



*Sarah Grady's Fourth Grade Class
El Camino Creek Elementary School
Carlsbad, California February, 2001*

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

A Step-by-Step Writing Program for Young Students

Author Heather Nielsen adapted FUNDAMENTAL STEPS from STEPS 1-2-3 and BASIC STEPS by Dave Yount and Paul DeKock.

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FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

The nationwide movement for high standards has not only determined what students should learn, but also has mandated that students demonstrate what they know. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS addresses numerous Language Arts Standards. As of late 2000, federally-funded efforts to develop a singular compendium of language arts standards were incomplete. For the purposes of Writing Standards, Interact consulted a Standards resource published by ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development), and McREL (Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning). FUNDAMENTAL STEPS meets the following standards set forth within *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education*. This document gathers standards set by such organizations as NCTE (National Council for Teachers of English) and NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress). Level II (Grades 3-5) Writing Standards met by FUNDAMENTAL STEPS include:

1. **Uses general skills and strategies of the writing process**
 - **Prewriting:** Uses prewriting strategies to plan written work
 - **Drafting and Revising:** Uses strategies to draft and revise written work
 - **Editing and Publishing:** Uses strategies to edit and publish written work
 - Evaluates own and others' writing
 - Uses strategies to write for different audiences
 - Uses strategies to write for a variety of purposes
 - Writes expository compositions
 - Writes narrative accounts
2. **Uses the stylistic and rhetorical aspects of writing**
 - Uses descriptive language that clarifies and enhances ideas
 - Uses paragraph form in writing
 - Uses a variety of sentence structures in writing
3. **Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions***
 - Uses pronouns in written compositions
 - Uses nouns in written compositions
 - Uses verbs in written compositions
 - Uses adjectives in written compositions
 - Uses adverbs in written compositions
 - Uses coordinating conjunctions (transitions) in written compositions
 - Uses conventions of spelling in written compositions
 - Uses conventions of capitalization in written compositions
 - Uses conventions of punctuation in written compositions
 - Uses standard format in written compositions

* *While FUNDAMENTAL STEPS does not specifically teach these grammatical conventions, they are in the Conventions Rubric as well as the Teacher Editing Guide and are a part of all good writing.*

STANDARDS

STANDARDS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

STANDARDS

4. Gathers and uses information for research purposes

- Uses a variety of strategies to plan research
- Uses encyclopedias to gather information for research topics
- Uses electronic media to gather information for research topics
- Uses strategies to gather and record information for research topics
- Uses strategies to compile information into written reports or summaries
- Cites information sources

5. Uses listening and speaking skills and strategies for a variety of purposes

- Contributes to group discussions
- Asks questions in class
- Responds to questions and comments
- Listens to classmates and adults
- Uses strategies to convey a clear main point when speaking
- Makes basic oral presentations to class
- Organizes ideas for oral presentation

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FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS is adapted for young writers from the original STEPS 1-2-3 (later revised as BASIC STEPS) writing program created by Dave Yount and Paul De Kock in 1979. Mr. Yount and Mr. De Kock team-taught high school humanities and saw their students consistently struggle to organize their thoughts. Knowing that good writing — and good thinking — takes more than just an idea and some basic mastery of spelling and writing conventions, the original authors of STEPS devised a commonsense instructional program to teach students to organize their thoughts clearly in relationship to their purpose for writing. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides the first foundation for essay writing that feeds into three later programs by Interact: BASIC STEPS, ADVANCED STEPS, and HONORS STEPS.

While trends in education change regularly, the fundamentals of good writing remain constant. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS introduces beginning writers, Grades 3-5, to the basic structure of the five-paragraph essay. Through this unit, your students will experience the following:

Knowledge

- Components of an organized essay
- Three basic organizational principles of the STEPS writing program
- Elements of the writing process
- Writing conventions (spelling, grammar, usage)

Skills

- Organizing information
- Using appropriate writing conventions
- Evaluating their own and their peers' work
- Editing for content and mechanics
- Revising and rewriting, incorporating feedback from teacher and peers
- Presenting speeches to an audience
- Thinking critically

Attitudes

- Confidence as their ability to express themselves clearly and intelligently grows
- Positive attitude towards writing

PURPOSE

One of the most difficult tasks teachers face is teaching their students how to write an organized, purposeful essay. The commonly espoused “writing process” has its limitations. Without direct instruction in a particular style, all the writing, editing, and revising in the world will not make a good essay!

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides a step-by-step formula for beginning writers to generate ideas, organize them logically, and communicate them clearly in writing. The Summary of Standards for Language Arts set forth in *Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education* (Kendall and Marzano, 2000) establishes four hallmarks of writing:

- 1) Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process;
- 2) Uses stylistic and rhetorical techniques in written compositions;
- 3) Uses grammatical and mechanical conventions in written compositions; and,
- 4) Gathers and uses information for research purposes.

The basic elements of the FUNDAMENTAL STEPS writing program are as follows:

“Fundamental” Principles

Three basic principles of writing guide the entire STEPS writing program. Essentially, these principles state that every well-organized essay has:

1. A **Preview Thesis** (also known in later STEPS units as the EGS: Enumerative General Statement) that introduces the purpose of the essay and acts as an organizing sentence.
2. **General Statements** (*idea statements*) supported by **specific details** (*concrete statements*). For example, students learn the difference between: “The car is beautiful” and “The car is bright red.”
3. A **Summary**, restating the Preview Thesis and wrapping up the essay in an engaging, summative manner.

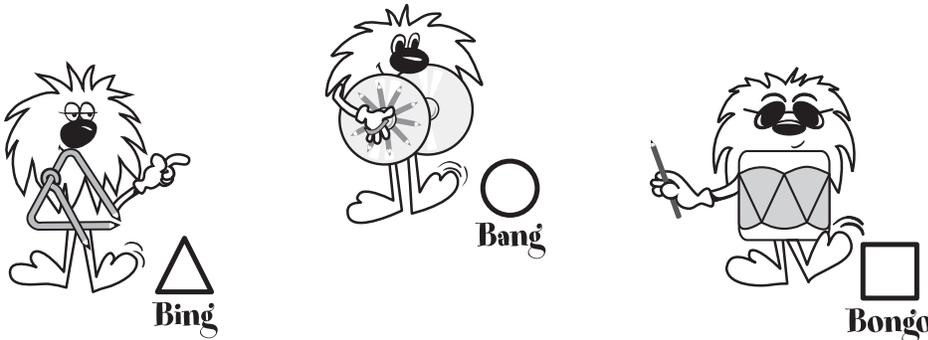
In FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, the organizational principles are represented by the following child-friendly mnemonics:

- **The Prelude** represents the musical introduction, or the **Preview Thesis**. The first paragraph introduces the subject and catches the reader’s interest, just as a musical prelude catches our attention with its sounds and rhythms.
- **Bing, Bang, and Bongo** represent the three **General Statements**, the reasons for writing the essay.
- **The Musical Finale** represents the **Summary**; now that the students have clearly identified all their points and proven their thesis, the reader can enjoy the beautiful music of the writer’s words!
- **Bandman Bob** helps students through the lessons in their Student Guides, in Read or Tells within the Teacher Guide, and on some of the reproducible pages.

Bing, Bang, and Bongo!

The “brainchildren” behind the Bing, Bang, and Bongo mnemonic, Dave Yount and Paul DeKock, actually taught and used these terms in high school, dealing with the smiles and snickers of adolescents “too cool” for such silliness. More than 20 years after their inception, Bing, Bang, and Bongo have helped many of these “cool” (but well-prepared!) young adults through college and on into successful careers as lawyers, journalists, teachers, entrepreneurs, and many other professions involving the writing process. The testimonials of these former students speak volumes. At the younger ages, clever memory tools are critical, particularly to address multiple intelligences and various learning styles. These terms help inject the “fun” into ‘fun’damental writing!

Bing, Bang, and Bongo are the three General Statements that require Specific Details for support. In FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, Bing, Bang, and Bongo are musical instruments. Bing is the triangle, Bang is the cymbal, and Bongo is the drum. Each instrument also has an accompanying shape: Bing is a triangle, Bang is a circle, and Bongo is a square. At this youngest level of writers, we also propose a third concrete distinguishing variable for Bing, Bang, and Bongo—color. Bing=green, Bang=blue, Bongo=red. See Introductory lesson Day 2 for specifics on how to teach and implement this tool.



Organization

Your FUNDAMENTAL STEPS Notebook is organized into six distinct sections: Introduction, Narrative Essay, Explanatory Essay, Persuasive Essay, Report of Information, and the Parent Connection.

Within the **Introduction** section, you familiarize yourself with the parts and pieces of the Notebook and with the philosophy and pedagogy behind the methods of instruction. This section reviews the writing process and addresses the important element of assessment. The Introduction concludes with 3-4 days of **critical first lessons** to introduce the fundamental principles of STEPS and begin teaching students how to organize and record their thoughts.

OVERVIEW

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

OVERVIEW

The following four sections each introduce and teach a different style of essay writing. While the four styles may vary in their purpose, audience, style, and voice, the organization of each section remains relatively static. Do not feel bound to teach these styles in a particular order. Interact units all come with the hope and understanding that each teacher *adapts* rather than *adopts* the ideas and procedures. We provide the recipe, or format; you improvise as your experience, district requirements, and comfort-level allow.

For the beginning writer, allow a minimum of eight lessons to introduce a new style of writing. This assumes a writing or language arts period of approximately one hour. This amount of time provides adequate opportunities to move through the entire writing process.

As you use FUNDAMENTAL STEPS over the years, keep particularly helpful student essays within this section to use as models. Good modeling is the essence of great teaching.

The **Parent Connection** offers some suggestions on how to educate and involve parents in their children’s writing. These suggestions came from a very successful parent-education program at a San Diego City middle school, with a diverse group of parents and children. Like the rest of the unit, use and adapt what works in your individual situation.

In the entire STEPS writing program, students practice to master the *process*, not content. The program teaches logical thinking in a step-by-step process. Oftentimes, teachers allow students to write any way they wish as long as content mastery is demonstrated, without requiring them to learn the discipline inherent in the essay process. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, a structured format, provides a “hanger” on which students hang their ideas. Once students master this discipline, the creativity and the content (the beautiful clothes on the hanger!) flow in a more organized manner.

1. **Before You Begin**

Carefully and thoroughly read both the Student Guide and the Introduction section of this Notebook before planning your writing instruction. Then, find the tab for the writing style you will teach first. Read this section and align it with any recommendations from your school or district Language Arts program, if appropriate. Doing so will help you plan your lessons and adjust this unit to meet your students' needs most appropriately. Find and use other resources to teach and supplement the mini-lessons recommended in this unit.

2. **Writing Folders/Portfolios**

Prepare a sturdy folder for each student before beginning any writing program. **Writing Folders** serve many purposes; students can use them to store their Student Guides and all their writing and grammar assignments throughout the year, showcasing their growth and progress (as a writing portfolio) as well as acting as a reference tool when working on skills previously introduced. Also, **Writing Folders** function as repositories of student observations and reflections; these thoughts and notes often serve as the seeds for later writing assignments. Regardless of the method of prewriting you employ, your students need a place to record their thoughts and reflections in order to make their writing personal.

3. **Establish an Author's Environment**

Students write most successfully when they write with deep involvement. As James Dickey observed, a writer is “someone who is enormously taken by things anyone else would walk by” (Calkins, 1994). One of the most important things a teacher provides for his or her students is the emotional safety to take risks and share what burns inside them. Students feel motivated to write when they write for the people that matter to them and about issues that are relevant to them.

Create a physical and emotional environment that encourages students to reach within themselves and go beyond their own limitations in their writing. Be a writer yourself! Share your writing experiences with your students. Lucy Calkins encourages her teachers to “help [students] know what they know!” (1994). Build a learning community...an authors' community...and students will want to write well. Decorate your walls with print-rich and content-rich images to spark imagination as well as provide practical guidance. Provide a

SETUP DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



You will have much greater success in teaching a particular writing style if you dedicate at least three writing periods to the Introductory STEPS lessons! In the fourth-grade pilot class, the teacher found that teaching both persuasive writing and introducing the organizational principles simultaneously was too much! Begin with the basic lessons in the introduction to save time and frustration for you and your students.



Experienced STEPS teachers share that to truly maximize student writing quality, allow a minimum of eight days for the entire writing process with each writing style. Remember that additional time spent in the writing process translates into better essays, deeper understanding, and sincere application of the STEPS process.

Word Wall and update it regularly; have an area dedicated to famous authors of familiar stories; dedicate a section of the class to a piece of writing from each student (select their best work or “work in progress,” or allow each student to select his/her own). Surround these young writers with positive models and motivation for writing.

4. **Schedule**

Students write in all areas of the curriculum and at any time of day. However, when teaching basic writing organizational strategies to beginning writers, it is best to dedicate specific time that students can anticipate for their writing. Establish a familiar rhythm and routine to your “Writers’ Workshop” and students will spend less time trying to figure out what is expected, and more time writing.

Before beginning a particular style of writing instruction, take three or four class periods to follow the Introductory Lessons on pages 22-30 of this Introduction section of the Notebook. These lessons and accompanying activities build the foundation for the common language of the STEPS writing programs.

The order of the writing styles is not prescriptive. They fall in order of general level of sophistication and/or difficulty for young writers. In FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, we introduce—and recommend you begin with—the Narrative style first. This is generally the simplest for students to write. Narrative is the most natural way of communicating for people, so whether you select a personal, non-fiction narrative, a literature-based narrative, or any other type of narrative, students write in first person and relate a personal experience.

Each section follows the same basic schedule of eight days of writing instruction. Modify this schedule as needed. The foundations of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the organizing preview and summary paragraphs remain basically the same regardless of the essay style. By the time students have written in two or three styles, they have the confidence and experience to translate these skills into a new form of writing.

5. Duplication

Duplicate the following reproducible masters as needed. Pages specific to each writing style are at the end of each style's section.

Introduction

- CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT?
- SAMPLE ESSAY
- PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING
- TRANSITIONS
- TEACHER EDITING GUIDE
- SPEECH TIPS
- GENERIC PREWRITING ORGANIZER

Narrative Essay

- DELIGHTFULLY DESCRIPTIVE
- NARRATIVE STUDENT SAMPLE
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC
- NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC
- NARRATIVE PREWRITING
- WRITING FRAMES: NARRATIVE ESSAY
- NARRATIVE CHECKLIST
- VOCABULARY VARIETY
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY
- PEER EDITING GUIDE

Explanatory Essay

- EXPLANATORY STUDENT SAMPLE
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC
- EXPLANATORY ESSAY RUBRIC
- EXPLANATORY PREWRITING
- WRITING FRAMES: EXPLANATORY ESSAY
- EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST
- VOCABULARY VARIETY
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: EXPLANATORY ESSAY
- PEER EDITING GUIDE

Persuasive Essay

- PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA
- PERSUASIVE STUDENT SAMPLE
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC
- PERSUASIVE ESSAY RUBRIC
- PERSUASIVE PREWRITING
- WRITING FRAMES: PERSUASIVE ESSAY
- PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST
- VOCABULARY VARIETY
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: PERSUASIVE ESSAY
- PEER EDITING GUIDE

SETUP DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Report of Information

- MODEL TOPICS
- REPORT OF INFORMATION STUDENT SAMPLE
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC
- REPORT OF INFORMATION RUBRIC
- OUTLINING STUDENT SAMPLE
- NOTE-TAKING
- REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE
- WRITING FRAMES: REPORT OF INFORMATION
- REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST
- VOCABULARY VARIETY
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: REPORT OF INFORMATION
- PEER EDITING GUIDE

Parent Connection

- STEPS GLOSSARY

6. Cross-Curricular Integration

Teachers do not often teach subjects in isolation. Interact firmly believes in integrated instruction as a tool for effective learning. These FUNDAMENTAL STEPS writing styles can be employed in all curricular areas. Examples include:

Narrative — Reading/Language Arts

Students write a character analysis about a novel from class. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo could be three outstanding characteristics the hero (or antagonist) has that the student admires. The Specific Details include direct quotes and examples from the literature itself along with commentary and personal reflection from the student/author.

Explanatory — Physical Education

Students write a “how-to” essay/speech introducing and explaining a new game or skill. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo are the three main steps in how to play the game.

Persuasive — Social Studies

Students write a persuasive essay convincing the audience that the colonists were right to enter into the Revolutionary war with the British in 1775. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo could be: colonists wanted their own laws and policies, colonists had too many taxes from Britain, and the colonists were forced to house troops in their homes.

Report of Information — Science/Language Arts

Students write a research essay on the inventor or scientist of their choice. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo could be: Bing—the life of the scientist, Bang—the invention or discovery for which he/she is most famous, Bongo—the impact this discovery had on the world. Students then present the information in a “Meeting of the Minds” roundtable format.

7. Mini-Lessons

Throughout the Notebook, FUNDAMENTAL STEPS recommends particular Mini-Lessons. Some supporting materials are included in this unit either in the Introduction or within each style’s section. Consult your Language Arts program or other supplemental curriculum for additional specific activities to teach these Mini-Lessons.

8. Accommodating Special Needs

Like all Interact units, FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides differentiated instruction through its various learning opportunities. *Bing, Bang, and Bongo* help students of different learning styles and strengths remember how to organize their thoughts within an essay. The many means of presenting the basic organizational principles (colors, shapes, music) capture the interest of the most reluctant and challenged learners! Work together with the Resource Specialist, Gifted and Talented Specialist, or any other itinerant teachers to coordinate instruction. Do not assume that your Resource or language-challenged students cannot write an essay like this! To the contrary, this organization is very predictable and mechanical. It is repetitive and structured. All students can and do write when proper time and attention is spent on these lessons!

9. Enhancing FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

One of the hallmarks of Interact units is the hands-on involvement students have with each other and with the material. In a writing program, students listen, watch, learn, and write. It is difficult to “simulate” learning to write. The action of writing is the object—not a simulation, but the real deal! Instead, we offer a few suggestions to enliven the writing program and lend a musical and/or kinesthetic twist to your class.

SETUP DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



With the fundamental organizational principles presented and practiced in STEPS, students have an easy model for oral presentations. Bing, Bang, and Bongo make planning and presenting a speech simple stuff!



Soft classical music as background helps students focus and allows them to get in touch with both their linguistic and creative powers.

Speeches: Students (and adults!) often fear sharing their ideas publicly. Nevertheless, this skill is extremely important. There are programs dedicated specifically to speech-writing and public speaking, but in FUNDAMENTAL STEPS we offer some basic tips for students in presenting an effective, organized speech to an audience (see SPEECH TIPS, pages 43-44 in this section of the Notebook). In the publishing phase, encourage students to present their essays as speeches rather than just turn them in to you for evaluation. This public share is good for both the presenters and the audience.

Student Roles: In **Grouping Students**, (pages 1:18-1:19) FUNDAMENTAL STEPS offers tips on how to enhance the “fun” and also give students specific roles and responsibilities.

Instruments in the classroom: If your school has a music program, most likely you can borrow the instruments used to represent Bing, Bang, and Bongo – the **triangle, cymbals, and drums**. Any kind of drum will suffice. (Bongos would be great, of course!) When introducing the unit to your students, use these actual instruments and ask for student volunteers to come up to the front of the room to play them (appropriately) at the right moment.

Special FUNDAMENTAL STEPS musical accompaniment: Since this unit links writing to music throughout, instrumental music provides a natural segue to each writing lesson. Select music you enjoy and play it at the beginning and ending of each Writers’ Workshop. Vary the musical selections for interests’ sake, or choose different pieces or styles of music to accompany different stages of the writing process. You could even link this to lessons in music history and famous composers...the cross-curricular opportunities abound!

10. **Personalize this Notebook**

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, while a comprehensive essay-writing program, deserves enhancement by you, the expert in your classroom. As you use this unit with a variety of classes, you’ll make adaptations that best fit the needs of your students. Add your own activities, assignments, and student essays to the appropriate sections as you teach the FUNDAMENTAL STEPS lessons and writing styles.

THE WRITING PROCESS

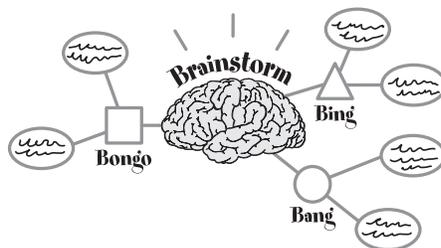
FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Most writing teachers use on the following phases in the writing process:

1. Prewriting

“What do I want to say in my essay? What is my purpose? Who is my audience? What are my Bing, Bang, and Bongo points to support my thesis paragraph?”

During the prewriting phase, students brainstorm, make notes, and organize their thoughts. Graphic organizers help most students make sense of their ideas and keep them focused on the topic/style. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides a variety of tools for this important phase. In FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, plan to spend at least two lessons on prewriting when introducing a new style of writing.



2. Drafting

Students use their prewriting work and write their first draft. At this stage they write freely without too much concern for spelling and conventions. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides optional writing templates (WRITING FRAMES) for this phase, self-contained paragraph “boxes” in which students write each paragraph with prompts to remind them of the necessary content. Encourage students to use the writing checklist (in their Student Guides) for the particular writing style, to ensure they include all the necessary elements. Remember—do not make a mystery of your expectations. Allow one to two class periods for this stage in the writing process—the more in-class work you allow, the better and more authentic the product.



3. Responding and Revising

“Does my writing make sense? Does it fit the purpose? Did I follow the checklist?”

This phase demands the most time of the teacher in the beginning. By spending more energy helping students to revise their first drafts early in the year, student writing improves



Use caution in teaching complete disregard for conventions during this process or any process. Good habits build over time and with practice. The philosophy behind this drafting step has good support, but carefully find your own balance of process and product quality.



THE WRITING PROCESS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

dramatically and they eventually become more independent revisionists of their own work. Use **Writing Conferences** (see page 17) as often as possible (minimally twice a month with each student) to give the best, most personal response to individual writing. Developmentally, young students grade three through five have a deep need to make their writing work for others. They listen to teachers' comments and suggestions, as well as those offered by peers (Fletcher and Protalupi, 1998). Allow at least one class period for this responding and revising phase.

4. **Proofreading and Editing**

“Is this my best? What writing conventions do I need to fix? Can I use some of my writer’s tools to enhance my writing?”



At this phase, students need to learn specific proofreading and editing techniques. Too many teachers simply tell their students to work in writing groups and “edit each others’ work!” First, teachers must teach editing. On the last page of the Student Guide, the **Editing Marks** provide an excellent reference and create common editing language for you and your students. Use the editing guides and checklists provided in FUNDAMENTAL STEPS or modify and create your own. Either way, *teach* the skills of editing in a concrete manner and model the process on an overhead or through a variation of daily language-skills practice. Highly-focused, daily mini-lessons are effective in presenting and modeling grammatical concepts. Use student work as authentic models for young writers to edit. Students enjoy becoming famous by offering their paragraphs for review! Remember that these are young writers. Do not expect them to write and edit like *The New Yorker*. Set high—but realistic!—expectations. See **Grouping Students** on pages 1:18-1:19 for options in using pairs or small groups of writers to help relieve the strain of editing every piece of work every time.

THE WRITING PROCESS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

5. Rewriting and Publishing

This part of the writing process demands that students incorporate the changes from Responding/ Revising and Proofreading/ Editing and create a new, improved version of their original

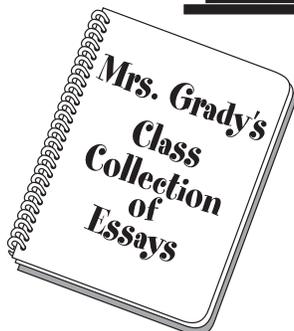


draft. Depending on the style and the purpose for the writing, encourage students to publish their writing for the appropriate audience in a creative form. Suggestions include:

- Create personal memory books with personal narratives as the writing focus, allowing students to incorporate photos and artwork to further express themselves
- Use a persuasive essay as a letter to the editor of your local paper
- Students share reports of information with another class as part of an exchange of new learning
- Use the computer/word processor to create high-quality final drafts of any style.

The Writing Process

1. Prewriting
2. Drafting
3. Responding & Revising
4. Proofreading & Editing
5. Rewriting & Publishing



Remove the Mystery

One of the most-often-cited reasons teachers feel uncomfortable teaching writing is the difficulty in *assessing* the writing. This resistance trickles down to the students. Seldom do students truly comprehend the purpose of their writing or the elements necessary to write “successfully” (in their minds, earn a “good grade”). With FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, the mystery of writing evaporates. Assessment is critical, essential, and very manageable.

Why Assess?

In practice, assessment means the determination of the quality of a student’s work measured against a standard. What is the value in determining the quality? Why assess at all? For two very good reasons. Assessment provides students with meaningful, helpful feedback to highlight what they do well and in what areas they can improve. More importantly, assessment also helps teachers focus on what their students need and what they need to teach as next steps. With standards-based teaching, the line between assessment and instruction no longer exists. *Assessment is only as good as the use we make of it.*

Tools for Assessment

Current best teaching practices encourage both writers (students) and teachers to use checklists and Rubrics. FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides the following:

Checklists — The First Step

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS provides a student content checklist for each writing style in the Student Guide, with a copy of each checklist in the reproducible section of each essay style. Students use these checklists when drafting and again when revising to ensure they include all of the important elements of a good essay. Use this checklist when reading through each student’s individual essay, prior to assigning a Rubric score.

Rubrics — Formal Assessment

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS uses a 4-point Rubric system. Each of the four writing styles has its own structure and content Rubric; these are referred to by name of the style (e.g., NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC). The CONVENTIONS RUBRIC remains static across writing styles, and is provided in each essay’s section of the Notebook. On pages 14-15 of the Student Guide, the **Essay Structure Rubric** gives students the majority of the assessment for each essay. The only difference between the Essay Structure

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Rubric and the Rubrics within each essay style is the addition of the content-specific element(s) for the Essay Rubrics. The qualitative descriptions of each point level are:

- 4 — Exemplary: Exceeds the standard. *Generally, this rating describes a work that demonstrates true mastery with above and beyond application and understanding.*
- 3 — Expected: Meets the standard with quality. *This rating describes an essay with good, solid mastery of the expectations in all areas.*
- 2 — Nearly There: Inconsistently meets the standard. *The essay at this level shows inconsistent comprehension or application of the essay-writing skills. This student may need re-teaching of the organizational principles or of conventions.*
- 1 — Incomplete: Has not yet met the standard. *If the student does not complete the essay, provide additional or alternative instruction and support.*

While it may seem a bit awkward to have two separate Rubrics for each essay, DO IT. Students become better writers with more specific feedback. By giving two separate scores for structure/content and for conventions, students (and parents) can easily see where their strengths and weaknesses lie. It is quite common for students to have excellent content but terrible spelling.

This unit is written for grades 3-5. Obviously, there is a range of expectations for these grades. The Rubrics are geared toward the middle: typical expectations for fourth grade. Adjust the Rubrics for your students as needed, either adding to or taking away from the provided guidelines.

While the checklists assist students with their writing, Rubrics show them *exactly* how they will be assessed. Post and distribute the Rubrics when introducing the essay to allow students every opportunity to succeed. Remember—assessment should not be mysterious or secretive.



Remember: evaluate the essay, not the student!



Each school or district may have its own assessment criteria. Adapt the provided tools as best fits the existing expectations and evaluative methods.

To hold students accountable for their writing, require each student to re-write any essay that does not earn at least a Rubric score of “3.” Use **Writing Conferences** (see page 17), directed mini-lessons determined by student needs, or another preferred method of feedback for delivering feedback and targeted instruction to improve students’ skills. Do not allow sub-par writing to go unnoticed and unchecked.

Observation — Informal Assessment

Teachers constantly assess student work and behavior. In addition to the formal Rubric scoring (and *occasionally in place of* the Rubric scores), assessment can be quick and informal. Most importantly, it should be authentic, and guide a “minds-on” approach to teaching. As you wander around your classroom while students write, notice their behaviors and provide meaningful comments in passing. Note students’ attitudes towards the subject matter, during peer editing, throughout the writing process, and towards writing in general! These anecdotal records allow you to plan instruction and establish teaching goals.

“Classrooms are shaped by what we reward and reprimand, by what we celebrate, by what we hold up as a model” (Calkins, 1994). Celebrate good writing every day. Several minutes at the end of each hour or lesson can be devoted to a time for students to share their favorite lines/paragraphs with their partners or with the whole class.

WRITING CONFERENCES

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Time...the one thing (besides money) no teacher ever has in abundance. So the idea of writing conferences probably brings a sarcastic smile, “Sure, like I have time to meet with every student to talk about his or her writing!” The benefits gained by conferring with students extend well beyond improved written expression. Not only will conferring help the students’ writing, these conferences help build the trust and confidence students have in you and in themselves. Building better people, one writing conference at a time.

A writing conference is a *conversation* (Anderson, 2000). With your student, you converse about how to become a better writer. Conversations about the content of students’ work are interesting and important too, but to save that precious time, keep as much of the writing conference focused on the *process* of the students’ writing. Mini-lessons are excellent opportunities to present effective writing strategies to all students. Then individual conferences teach students specific strategies to improve their writing. Over time, these gently and individually reinforced strategies transfer naturally and easily into student work, and will result in better writing the rest of their lives.

Since this is a unit about writing a five-paragraph essay, we include only the barest-bones introduction to writing conferences. Please consult one of these excellent resources to learn more about conducting successful conferences within your own classroom.

Anderson, Carl. *How’s It Going?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2000.
Calkins, Lucy. *The Art of Teaching Writing*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1994.
Murray, Donald M. *A Writer Teaches Writing*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985.



Experienced STEPS teachers share that teachers should aim to meet with each student one-on-one at least twice a month. In a class of 30 students, this translates roughly into three conferences a day (60 conferences a month, 20 school days in a month). This might sound overwhelming but again...when you keep the conference focused on one skill and both teacher and student come prepared, the conference can be as brief as five minutes. That’s fifteen minutes a day; or some teachers dedicate two days a week to conferencing, and make a 45 minute block of quiet, undisturbed time. Find what works for you! The results are well worth it.

GROUPING STUDENTS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

At different points in the writing process, you and your students benefit from working in pairs or small groups. Many teachers are reluctant to allow students to help each other write and edit. Others overuse this practice. However, when strict behavioral expectations are established and enforced from the onset, when students have particular jobs in their pairs or groups, and when you set a time limit for the group work, you raise the likelihood of student success. Use groups and pairings judiciously, and select groups carefully to maximize their efficacy. In each journey through the writing process, divide students into groups no more than twice. Pairs are often more effective and more productive. We offer merely a few grouping suggestions; modify and enhance your groupings as fits the needs of your classroom.



The *'Riting Recorder* writes down all the ideas of the pair (or group), then the other student copies the ideas at the end of the prewriting session.

In the **Prewriting** phase, give students the lesson's prompt (preview thesis, or merely some suggested main ideas) then divide the class into pairs and encourage them to brainstorm together. Select one student in each pair to be the *Detail Detective* and the other is the *'Riting Recorder*. Assign and require that students use graphic organizers (from the particular style within FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, or use your own) to find Bing, Bang, and Bongo main point ideas (General Statements) and appropriate Specific Details. The Recorder writes down the ideas on the graphic organizer or scratch paper. After students finish brainstorming (do NOT interrupt the brainstorming flow!), the Detective checks the proposed details to ensure they are concrete.



Instead of the roles provided, have students role-play 'teacher' and 'audience.'

In the **Responding and Revising** phase, students meet in pairs or small groups to help each other check content using the various checklists in their Student Guides as well as other writing tools at your discretion. Students take turns reading to check for each required element and reading as the audience. Each tab has a Roles and Responsibilities accountability form (e.g., RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY) that outlines specific jobs to assist students in this important phase.

When **Editing and Proofreading** students use the PEER EDITING GUIDE provided in each writing section of this Notebook. Now they *all* must role-play *editors* and *proofreaders*. At these young ages, it is important to set realistic expectations for editing and proofreading. Student *editors* could specialize in one or two particular types of errors and focus primarily on those errors. For example, Christine could be the *Capitalization and Spelling Specialist* while Sean could focus as the *Grammar Specialist* and Mark could act as the

GROUPING STUDENTS

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Punctuation Specialist. Use the Rubric for the particular style in this phase, and encourage students to check the Rubric as their guide. Remember...you are not trying to trap your students in their writing errors. You are teaching them how to be better writers. Use every tool available.

Particularly with young, beginning writers, do not overly-rely on these student pairs and groups. Nothing can substitute for the feedback that a qualified, experienced, and caring adult (you!) provides. However, use these roles and assignments to relieve a bit of the burden and allow students to interact with each other; the value of the cooperation and collaboration in a structured manner cannot be underestimated.

To help group behavior and build in accountability, use the following Cooperative Learning Rubric guidelines:

- 4 — Consistently and actively helps the group achieve its goals by communicating well with group members, by encouraging the group to work together, and by willingly accepting and completing the necessary work of their role.
- 3 — Usually helps the group achieve its goals by communicating with group members, by encouraging the group to work together, and willingly accepting and completing the necessary work of their role.
- 2 — Makes some effort to help the group achieve its goals.
- 1 — Makes little or no effort to help the group achieve its goals.

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UNIT TIME CHART

INTRODUCTION TO FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



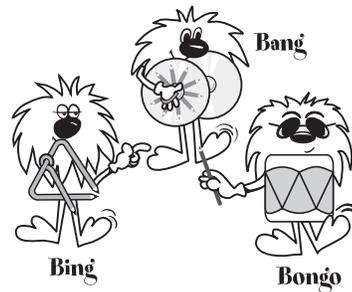
FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY 1

- Define and Determine Concrete vs. Abstract
CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT?

DAY 2

- Introduce Bing, Bang, and Bongo, and the Three Fundamental Principles
TREMENDOUS TRAVELS



DAYS 3-4

- Draft in the Fundamental Style
PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING

INTRODUCTION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



3 to 4 lessons



Approximately 45 minutes



Even though your students will have many of the answers right in front of them, this is okay. Some won't even notice; others will just feel smart to know the answer! The point of this exercise is to instruct. It is not a test!

Timing

- Allow three to four class periods prior to teaching a particular style of writing. Spend as much time as needed on the skills taught by these lessons. The result? Better quality writing.

Objectives

- Identify and discriminate between concrete and abstract words
- Learn/review the writing process
- Read about and identify the three organizational principles of STEPS
- Draft a simple narrative essay given a specific prewriting plan, following the five-paragraph STEPS form

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing Folders (or materials to make them) — *class set*
- CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT? — *class set + transparencies*
- SAMPLE ESSAY — *transparency*
- PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING — *class set + transparency*
- Colored pencils or markers (green, blue, red) — *enough to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

Day One—Define and Determine Concrete vs. Abstract Words

1. Before learning FUNDAMENTAL STEPS essay writing, your students need to know the difference between **concrete** and **abstract** words. This sets the stage for the entire first organizational principle of the STEPS writing program—distinguishing General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) from Specific Details. Distribute the CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT? pages and project the transparencies onto the wall.
2. Step by step, go through each item of this activity. Cover the transparency with another piece of paper so you do not reveal the answers ahead of time. As you work through each question, continue revealing the steps one by one. Explain to your students that this activity is very important, because in their essay writing they will need to use both abstract and concrete words. One of the most important elements of these early days

is establishing a common language. This common language will ease communication between you and your students as you move through the year of writing.

Answer Key: CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT?

1. Grass
 2. Grass; sight, taste, smell, hearing, touch
 3. Fingers, hands, feet, bodies (Answers will vary)
 4. Eyes
 5. Ears
 6. Noses
 7. Dog; Apple
 8. See; smell
 9. Basketball
 10. Sports car; eyeball; ruler
 11. Truth
 12. Honor; patriotism
 13. U.S. Flag
 14. Idea
 15. (Any one of the following answers acceptable) Taste, touch, smell, see, hear
 16. a.
 17. Hear Emily's cat meowing; see Emily's cat stretching; feel Emily's cat jumping into her lap
 18. (No answer required)
 19. B; B
 20. Beautiful
 21. (No answer required)
 22. Yes!
-
3. The CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT? activity will take approximately 30 minutes depending on how many questions your students have. Do not collect this, unless it is simply to check for completion. Students save this for later reference.
 4. Distribute the Student Guides and direct your students to the letter on the cover.



INTRODUCTION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



5. Read the letter to your students from Bandman Bob as they read along on page one of their guide.

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen!

Word ‘round the studio is that you are learning one of the most important skills you need for life—how to write an excellent essay. Good for you! I’m thrilled your teacher asked for my assistance! Before long, you’ll be writing five paragraph essays with the help of my musical assistants—**Bing**, the musical triangle, **Bang**, the cymbals, and **Bongo**, the drums! We will use them to help organize your essays. An essay without good organization is worse than a band with no music or leader... all jumbled up, it just doesn’t make sense!

As we learn good essay-writing skills, I will pop in and out to give you some writing tips. I also want to see you using **Bing**, **Bang**, and **Bongo** in your essays. Every time you write, you write for a **purpose** and for an **audience**. You might not believe it now, but you have so much to say in your writing! Bing, Bang, and Bongo will help the music of your words play loudly, clearly and effectively!

Happy Writing!

Bandman Bob

Reassure your students that if they have any questions, there will be plenty of time to address their concerns over the next few days.

6. If students already have a Writing Folder, direct them to carefully store their Student Guides in their folders now. If they do not have a Writing Folder, distribute construction paper to make their own folders to hold all their FUNDAMENTAL STEPS writing work *or* give them each a ready-made pocket folder to store these important papers.
7. Before ending the writing workshop, play any special music you have selected to signal the end (finale!) of the day’s writing lesson.

Day Two—Introduce Bing, Bang, and Bongo, and the Three Fundamental Principles

1. Ask students to take out their **Writing Folders** and their Student Guides.
2. Review the differences between **concrete** and **abstract**. Ask students to give you a few examples of each to check for understanding. Write the following sentences on the overhead:

John and Eric's friendship was based on their truth and honor. They grew up together and shared many memories.

John threw the football to Eric in a beautiful spiral toss. Eric caught the ball and sprinted through the sticky mud all the way to the tall elm tree.

Which sentences are more abstract? (*the first group*)
Which sentences are more concrete? (*the second group*)
Which help paint a more vivid picture in your mind? (*the concrete sentences*)
3. Ask your students to copy the sentences on their own paper. Next, ask them to underline the abstract nouns and circle the concrete nouns. (*Abstract nouns: friendship; truth; honor; memories. Concrete nouns: football; toss; ball; mud; tree.*)
4. Challenge students to apply this skill. Ask them to write several of their own sentences and identify the concrete and abstract nouns.
5. Now direct students to pages 2-3 of their Student Guides. If you have not taught the writing process before, spend time previewing the stages and phases of writing. If this is a review for your students, explain how important it is to work hard at every step of the process. Bandman Bob will have some suggestions as they progress through the different steps, and hopefully all students will have a finished product they are very proud of by the publication phase of each essay!
6. Use this time to begin establishing behavioral and academic expectations for your students. Most students need quiet (silent) writing time. Explain when in the writing process students will confer with each other, when they might meet with you, and when and how you will assess them.



Approximately 45 minutes



Play soft classical music during writing time to assist student focus and minimize background distractions.

INTRODUCTION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

7. Project the transparency of SAMPLE ESSAY for students as they turn to pages 4-5 in their Student Guides.
8. Introduce the terms **purpose** and **audience** to your students.
9. Carefully read the essay with your students as a shared read. Verbalize your own thinking as you identify the components of the essay. This model narrative essay demonstrates the three organizational principles of the STEPS writing program. Use the comments in the sidebar of the essay to guide the discussion.
10. After reading **Tremendous Travels** with your students, go back and carefully note the three fundamental organizational principles:
 - The **Preview Thesis**—This introduces the main idea of the essay and lists Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
 - **General Statements** (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) or opinions introduced in the thesis must be supported by concrete **Specific Details**. Students expand on these in the three body paragraphs and add concrete details (facts) to support their statements.
 - **Summary**—the final paragraph restating the thesis and reviewing Bing, Bang, and Bongo.

“Dissect” the essay’s parts while thinking aloud. Read and note the first sentence (a question) which catches the interest of the audience. Underline the **Preview Thesis** with a black overhead marker; direct students to underline the thesis in their Student Guides (in pen or pencil). The **musical prelude** represents the **thesis**. *The preview thesis is “I love traveling, and my favorite places I have visited are Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge.”*



Use the term “preview” as a link to the familiar with your students. Most students have seen a movie with previews. What do the previews tell us?

11. The Preview Thesis tells the reader what the essay will be about—in this case, the three places the author has most enjoyed visiting. Ask students to write the **Preview Thesis** on the appropriate line in their Student Guides; model this on the overhead.
12. Now use the green, blue, and red overhead markers to identify the **Bing** (green), **Bang** (blue), and **Bongo** (red) of the essay. Students can share their colored markers with each other, but they should use the same colors you use for continuity’s sake. In both the intro paragraph AND in the individual body

paragraphs, draw a green triangle around the Bing (*Washington D.C.*); draw a blue circle around the Bang (*Italy*); and draw a red square around the Bongo (*Columbia Gorge*). Use these colors throughout the entire prewriting and perhaps even into the drafting phase every time students write in STEPS style.

13. In the summary paragraph, once again identify Bing, Bang, and Bongo with the colored markers. This “musical finale” re-states the three main points. The finale invites the reader to personalize the narrative with the concluding question, “What are your favorite places in the world?”
14. After students have used the coloring materials to clearly identify the **Preview Thesis**, the **Bing, Bang, and Bongo**, and the **Summary** of the essay, encourage them to re-read the first body paragraph—the Bing paragraph—to identify the reasons the author gives for Washington D.C. as a favorite travel destination.
15. Link the learning from yesterday’s concrete/abstract lesson. The author uses concrete details to explain why she enjoyed Washington D.C. However, she also included an opinion as one of her details! (*I loved seeing the White House.*)
16. On Student Guide page 5, help students complete the following outline of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the supporting details. This solidifies the importance of the **second fundamental organizational principle**, that the **General Statements** listed in the preview thesis are supported by **Specific Details**.
 - I. Washington D.C.
 - a. White House (*This is really commentary; not a concrete detail! Use this as an example of how to enhance with abstract in addition to concrete.*)
 - b. Capitol and senators
 - c. Crisp January air
 - II. Italy
 - a. The Sistine Chapel
 - b. Delicious pasta and gelato
 - c. The Forum, old historical place (*Again, commentary blends with Specific Detail*)
 - III. Columbia Gorge
 - a. Hiking on green trails
 - b. Visiting many waterfalls
 - c. Reading by the fireplace



The colors and shapes really help some students remember to keep the points in order. Presenting and reinforcing the information in as many different means possible increases the likelihood of learning!



For older or more sophisticated writers, encourage them to add a sentence or two of commentary—opinions, feelings, reflections, or predictions that directly support the specific details.



There are a few “right” ways to outline/list the Specific Details. Accept a variety of correct answers as long as they resemble those presented here!

INTRODUCTION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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Approximately 45-90 minutes

17. Now review the **third fundamental organizational principle** with your students, the Summary re-states the thesis and wraps up the essay in an engaging, summative manner. Ask students to write the summary statement on the final lines in their Student Guides: *For many reasons I loved Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge*. This musical finale reminds the reader of the main points the author included in the body of the essay.
18. Conclude the lesson with any student comments or questions about the three fundamental organizational principles. If you are using a particular piece of music to signal the end of Writers' Workshop, play it now!

Days Three and Four—Drafting in the Fundamental Style

1. Review yesterday's work from Student Guide pages 4-5 (Tremendous Travels). Ask students "Who remembers the three special elements in a FUNDAMENTAL STEPS essay?" Hopefully, many can reply with an answer similar to:
 - 1) *Preview Thesis introduces the essay with Bing, Bang, and Bongo (General Statements)*
 - 2) *General Statements must have Specific (concrete) Details to support them*
 - 3) *Summary re-states preview thesis and Bing, Bang, and Bongo*
2. Inform students that today they will practice drafting an essay from prewriting that you give them. This will help them when they have to write their own independent essays.
3. Distribute both pages of PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING and project the plan on the overhead. Using the overhead markers, identify the following:

Purpose and audience of essay — Purpose: To inform. This narrative essay will inform the audience about the author's favorite animal, the horse. This could be both a written essay as well as a speech to present to the audience. Audience: Classmates or the teacher.

Preview Thesis — Underline the entire thesis sentence in black: "I love horses because they are lovable and sweet, they are fun to watch, and they teach me responsibility." Underline Bing ("they are loveable and sweet") in green; underline Bang ("they are fun to watch") in blue; underline Bongo ("they teach me responsibility") in red.

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Bing — Underline the Bing statement in green. Draw a green triangle next to each of the Bing **Specific Details**.

Bang — Underline the Bang statement in blue. Draw a blue circle next to each of the Bang **Specific Details**.

Bongo — Underline the Bongo statement in red. Draw a red square next to each of the Bongo **Specific Details**.

Summary — Underline the entire summary in black: “The three reasons I love horses are that they are loveable and sweet, they are fun to watch, and they teach me responsibility.”

- Count how many places Bing, Bang, and Bongo each appear. Remind students that the audience will truly understand the General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) presented in the essay because they will read it three times (in the Preview Thesis, body paragraph, and Summary)!
- Note the Specific Details that support each General Statement. Remind students of the difference between concrete words and abstract words, and the importance of using concrete details to explain the general statements that support the thesis.
- Begin modeling the drafting phase using page two of PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING. Students “cut and paste” the text from page one to page two. This exercise reinforces (in a very simple manner) the transfer of information from prewriting to drafting (specifically, if they do a good job prewriting, drafting is very simple!). Use the writing frames to reinforce the idea of five separate paragraphs. Younger writers especially need these prompts to indent and to use transition words.
- Note the use of transition words in the paragraphs. This provides a natural opportunity to either teach or review transition words and their importance in the flow of an essay.
- Give students time to finish this assignment—drafting an essay from a given plan—either in writing quads, pairs, or individually.



Note the TRANSITIONS resource for students on page 39 of the Introduction of this Notebook.

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9. Collect these essays before students leave so you can check their understanding. **It is critical that your students understand the fundamental organizational principles of the STEPS writing program before beginning a particular style of writing.**
10. Conference with students as needed.
11. Use mini-lessons, either with small groups or with the entire class, on a daily basis to teach and re-teach the necessary skills.

Recommended Mini-Lessons

- Transitions
- Using the STEPS checklist
- Topic Sentences
- Writing Mechanics (grammar, punctuation)
- Verb usage/tenses

CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT? (1)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

1. Which can we touch with our fingers?

GRASS BRAVERY

2. _____ is a **concrete** thing. Because it is concrete, we can experience it with our five senses. What are our five senses?



3. Because grass is **concrete**, we can **feel** it when we touch it with our _____.

4. Because grass is **concrete**, we can **see** it with our _____.

5. Because grass is **concrete**, when wind blows through it, we can **hear** it with our _____.

6. Because grass is **concrete**, after a lawn mower has cut it, we can **smell** the cut grass with our _____.

7. The grass is a **concrete** thing because we can experience it with our **senses**. Circle the **concrete** words:

Honor

Patriotism

Apple

Dog

Happiness

8. We can _____ an apple with our eyes. We can _____ a wet dog with our noses.

9. What concrete object is dribbled up and down a hard gym floor by players on two different teams?

Because it is a **concrete object**, we can **directly experience** a basketball with our **senses**.

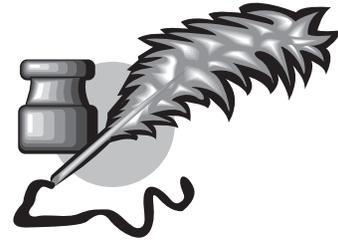


CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT? (2)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

10. Circle the **concrete** word :

Ruler Love Sports car
Patriotism Eyeball



11. Circle the word that is **not concrete**:

Bread Truth

12. We cannot taste, touch, or smell truth. Truth is not concrete. Truth is an **idea**. Circle the words that are **ideas**, not concrete things:

Finger Honor Pencil
Horse Patriotism

13. Patriotism is an **idea**. Ideas are important to us human beings! Why? Because we think about them and we live with them. What **concrete** thing hangs in most classrooms that represents the **idea** of patriotism and our country? (Hint: it is red, white, and blue!)

14. A flag is a **concrete** thing that suggests the _____ of patriotism.

15. Besides saying that patriotism and truth are **ideas** we also say they are **abstract**. Things that are **abstract** are **not concrete**. They cannot be directly experienced by our senses. For example, we cannot _____ patriotism.

16. Concrete words help create pictures in your readers' minds. Which of these sentences creates a better picture in your mind?

- a. Emily's cat meowed loudly, stretched his long, grey body, and jumped into her lap.
- b. Emily's cat has confidence and fills her with love and pride.

17. The first sentence has more **concrete** descriptions in it. It also uses vivid verbs. (That is another lesson!) Confidence, love, and pride are **abstract** and we cannot touch, hear, see, smell, or taste them. With sentence **a**, what can you "see" and "hear" in your mind?

CONCRETE OR ABSTRACT? (3)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

18. When we speak and write, we need **both concrete** and **abstract** words. **Concrete** words help to support our **abstract** descriptions or ideas. These two paragraphs are about the **idea of beauty**.

Paragraph A: The view from my window is beautiful. The trees are big. My memories of the neighbor's nice yard last fall make me smile.

Paragraph B: The view from my window is beautiful. The huge oak trees have bright, colorful leaves in the fall. My neighbors and I played in the piles of crunchy leaves after we raked them last year. Most days, the sky is as blue as my grandma's clear eyes.

19. Which of the paragraphs (**A** or **B**) has more concrete words? _____

Which of the paragraphs creates more pictures in your mind? _____

20. **Paragraph B creates more exact pictures in our minds.** The writer creates these pictures by using concrete words. The concrete words in Paragraph B prove the **idea** the writer feels. When she looks out the window, the view is

21. **Beautiful** is an **abstract** word. We cannot go to a store and buy beauty. However, we believe and “see” the beauty because the writer supported this **abstract** idea with **concrete** words.

22. When you write, is it ok to use **abstract** words? _____

Of course **abstract ideas** are important! But when we use them, we need to support them with **specific concrete details!**



SAMPLE ESSAY (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



The first paragraph is the musical prelude with the Preview Thesis. The thesis statement introduces the topic of the essay: the author's favorite places she has visited. In the essay, the author has to explain why Washington D.C. (BING), Italy (BANG), and the Columbia Gorge (BONGO) are her favorite places.



The second paragraph is the BING. The author supports BING with specific details (concrete statements). *This second sentence is the author's opinion, which directly supports the General Statement and makes the paragraph more personal!



The third paragraph is the BANG. The author re-states that Italy is another favorite place she has visited. The rest of the paragraph uses specific details and comments to tell why she loved Italy.

The fourth paragraph is the BONGO. The first sentence is followed by concrete details and comments describing the BONGO point.



The fifth paragraph is the conclusion—the musical finale! The musical finale represents the ending and a reminder of all the author's three points. The author includes the reader with the last sentence, a question.



Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4

Your five paragraph essays will be clear and easy for any audience to follow when you use Bing, Bang, and Bongo!

TREMENDOUS TRAVELS

Do you like to travel? I love traveling, and my favorite places I have visited are Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge.

Washington D.C. was my favorite place to visit. *I loved seeing the White House. When I walked into the Capitol building, I heard all of the senators debating loudly. The crisp January air turned my nose into an ice cube!

My second favorite place was Italy. I saw the amazing Sistine Chapel with the ceiling painted by Michelangelo. I ate a lot of delicious food like pasta and gelato (like ice cream, but better!). I loved the Forum, a place where Italians worked and lived 2000 years ago.

My third favorite place to visit was the Columbia Gorge. I loved hiking on the many green and peaceful trails. I visited many waterfalls including the spectacular Multnomah Falls. When it rained, I enjoyed reading a book by the warm fireplace.

For many reasons I loved Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge. What are your favorite places in the world?

- *The purpose of this essay is to inform the reader.*
- *The audience could be your teacher, your friends, other students your age, or anyone else!*

SAMPLE ESSAY (2)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Use the **TREMENDOUS TRAVELS** essay as a model. Identify the following three principles of organization:

1. Preview Thesis (“The Prelude”)
2. Bing (triangle), Bang (cymbals), and Bongo (drums)—General Statements to prove your thesis point. These must have concrete Specific Details!
3. Summary in the final paragraph (“The Finale”)

1. What is the Preview Thesis? (Remember: this is the preview for your readers. The thesis tells them what is coming up!) *This is The Musical Prelude!*

2. What are the Bing, Bang, and Bongo and their Supporting Details?



Bing? _____
Detail _____
Detail _____
Detail _____



Bang? _____
Detail _____
Detail _____
Detail _____



Bongo? _____
Detail _____
Detail _____
Detail _____



3. What is the Summary? *The Musical Finale!*



PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING (1)

PREWRITING

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Purpose: To inform. This narrative *essay* will inform the audience about my favorite animal, the horse. This could be both a written *essay* as well as a *speech* to present to my audience.

Audience: My classmates and my teacher.

Preview Paragraph —Musical Prelude



Ever since my first ride atop a horse at Aunt Cindy's house, I have thought horses were the greatest animals in the whole world. I love horses because they are lovable and sweet, they are fun to watch, and they teach me responsibility.

Adding the Details:

BING: Horses are loveable and sweet.



Detail #1: My horse, Romeo, will do anything for treats. Once I got him to bow!

Detail #2: When I walk down the barn aisle and he whinnies to me, it is better than getting an A+ on a test!

BANG: Horses are fun to watch.



Detail #1: I like watching horses buck, rear, and gallop around their pasture.

Detail #2: Horses can do many difficult things like jump over large fences and race around a racetrack.

BONGO: Horses teach me responsibility.



Detail #1: When my friends don't feel like going to soccer practice, they can call and say they won't be coming.

Detail #2: With my horse, I am responsible for another life so I cannot just call and say I can't feed him or clean his stall.

Summary:

In conclusion, the three reasons I love horses are that they are loveable and sweet, they are fun to watch, and they teach me responsibility. These are just a few examples, but I love everything about these amazing animals!

PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING (2)

DRAFTING



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Use the prewriting about the author's favorite animal to write a first draft. This will help you when you have to write a first draft from your own prewriting!

The Horse: My Favorite Animal



Ever since my first ride atop a horse at Aunt Cindy's house,

I love horses because they are lovable and sweet, they _____



First, I love horses because they are loveable and sweet. For example, my horse, Romeo, will do _____

_____. Once I got him to bow!

Also, when I walk _____



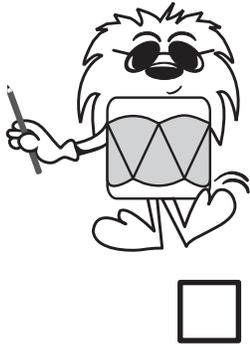
The second reason I love horses is because horses are fun to watch. I like watching horses _____

Horses can do many difficult things like jump over large fences



PRACTICE FROM PREWRITING (3) DRAFTING

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Finally, horses teach me responsibility. When my friends don't feel like going to soccer practice, _____

However, with my horse, I am _____



In conclusion, the three reasons I love horses are that _____

These are just a few examples, but I love everything about these amazing animals!

Written by: Kaitlin



TRANSITIONS



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“A *TRANSITION* is a word or phrase that is kind of a bridge to carry your reader from one idea to another. The following transition words and phrases help link the paragraphs and the ideas of your *STEPS* essay together. In the sample essays for each style, see how the author used these words and other phrases to keep the essay flowing nicely!”

Transition words

after
after that
afterward
also
another
at first
at last
at the same time
finally
first (second, third, etc.)
for example
for instance
for this reason
furthermore

however
in addition
in spite of
instead
in the first place
in the second, etc.
later
meanwhile
moreover
nevertheless
next
one
on the other hand
other
otherwise
similarly

soon
then
to begin with
when

Choose from these special transition words to begin your fifth and last paragraph.

as a result
consequently
in conclusion
in summary
finally
therefore

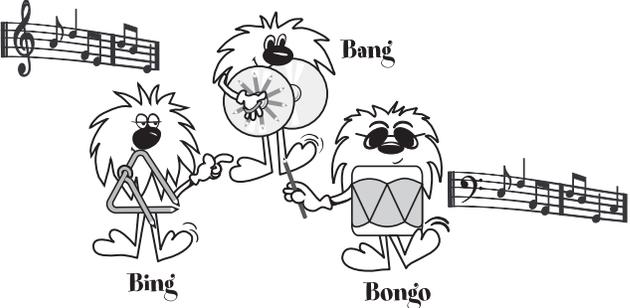




TEACHER EDITING GUIDE (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

This section on conventions has its origin in the California State Standards and is listed by grade level. The essay form section comes directly from the STEPS essay structure for a piece of basic expository writing. Make adaptations for essays of differing forms. Consider all the following when assigning a Rubric score, and attach this checklist (or your own variation) with the Rubric to provide detailed feedback for the student on the *why* behind the Rubric score.

ESSAY FORM	COMMENTS
Title <input type="checkbox"/> Attention getting	<hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph One—Preview/Prelude <input type="checkbox"/> Interest catcher <input type="checkbox"/> Preview Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Bing <input type="checkbox"/> Bang <input type="checkbox"/> Bongo	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Paragraph Two—BING <input type="checkbox"/> Transition word or phrase <input type="checkbox"/> General statement introducing Bing <input type="checkbox"/> Specific detail sentences	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Paragraph Three—BANG <input type="checkbox"/> Transition word or phrase <input type="checkbox"/> General statement introducing Bang <input type="checkbox"/> Specific detail sentences	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Paragraph Four—BONGO <input type="checkbox"/> Transition word or phrase <input type="checkbox"/> General statement introducing Bongo <input type="checkbox"/> Specific detail sentences	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Paragraph Five—Summary/Finale <input type="checkbox"/> Transition word or phrase <input type="checkbox"/> Summary Statement with BING, BANG, BONGO in correct order <input type="checkbox"/> Closing – question or statement calling for reader reaction	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
	



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Mechanics — Standards and Conventions

Standards

Grade 3

- 1.1 Create a single paragraph:
 - a. Develop a topic sentence
Include simple supporting facts and details

Grade 4

- 1.0 Write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea.
 - a. Shows knowledge of audience and purpose
- 1.1 Organizational structure
 - a. Point of view based on purpose, audience, length, and format requirements
- 1.2 Create multiple paragraph compositions
 - a. Provide Introductory paragraph
Establish and support central idea with topic sentence at or near beginning of first paragraph
Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations
Conclude with paragraph that summarizes the points
Use correct indentation
- 1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information
 - a. Chronological order
Cause and effect
Posing and answering question
Similarity and difference

Grade 5

Writing strategies – write clear, coherent and focused essays

Awareness of audience and purpose

Essays contain

1. Formal introductions
 2. Supporting evidence
 3. Conclusions
- 1.1 Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions
 - a. Establish and develop situation or plot
 - b. Describe the setting
Present an ending
 - 1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions
 - a. Establish a topic, important ideas, or events in sequence or chronological order
 - b. Provide details and transitional expressions
 - c. Offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes ideas and details



TEACHER EDITING GUIDE (3)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Conventions

Grade 3

- 1.1 Understand and use complete and correct declarative, interrogative, imperative, and exclamatory sentences
- 1.2 Identify subjects and verbs that are in agreement and identify and use pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles correctly
- 1.3 Identify and use past, present, and future verb tenses properly
- 1.4 Identify and use subjects and verbs correctly
- 1.5 Punctuate dates, city and state, and titles of books correctly
- 1.6 Use commas in dates, locations, and addresses and for items in a series
- 1.7 Capitalize geographical names, holidays, historical periods, and special events correctly
- 1.8 Spell correctly
 - a. One-syllable words that have blends
 - b. Contractions
 - Compounds
 - Orthographic patterns (i.e., *qu*, consonant doubling, changing from *y* to *ies* when forming the plural)
 - Common homophones

Grade 4

Use simple and compound sentences

Combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, and prepositional phrases

- 1.3 Identify and use regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions
- 1.4 Use parentheses, commas in direct quotations, and apostrophes in the possessive case of nouns and in contractions
- 1.5 Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to identify titles of documents
- 1.6 Capitalize names of magazines, newspapers, works of art, musical compositions, organizations, and the first word in quotations when appropriate
- 1.7 Spell correctly roots, inflections, suffixes and prefixes, and syllable constructions

Grade 5

Identify and correctly use

- a. Prepositional phrases
- b. Appositives
- c. Independent and dependent clauses
- d. Transitions and conjunctions to connect ideas
- e. Identify and correctly use
- f. Verbs that are often misused (e.g., *lie/lay*, *sit/set*)
- g. Modifiers
- h. Pronouns
- i. Use a colon and quotations marks correctly
- j. Use correct capitalization
- k. Spell roots, suffixes, prefixes, contractions, and syllable constructions correctly

SPEECH TIPS (1)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Preparing a speech is a lot like writing an essay!

First, determine a purpose for the speech. This is usually determined by the teacher. Is the speech intending to:

- **Demonstrate/explain** how to do something (use the organizational tips in the *Explanatory* Essay style!)
- **Inform** or educate the audience by giving information (try the *Narrative* or *Report of Information* Essays!)
- or
- **Persuade** the audience to a particular point of view (the *Persuasive* style is perfect for this!)

Second, narrow and select the topic. Great speeches - like essays - give specific information in an organized fashion.

Third, begin preparing using the **Fundamental Organizational Principles!** Remember:

- Begin organizing your speech with a Preview Thesis that includes Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
- All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have Specific Details (concrete words!) that support them. These help your audience to experience (see, hear, smell, taste, touch) what you are telling them!
- Conclude your speech the same way you began it — with a Summary that re-states your thesis and your Bing, Bang, and Bongo.

Whether writing an essay or a speech, start with **Prewriting!** Organizing your ideas into Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statements and the factual, supporting Specific Details makes your speech easier to remember. It is also easier for your listener to follow and understand.

After prewriting, create a fascinating **interest-catcher**. This opening line or two is even more important in a speech than in an essay. You want your audience to have a reason to listen to you from the very beginning!





SPEECH TIPS (2)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Revise your essay and add flair and pizzazz to the ideas and details. When you give a speech, part of your goal is to entertain your audience, even if the true purpose is to inform or persuade. Adding descriptions and vivid vocabulary helps the essay's entertainment!

“Sometimes you will give a speech after you’ve written your entire essay. Sometimes you might just use your prewriting and notes to deliver your speech!”

Use your prewriting (or your entire essay) to practice presenting your speech. Some things to remember as you prepare and present:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Speak loudly enough for people in the back to hear you.
- Look at your audience as often as possible.
- Do not “read” your speech; these are your ideas! Speak them with confidence! Check your notes only when necessary.
- Stand up tall and use good posture.



GENERIC PREWRITING ORGANIZER



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

PREVIEW THESIS

BING

• _____

• _____

BONGO

• _____

• _____

BANG

• _____

• _____

Definition

A narrative essay does the following:

- Describes an experience or situation (real or imagined) important to the author
- Provides vivid details and examples that appeal to the senses
- Is written in the first person (using “I,” writing from the author’s perspective)

Recommended Mini-Lessons

- Descriptive writing techniques

“Showing Writing” Mini-lesson Ideas

This technique for creative writing is one that students respond to with enthusiasm. The process asks students to “show” a picture using words rather than just “tell” about a situation. Student-authors rely on their five senses to give them direction for the word picture they are going to “show.”

A good starter for this process is to give the students the prompt “My room is so messy...” You can say the prompt or write it on the board. The first few times you give a prompt, you will want to have the students respond by asking “How messy is it?” Then the students should write a description of their messy room that describes how each of the five senses is impacted by the messiness.

For example:

As I entered the cluttered space I call my room, I felt the week-old potato chips as they ground into my stinky, sweaty socks. The schoolbooks in my arms quickly joined those on the bed and floor as I swooned when I caught whiff of the reeking orange turned moldy and fuzzy. I scrambled through the mess on my desk in search of my math book, but before I found it a dried out chocolate Easter egg surfaced. At least I had a snack to help me deal with the rest of the mess.

As you can tell, students can really get into this type of descriptive writing. Create an ongoing list where the students can add prompts for daily practice. Some sample ideas:

- *My parents are so strict...*
- *My brother’s football team is so amazing...*
- *Being an early colonist was so difficult...*
- *The invention of the light bulb changed our world in so many ways...*

Not all prompts will be workable with all of the senses. This allows a lesson about not overdoing the description.



Young children will need lots of time and practice before coming up with their own descriptive examples that directly support their general statements. This skill (descriptive writing, or “Showing Writing”) carries over to all writing. Use your language arts program as a resource for these important mini-lessons.



This paragraph is a result of a lot of “Showing Writing” practice, when students use a graphic organizer with all five senses and describe an isolated scene or event using all their senses. This is a nice follow-up to the Intro section’s Concrete vs. Abstract lesson. Dedicate brief time daily to describing a place or incident with vivid sensory details. This daily practice will teach and model good descriptive language, important now and in all writing!

NARRATIVE ESSAY INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Some narrative writing types that won't work as well in the style of STEPS include: Tall Tales, Short Stories, Fables, Fairy Tales. While students could definitely use the STEPS structure very successfully in writing one of these more creative essays, the beginning STEPS writers benefit from the more "factual" nature of the expository essay style. Ultimately, this structure provides a perfect frame for placing creative thoughts and language such as a story, fable, etc.



Many districts offer prompts for this basic style of writing.



In the pilot fifth grade class, the teacher gave students a question to answer: "Which group of colonies would you belong to and why?" Students had just finished studying the Southern, Middle, and New England colonies and the teacher used this STEPS essay as a final assessment! Yet another way to integrate STEPS writing into your curriculum, and provide assessment of content as well as writing skills...

Before You Begin

1. Determine which type of narrative essay your students will write. This is a broad category of writing! Before planning your narrative instructional unit, narrow the scope by selecting from one of the following examples, or use your own. Some specific types of Narratives which "work" with the FUNDAMENTAL STEPS principles include:
 - Autobiographical Incident
 - Biographical Sketch
 - Personal Narrative
 - Literature Analysis
2. Before introducing Narrative Writing Style, decide if your students will select their own topic to narrate, or if you will assign a class-wide thesis. Students could work individually or in groups of four to draft an essay. They could select a thesis from a menu (either published as part of an existing literature or other curriculum unit or developed as a whole class), or they could create their own thesis.

Honestly consider the following factors influencing this decision:

- the district requirements* (perhaps you have a district-wide narrative writing prompt, or your language arts program already gives you a specific topic linked to your literature)
- the students' experience and mastery of the three STEPS organizational principles*

3. How will this decision affect the lessons?

Assigning a class-wide thesis

Option One: On Days 2 and 3 of this section, students brainstorm together on the given thesis, developing a bank of Bing, Bang, and Bongo support/explanation for the thesis. Allow students to select their own (individually or in groups of four) Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statements from this class idea bank. This gives students some control over their essay. When writing a narrative essay, the descriptions and examples will be much more vivid and personal if the author has experience or personal interest in the topic!

NARRATIVE ESSAY INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Option Two: On Day 1 or 2, assign the thesis and the General Statements of support, the Bing, Bang, and Bongo. This option saves time and minimizes confusion for the students. As a class, or in student pairs or writing groups, compile a list of specific (concrete) details supporting each of the Bing, Bang, and Bongo points. Students select specific details of their choice (from the list compiled in class) or you assign the specific details.

Students select their own thesis/narrative topic

On Day 2, students brainstorm (in class, groups, pairs, or individually) topics for the narrative. Use one or two to model appropriate and inappropriate Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statements. Also model descriptive and relevant Specific Details that will help support the Bing, Bang, and Bongo.

With this option, your students may require more assistance and conferencing. Use this option if you have a small class size, plenty of adult help to assist writers, or very confident, capable students with a strong grasp of the writing style and requirements.



NARRATIVE ESSAY UNIT TIME CHART

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review writing process, purpose, and audience • Define narrative writing • Establish goals and outcomes for narrative style • Read student sample essay • Identify and review organizing principles <p>DELIGHTFULLY DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVE STUDENT SAMPLE CONVENTIONS RUBRIC NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC</p>	<p>Prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice using descriptive language • Brainstorm topics for narration • Organize General Statements and Specific Details <p>NARRATIVE PREWRITING</p>	<p>Prewriting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete unfinished prewriting • Review prewriting <p>NARRATIVE PREWRITING</p>
DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
<p>Drafting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a first draft narrative essay • Include interest-catching first sentence and engaging final sentence <p>WRITING FRAMES: NARRATIVE ESSAY NARRATIVE CHECKLIST</p>	<p>Drafting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the first draft of the Narrative Essay 	<p>Responding and Revising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check content and form of essay • Improve essay through addition of descriptive language, re-writing Specific Details, etc. • Cooperatively assist peers in revision process <p>NARRATIVE CHECKLIST VOCABULARY VARIETY RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY</p>
DAY 7	DAY 8	
<p>Proofreading and Editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and correct writing convention errors <p>PEER EDITING GUIDE</p>	<p>Publishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite narrative essay, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases • Add an appropriate and interesting title • Publish (or present) narrative in prescribed fashion 	

DAY ONE — INTRODUCTION

Objectives

- Review the writing process, purpose, and audience
- Define narrative writing
- Establish goals and outcomes for narrative style
- Read student sample essay
- Identify and review FUNDAMENTAL STEPS organizing principles

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- DELIGHTFULLY DESCRIPTIVE — *class set (Optional)*
- NARRATIVE STUDENT SAMPLE — *transparency*
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector—*one*

Procedure

1. Direct students to their Student Guides pages 2-3 to review the writing process. As you introduce this new style of writing, remind them that you will spend a good amount of time at the prewriting stage to ensure better quality writing.
2. Remind students that every essay has both a definite **purpose** and an **audience** (the reader). If this is your first essay style in FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, spend plenty of time explaining purpose and audience.
3. Introduce narrative writing with the Student Guide pages 6-7. Ask students if they know what the **purpose** of a narrative essay is. Tell (or remind) them that there are three basic purposes of any essay: **to entertain, to inform, and/or to persuade**. An essay can (and often does) have more than one purpose! The purpose of a narrative essay is (generally) to both inform and entertain.



Use mini-lessons each day to introduce examples of descriptive devices; distribute this to students as a resource for their writing folders.



Introduce the new lesson and the new writing style with flair! Select a piece of music to play that will represent the Narrative Style. Bring out the instruments. Invite a guest “Bandman Bob” to announce the new writing style.



Alter this purpose/definition of Narrative Essay as needed depending on which type of Narrative you use!

NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

4. Now students need to learn the elements that make a Narrative essay unique. Write the following on the board or transparency while directing students to write the definition in their Student Guides, page 6:

Narrative Essay Definition:

1. *Describes an experience or situation (real or imagined) important to me*
2. *Provides vivid details and descriptive examples that appeal to the senses*
3. *Is written in the first person (using "I," writing from my perspective)*

5. Discuss **audience**. Review and link the learning by discussing previous essays and their audience.
6. Propose a topic for a narrative essay: "My Three Favorite Desserts." Ask: "What is the purpose for this essay? Who might the audience be for an essay like this?"
Answers for purpose could be: inform, entertain, even to persuade! Answers for audience might include: my teacher, my classmates, a new pen pal, my friends, my parents.
7. Share that there are many different audiences possible for a narrative essay. The audience depends on the topic.
8. Students turn to page 7 in their Student Guides. Display the overhead of NARRATIVE STUDENT SAMPLE and read aloud the sample Narrative Essay from the Student Guide page 7.
9. Spend time reading the comments in the margins of the essay. Remind students that this is an authentic essay, written by a fifth grade student in Carlsbad, California using the STEPS writing program! Ask if your students have suggestions on how to make the essay even better.
10. Re-read the essay and direct students to underline the Preview Thesis: "I would want to live in the Middle Colonies over the Southern and New England colonies for many reasons... including its Bing calm and tolerant Quakers, Bang friendliness between the Quakers and the Indians, and Bongo excellent leader of Pennsylvania, William Penn using the green, blue, and red markers.



Use as many different examples as necessary.

NARRATIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

11. Distribute the CONVENTIONS RUBRIC (or ask students to take out) and refer students to the Essay Structure Rubric on pages 14-15 of the Student Guide. Discuss the general Rubrics to ensure student understanding of FUNDAMENTAL STEPS structure and conventions expectations.
12. Distribute the NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC and briefly review the requirements of this style. Note how the sample essay meets (and occasionally, falls short of) the expectations established in the rubric. Students keep the rubric in their writing folders to use throughout the writing process.
13. End the lesson with a preview of tomorrow's prewriting. Give your students the "heads up" — will they select their own topic for prewriting or will they write to a prescribed thesis? (See **Before You Begin** on page 2:2 for information on making this final determination.) Painting the picture of their ultimate goal helps many students focus and make meaning of the learning.



Kaylee's essay earned a 4 Rubric Score because of her application of the organizational principles and the creative descriptive language which added flair and made the essay 'exemplary' for a fifth grade writer!

NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY TWO — PREWRITING

Objectives

- Brainstorm topics for narration
- Organize General Statements and Specific Details

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- NARRATIVE PREWRITING — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector—*one*

Procedure

1. Review the **purpose** and definition of narrative writing (students can refer to their Student Guides pages 6-7).

(If you are assigning the students' thesis, skip to #2 on page 2:10.)

If students select their own thesis:

2. Distribute NARRATIVE PREWRITING and project the transparency on the overhead.
3. Give students time to brainstorm narrative preview thesis ideas. At this early prewriting stage, focus only on the **topics or events** about which they want to write. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo (which are part of the preview thesis) will come once an appropriate topic has been selected. For each example, clearly articulate the purpose (to inform and/or to entertain) and discuss the potential audience(s) for this topic or event.
4. It may be helpful to model some *inappropriate* topics as well as *appropriate* topics for a narrative essay. Spend a few minutes allowing students to develop their own lists of topics with partners. Then, a public share of ideas would really strengthen the entire learning community.



If you are assigning the thesis, use this outline form and fill in the necessary information before copying for your students.



Students may work in writing pairs or quads at this time, then come together as a class to share ideas.

NARRATIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

5. Given the definition of a Narrative, pose the following (or modified) questions to your students as they seek an individual thesis for their Narrative Essay.

Does my topic describe an experience or situation (real or imagined) important to me?

Can I provide vivid details and descriptive examples that appeal to the senses?

Can I write from my perspective (using “I”) on this topic?

Students need to answer “yes” to these questions (or those you identify as key) in order to write a successful Narrative Essay. _

6. Select one (or more, as needed) topics to move to the next step with your students: supporting the issue with three main point General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo).
7. Remind students that each Bing, Bang, and Bongo can be opinions, but must be supported by facts, experiences, or other vivid details. Each general statement (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) needs a minimum of two specific details. In order to earn a “4” (“Pulitzer Prize”) on the content/structure rubric, students also need to add commentary. This step is perhaps the most difficult and the most important for the success of the essay.
8. Refer back to the Student Guide example on page 7 to show how the author supported opinions with specific details.
9. Give students time to work (individually or in writing pairs) to develop their own personal Preview Thesis with Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Then encourage them to find appropriate, related Specific Details to support each Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Conduct as many writing conferences as you can during this phase, particularly with students struggling with the organizational principles or with descriptive specific details that support the general statements.
10. If time is short, direct students to file these NARRATIVE PREWRITING papers into their writing folders and finish in class tomorrow or assign as homework.



Teach, include and expect, commentary as appropriate for your class needs.



This is a nice time to have parent or other adult support to assist young writers in finding relevant, concrete details.



Remember: this prewriting phase is critical to later success. Spend more time than you think is necessary here!

NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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If you assign a class-wide thesis:

Option One — *Brainstorming together on a given thesis*

2. Distribute NARRATIVE PREWRITING (with the thesis you are assigning written into the form) and project the overhead transparency. Given the particular thesis, the students must now brainstorm appropriate, supportive Bing, Bang, and Bongo main point General Statements.
3. As a whole class, create a list of at least five to seven strong statements from which students can select their Bing, Bang, and Bongo. For each Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statement, generate options for Specific Details. Remind students that in a narrative essay, Specific Details must be facts or experiences that directly relate to the General Statement and tell the story dictated by the thesis. For each General Statement, generate at least one example of commentary, if this is appropriate for your class.
4. Direct students to complete NARRATIVE PREWRITING before leaving class. Give as much support as necessary.

Option Two — *Assigning the thesis and Bing, Bang, and Bongo*

2. Distribute NARRATIVE PREWRITING (with the thesis and Bing, Bang, and Bongo written into the form) and project the overhead transparency. Given the preview thesis, Bing, Bang, and Bongo, students must now brainstorm appropriate Specific Details to support each Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
3. Remind students that in a narrative essay, Specific Details must be either: facts or experiences that descriptively and vividly support the general statements as well as the thesis.
4. In pairs, groups, or with the entire class, record options for Specific Details and commentary for each Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
5. Direct students to complete NARRATIVE PREWRITING before leaving class. Give as much support as necessary.



It helps students to have adult support and guidance at this stage. If possible, arrange to have parents or a classroom aide in the room when prewriting.

DAY THREE — PREWRITING, Continued

Objectives

- Complete unfinished prewriting
- Review prewriting

Before students begin to draft their essays, it is essential that their prewriting has solid components, meeting the three fundamental organizational principles of STEPS writing. Today's main focus is to carefully check and complete prewriting work begun on Day Two.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- NARRATIVE PREWRITING — *transparency (from Day 2)*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*

Before You Begin

Write these elements on the board. In Step 5 of today's lesson, refer to these questions about students' prewriting and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.

- Does the prewriting have a clear preview thesis (“prelude”) with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
- Does the Bing have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts or experiences with vivid descriptive details?
“Underline the Bing in green.”
- Does the Bang have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts or experiences with vivid descriptive details?
“Underline the Bang in blue.”
- Does the Bongo have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts or experiences with vivid descriptive details? *“Underline the Bongo in red.”*
- Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”

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Prewriting Pairs

Younger students might struggle behaviorally and developmentally with this peer task. Depending on your class, you could have each student check his/her own work as you walk them through the next step(s) and then collect and check each of the students' prewriting. With this option, project the prewriting activity onto the overhead and use this to identify the required elements.

Procedure

1. Direct students to take out their writing folders and Student Guides.
2. Announce:

Today you must give Bandman Bob some serious assistance. We have quite a few different compositions going on in our classroom, and he knows that this beginning organizational time is the hardest of all! Before you write your first drafts, we need to be sure you've included our musical friends Bing, Bang, and Bongo in your essays! We also need to make sure that your preludes and finales clearly state your narrative topic and that they tell the Bing, Bang, and Bongo! Finally, we need to check that you included vivid, factual descriptions in your Specific Details for each Bing, Bang, and Bongo. If we spend time checking our work today as "Detail Detectives," the rest of the writing process will be harmonious!

3. Direct students to take out their NARRATIVE PREWRITING and their green, blue, and red coloring materials.
4. Divide students into Prewriting Pairs. Today each student will act as a "Detail Detective" for another student or students.
5. Explain that students need to check for specific elements in the prewriting from yesterday. Refer to these elements on the board, and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.
 - Does the prewriting have a clear preview thesis with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
"In the thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red."
 - Does the Bing have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts or experiences with vivid descriptive details?
"Underline the Bing in green."
 - Does the Bang have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts or experiences with vivid descriptive details?
"Underline the Bang in blue."

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- Does the Bongo have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts or experiences with vivid descriptive details? “*Underline the Bongo in red.*”
 - Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo? “*In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.*”
6. Monitor students as needed.
 7. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice. Collect the completed and checked NARRATIVE PREWRITING and check and provide feedback for student work before beginning the next phase: drafting.

NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FOUR — DRAFTING

Objectives

- Write a first draft narrative essay
- Include interest-catching first sentence and engaging final sentence

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- WRITING FRAMES: NARRATIVE ESSAY — *class set (Optional)*
- NARRATIVE CHECKLIST (from Student Guide, page 6) — *transparency (Optional)*
- Paper, lined — *class set*

Procedure

1. Return NARRATIVE PREWRITING to students with your feedback and comments. Ask students to take out their Student Guides and writing folders. Today they will need the Narrative Checklist on page 6 of the Student Guide, and they may also use the Rubric from Day One.
2. If needed, conduct a mini-lesson to re-teach any skills with which many students struggled. For example, if quite a few students still do not have two solid descriptive details for their Bing, Bang, and Bongo, use some authentic examples on the overhead to re-teach how to create and use appropriate Specific Details.
3. Distribute WRITING FRAMES: NARRATIVE ESSAY or lined paper.
4. Introduce (or review) two elements necessary for a good essay that are not in the students' prewriting: an interest-catching first sentence for the prelude (first) paragraph, and a concluding sentence for the finale (last) paragraph that includes the audience.
5. Brainstorm or provide a few examples of a solid interest-catcher. These do not have to be too sophisticated; however, they should relate to the topic of the essay. One simple way to encourage reluctant or “stuck” students is to work backwards from their preview thesis and ask the audience a question



Use these helpful frames for drafting if your students need the reminders for indentation, transitions, etc.

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

related to the thesis (see Narrative Essay Student Sample, Student Guide page 7). Another way to catch the interest of the reader is to make a statement related to the thesis. For example, in an essay about ocean animals, the author's thesis was: *"I find blue whales to be the most fascinating animals because they are the largest mammals on earth, they have an interesting diet, and their body shape and color intrigue me."* The statement this student author chose to introduce the topic was: *"The underwater kingdom is full of many colorful creatures."*

6. The summary paragraph's concluding sentence can then be a simple modification of the interest-catching first sentence. Using the example from #5, the author's final sentence was: *"I hope that in the future we can learn more about blue whales and other underwater creatures."*
7. When students understand how to write the first and last sentences of their essay, they are ready to draft. If needed, project a transparency of the NARRATIVE CHECKLIST and show how to use the checklist as they write. If students draft on lined paper, encourage (or tell!) them to write on every-other line. By double-spacing their rough drafts, they leave much more room for comments during the Revising and Editing phases. Enforce this policy, soon it will become habit.
8. Remind students to use the Narrative Checklist in their Student Guides, the Rubric, and their NARRATIVE PREWRITING when drafting. Remember: this is different from creative-writing drafting. This is a step-by-step essay program, and while normally the drafting phase is the time to "get your writing juices flowing," the objective here is to craft an organized five-paragraph essay. There is no hidden agenda! Remind students that their success is up to them. If they carefully follow the guidelines of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the other suggestions made by Bandman Bob, their essays will be wonderful!
9. Allow as much time as students need to write in class. Dedicate the language arts class lesson to drafting. Do not allow students to write at home; instruct them to place their drafts neatly into their writing folders and put them aside for the day. End the class with the flourish of your choice.



To maximize your conferencing time and energies with students in tomorrow's lesson, collect and read the incomplete student essays at this point. This will show you exactly which areas of need they have.

NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FIVE — DRAFTING, continued

Objective

- Complete the first draft of the Narrative Essay

Spend as much time conferring with individual students as possible during this lesson.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*

Procedure

1. Begin class with the flourish of your choice. Students may need some motivation to keep writing today.
2. Set clear expectations for behavior during this writing period. Most students need silent writing time. Enforce the no-talking rule to maximize time on task.
3. Give students approximately 45 minutes to finish their first drafts. If students finish early, they may re-read their essays and begin revising and looking for ways to improve the essay. Remind them to use the NARRATIVE CHECKLIST while writing. It is easier to include all the important information from the beginning than to go back and add it later.
4. Collect drafts if you plan to check them before students begin responding and revising.



One way students can improve their essays in this phase is to add descriptive devices. If you have taught mini-lessons on descriptive language, provide a few more examples using today's student work to encourage vivid detail.

NARRATIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY SIX — RESPONDING AND REVISING

Objectives

- Check content and form of essay
- Improve essay through addition of descriptive language, re-writing Specific Details, etc.
- Cooperatively assist peers in revision process

Materials

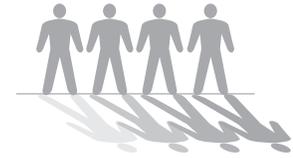
- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- NARRATIVE CHECKLIST — *class set*
- DELIGHTFULLY DESCRIPTIVE — *as reference*
- VOCABULARY VARIETY — *class set*
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY—
class set
- Paper clips — *class set*
- Timer — *one*
- Student Thesaurus — *one per Wordsmith*

Procedure

1. Begin the day with Bandman Bob's announcement sent via you, the teacher (alter as needed):

Well, ladies and gentlemen...these narrative essays of yours have a beautiful ring to them! Your teacher shared some of them with me, and I can tell you are working well with my friends Bing, Bang, and Bongo! Most of you realize that each of my friends needs support from you. By supporting Bing, Bang, and Bongo with details that have vivid descriptions, your audience can feel like they were there when your narrative's events took place! Today you're going to work together to strengthen your Bing, Bang, and Bongo statements even more!

Good luck, and good writing! Make the music of your words beautifully descriptive down to the tiniest detail!



Small Groups

Today's student roles:
*Wordsmith; Dean of Description;
Checklist Checker; The Audience*



Copy and distribute
VOCABULARY VARIETY
if students don't have it from a
previous writing style.



NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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Encourage students to add to this list as the year progresses. Supplement with your own language unit's activities or lessons to enhance vocabulary selection.



Most language arts programs offer excellent lessons in descriptive/figurative language, such as similes and metaphors, onomatopoeia and alliteration.



Even when a student has to be "The Audience" for him or herself, ask students to step outside of themselves and pretend they have never seen the narrative essay!

2. Distribute (or ask students to take out) **VOCABULARY VARIETY**. This reference tool helps add power to their essays by injecting variety into the ordinary words such as “said” and “good” students tend to overuse. In their groups today, one person will be the “Wordsmith.” This person will check the others’ essays for overuse of common words and make recommendations for improvement. Encourage students to consult the thesaurus as well.
3. Today’s Deans of Description will find one sentence in each group members’ essay that can be improved with a descriptive technique taught thus far. If you have been doing mini-lessons to enhance writing with vocabulary and description, a simple review at this time will suffice. Otherwise, conduct a mini-lesson with the entire class to clearly show the power of descriptive language.
4. In this Responding and Revising phase, the two remaining roles are: “Checklist Checker” and “The Audience.” The “Checklist Checker” does just that — he or she uses the **NARRATIVE CHECKLIST** to ensure the author included all the required elements in his or her draft. “The Audience” has a very important but less prescriptive role. These individuals within each group read the essay as if they were the intended audience. After reading the essay, “The Audience” must make helpful comments for the author.
5. Distribute **RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY** and review this with your class.
6. Divide students into their writing groups, or assign new groups of four students per group. Allow writing groups to sit together with their essays, writing folders, and any helpful writing resources (including those just distributed today). When groups must be larger than four, extra students assume the role of “The Audience.”
7. Assign roles for today, or allow students to select their own roles.

NARRATIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

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8. Once students understand their responsibilities for today's revising session, let them know that they have 10 minutes (modify as needed) to read each essay and perform their responsibilities. At the end of the 10 minutes, announce the transition time and have students rotate essays around the group.
9. This process takes from 40-60 minutes. Meet with students individually as necessary during this time. At the end of the time, ask students to return to their seats and spend a few minutes reviewing the comments made by their group-mates.
10. End today's lesson with the flourish of your choice. Announce that tomorrow, students will work with an editing partner (or group) on the writing conventions such as spelling and capitalization in their essay.



If students did not use every other line and/or used the WRITING FRAMES when drafting, instruct students to use the margins for their comments during the Responding and Revising phase.



You may very likely need to extend this lesson into the next day depending on your students' ability to stay on task.

NARRATIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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*Writing Groups, Pairs, or
Individuals*

DAY SEVEN — PROOFREADING AND EDITING

Objectives

- Find and correct writing convention errors

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PEER EDITING GUIDE — *class set*

Procedure

In advance of the lesson, determine if students will edit and proofread in pairs, small groups, or as individuals. After the previous day's intense Responding and Revising session, your students may need a mellow day of independent or partner editing and proofreading.

1. Today students read their essays yet again (they may groan at this, but reassure them that all good authors read, re-read, write, and re-write countless times). This time they read for the nitty-gritty mechanics. Introduce the lesson with a flourish of your choice.
2. Distribute the PEER EDITING GUIDE. If this is the first time your students have used this form, review it with them and be sure they understand the basic grammatical and mechanical elements to look for today. Refer students to Editing Marks on page 16 of their Student Guides. Students should use these marks when editing today.
3. Direct students to begin editing, either in groups, pairs, or individually. Remind students of the classroom resources they have (dictionaries, thesaurus, writing folders, word walls, etc). Resources are there for their use; they are writers' most valuable tools.
4. While students proofread and edit (quietly!), conduct writing conferences with individual students.
5. As students finish their editing guides, encourage them to begin the publishing phase if they are ready.
6. By the end of today, students should have plenty of suggestions that will improve their final drafts. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice.

DAY EIGHT — PUBLISHING

Objectives

- Rewrite narrative essays, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases
- Add an appropriate and interesting title
- Publish (or present) narrative in prescribed fashion

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- Paper, lined — *class set*
or
- Computer access — *up to one per student (Optional)*

Procedure

1. At last, the final day of the Narrative Style! Some students will be tempted to rush through the re-writing of their original draft. Bandman Bob has a few reminders for them. Read the following letter from Bandman Bob to your students, altering as needed:

Ladies and gentlemen...musicians and writers alike. Congratulations! Your hard work during the writing process has led us to final publishing day! You have made music with your words during the first four phases of the writing process, using the musical prelude (you called it a preview paragraph, I believe), Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the musical finale, or concluding paragraph. Each day your essays sound better and better. Today you bring it all together for the ultimate finale! If you haven't titled your essay yet, today is the day for this crowning moment, too!

Today you must very carefully use all the helpful and thoughtful comments your classmates and teacher have given you through the writing process. Do not ignore their wisdom! No one writes his or her best when writing alone.

In this Publishing phase of the Writing Process, you use your original draft plus the forms and comments from the Responding/Revising and the Proofreading/Editing phases. This is a bit like



NARRATIVE ESSAY

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putting a puzzle together. You need to look at the pieces and plan how to fit it all in. By the time you are done, though, the final draft will be so good, your essay will be ready for the world to read!

Your teacher may have a special way (she/he) wants you to publish the final draft of your essay. That's up to your teacher. When you're done, however, I hope you share your essay with the audience for whom you wrote it! Bing, Bang, and Bongo really do impress others who doubt that elementary students can write five-paragraph essays! Once again, good luck, and good writing!

2. If students have not yet titled their essays, encourage them to find a catchy, short title that captures the essence of the narrative in a few words.
3. Reiterate to students not to rush this publishing process. If students will be publishing on the computer, plan accordingly.
4. Continue conferencing with students in this phase of the writing process.
5. Students will finish at different times. On the board, write which of the following items you want the students to include with their essays. (We recommend that at least once in the STEPS process you require that students turn in all of these papers for your thorough review of their work.)
 - NARRATIVE PREWRITING
 - First draft of essay
 - RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY (and any comments attached)
 - PEER EDITING GUIDE (and any comments attached)
 - Final draft of essay
6. End this style with the flourish of your choice, and congratulate your students on work well-done! Give students ample opportunity to share their work with each other. Narratives in particular can be an excellent tool towards building classroom communities.



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

“All good writers use special tools and techniques to make their ideas more descriptive. Here are a few devices you can use in your Narrative Essays (and in all your essays!) to add flair and genius to your writing!”



Alliteration

Alliteration is a string of words that start with the same sound. One famous alliterative tongue-twister is: *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.*

Fundamental Steps uses alliteration often! *Detail Detective; Prewriting Pairs; Bandman Bob; Bing, Bang, and Bongo; Vocabulary Variety; Delightfully Descriptive!*

Simile

A simile (si - mi - lee) compares two or more different things that are alike in some ways. Similes use the words *like* or *as* to compare these things.

For example:

(Ordinary sentence) *Cafeteria food tastes bad.*

(With a simile) *Cafeteria food is like the scab that just fell off my wounded knee.*

Metaphor

Metaphors make pictures in the audience’s mind by comparing a person, place, thing, or idea with something very dramatic and vivid. Unlike similes, metaphors do not use “like” or “as” to compare. They simply say that something *is* or *was* another thing! By taking an ordinary sentence and adding a metaphor, the author creates more vivid images.

For example:

(Ordinary sentence) *A blue whale’s skin is a blue-gray color.*

(With a metaphor) *The skin of a blue whale is the sky on a partly cloudy day.*

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia (on-oh-mah-toh-pee-ah) is a device that uses words to represent the sounds they describe.

For example: **Clang!** *The trolley bell rang across the station.*

The boom of thunder startled the cat.

Bzzzz! *Watch out for that bumble bee!*

Personification

Using personification, authors give human characteristics to a non-human object or animal. For example:

Non-human object — **pencil**

Human characteristics that could describe a pencil — **dancing**, flying, stretching, napping

The yellow number 2 pencil danced (flew, stretched...) across Jenny’s paper as she wrote her essay.

Non-human object — **river**

Human characteristics that could describe a river — singing, gurgling, babbling, running

Watching the river run rapidly downstream, listening to the river sing loudly and babble happily, Lewis and Clark knew they were near the Pacific Ocean at last.



NARRATIVE STUDENT SAMPLE

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

FUN IN FLORIDA

Written by: Lisa

Where is the best place you have been on vacation? Florida was my favorite place to visit for many reasons, including the exciting theme parks, the beautiful beaches, and the warm, sunny weather.

The first reason Florida was my favorite place to visit was the exciting theme parks. Every park had so many different things to see and do. I loved going on rides and watching shows and parades. At one park, I saw all kinds of different animals that live in the ocean, such as dolphins, seals, and even whales.

The next reason Florida was my favorite place to visit was the beautiful beaches. I played in the waves and built a sand castle in the soft, white sand. In the evening, I watched the sunset over the water as the sky turned shades of pink and orange. I loved the combination of sun, surf, and sand.

The last reason Florida was my favorite place to visit was the warm, sunny weather. The temperature stayed in the high 80s, and I wore shorts and sandals everyday. When it rained, it only lasted a short while and then the sun came out again. I enjoyed doing outdoor activities in the nice weather, such as swimming and walking on the beach.

For many reasons, Florida was my favorite place to visit on vacation. Exciting theme parks, beautiful beaches, and warm, sunny weather make Florida a great place to go on vacation. Where would you most like to spend your next vacation?

This prelude paragraph is written in the first person. The author uses "I" and shares her thesis: "Florida was my favorite place to visit..." This narrative essay informs the reader why Florida is the author's favorite place to visit on vacation.



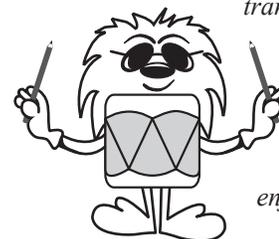
This prelude paragraph is written in the first person. The author uses "I" and shares her thesis: "Florida was my favorite place to visit..." This narrative essay informs the reader why Florida is the author's favorite place to visit on vacation.

This paragraph would have been stronger with specific details of the rides, shows, and parades the author enjoyed.



The author used alliteration to end the paragraph: "...sun, surf, and sand."

This BONGO paragraph is a solid "Expected" (3 on the rubric) paragraph. The author has a transition ("The last reason..."), the BONGO (warm, sunny weather), and specific details (wore shorts and sandals, enjoyed outdoor activities).



The finale paragraph restates the author's main points and engages the reader by ending with a question.

Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4

CONVENTIONS RUBRIC



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



4: Exemplary — “Editing Expert”

Exceeds the Standard

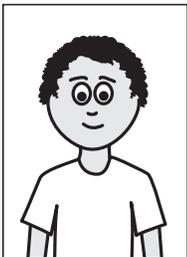
- Consistently uses proper paragraph form
- Effectively uses proper punctuation and capitalization
- Actively applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



3: Expected — “Detail Dynamo”

Meets the standard with quality

- Uses proper paragraph form
- Usually employs proper punctuation and capitalization
- Adequately applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



2: Nearly There — “Working Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

- Occasionally uses proper paragraph form
- Contains noticeable errors in punctuation and capitalization
- Inconsistently applies correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure



1: Incomplete — “Struggling Scribe”

Has not met the standard

- Uses improper paragraph form (does not indent; does not include five paragraphs)
- Misuses punctuation and capitalization
- Incorporates many errors of grammar, spelling, and/or sentence structure

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Conventions Rubric Score: _____



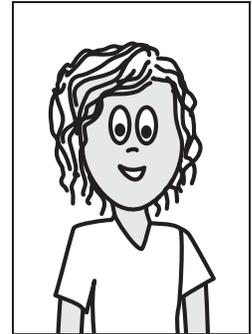
NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

4: Exemplary Essay—“Pulitzer Prize Winner”

Exceeds the standard

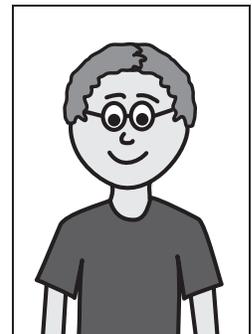
- Consistently and completely meets criteria for Narrative Essay
- Demonstrates true understanding and consistent application of all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes interesting, appropriate transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective, interesting first and last sentences
- Includes descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



3: Expected Essay—“Published Author”

Meets the standard with quality

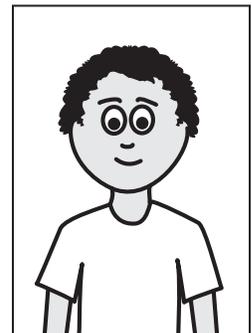
- Adequately meets criteria for Narrative Essay
- Applies all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective first and last sentences
- May include descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



2: Nearly There—“Apprentice Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

- Meets some criteria for Narrative Essay
- Attempts to (or inconsistently) include the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (may not demonstrate understanding of concrete nature of Specific Details)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses transitions to begin paragraphs
- Inconsistently or incorrectly attempts interesting first and last sentences



NARRATIVE ESSAY RUBRIC (2)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

1: Incomplete—"Fumbling Writer"

Has not met the standard

- Does not meet criteria for Narrative Essay
- Does not include some or all of the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses or does not use transitions to begin paragraphs
- Little or no attempt to write interesting first and last sentences



Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Narrative Essay Rubric Score: _____

Comments: _____



NARRATIVE PREWRITING

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Purpose: _____

Audience: _____

In a narrative essay, the Preview Thesis is the tale you will tell...the topic you will describe! What will your audience know at the end of your essay?

Preview Thesis:

Remember...each Bing, Bang, and Bongo must have support from specific details (facts, experiences, and descriptive language!). Add commentary after the details.



BING: _____





BANG: _____





BONGO: _____



NARRATIVE PREWRITING



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Now its time to add the details!

Main Points (General Statements)	Facts/Experience/Descriptive Details (Specific Details)
 Bing <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Bang <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Bongo <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Summary:

Remember to re-write the thesis, including the Bing, Bang, and Bongo in your summary.

In conclusion,





WRITING FRAMES: NARRATIVE ESSAY

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Interest Catcher: _____

Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BING: _____

Provide at least two descriptive specific details:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BANG: _____

Provide at least two descriptive specific details:

WRITING FRAMES: NARRATIVE ESSAY



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BONGO: _____

Provide at least two descriptive specific details:



Re-state Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:

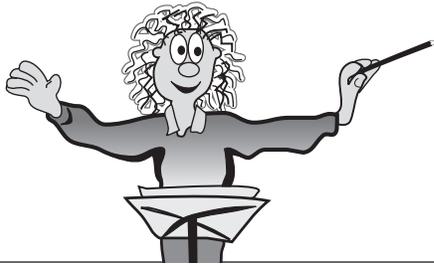
Concluding Statement: _____





NARRATIVE CHECKLIST

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Narrative Essay Checklist

Preview Paragraph

- Did the author start his/her paragraph with a sentence that catches the audience's attention?
- Did the author clearly write his/her preview thesis (the topic of the essay) and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo all in one sentence?



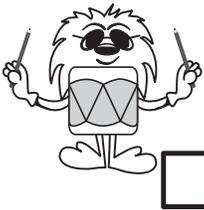
BING — General Statement #1

- Did the author re-state his/her Bing in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bing statement?
- Did the author include concrete words, facts, and examples?



BANG — General Statement #2

- Did the author re-state his/her Bang in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bang statement?
- Did the author include concrete words, facts, and examples?



BONGO — General Statement #3

- Did the author re-state his/her Bongo in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bongo statement?
- Did the author include concrete words, facts, and examples?



Concluding Paragraph

- Did the author re-state his/her thesis with his/her Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- Did the author write an interesting finale sentence?

VOCABULARY VARIETY



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“World-class writers...please keep this handy list of words. “Instead of Said” and “Better than Good” word lists keep you from re-using the same familiar words “said” and “good” too often in your writing. Add to this list as you go! I’m sure you know some better words than those I gave you!”

Instead of Said, try...

added	explained
admitted	gaspd
answered	greeted
argued	hinted
asked	informed
babbled	insisted
bawled	laughed
blurted	murmured
bragged	muttered
bugged	ordered
called	pleaded
cautioned	promised
chatted	questioned
cheered	quoted
chuckled	ranted
coaxed	reminded
confessed	replied
corrected	requested
cried	roared
croaked	smiled
crowed	stammered
dared	suggested
decided	wailed
declared	wept
demanded	whispered
denied	wondered
exclaimed	yelled

Better than Good, try...

acceptable
adequate
ample
excellent
exemplary
first-rate
genuine
great
pleasant
pleasing
positive
praise-worthy
proficient
satisfactory
solid
splendid
substantial
superior
tiptop
valuable
useful
worthy



RESPONDING AND REVISING: NARRATIVE ESSAY

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Name: _____



“Congratulations on completing your first draft! Now it’s time to fine-tune the quality! First, write your name at the top of this paper. Then attach this page to the first draft of your essay with a paper clip. This page will stay with your essay as it goes around to each of the other people in your writing group. Today you will work in one of the following Roles. Please take your job very seriously, as each of these roles is extremely important. Sign your name in the far right column when you have finished your job. Good luck!”

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities	Resources	Signature
Wordsmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Give at least three suggestions for more interesting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOCABULARY VARIETY • Thesaurus 	
Dean of Description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Select one sentence to improve using one of the suggested techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DELIGHTFULLY DESCRIPTIVE 	
Checklist Checker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Use the checklist to make sure every element is included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NARRATIVE CHECKLIST 	
The Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Write one compliment about the essay <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write one suggestion for the essay <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

PEER EDITING GUIDE



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“Use this Peer Editing Guide during Phase Four (Proofreading and Editing) of the Writing Process to help you and your classmates become world-class writers!”

ESSAY CONTENT

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Interest catcher
- ___ Preview Thesis
- ___ BING
- ___ BANG
- ___ BONGO



Paragraph Two

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BING
- ___ Specific detail sentences



Paragraph Three

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BANG
- ___ Specific detail sentences

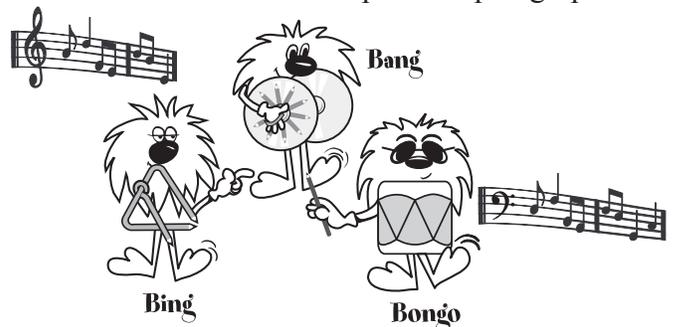


Paragraph Four

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BONGO
- ___ Specific detail sentences

Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Transition word
- ___ Summary Statement with BING, BANG, and BONGO in correct order
- ___ Closing – question or statement calling for reader reaction, similar to the interest catcher in preview paragraph



WRITING CONVENTIONS

Paragraph Form

- ___ Five paragraphs
- ___ Indented first line of each

Word Errors

- ___ Spelling
- ___ Capitalization (proper nouns, first word of sentences)
- ___ Word choice (is there a better word?)
- ___ Pronouns used correctly

Sentence Errors

- ___ Run on
- ___ Fragment
- ___ Hard to understand

Punctuation

- ___ Periods after sentences and in titles (i.e., Mr.)
- ___ Commas
- ___ Apostrophes (possessive nouns, contractions)
- ___ Quotation marks

EXPLANATORY ESSAY INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Definition

An explanatory essay explains a process clearly to an audience.

Explanatory essays do one or all of the following:

- Explain how to do something
- Explain how something works
- Explain how to get from one place to another; or anything else you explain in a particular order.

Recommended Mini-Lessons

- Sequencing
- Speech-giving (see **Introduction** page 1:43 for more information)
- How-To Speech

In this writing style, begin every school day with one or two examples of sequencing written on the board. With these mini-lessons, teach and reinforce transition words. How-to/explanatory essays lend themselves perfectly to logical, natural lessons in sequencing. Support these mini-lessons with student work as they move through the writing process.



Check your district or language-arts program guidelines for using explanatory essay style. The student sample was selected to show how an essay can explain an author's craft (using setting to indicate theme). A more typical explanatory essay is the "How-To" essay/speech. The directions within this style are skeletal and flexible enough to accommodate a variety of needs. Adjust the definition of explanatory essay as needed.



EXPLANATORY ESSAY UNIT TIME CHART

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review writing process, purpose, and audience Define Explanatory writing Establish goals and outcomes for Explanatory style Read student sample essay Identify and review organizing principles <p>EXPLANATORY STUDENT SAMPLE CONVENTIONS RUBRIC EXPLANATORY ESSAY RUBRIC</p>	<p>Prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brainstorm topics for explanation Organize General Statements and Specific Details <p>EXPLANATORY PREWRITING</p>	<p>Prewriting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete unfinished prewriting Review prewriting <p>EXPLANATORY PREWRITING</p>
DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
<p>Drafting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write a first draft Explanatory essay Include interest-catching first sentence and interesting final sentence <p>WRITING FRAMES: EXPLANATORY ESSAY EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST</p>	<p>Drafting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete the first draft of the Explanatory Essay 	<p>Responding and Revising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check content and form of essay Improve essay through addition of descriptive language, re-writing Specific Details, adding sequencing words, etc. Cooperatively assist peers in revision process <p>EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST VOCABULARY VARIETY RESPONDING AND REVISING: EXPLANATORY ESSAY</p>
DAY 7	DAY 8	
<p>Proofreading and Editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find and correct writing convention errors <p>PEER EDITING GUIDE</p>	<p>Publishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rewrite Explanatory essays, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases Add an appropriate and interesting title 	

DAY ONE — INTRODUCTION

Objectives

- Review the writing process, purpose, and audience
- Define Explanatory writing
- Establish goals and outcomes for Explanatory style
- Read student sample essay
- Identify and review FUNDAMENTAL STEPS organizing principles

Materials

- Student Guides — class set
- Writing folders — *class set*
- EXPLANATORY STUDENT SAMPLE — *transparency*
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- EXPLANATORY ESSAY RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

1. Direct students to their Student Guides pages 2-3 to review the writing process. As you introduce this new style of writing, remind them that you will spend a good amount of time at the prewriting stage to ensure better quality writing.
2. Remind students that every essay has both a definite **purpose** and an **audience** (the reader). If this is your first essay style in FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, spend plenty of time explaining purpose and audience.
3. Introduce Explanatory writing with the Student Guide pages 8-9. Ask students if they know what the **purpose** of a Explanatory essay is. The three basic purposes of writing are to: entertain, inform, and/or persuade. Direct students to write the purpose in their Student Guides, page 8 (*to inform and/or to entertain*). Ask students if they know what the **definition** of a Explanatory essay is. After an appropriate brainstorming time, write the following on the board or transparency while directing students to write the definition in their Student Guides, page 8:
Explanatory Essay Definition:
 1. Explain how to do something
 2. Explain how something works
 3. Explain how to get from one place to another; or anything else you explain in a particular order.



Introduce the new lesson and the new writing style with flair! Select a piece of music to play that will represent the Explanatory Style. Bring out the instruments. Invite a guest “Bandman Bob” to announce the new writing style.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Use as many examples as necessary to illustrate sample topics/audiences.



Clearly establish for your students the criteria you expect their Explanatory Essays to meet. Add these to the Rubric, or post them in a prominent place in the classroom.

Enhance the lesson's end with your flourish of choice: music, Bandman Bob, etc.

4. Discuss **audience**. Review and link the learning by discussing previous essays and their audience.
5. Propose a topic for a Explanatory essay: “How to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.”
Ask: “Who might the audience be for an essay like this?”
Answers might include: My younger brother; a friend from another country (where they don’t eat peanut butter!); my uncle.
6. Share that there are many different audiences possible for a Explanatory essay. The audience depends on the topic.
7. Students turn to page 9 in their Student Guides. Display the overhead of EXPLANATORY STUDENT SAMPLE and read aloud the sample Explanatory Essay.
8. Spend time reading the comments in the margins of the essay. Tell students that this is an authentic essay, written by a sixth grade student in San Diego, California using the STEPS writing program! Ask if your students have suggestions how to make the essay even better.
9. Re-read the essay and direct students to underline the Preview Thesis: *In The Golden Goblet, Eloise Jarvis McGraw shows the theme through the setting of Ancient Egypt by introducing three different places: ...including its Bing (the city of Thebes), Bang (the tombs), and Bongo (the palace) using the green, blue, and red markers.*
10. Distribute the CONVENTIONS RUBRIC (or ask students to take out) and refer students to the Essay Structure Rubric on pages 14-15 of the Student Guide. Discuss the general Rubrics to ensure student understanding of FUNDAMENTAL STEPS structure and conventions expectations.
11. Distribute the EXPLANATORY ESSAY RUBRIC and briefly review the requirements of this style. Note how the sample essay meets (and occasionally, falls short of) the expectations established in the Rubric. Students keep the Rubric in their writing folders to use throughout the writing process.
12. End the lesson with a preview of tomorrow’s prewriting. Painting the picture of their ultimate goal helps many students focus and make meaning of the learning.

DAY TWO — PREWRITING

Objectives

- Brainstorm topics for explanation
- Organize General Statements and Specific Details

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- EXPLANATORY PREWRITING — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (green, blue, red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

1. Review the **purpose** of Explanatory writing (students can refer to their Student Guide pages 8-9).
2. Distribute EXPLANATORY PREWRITING and project the transparency on the overhead.
3. Give students time to brainstorm processes they can and want to explain. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo are the three major steps in a how-to, or the three major points of explanation in (for example) an orderly historical or literature-based explanation. Students will develop these after they select an appropriate topic. For each example, clearly articulate the purpose (to inform and/or to entertain—but mostly, to explain!) and discuss the potential audience(s) for this topic of explanation.
4. It may be helpful to model some *inappropriate* topics as well as *appropriate* topics for a Explanatory essay. A student may be very interested in telling the class how to knit a sweater, but this has many steps that are difficult to explain using words. Spend a few minutes allowing students to develop their own lists of topics with partners. Then, a public share of ideas would really strengthen the entire learning community
5. Select one (or more, as needed) topics to move to the next step with your students: adding the three main point General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo). These need to be topics which are truly explanatory in nature!



The purpose depends on how you use the Explanatory style in your class.



Students may work in writing pairs or quads at this time, then come together as a class to share ideas.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



This is a nice time to have parent or other adult support to assist young writers in finding relevant, concrete details.



Remember: this prewriting phase is critical to later success. Spend more time than you think is necessary here!

6. Remind students that each Bing, Bang, and Bongo can be opinions, but must be supported by facts, experiences, or further steps in the process. Each general statement (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) needs a minimum of two specific details. **Vivid, concrete examples are critical to clearly explain any process.** This step is perhaps the most difficult and the most important for the success of the essay!
7. Refer back to the Student Guide example on page 9 to show how that author supported his opinions with specific details.
8. Give students time to work (individually or in writing pairs) to develop their own personal Preview Thesis with Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Encourage them to then find appropriate, related Specific Details to support each Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Conduct as many writing conferences as you can during this phase, particularly with students struggling with the organizational principles or with discriminating between fact and opinion.
9. If time is short, direct students to file these EXPLANATORY PREWRITING papers into their writing folders and finish in class tomorrow or assign as homework.

DAY THREE — PREWRITING, continued

Objectives

- Complete unfinished prewriting
- Review prewriting

Before students begin to draft their essays, it is essential that their prewriting has solid components, meeting the three fundamental organizational principles of STEPS writing. Today's main focus is to carefully check and complete prewriting work begun on Day Two.

Materials

- Student Guides — class set
- Writing folders — class set
- EXPLANATORY PREWRITING (from Day Two) — transparency
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — enough for students to share

Before You Begin

Write these elements on the board. In Step 5 of today's lesson, refer to these questions about students' prewriting and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.

- Does the prewriting have a clear preview thesis (“prelude”) with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
- Does the Bing have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or further steps in the process I’m explaining? *“Underline the Bing in green.”*
- Does the Bang have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or further steps in the process I’m explaining? *“Underline the Bang in blue.”*
- Does the Bongo have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or further steps in the process I’m explaining? *“Underline the Bongo in red.”*
- Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Procedure

1. Direct students to take out their writing folders and Student Guides.
2. Announce:

Today you must give Bandman Bob some serious assistance. We have quite a few different processes we are explaining in our classroom, and he knows that this beginning organizational time is the hardest of all! Before you write your first drafts, we need to be sure you've included our musical friends Bing, Bang, and Bongo in your essays! We also need to make sure that your preludes and finales clearly say what your essay explains, and that they tell the Bing, Bang, and Bongo! Finally, we need to check that you included facts, experience, or further steps in the process in your Specific Details for each Bing, Bang, and Bongo. If we spend time checking our work today as "Detail Detectives," we will hear the melody of our writing throughout the rest of the writing process!

3. Direct students to take out their EXPLANATORY PREWRITING and their green, blue, and red pencils.
4. If students will work in pairs/groups, divide students now. In Prewriting Pairs/Writing Groups each student will act as a "Detail Detective" for another student or students.
5. Either as a whole class or in pairs/groups, explain that students need to check for specific elements in the prewriting from yesterday (either their own or their peer's prewriting). Refer to these elements on the board, and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.
 - Does the prewriting have a clear preview thesis ("prelude") with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
"In the thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red."
 - Does the Bing have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or further steps in the process I'm explaining? *"Underline the Bing in green."*



Depending on your class, each student can check his/her own work as you walk them through the next step(s). You can then collect and check each of the students' prewriting. With this option, project the Explanatory Prewriting activity onto the overhead and use this to identify the required elements.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

- Does the Bang have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or further steps in the process I'm explaining? *“Underline the Bang in blue.”*
 - Does the Bongo have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or further steps in the process I'm explaining? *“Underline the Bongo in red.”*
 - Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
6. Monitor students as needed.
 7. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice. Collect the completed and checked EXPLANATORY PREWRITING and check and provide feedback for student work before beginning the next phase: drafting.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FOUR — DRAFTING

Objectives

- Write a first draft Explanatory essay
- Include interest-catching first sentence and interesting final sentence

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- WRITING FRAMES: EXPLANATORY ESSAY — *class set (Optional)*
- EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST — *transparency (Optional)*
- Paper, lined — *class set*

Procedure

1. Return EXPLANATORY PREWRITING to students with your feedback and comments. Ask students to take out their Student Guides and writing folders. Today they will need the Explanatory Checklist on page 8 of the Student Guide, and they may also use the Rubric from Day One.
2. If needed, conduct a mini-lesson to re-teach any skills with which many students struggled. For example, if quite a few students still do not have two solid facts, experiences, or further steps for their Bing, Bang, and Bongo, use some authentic examples on the overhead to re-teach how to create and use appropriate Specific Details.
3. Distribute WRITING FRAMES: EXPLANATORY ESSAY or lined paper.
4. Introduce (or review) two elements necessary for a good essay that are not in the students' prewriting: an interest-catching first sentence for the prelude/preview (first) paragraph, and a concluding sentence for the finale (last) paragraph that involves the audience.
5. Brainstorm or provide a few examples of a solid interest catcher. These do not have to be too sophisticated; however, they should relate to the topic of the essay. One simple way to encourage reluctant or "stuck" students is to work backwards from their preview thesis and ask the audience a question to heighten their interest in the topic. For example, if the topic is "Earthquakes" then a simple, appropriate interest catcher would be "What on earth causes our earth to quake, shake, rattle and roll?"



Use these helpful frames for drafting if your students need the reminders for indentation, transitions, etc.



In this explanatory essay, the author would explain the three major processes behind an earthquake.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

6. The summary paragraph's concluding sentence can then be a simple modification of the interest-catching first sentence. Using the example from #5, a final sentence might be: *"Amazing forces unseen by humans cause earthquakes."*
7. When students understand how to write the first and last sentences of their essay, they are ready to draft. If needed, project a transparency of the EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST and show how to use the checklist as they write. If students draft on lined paper, encourage (or tell) them to write on every-other line. By double-spacing their rough drafts, they leave much more room for comments during the Revising and Editing phases. Enforce this policy! Soon it will become habit.
8. Remind students to use the Explanatory Checklist in their Student Guides, the Rubric, and their EXPLANATORY PREWRITING when drafting. Remember: this is different from creative-writing drafting. This is a step-by-step essay program, and while normally the drafting phase is the time to "get your writing juices flowing," the objective here is to craft an organized five-paragraph essay. There is no hidden agenda! Remind students that their success is up to them. If they carefully follow the guidelines of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the other suggestions made by Bandman Bob, their essays will be wonderful!
9. Allow as much time as students need to write in class. Dedicate the language class lesson to drafting. Do not allow students to write at home; instruct them to place their drafts neatly into their writing folders and put them aside for the day. End the class with the flourish of your choice!



To maximize your conferencing time and energies with students in tomorrow's lesson, collect and read the incomplete student essays at this point. This will show you exactly which areas of need they have.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FIVE — DRAFTING, continued

Objective

- Complete the first draft of the Explanatory Essay

Spend as much time conferring with individual students as possible during this lesson.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders (including the drafts begun yesterday) — *class set*

Procedure

1. Begin class with the flourish of your choice. Students may need some motivation to keep writing today.
2. Set clear expectations for behavior during this writing period. Most students need silent writing time. Enforce the no-talking rule to maximize time on task.
3. Give students approximately 45 minutes to finish their first drafts. If students finish early, they may re-read their essays and begin revising and looking for ways to improve the essay.
4. Collect drafts if you plan to check them before students begin responding and revising.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY SIX — RESPONDING AND REVISING

Objectives

- Check content and form of essay
- Improve essay through addition of descriptive language, re-writing Specific Details, adding sequencing words, etc.
- Cooperatively assist peers in revision process

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST — *class set*
- VOCABULARY VARIETY — *class set*
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: EXPLANATORY ESSAY — *class set*
- Paper clips — *class set*
- Timer — *one*

Procedure

1. Begin the day with Bandman Bob’s announcement sent via you, the teacher: (alter as needed):

Well, ladies and gentlemen...you certainly have been working hard on these Explanatory essays! Your Explanatory essays are pretty clear, but I know that with a little more work you can be certain to explain your topic to any audience you wish. Today after learning a bit about how to improve your essays, you’re going to work together to make your paragraphs more powerful!

Good luck, and good writing!

2. Distribute (or ask students to take out) VOCABULARY VARIETY. This reference tool helps add power to their essays by injecting variety into the ordinary words such as “said” and “good” students tend to overuse. In their groups today, one person will be the “Wordsmith.” This person will check the others’ essays for overuse of common words and make recommendations for improvement.



Small Groups

*Today’s student roles: Wordsmith;
Checklist Checker; The Audience*



Copy and distribute this if students don’t have it from a previous writing style.



Encourage students to add to this list as the year progresses.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Unlike the other styles, the Explanatory style has only three roles at this phase. Extra students in a group are “The Audience,” or assign a special “Explanatory Expert” job for sequencing skills. When students are “The Audience” for themselves, ask students to pretend they do not know the steps or the process presented in the Explanatory essay!



If students did not use every other line and/or used the WRITING FRAMES when drafting, instruct students to use the margins for their comments during the Responding and Revising phase.



You may very likely need to extend this lesson into the next day depending on your students’ ability to stay on task.

3. Remind students (or teach them, if you have not done so already) about how the use of vivid sensory details helps further support their arguments. Both the “Wordsmiths” and “The Audience” for today help their classmates use more descriptive language.
4. In this Responding and Revising phase, the two remaining roles are: “Checklist Checker” and “The Audience.” The “Checklist Checker” does just that — he or she uses the EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST to ensure the author included all the required elements in his or her draft. “The Audience” has a very important but less prescriptive role. These individuals within each group read the essay as if they were the intended audience. After reading the essay, “The Audience” must make helpful comments for the author.
5. Distribute RESPONDING AND REVISING: EXPLANATORY ESSAY and review this with your class.
6. Divide students into their writing groups, or assign new groups of three to four students per group. Allow writing groups to sit together with their essays, writing folders, and any helpful writing resources (including those just distributed today). When groups must be larger than three, extra students assume the role of “The Audience.”
7. Assign roles for today, or allow students to select their own roles.
8. Once students understand their responsibilities for today’s revising session, let them know that they have 10 minutes (modify as needed) to read each essay and perform their responsibilities. At the end of the 10 minutes, announce the transition time and have students rotate essays around the group.
9. This process takes from 30-50 minutes. Meet with students individually as necessary during this time. At the end of the time, ask students to return to their seats and spend a few minutes reviewing the comments made by their group-mates.
10. End today’s lesson with the flourish of your choice. Announce that tomorrow, students will work with an editing partner (or group) on the writing conventions such as spelling and capitalization in their essay.

DAY SEVEN — PROOFREADING AND EDITING

Objectives

- Find and correct writing convention errors

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PEER EDITING GUIDE — *class set*

Procedure

In advance of the lesson, determine if students will edit and proofread in pairs, small groups, or as individuals. After the previous day's intense Responding and Revising session, your students may need a mellow day of independent or partner editing and proofreading.

1. Today students read their essays yet again (they may groan at this, but reassure them that all good authors read, re-read, write, and re-write countless times!). This time they read for the nitty-gritty mechanics. Introduce the lesson with a flourish of your choice.
2. Distribute the PEER EDITING GUIDE. If this is the first time your students have used this form, review it with them and be sure they understand the basic grammatical and mechanical elements to look for today. Refer students to Editing Marks on page 16 of their Student Guides. Students should use these marks when editing today.
3. Direct students to begin editing, either in groups, pairs, or individually. Remind students of the classroom resources they have (dictionaries, thesaurus, their writing folders, word walls, etc). Resources are there for their use; they are writers' most valuable tools!
4. While students proofread and edit (quietly), conduct writing conferences with individual students.
5. As students finish their editing guides, encourage them to begin the publishing phase if they are ready.
6. By the end of today, students should have plenty of suggestions that will improve their final drafts. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice.



*Writing Groups, Pairs, or
Individuals*

EXPLANATORY ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY EIGHT — PUBLISHING

Objectives

- Rewrite Explanatory essays, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases
- Add an appropriate and interesting title

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- Paper, lined — *class set*
- or
- Computer access — *up to one per student (Optional)*

Procedure

1. At last, the final day of the Explanatory Style! Some students will be tempted to rush through the re-writing of their original draft. Bandman Bob has a few reminders for them. Read the following letter from Bandman Bob to your students, altering as needed:



Ladies and gentlemen...musicians and writers alike. Congratulations! Your hard work during the writing process has led us to this point...performance day! You have finished the first four phases of the writing process, using the musical prelude, Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the musical finale and making improvements to them every day. You have spent very valuable time and effort. Today you bring it all together for the grandest moment of the writing process!

Today you must very carefully use all the helpful and thoughtful comments your classmates and teacher have given you through the writing process. Do not ignore their wisdom! No one writes his or her best when writing alone.

In this Publishing phase of the Writing Process, you use your original draft plus the forms and comments from the Responding/Revising and the Proofreading/Editing phases. This is a bit like putting a puzzle together. You need to look at the pieces and plan how to fit it all in.

EXPLANATORY ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Your teacher may have a special way (she/he) wants you to publish the final draft of your essay. That's up to your teacher. When you're done, however, I hope you share your essay with the audience for whom you wrote it! Wouldn't that be such a rewarding experience — to see if you really can explain your thesis to your intended audience? Once again, good luck, and good writing!

2. If students have not yet titled their essays, encourage them to find a catchy, short title that captures the essence of the explanatory essay in a few words.
3. Reiterate to students not to rush this process. If students will be publishing on the computer, plan accordingly.
4. Continue conferencing with students in this phase of the writing process.
5. Students will finish at different times. On the board, write which of the following items you want the students to include with their essays. (We recommend that at least once in the STEPS process you require that students turn in all of these papers for your thorough review of their work.)
 - EXPLANATORY PREWRITING
 - First draft of essay
 - RESPONDING AND REVISING: EXPLANATORY ESSAY (and any comments attached)
 - PEER EDITING GUIDE (and any comments attached)
 - Final draft of essay



EXPLANATORY STUDENT SAMPLE

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

EXAMINING EGYPT

Written by: Cody

There are many ways authors develop the themes in their books. In The Golden Goblet, Eloise Jarvis McGraw shows the theme through the setting of Ancient Egypt by introducing three different places: the city of Thebes, the tombs, and the palace.

First of all, the story begins in the city of Thebes, also known as the city of the dead. This indicates objects made here must have had something to do with the deceased. Also, this shows that Thebes must have been a very important part of Ancient Egypt.

Next, the author takes the story to the tombs. The tombs were filled with jewels, gold, and carefully carved statues. This setting allows you to see the dead were greatly appreciated, since people had more elaborate homes after they die. This also shows you people may have yearned to die.

Lastly, the setting moved to the palace. The palace was home to the pharaoh, Queen, and other important people. This assured you that everyday laborers didn't usually see the inside of the palace. Furthermore, the palace must have been a very special place.

In summary, Eloise Jarvis McGraw describes Ancient Egypt using three different places: the capital of Ancient Egypt, the homes of the dead, and the homes of the Pharaoh and the Queen. When examined with the plot, the theme emerges: good conquers evil.

The purpose of this essay is to inform. The student/author is explaining how the author of The Golden Goblet uses three different settings of the novel to develop the theme of the book. An explanatory essay doesn't always have to be a "How-To" essay!

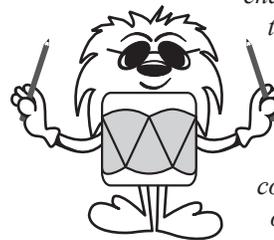


Great transition! The author gives good information about Thebes with specific details and good word variety (dead; deceased).

Again, the author uses great concrete details to show the audience the tombs. The last sentence is commentary, an idea the author has: "people may have yearned to die."



In this BONGO paragraph, the author changed the tense to past tense. It is important to use one verb tense (past, present, or future) in an essay. The final sentence is commentary—the author's opinion—but how is it related to the theme?



In the finale, the author uses different terms to describe the BING, BANG, and BONGO. The last sentence tells the theme of the book that the setting helped explain. This essay would have been better if the author had explained how the setting indicated "good conquered evil." This theme comes as a bit of a surprise at the very end! Structurally, this essay is Exemplary, but in content, it needed more of a link with the theme.

Structure and Content Rubric Score: 3

CONVENTIONS RUBRIC



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



4: Exemplary — “Editing Expert”

Exceeds the Standard

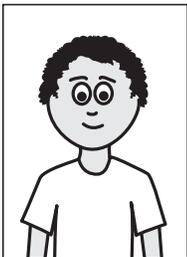
- Consistently uses proper paragraph form
- Effectively uses proper punctuation and capitalization
- Actively applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



3: Expected — “Detail Dynamo”

Meets the standard with quality

- Uses proper paragraph form
- Usually employs proper punctuation and capitalization
- Adequately applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



2: Nearly There — “Working Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

- Occasionally uses proper paragraph form
- Contains noticeable errors in punctuation and capitalization
- Inconsistently applies correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure



1: Incomplete — “Struggling Scribe”

Has not met the standard

- Uses improper paragraph form (does not indent; does not include five paragraphs)
- Misuses punctuation and capitalization
- Incorporates many errors of grammar, spelling, and/or sentence structure

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Conventions Rubric Score: _____



EXPLANATORY ESSAY RUBRIC (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

4: Exemplary Essay—“Pulitzer Prize Winner”

Exceeds the standard

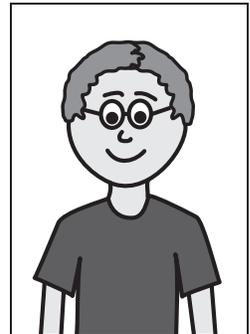
- Completely, and with great detail, meets the criteria of an Explanatory Essay
- Demonstrates true understanding and consistent application of all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes interesting, appropriate transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective, interesting first and last sentences
- Includes descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



3: Expected Essay—“Published Author”

Meets the standard with quality

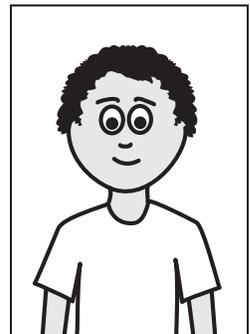
- Adequately includes all the criteria of an Explanatory Essay
- Applies all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective first and last sentences
- May include descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



2: Nearly There—“Apprentice Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

- Includes some of the criteria of an Explanatory Essay
- Attempts to (or inconsistently) include the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (may not demonstrate understanding of concrete nature of Specific Details)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses transitions to begin paragraphs
- Inconsistently or incorrectly attempts interesting first and last sentences



EXPLANATORY ESSAY RUBRIC (2)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

1: Incomplete—“Fumbling Writer”

Has not met the standard

- Does not include the criteria of an Explanatory Essay
- Does not include some or all of the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses or does not use transitions to begin paragraphs
- Little or no attempt to write interesting first and last sentences



Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Explanatory Essay Rubric Score: _____

Comments: _____



EXPLANATORY PREWRITING

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Purpose: _____

Audience: _____

In an Explanatory essay, the Preview Thesis is the process you will explain!

Preview Thesis:

Three General Statements (steps or part of the process I am explaining) *Remember...each Bing, Bang, and Bongo must have support from specific details (facts, experiences, and/or further steps to support). Add commentary after the details.*



BING: _____





BANG: _____





BONGO: _____



EXPLANATORY PREWRITING



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Now its time to add the details!

Main Points (General Statements)	Facts/Experience/Further Steps to Support (Specific Details)
 Bing <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Bang <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Bongo <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Summary:

Remember to re-write the thesis, including the Bing, Bang, and Bongo in your summary.

In conclusion,





WRITING FRAMES: EXPLANATORY ESSAY (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Interest Catcher: _____

Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BING: _____

Provide at least two specific details — Facts/Experience/Further Steps to Support:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BANG: _____

Provide at least two specific details — Facts/Experience/Further Steps to Support:

WRITING FRAMES: EXPLANATORY ESSAY (2)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BONGO: _____

Provide at least two specific details — Facts/Experience/Further Steps to Support:



Re-state Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:

Concluding Statement: _____





EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Explanatory Essay Checklist

Preview Paragraph

- Did the author start his/her paragraph with a sentence that catches the audience's attention?
- Did the author clearly write his/her preview thesis (the topic of the essay) and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo all in one sentence?



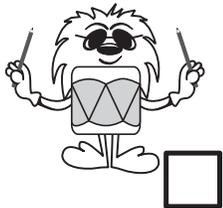
BING — General Statement #1

- Did the author re-state his/her Bing in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bing statement?
- Did the author include concrete words, facts, and examples?



BANG — General Statement #2

- Did the author re-state his/her Bang in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bang statement?
- Did the author include concrete words, facts, and examples?



BONGO — General Statement #3

- Did the author re-state his/her Bongo in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bongo statement?
- Did the author include concrete words, facts, and examples?



Concluding Paragraph

- Did the author re-state his/her thesis with his/her Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- Did the author write an interesting finale sentence?

VOCABULARY VARIETY



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“World-class writers...please keep this handy list of words. “Instead of Said” and “Better than Good” word lists keep you from re-using the same familiar words “said” and “good” too often in your writing. Add to this list as you go! I’m sure you know some better words than those I gave you!”

Instead of Said, try...

added	explained
admitted	gasp
answered	greeted
argued	hinted
asked	informed
babbled	insisted
bawled	laughed
blurted	murmured
bragged	muttered
bugged	ordered
called	pleaded
cautioned	promised
chatted	questioned
cheered	quoted
chuckled	ranted
coaxed	reminded
confessed	replied
corrected	requested
cried	roared
croaked	smiled
crowed	stammered
dared	suggested
decided	wailed
declared	wept
demanded	whispered
denied	wondered
exclaimed	yelled

Better than Good, try...

acceptable
adequate
ample
excellent
exemplary
first-rate
genuine
great
pleasant
pleasing
positive
praise-worthy
proficient
satisfactory
solid
splendid
substantial
superior
tiptop
valuable
useful
worthy



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Name: _____

“Congratulations on completing your first draft! Now it’s time to fine-tune the quality! First, write your name at the top of this paper. Then attach this page to the first draft of your essay with a paper clip. This page will stay with your essay as it goes around to each of the other people in your writing group. Today you will work in one of the following roles. Please take your job very seriously, as each of these roles is extremely important. Sign your name in the far right column when you have finished your job. Good luck!”



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities	Resources	Signature
Wordsmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Give at least three suggestions for more interesting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOCABULARY • VARIETY • Thesaurus 	
Checklist Checker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Use the checklist to make sure every element is included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXPLANATORY CHECKLIST 	
The Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Write one compliment about the essay <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write one suggestion for the essay 		

PEER EDITING GUIDE



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“Use this Peer Editing Guide during Phase Four (Proofreading and Editing) of the Writing Process to help you and your classmates become world-class writers!”

ESSAY CONTENT

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Interest catcher
- ___ Preview Thesis
 - ___ BING
 - ___ BANG
 - ___ BONGO



Paragraph Two

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BING
- ___ Specific detail sentences



Paragraph Three

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BANG
- ___ Specific detail sentences

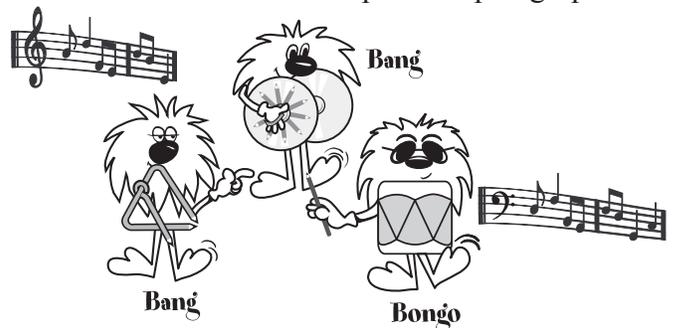


Paragraph Four

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BONGO
- ___ Specific detail sentences

Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Transition word
- ___ Summary Statement with BING, BANG, and BONGO in correct order
- ___ Closing – question or statement calling for reader reaction, similar to the interest catcher in preview paragraph



WRITING CONVENTIONS

Paragraph Form

- ___ Five paragraphs
- ___ Indented first line of each

Word Errors

- ___ Spelling
- ___ Capitalization (proper nouns, first word of sentences)
- ___ Word choice (is there a better word?)
- ___ Pronouns used correctly

Sentence Errors

- ___ Run on
- ___ Fragment
- ___ Hard to understand

Punctuation

- ___ Periods after sentences and in titles (i.e., Mr.)
- ___ Commas
- ___ Apostrophes (possessive nouns, contractions)
- ___ Quotation marks

PERSUASIVE ESSAY INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Definition

A persuasive essay does the following:

- Clearly states the writer’s opinion on an issue
- Presents support through fact, experience, or observations of the writer, and/or statements from experts
- Invites the reader to share the writer’s opinion

Recommended Mini-Lessons

- Fact vs. Opinion
- Persuasive techniques

Before You Begin

Before introducing Persuasive Writing Style, decide if your students will select their own topic to persuade, or if you will assign a class-wide thesis. Students could work individually or in groups of four to draft an essay. They could select a thesis from a menu (either published as part of the unit or developed as a whole class), or they could create their own thesis.

Honestly consider the following factors influencing this decision:

- *the age and maturity of your students* (persuading someone to a specific opinion is a sophisticated task, developmentally)
- *the district requirements* (perhaps you have a district-wide persuasive writing prompt, or your language arts program already gives you a specific topic linked to your literature)
- *the students’ experience and mastery of the three STEPS organizational principles*

In this writing style, begin every school day with one or two examples of propaganda (see PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA) written on the board. Note: the definition of “propaganda” is ideas, facts, or information spread to further a particular cause. Support these mini-lessons with student samples and with the class, keep a running record of the student statements and categorize them accordingly.



Young children will need lots of time and practice before coming up with their own appropriate propaganda that directly supports their general statements.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



In the pilot fourth grade class, the teacher gave students a choice. Some students used the provided Preview Thesis, Bing, Bang, Bongo, and all the Specific Details that the teacher provided. Others wrote their own thesis, Bing, Bang, and Bongo and Specific Details and had the teacher check them before writing. Surprisingly, MANY students chose their own persuasive topic, rather than taking the “easy way” and writing from a very prescribed (success guaranteed) plan! Some of these students did an excellent job finding appropriate facts to support their General Statements. Others did not. Those who struggled needed a lot of one-on-one time to reinforce the skill of supporting opinions/statements with facts, experience or experts’ opinions that are RELEVANT to the thesis!

How will this decision affect the lessons?

Assigning a class-wide thesis

Option One: On Days 2 and 3 of this section, students brainstorm together on the given thesis, developing a bank of Bing, Bang, and Bongo support for the thesis. Allow students to select their own (individually or in groups of four) Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statements from this class word bank. This gives students some control over their essay. When writing a persuasive essay, it helps convince the audience if the author sincerely believes in his or her arguments!

Option Two: On Day 1 or 2, assign the thesis and the General Statements of support, the Bing, Bang, and Bongo. This option saves time and minimizes confusion for the students. As a class, or in student pairs or writing groups, compile a list of specific (concrete) details supporting each of the Bing, Bang, and Bongo points. Students select specific details of their choice (from the list compiled in class) or you assign the specific details.

Students select their own point of persuasion

On Day 2, students brainstorm (in class, groups, pairs, or individually) topics about which they feel passionate. Use one or two to model appropriate and inappropriate Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statements. Also model persuasive Specific Details that will help the writer’s argument.

With this option, your students may require more assistance and conferencing. Use this option if you have a small class size, plenty of adult help to assist writers, or very confident, capable students with a strong grasp of the writing style and requirements.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY UNIT TIME CHART

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review writing process, purpose, audience • Define persuasive writing • Establish goals and outcomes • Read student sample essay • Identify and review organizing principles <p>PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA PERSUASIVE STUDENT SAMPLE CONVENTIONS RUBRIC PERSUASIVE ESSAY RUBRIC</p>	<p>Prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminate between fact and opinion • Brainstorm topics for persuasion • Organize General Statements and Specific Details <p>PERSUASIVE PREWRITING</p>	<p>Prewriting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete unfinished prewriting • Review prewriting <p>PERSUASIVE PREWRITING</p>
DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
<p>Drafting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a first draft persuasive essay • Include interest-catching first sentence and “invitation” final sentence <p>WRITING FRAMES: PERSUASIVE ESSAY PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST</p>	<p>Drafting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete first draft of Persuasive Essay 	<p>Responding and Revising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check content and form of essay • Improve essay through addition of persuasive language, re-writing Specific Details, etc. • Cooperatively assist peers in revision process <p>PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST VOCABULARY VARIETY PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA RESPONDING AND REVISING: PERSUASIVE ESSAY</p>
DAY 7	DAY 8	
<p>Proofreading and Editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and correct writing convention errors <p>PEER EDITING GUIDE</p>	<p>Publishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite persuasive essays, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases • Persuade the appropriate audience(s) of the value of the authors’ arguments! • Add an appropriate and interesting title 	

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY ONE — INTRODUCTION

Objectives

- Review the writing process, purpose, and audience
- Define persuasive writing
- Establish goals and outcomes for persuasive style
- Read student sample essay
- Identify and review FUNDAMENTAL STEPS organizing principles

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA — *class set (Optional)*
- PERSUASIVE STUDENT SAMPLE — *transparency*
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- PERSUASIVE ESSAY RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

1. Direct students to their Student Guides pages 2-3 to review the writing process. As you introduce this new style of writing, remind them that you will spend a good amount of time at the prewriting stage to ensure better quality writing.
2. Remind students that every essay has both a definite **purpose** and an **audience** (the reader). If this is your first essay style in FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, spend plenty of time explaining purpose and audience.
3. Introduce persuasive writing with the Student Guide pages 10-11. Ask students if they know what the **purpose** of a persuasive essay is. The three basic purposes of writing are to: entertain, inform, and/or persuade. Direct students to write the purpose in their Student Guides, page 10 (*to persuade*). Ask students if they know what the **definition** of a persuasive essay is. After an appropriate brainstorming time, write the following on the board or transparency while directing students to write the definition in their Student Guides, page 10:



Use mini-lessons each day to introduce examples of persuasive techniques; distribute this to students as a resource for their writing folders.



Introduce the new lesson and the new writing style with flair! Select a piece of music to play that will represent the Persuasive Style. Bring out the instruments. Invite a guest “Bandman Bob” to announce the new writing style.

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Persuasive Essay Definition:

1. *Clearly states my opinion on an issue that is important to me.*
2. *Presents support through fact, experience, or observations. I can also use statements from experts.*
3. *Invites the reader to share my opinion.*
4. Discuss **audience**. Review and link the learning by discussing previous essays and their audience.
5. Propose a topic for a persuasive essay: “Schools should provide delicious, healthy lunches for students.” Ask: “Who might the audience be for an essay like this?” Answers might include: the school principal, the school board, the PTA, the food companies who provide lunch to schools, the local newspaper.
6. Share that there are many different audiences possible for a persuasive essay. The audience depends on the topic.
7. Students turn to page 11 in their Student Guides. Display the overhead of PERSUASIVE STUDENT SAMPLE and read aloud the sample Persuasive Essay.
8. Spend time reading the comments in the margins of the essay. Remind students that this is an authentic essay, written by a fourth grade student in Carlsbad, California using the STEPS writing program! Ask if your students have suggestions how to make the essay even better.
9. Re-read the essay and direct students to underline the Preview Thesis: *“I think school should have longer recess because recess is not long enough for...including its Bing conversations, Bang play time, and Bongo snack using the green, blue, and red markers.*
10. Distribute the CONVENTIONS RUBRIC (or ask students to take out) and refer students to the Essay Structure Rubric on pages 14-15 of the Student Guide. Discuss the general Rubrics to ensure student understanding of FUNDAMENTAL STEPS structure and conventions expectations.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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Clearly establish for your students the criteria you expect their Persuasive Essays to meet. Add these to the Rubric, or post them in a prominent place in the classroom.



Enhance the lesson's end with your flourish of choice: music, Bandman Bob, etc.

11. Distribute the PERSUASIVE ESSAY RUBRIC and briefly review the requirements of this style. Note how the sample essay meets (and occasionally, falls short of) the expectations established in the Rubrics. Students keep the Rubrics in their writing folders to use throughout the writing process.
12. End the lesson with a preview of tomorrow's prewriting. Give your students the "heads up" — will they select their own topic for prewriting or will they write to a prescribed thesis? (See **Before You Begin** on page 4:11 for information on making this final determination.) Painting the picture of their ultimate goal helps many students focus and make meaning of the learning.

DAY TWO — PREWRITING

Objectives

- Discriminate between *fact* and *opinion*
- Brainstorm topics for persuasion
- Organize General Statements and Specific Details

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- PERSUASIVE PREWRITING — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (green, blue, red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

1. On the overhead or the board, write the following:
“Baseball is the best sport in the world.”
“Two baseball teams play in the World Series.”
2. Ask your students:
“What do you notice about these two statements?” Answers may include: “They are both about baseball.” “They are both about sports.”
3. Ask if students know the difference between *fact* and *opinion*. Write the words *fact* and *opinion* on the board above or beside the sentences from #1. “Baseball is the best sport in the world” is an *opinion*. “Two baseball teams play in the World Series” is a *fact*.
4. Review the **purpose** of persuasive writing (students can refer to their Student Guide pages 10-11). Ask: “Why might it be important to know the difference between fact and opinion when writing a persuasive essay?”
5. Lead students in a discussion of how facts are necessary to support opinions in a persuasive essay. If we are to persuade our audience that a particular opinion makes sense, we need to use logical, factual information to support our arguments.
6. Link the terms *fact* and *opinion* with *concrete* and *abstract*. Just like the first Fundamental Organizational Principle states, abstract general statements must be supported by concrete details. In persuasive writing, opinions must be supported by facts.



If you are assigning the thesis, use this outline form and fill in the necessary information before copying for your students.



If necessary, supplement with your own fact/opinion activity to ensure understanding of this critical skill.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

7. If students will select their own topic of persuasion for this writing style, distribute PERSUASIVE PREWRITING and project the transparency on the overhead. If you are assigning their thesis, distribute the already-prepared PERSUASIVE PREWRITING.

(If you assign the students' thesis, skip to #8 on page 4:9.)

If students select their own point of persuasion:

8. Introduce the necessary elements in a persuasive essay from the PERSUASIVE PREWRITING form. Write the following questions on the board as you discuss them with your students.
 - Is this an important, interesting issue? Yes/No
 - Do I feel strongly about this issue? Yes/No
 - Can I support this issue with facts, experiences, and/or experts' opinions? Yes/No
9. Give students time to brainstorm issues or opinions about which they can answer **yes** to all these questions. At this early prewriting stage, focus only on the opinions and issues about which they want to write. The Bing, Bang, and Bongo (which are part of the preview thesis!) will come once an appropriate topic has been selected. For each example, clearly articulate the purpose (to persuade the audience to this opinion, or to take certain action related to this opinion) and discuss the potential audience(s) for this argument.
10. It may be helpful to model some *inappropriate* topics as well as *appropriate* topics for a persuasive essay. A student may sincerely believe an issue is important and interesting, but when pushed with the last question — can he or she support this opinion with facts, experiences, or expert wisdom, the answer may well be “no.” For example, “I believe pets should be allowed to come to school with their owners” is a powerful, emotional opinion...but obviously lacking in factual, logical support. Spend a few minutes allowing students to develop their own lists of topics with partners. Then, a public share of ideas would really strengthen the entire learning community
11. Select one (or more, as needed) topics to move to the next step with your students: supporting the issue with three main point General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo).



Students may work in writing pairs or quads at this time, then come together as a class to share ideas.



This example, from the 4th grade piloting class, had plenty of passion and enthusiasm from the author! However, she quickly recognized the difficult road she would face in trying to persuade an audience of the school administration that this was truly a good thing for the students and the school as well as for the pet!

PERSUASIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

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12. Remind students that each Bing, Bang, and Bongo can be opinions, but must be supported by facts, experiences, or experts' opinions. Each general statement (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) needs a minimum of two specific details. This step is perhaps the most difficult and the most important for the success of the essay!
13. Refer back to the Student Guide example on page 11 to show how that author supported his opinions with specific details.
14. Give students time to work (individually or in writing pairs) to develop their own personal Preview Thesis with Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Encourage them to then find appropriate, related Specific Details to support each Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Conduct as many writing conferences as you can during this phase, particularly with students struggling with the organizational principles or with discriminating between fact and opinion.
15. If time is short, direct students to file these PERSUASIVE PREWRITING papers into their writing folders and finish in class tomorrow or assign as homework.

If you assign a class-wide thesis:

Option One — *Brainstorming together on a given thesis*

8. Distribute PERSUASIVE PREWRITING and project the overhead transparency. Given the particular thesis, the students must now brainstorm appropriate, supportive Bing, Bang, and Bongo main point General Statements.
9. As a whole class, create a list of three to five strong statements from which students can select their Bing, Bang, and Bongo. For each Bing, Bang, and Bongo General Statement, generate options for Specific Details. Remind students that in a persuasive essay, Specific Details must be either: facts, experiences, or experts' opinions.
10. Direct students to complete PERSUASIVE PREWRITING before leaving class. Give as much support as necessary.



This is a nice time to have parent or other adult support to assist young writers in finding relevant, concrete details.



Remember: this prewriting phase is critical to later success. Spend more time than you think is necessary here!



It helps students to have adult support and guidance at this stage. If possible, arrange to have parents or a classroom aide in the room when prewriting.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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Option Two — Assigning the thesis and Bing, Bang, and Bongo

8. Distribute PERSUASIVE PREWRITING and project the overhead transparency. Given the preview thesis, Bing, Bang, and Bongo, students must now brainstorm appropriate Specific Details to support each Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
9. Remind students that in a persuasive essay, Specific Details must be either: facts, experiences, or experts' opinions.
10. In pairs, groups, or with the entire class, record options for Specific Details for each Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
11. Direct students to complete PERSUASIVE PREWRITING before leaving class. Give as much support as necessary.

DAY THREE — PREWRITING, continued

Objectives

- Complete unfinished prewriting
- Review prewriting

Before students begin to draft their essays, it is essential that their prewriting has solid components, meeting the three fundamental organizational principles of STEPS writing. Today's main focus is to carefully check and complete prewriting work begun on Day Two.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PERSUASIVE PREWRITING (from Day Two) — *transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*

Before You Begin

Write these elements on the board. In Step 5 of today's lesson, refer to these questions about students' prewriting and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.

- Does the prewriting have a clear preview thesis (“prelude”) with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
- Does the Bing have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or expert opinions?
“Underline the Bing in green.”
- Does the Bang have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or expert opinions?
“Underline the Bang in blue.”
- Does the Bongo have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or expert opinions?
“Underline the Bongo in red.”
- Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Procedure

1. Direct students to take out their writing folders and Student Guides.
2. Announce:

Today you must give Bandman Bob some serious assistance. We have quite a few different compositions going on in our classroom, and he knows that this beginning organizational time is the hardest of all! Before you write your first drafts, we need to be sure you've included our musical friends Bing, Bang, and Bongo in your essays! We also need to make sure that your preludes and finales clearly state your opinion about your topic of persuasion, and that they tell the Bing, Bang, and Bongo! Finally, we need to check that you included facts, experience, or experts' opinions in your Specific Details for each Bing, Bang, and Bongo. If we spend time checking our work today as "Detail Detectives," the rest of the writing process will be harmonious!

3. Direct students to take out their PERSUASIVE PREWRITING and their green, blue, and red pencils.
4. If you will be using pairs/groups during this prewriting phase, divide students now. In Prewriting Pairs/Writing Groups each student will act as a "Detail Detective" for another student or students.
5. Either as a whole class or in pairs/groups, explain that students need to check for specific elements in the prewriting from yesterday (either their own or their peer's prewriting). Refer to these elements on the board, and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.
 - Does the prewriting have a clear preview thesis with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
"In the thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red."



Younger students struggle behaviorally and developmentally with this peer task. Depending on your class, you could have each student check his/her own work as you walk them through the next step(s) and then collect and check each of the students' prewriting. With this option, project the Prewriting activity onto the overhead and use this to identify the required elements.

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- Does the Bing have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or expert opinions?
“Underline the Bing in green.”
 - Does the Bang have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or expert opinions?
“Underline the Bang in blue.”
 - Does the Bongo have two details to support it? Are these details specific facts, experiences, or expert opinions?
“Underline the Bongo in red.”
 - Does the summary include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
6. Monitor students as needed.
7. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice. Collect the completed and checked PERSUASIVE PREWRITING and check and provide feedback for student work before beginning the next phase: drafting.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FOUR — DRAFTING

Objectives

- Write a first draft persuasive essay
- Include interest-catching first sentence and “invitation” final sentence

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- WRITING FRAMES: PERSUASIVE ESSAY — *class set (Optional)*
- PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST (from Student Guide, page 10) — *transparency (Optional)*
- Paper, lined — *class set*

Procedure

1. Return PERSUASIVE PREWRITING to students with your feedback and comments. Ask students to take out their Student Guides and writing folders. Today they will need the Persuasive Checklist on page 10 of the Student Guide, and they may also use the Rubric from Day One.
2. If needed, conduct a mini-lesson to re-teach any skills with which many students struggled. For example, if quite a few students still do not have two solid facts, experiences, or experts’ opinions for their Bing, Bang, and Bongo, use some authentic examples on the overhead to re-teach how to create and use appropriate Specific Details.
3. Distribute WRITING FRAMES: PERSUASIVE ESSAY or lined paper.
4. Introduce (or review) two elements necessary for a good essay that are not in the students’ prewriting: an interest-catching first sentence for the prelude/preview(first) paragraph, and a concluding sentence for the finale (last) paragraph that invites the reader to share the author’s opinion.
5. Brainstorm or provide a few examples of a solid interest catcher. These do not have to be too sophisticated; however, they should relate to the topic of the essay. One simple way to encourage reluctant or “stuck” students is to work backwards from their preview thesis and ask the audience if they share the author’s



Use these helpful frames for drafting if your students need the reminders for indentation, transitions, etc.



A question is always a good (and easy) first interest-catching sentence for students.

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opinion. For example, if the preview thesis is *“Swimming is the best sport because it doesn’t cause many injuries, everyone can find a swimming style they like, and swimming makes you feel fresh and strong.”* then a simple, appropriate interest catcher would be *“I think swimming is a great sport, don’t you?”*

6. The summary paragraph’s concluding sentence can then be a simple modification of the interest-catching first sentence. Using the example from #5, a final sentence might be: *“Don’t you think swimming is a great sport?”*
7. When students understand how to write the first and last sentences of their essay, they are ready to draft! If needed, project a transparency of the PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST and show how to use the checklist as they write. If students draft on lined paper, encourage (or tell!) them to write on every-other line. By double-spacing their rough drafts, they leave much more room for comments during the Revising and Editing phases. Enforce this policy! Soon it will become habit.
8. Remind students to use the Persuasive Checklist in their Student Guides, the Rubric, and their PERSUASIVE PREWRITING when drafting. Remember: this is different from creative-writing drafting. This is a step-by-step essay program, and while normally the drafting phase is the time to “get your writing juices flowing,” the objective here is to craft an organized five-paragraph essay. There is no hidden agenda! Remind students that their success is up to them. If they carefully follow the guidelines of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the other suggestions made by Bandman Bob, their essays will be wonderful!
9. Allow as much time as students need to write in class. Dedicate the language class lesson to drafting. Do not allow students to write at home; instruct them to place their drafts neatly into their writing folders and put them aside for the day. End the class with the flourish of your choice!



In the pilot class for this style, one student asked as they began their drafting: “How many paragraphs does this have to be?” (sigh) We all have those students and those moments. Don’t despair! Remember that this is a fairly sophisticated skill for such young students; however, they are capable. Maintain your high expectations, be patient, and keep re-teaching the fundamental principles of organization. They will get it! One wise teacher commented that “we should really be called ‘re-teach’ because we do more re-teaching than introducing new material!” All in a day’s work.

To maximize your conferencing time and energies with students in tomorrow’s lesson, collect and read the incomplete student essays at this point. This will show you exactly which areas of need they have.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

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DAY FIVE — DRAFTING

Objective

- Complete the first draft of the Persuasive Essay

Spend as much time conferring with individual students as possible during this lesson.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders (including the drafts begun yesterday) — *class set*

Procedure

1. Begin class with the flourish of your choice. Students may need some motivation to keep writing today.
2. Set clear expectations for behavior during this writing period. Most students need silent writing time. Enforce the no-talking rule to maximize time on task.
3. Give students approximately 45 minutes to finish their first drafts. If students finish early, they may re-read their essays and begin revising and looking for ways to improve the essay's persuasion and flow.
4. Collect drafts if you plan to check them before students begin responding and revising.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY SIX — RESPONDING AND REVISING

Objectives

- Check content and form of essay
- Improve essay through addition of persuasive language, re-writing Specific Details, etc.
- Cooperatively assist peers in revision process

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST — *class set*
- VOCABULARY VARIETY — *class set*
- PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA — *as reference*
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: PERSUASIVE ESSAY — *class set*
- Paper clips — *class set*
- Timer — *one*

Procedure

1. Begin the day with Bandman Bob's announcement sent via you, the teacher: (alter as needed):

Well, ladies and gentlemen...you certainly have been working hard on these persuasive essays! Your teacher shared some of them with me, and I can tell you are understanding the fundamental principles of FUNDAMENTAL STEPS! Your persuasive essays are mighty convincing, but I know that with a little more work you can be certain to persuade your audience to your opinion! Today after learning a bit about how to improve your essays, you're going to work together to strengthen your statements even more! By the time you're through, no one will be able to resist your argument!

Good luck, and good writing! Make the music of your words as powerful and strong as possible!



Small Groups

*Today's student roles: Wordsmith;
Persuasive Pro; Checklist
Checker; The Audience*



*Copy and distribute
VOCABULARY VARIETY
if students don't have it from
a previous writing style.*



PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

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Encourage students to add to this list as the year progresses.



Even when a student has to be “The Audience” for him or herself, ask students to step outside of themselves and pretend they do not already believe the ideas presented in the persuasive essay!

2. Distribute (or ask students to take out) VOCABULARY VARIETY. This reference tool helps add power to their essays by injecting variety into the ordinary words such as “said” and “good” students tend to overuse. In their groups today, one person will be the “Wordsmith.” This person will check the others’ essays for overuse of common words and make recommendations for improvement.
3. Be sure to review the information in PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA carefully as this will be more difficult for students to incorporate directly into their essays. “Persuasive Pros” for today will find one sentence in each group members’ essay that can be improved with a propaganda technique included on this page or another powerful, persuasive technique. If you have been doing mini-lessons of persuasive techniques, a simple review at this time will suffice. Otherwise, conduct a mini-lesson using PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA to clearly show the power of persuasive writing techniques!
4. Remind students (or teach them, if you have not done so already) about “Showing Writing” (see Mini-Lessons p. 1 of the **Narrative** section of this Notebook). Using vivid sensory details helps further support their arguments. Both the “Wordsmiths” and “Persuasive Pros” for today help their classmates use more descriptive language.
5. In this Responding and Revising phase, the two remaining roles are: “Checklist Checker” and “The Audience.” The “Checklist Checker” does just that — he or she uses the PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST to ensure the author included all the required elements in his or her draft. “The Audience” has a very important but less prescriptive role. These individuals within each group read the essay as if they were the intended audience. After reading the essay, “The Audience” must make helpful comments for the author.
6. Distribute RESPONDING AND REVISING: PERSUASIVE ESSAY and review this with your class.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY DAILY DIRECTIONS

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7. Divide students into their writing groups, or assign new groups of four students per group. Allow writing groups to sit together with their essays, writing folders, and any helpful writing resources (including those just distributed today). When groups must be larger than four, extra students assume the role of “The Audience.”
8. Assign roles for today, or allow students to select their own roles.
9. Once students understand their responsibilities for today’s revising session, let them know that they have 10 minutes (modify as needed) to read each essay and perform their responsibilities. At the end of the 10 minutes, announce the transition time and have students rotate essays around the group.
10. This process takes from 40-60 minutes. Meet with students individually as necessary during this time. At the end of the time, ask students to return to their seats and spend a few minutes reviewing the comments made by their group-mates.
11. End today’s lesson with the flourish of your choice. Announce that tomorrow, students will work with an editing partner (or group) on the writing conventions such as spelling and capitalization in their essay.



If students did not use every other line and/or used the WRITING FRAMES when drafting, instruct students to use the margins for their comments during the Responding and Revising phase.



You may very likely need to extend this lesson into the next day depending on your students’ ability to stay on task.

PERSUASIVE ESSAY

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



*Writing Groups, Pairs, or
Individuals*

DAY SEVEN — PROOFREADING AND EDITING

Objectives

- Find and correct writing convention errors

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PEER EDITING GUIDE — *class set*

Procedure

In advance of the lesson, determine if students will edit and proofread in pairs, small groups, or as individuals. After the previous day's intense Responding and Revising session, your students may need a mellow day of independent or partner editing and proofreading.

1. Today students read their essays yet again (they may groan at this, but reassure them that all good authors read, re-read, write, and re-write countless times!). This time they read for the nitty-gritty mechanics. Introduce the lesson with a flourish of your choice.
2. Distribute the PEER EDITING GUIDE. If this is the first time your students have used this form, review it with them and be sure they understand the basic grammatical and mechanical elements to look for today. Refer students to Editing Marks on page 16 of their Student Guides. Students should use these marks when editing today.
3. Direct students to begin editing, either in groups, pairs, or individually. Remind students of the classroom resources they have (dictionaries, thesaurus, their writing folders, word walls, etc). Resources are there for their use; they are writers' most valuable tools.
4. While students proofread and edit (quietly), conduct writing conferences with individual students.
5. As students finish their editing guides, encourage them to begin the publishing phase if they are ready.
6. By the end of today, students should have plenty of suggestions that will improve their final drafts. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice.

DAY EIGHT — PUBLISHING

Objectives

- Rewrite persuasive essays, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases
- Persuade the appropriate audience(s) of the value of the authors' arguments!
- Add an appropriate and interesting title

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- Paper, lined — *class set*
or
- Computer access — *up to one per student (Optional)*

Procedure

1. At last, the final day of the Persuasive Style! Some students will be tempted to rush through the re-writing of their original draft. Bandman Bob has a few reminders for them. Read the following letter from Bandman Bob to your students, altering as needed:

Ladies and gentlemen...musicians and writers alike. Congratulations! Your hard work during the writing process has led us to this point... performance day! You have finished the first four phases of the writing process, using the musical prelude, Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the musical finale and making improvements to them every day. You have spent very valuable time and effort. Today you bring it all together for the grandest moment of the writing process!

Today you must very carefully use all the helpful and thoughtful comments your classmates and teacher have given you through the writing process. Do not ignore their wisdom! No one writes his or her best when writing alone.

In this Publishing phase of the Writing Process, you use your original draft plus the forms and comments from the Responding/Revising and the Proofreading/Editing phases. This is a bit like putting a puzzle together. You need to look at the



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pieces and plan how to fit it all in. By the time you are done, though, the final draft will be so good, you could convince any audience in the world that your opinion is “truth.”

Your teacher may have a special way (she/he) wants you to publish the final draft of your essay. That’s up to your teacher. When you’re done, however, I hope you share your essay with the audience for whom you wrote it! Wouldn’t that be such a rewarding experience — to see if you really can persuade your intended audience? Once again, good luck, and good writing!

2. If students have not yet titled their essays, encourage them to find a catchy, short title that captures the essence of the persuasive essay in a few words.
3. Reiterate to students not to rush this process. If students will be publishing on the computer, plan accordingly.
4. Continue conferencing with students in this phase of the writing process.
5. Students will finish at different times. On the board, write which of the following items you want the students to include with their essays. (We recommend that at least once in the STEPS process you require that students turn in all of these papers for your thorough review of their work.)
 - PERSUASIVE PREWRITING
 - First draft of essay
 - RESPONDING AND REVISING: PERSUASIVE ESSAY (and any comments attached)
 - PEER EDITING GUIDE (and any comments attached)
 - Final draft of essay

PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

“Propaganda” is a word that means _____

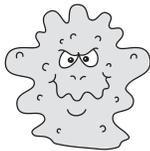
People use propaganda to persuade an audience! Commercials and advertisements are full of propaganda. Take a look at some of these commonly used techniques and see if you can use any of these in your essay to improve the power of your persuasion!



“LOADED” WORDS — Words and phrases that have a strong emotional impact.

Without loaded words:

***Cleanall* kills germs.**

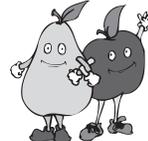


With loaded words:

***Cleanall* kills deadly germs, protecting the lives of your loved ones.**

EXPERT SUPPORT — Associating the idea with a well-known organization or person, or with a professional organization or group of people; using experts’ opinions!

The American Diabetes Association recommends eating five servings of fruits or vegetables every day.



BANDWAGON — Stressing the idea that people like to do what others are doing and like to believe what others believe.

Across the nation, people everywhere are discovering the strength, quality, and good value in the *Smith 990* truck.



PLAIN FOLKS — Identifying the opinion or issue with common people and common needs, making it seem commonly obvious that your opinion or issue is correct!

As a kindergarten teacher and mother of three, my mom works hard all day, every day. She really deserves to win the relaxing week-long vacation to Hawaii!



PERSUASIVE STUDENT SAMPLE

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

We Need More Time!

Written by: David

Do you think recess is too short? I think school should have longer recess because recess is not long enough for conversations, snack, and play time.

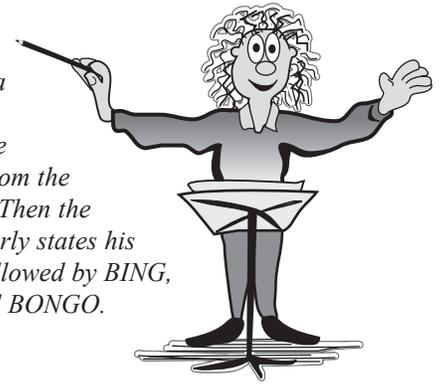
First, recess is not long enough to have a long conversation. Experts say that one of the most important life skills students learn in school is working together. Well, how can we work together if we don't have time to talk and get to know each other? When kids don't have enough time to talk at recess they end up talking more in class and that distracts the teacher and takes up learning time anyway. Recess might as well be longer because students will find a way to talk with each other one way or another.

Next, students do not have enough time to eat their snacks. With such a short recess, kids shove their food into their mouths like high-speed bulldozers scoop up huge mounds of dirt. Eating so quickly is unhealthy. If recess were longer, students could eat slowly and chew their food properly.

Finally, kids should have more play time. Everywhere around the world, kids have more homework, more tests, and more stress. Enough is enough! Schools should give 10 minutes to eat and then 15 minutes to play. It is time for kids to get outside and run, skip, jump, and be kids!

In conclusion, school should have longer recess because recess is not long enough for conversations, snack, and play time. Don't you think recess is too short?

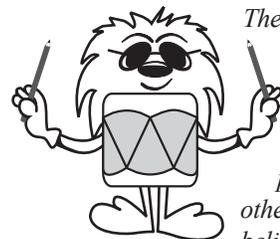
The first sentence—a question—interests the audience from the beginning. Then the author clearly states his opinion, followed by BING, BANG, and BONGO.



This author used “expert opinion” to support his General Statement, explaining why conversations are important. The question in the middle of the paragraph makes the reader think about the arguments explaining why students need conversations. Do you think these arguments are persuasive?



“Kids shove their food into their mouths like high-speed bulldozers scoop up huge mounds of dirt” is a descriptive writing device that helps put a picture in the mind of the audience.



The author used the Persuasive Propaganda technique “Bandwagon,” stressing the idea that people like to do what others are doing and like to believe what others believe.

After the transition phrase, the author re-states the BING, BANG, and BONGO. The closing question invites the reader to share the author's opinion.

Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4

CONVENTIONS RUBRIC



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



4: Exemplary — “Editing Expert”

Exceeds the Standard

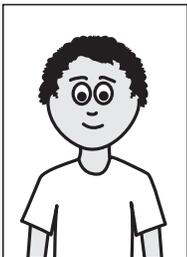
- Consistently uses proper paragraph form
- Effectively uses proper punctuation and capitalization
- Actively applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



3: Expected — “Detail Dynamo”

Meets the standard with quality

- Uses proper paragraph form
- Usually employs proper punctuation and capitalization
- Adequately applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



2: Nearly There — “Working Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

- Occasionally uses proper paragraph form
- Contains noticeable errors in punctuation and capitalization
- Inconsistently applies correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure



1: Incomplete — “Struggling Scribe”

Has not met the standard

- Uses improper paragraph form (does not indent; does not include five paragraphs)
- Misuses punctuation and capitalization
- Incorporates many errors of grammar, spelling, and/or sentence structure

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Conventions Rubric Score: _____



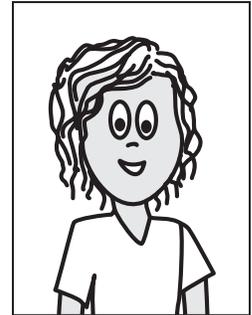
PERSUASIVE ESSAY RUBRIC (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

4: Exemplary Essay—“Pulitzer Prize Winner”

Exceeds the standard

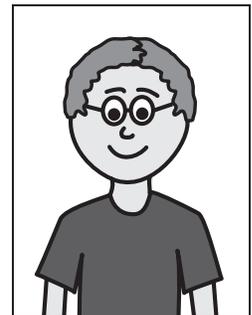
- Clearly and consistently contains all the following persuasive elements:
 1. Thesis is an important, interesting issue
 2. Relevant facts, experiences, and/or experts’ opinions to support thesis
 3. Essay invites the audience to share the author’s opinion
 4. Persuasive language adds emphasis to author’s opinion
 5. Author commentary on facts and specific details to further enhance the emphasis of the thesis
- Demonstrates true understanding and consistent application of all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes interesting, appropriate transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective, interesting first and last sentences
- Includes descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



3: Expected Essay—“Published Author”

Meets the standard with quality

- Adequately contains all the following persuasive elements:
 1. Thesis is an important, interesting issue
 2. Relevant facts, experiences, and/or experts’ opinions to support thesis
 3. Essay invites the audience to share the author’s opinion
 4. Persuasive language adds emphasis to author’s opinion
 5. Author commentary on facts and specific details to further enhance the emphasis of the thesis
- Applies all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective first and last sentences
- May include descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



PERSUASIVE ESSAY RUBRIC (2)

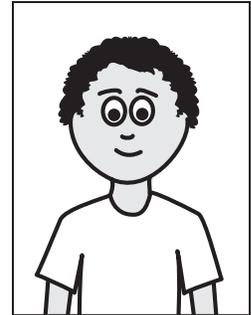


FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

2: Nearly There—“Apprentice Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

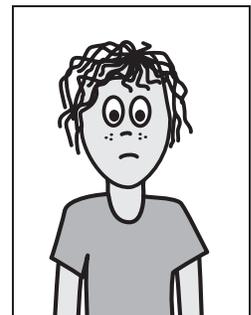
- Lacks some of the following persuasive elements:
 1. Thesis is an important, interesting issue
 2. Relevant facts, experiences, and/or experts’ opinions to support thesis
 3. Essay invites the audience to share the author’s opinion
 4. Persuasive language adds emphasis to author’s opinion
 5. Author commentary on facts and specific details to further enhance the emphasis of the thesis
- Attempts to (or inconsistently) include the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (may not demonstrate understanding of concrete nature of Specific Details)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses transitions to begin paragraphs
- Inconsistently or incorrectly attempts interesting first and last sentences



1: Incomplete—“Fumbling Writer”

Has not met the standard

- Does not contain many of the following persuasive elements:
 1. Thesis is an important, interesting issue
 2. Relevant facts, experiences, and/or experts’ opinions to support thesis
 3. Essay invites the audience to share the author’s opinion
 4. Persuasive language adds emphasis to author’s opinion
 5. Author commentary on facts and specific details to further enhance the emphasis of the thesis
- Does not include some or all of the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses or does not use transitions to begin paragraphs
- Little or no attempt to write interesting first and last sentences



Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Explanatory Essay Rubric Score: _____

Comments: _____



PERSUASIVE PREWRITING

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Purpose: _____

Audience: _____

In a Persuasive essay, the Preview Thesis is the opinion you have! This opinion is what you want your audience to believe at the end of your essay!

Preview Thesis:

“I believe that _____

Is this an important, interesting issue? Yes/No

Do I feel strongly about this issue? Yes/No

Can I support this issue with facts, experiences, and/or experts’ opinions? Yes/No

Three reasons to support my opinion: *These can also be opinions! But remember...each Bing, Bang, and Bongo must have support from specific details (facts, experiences, and/or expert opinions).*

Add commentary after the details.



BING: _____





BANG: _____





BONGO: _____



PERSUASIVE PREWRITING



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Now its time to add the details!

Main Points (General Statements)	Facts/Experience/Expert Opinion to Support (Specific Details)
 Bing <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Bang <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
 Bongo <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Summary:

Remember to re-write the thesis, including the Bing, Bang, and Bongo in your summary.

In conclusion,





WRITING FRAMES: PERSUASIVE ESSAY (1)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Interest Catcher: _____

Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BING: _____

Provide at least two persuasive specific details:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BANG: _____

Provide at least two persuasive specific details:

WRITING FRAMES: PERSUASIVE ESSAY (2)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BONGO: _____

Provide at least two persuasive specific details:



Re-state Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:

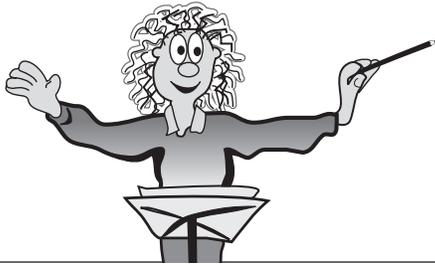
Concluding Statement: _____





PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Persuasive Essay Checklist

Preview Paragraph

- Did the author start his/her paragraph with a sentence that catches the audience's attention?
- Did the author clearly write his/her thesis statement (his/her opinion) and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo in his/her preview?



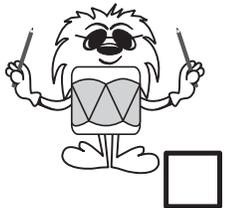
BING — General Statement #1

- Did the author re-state his/her Bing in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bing statement?
- Will these details help persuade the audience?
- Did the author include concrete words?



BANG — General Statement #2

- Did the author re-state his/her Bang in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bang statement?
- Will these details help persuade the audience?
- Did the author include concrete words?



BONGO — General Statement #3

- Did the author re-state his/her Bongo in the first sentence?
- Do the author have two (or more) details that support his/her Bongo statement?
- Will these details help persuade the audience?
- Did the author include concrete words?

Concluding Paragraph

- Did the author re-state his/her thesis with his/her Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- Did the author invite the audience to share his/her opinion?

VOCABULARY VARIETY



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“World-class writers...please keep this handy list of words. “Instead of Said” and “Better than Good” word lists keep you from re-using the same familiar words “said” and “good” too often in your writing. Add to this list as you go! I’m sure you know some better words than those I gave you!”

Instead of Said, try...

added	explained
admitted	gaspd
answered	greeted
argued	hinted
asked	informed
babbled	insisted
bawled	laughed
blurted	murmured
bragged	muttered
bugged	ordered
called	pleaded
cautioned	promised
chatted	questioned
cheered	quoted
chuckled	ranted
coaxed	reminded
confessed	replied
corrected	requested
cried	roared
croaked	smiled
crowed	stammered
dared	suggested
decided	wailed
declared	wept
demanded	whispered
denied	wondered
exclaimed	yelled

Better than Good, try...

acceptable
adequate
ample
excellent
exemplary
first-rate
genuine
great
pleasant
pleasing
positive
praise-worthy
proficient
satisfactory
solid
splendid
substantial
superior
tiptop
valuable
useful
worthy



RESPONDING AND REVISING: PERSUASIVE ESSAY

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Name: _____

“Congratulations on completing your first draft! Now it’s time to increase the powerful persuasion and fine-tune the quality! First, write your name at the top of this paper. Then attach this page to the first draft of your essay. This page will stay with your essay as it goes around to each of the other people in your writing group. You will each have one of the following roles for today’s Responding and Revising lesson. You will do this job for every essay that you read. Please take your job very seriously, as each of these roles is extremely important. Sign your name in the far right column when you have finished your job. Good luck!”



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities	Resources	Signature
Wordsmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Give at least three suggestions for more interesting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOCABULARY VARIETY • Thesaurus 	
Propaganda Pro	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Select one sentence to improve using one of the suggested techniques 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERSUASIVE PROPAGANDA 	
Checklist Checker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Use the checklist to make sure every element is included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PERSUASIVE CHECKLIST 	
The Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Write one compliment about the essay <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write one suggestion for the essay <hr/> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer the question: do you now agree with the author’s opinion? YES/NO (circle one) 		

PEER EDITING GUIDE



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“Use this Peer Editing Guide during Phase Four (Proofreading and Editing) of the Writing Process to help you and your classmates become world-class writers!”

ESSAY CONTENT

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Interest catcher
- ___ Preview Thesis
 - ___ BING
 - ___ BANG
 - ___ BONGO



Paragraph Two

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BING
- ___ Specific detail sentences



Paragraph Three

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BANG
- ___ Specific detail sentences

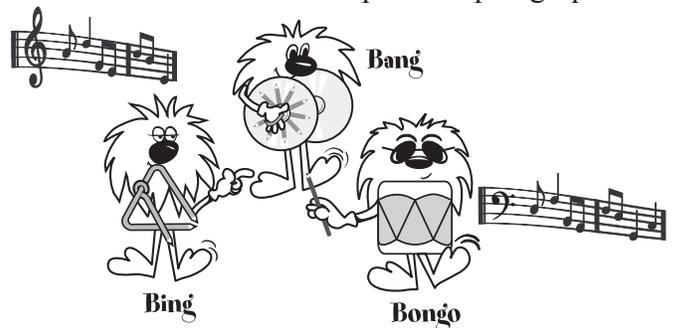


Paragraph Four

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BONGO
- ___ Specific detail sentences

Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Transition word
- ___ Summary Statement with BING, BANG, and BONGO in correct order
- ___ Closing – question or statement calling for reader reaction, similar to the interest catcher in preview paragraph



WRITING CONVENTIONS

Paragraph Form

- ___ Five paragraphs
- ___ Indented first line of each

Word Errors

- ___ Spelling
- ___ Capitalization (proper nouns, first word of sentences)
- ___ Word choice (is there a better word?)
- ___ Pronouns used correctly

Sentence Errors

- ___ Run on
- ___ Fragment
- ___ Hard to understand

Punctuation

- ___ Periods after sentences and in titles (i.e., Mr.)
- ___ Commas
- ___ Apostrophes (possessive nouns, contractions)
- ___ Quotation marks

REPORT OF INFORMATION INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Definition

A report of information essay does the following:

- Clearly informs the audience on a particular topic
- Presents support through researched facts
- Uses appropriate bibliographic/referencing style

Recommended Mini-Lessons

- Note-taking (Prewriting phase)
- Bibliographic notation (Prewriting phase)
- Outlining (Prewriting phase)

Before You Begin

Before introducing Report of Information Writing Style, decide on the following:

1. Topic

Decide if your students will write on a topic that is pre-determined by your district, by you, or if students will determine their own topics.

- District determined

Most districts have a pre-determined grade-specific report of information topic. Be sure to consider this information in making your final decision. Follow the teaching directions as they are written for your district's topic of choice.

If your district does not have a specific topic or if your students have already written on this topic, decide if you will determine a class-wide topic or if you will allow students/groups to decide their own topics.

- Teacher determined

Develop a single class-wide topic or a menu of appropriate topics from which students can choose. Consider your language arts program as it may provide appropriate topic(s) for this essay style. Follow the teaching directions as they are written for your topic(s) of choice.

- Student/group determined

Follow the teaching directions as written with the following amendments:

- Add time to Day One to assist students with mastery of the three STEPS organizational principles.
- Provide time between Days One and Two for topic brainstorming. Students may need you to work through an example topic. Allow students to choose the example or another topic from the brainstorming session, or a new one which is then teacher approved. As part of the



Honestly consider the age and maturity of your students as well as your students' experience and mastery of the STEPS organizing principles when deciding on how the topic will be determined.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

brainstorming, have students make an “I wonder” list in which they write down the things that they wonder about. They then circle the topics that really interest them, finalize their topic based on ease of obtaining information, and use the five W’s to organize their essays [writing at least three questions about the topic (BING, BANG, and BONGO), questions that answer the five W’s: Who? What? When? Where? and Why?...and How?).

2. **Unique Factors of Report of Information**

A unique aspect of the Report of Information essay style is the additional step of “planning.” This includes finding facts, taking notes, and making an outline. Consider your students’ knowledge of these aspects before teaching this writing style. Incorporate additional days for mini-lessons to teach these skills as appropriate. Remember that students will need time between Days Two and Three for research (this includes gathering the appropriate resources, reading, taking notes, making appropriate bibliographic references, and organizing their information) plan accordingly. Be sure to dedicate plenty of time to the prewriting phase of this essay style.

3. **Writing Groups**

Determine whether you will have students work individually or within writing groups (of four students each). If you choose to use writing groups, students work together throughout the process of writing while writing their own essay. Use of writing groups assists with research time and allows for group discussions throughout the writing process, making the end product stronger. If the report of information essay will also be used for an oral presentation, this option decreases the number and the repetitive nature of 35 similar presentations.

4. **Bibliographic style**

You need to consider the bibliographic style you will teach your students. We have presented the MLA style in the student sample essay (Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, Fifth Edition*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999). Consult your language arts program and/or your district standards in determining the appropriate style.

REPORT OF INFORMATION INTRODUCTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

5. Resources and Specific Details

Decide on the minimum number of reference sources students will need as part of their report of information essay. Additionally, decide on the minimum number of Specific Details they need for each General Statement (BING, BANG, and BONGO). We have presented a minimum of two Specific Details for each General Statement while informing students that in this essay style they may need more than two details to inform their audience. The REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE presents two reference sources (books) for each General Statement with two facts from each book. Adjust this form as needed.



REPORT OF INFORMATION UNIT TIME CHART

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the writing process, purpose, and audience • Define report of information writing • Establish goals and outcomes for report of information writing • Read student sample essay • Identify and review organizing principles <p>MODEL TOPICS REPORT OF INFORMATION STUDENT SAMPLE CONVENTIONS RUBRIC REPORT OF INFORMATION RUBRIC OUTLINING STUDENT SAMPLE</p>	<p>Prewriting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize General Statements • Learn note-taking skills • Begin research <p>NOTE-TAKING</p>	<p>Prewriting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize Specific Details • Learn outlining skills • Continue research <p>NOTE-TAKING REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE</p>
DAY 4	DAY 5	DAY 6
<p>Drafting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a first draft report of information essay • Include interest-catching first sentence and “concluding” final sentence <p>WRITING FRAMES: REPORT OF INFORMATION REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST</p>	<p>Drafting, continued</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the first draft of Report of Information Essay 	<p>Responding and Revising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check content and form of essay • Improve essay through addition of facts, re-writing Specific Details, correctly citing resources in bibliography and within text, etc. • Cooperatively assist peers in revision process <p>VOCABULARY VARIETY RESPONDING AND REVISING: REPORT OF INFORMATION</p>
DAY 7	DAY 8	
<p>Proofreading and Editing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find and correct writing convention errors <p>PEER EDITING GUIDE</p>	<p>Publishing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rewrite report of information essay, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases • Inform the appropriate audience(s) on the topic • Add an appropriate and interesting title 	

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY ONE — INTRODUCTION

Objectives

- Review the writing process, purpose, and audience
- Define report of information writing
- Establish goals and outcomes for report of information writing
- Read student sample essay
- Identify and review FUNDAMENTAL STEPS organizing principles

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- MODEL TOPICS — *transparency*
- REPORT OF INFORMATION STUDENT SAMPLE — *transparency*
- CONVENTIONS RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- REPORT OF INFORMATION RUBRIC — *class set + transparency*
- OUTLINING STUDENT SAMPLE — *class set + transparency (Optional)*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

1. Direct students to their Student Guides pages 2-3 to review the writing process. As you introduce this new style of writing, remind students that you will spend a good amount of time at the prewriting stage to ensure better quality writing.
2. Remind students that every essay has both a **purpose** and an **audience** (the reader). If this is your first essay style in FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, spend plenty of time explaining purpose and audience.
3. Introduce report of information writing with the Student Guide pages 12-13. Ask students if they know what the **purpose** of a report of information essay is. Tell (or remind) them that there are three basic purposes of any essay: **to entertain, to inform, and/or to persuade**. Direct students to write the purpose in their Student Guides, page 12 (*to inform*). Ask students if they know what the **definition** of a report of information essay is. After an



Introduce the new lesson and the new writing style with flair! Select a piece of music to play that will represent the Report of Information style. Bring out the instruments. Invite a guest “Bandman Bob” to announce the new writing style.

Allot enough time for review dependent on your students’ understanding of the writing process.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

appropriate brainstorming time, write the following on the board or transparency while directing students to write the definition in their Student Guides, page 12:

Report of Information Definition:

1. *Clearly informs the audience on a particular topic*
2. *Presents support through researched facts*
3. *References research through appropriate bibliographic style*

4. Discuss **audience**. Review and link the learning by discussing previous essays and their audience. Ask students who they think the likely audience is for a report of information essay. Advise students that when writing they should assume that the audience is interested in the topic and does not know the information that they will present. Students should work toward keeping it simple (e.g., finding the three most interesting things about the topic and presenting these).
5. Display the overhead of MODEL TOPICS. Read the list as a class, then discuss the suitability of each topic. Use the following to guide your discussion.
 - *Topic 1 might be better for a description (or narrative essay) than for a report of information essay.*
 - *Topic 2 is interesting and there are facts available on this topic.*
 - *Topic 3 is too broad.*
 - *Topic 4 would give instructions and not facts (explanatory essay).*
 - *Topic 5 would require opinion (persuasive essay style) rather than facts.*

Circle Topic 2 as the appropriate choice for a report of information essay.

6. Share that there are many different audiences possible for a report of information essay. The audience depends on the topic.
7. Instruct students to turn to page 13 of their Student Guides. Display the overhead REPORT OF INFORMATION STUDENT SAMPLE and read aloud the sample Report of Information Essay.

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

8. Spend time reading the comments in the margins of the essay. **Note:** This essay is an adaptation of student work and the sources cited are fictitious. Ask if your students have suggestions on how to make the essay even better.
9. Inform students that when writing a report of information essay, once a topic has been chosen it is important to develop a **Focus Question**. This focus question assists in organizing the essay and is often re-phrased as the preview thesis. Re-read the essay and direct students to underline the Preview Thesis in black pen or pencil: “Miners of the 1840s used three methods to take gold from rivers and streams: panning (**Bing**), cradling (**Bang**), and using a long tom (**Bongo**). Instruct students to underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red using their coloring pencils, crayons, or markers. Discuss the logical focus question for the student sample, “*What methods did miners use to take gold from rivers and streams?*” Have students notice how this question was re-phrased as the preview thesis.
10. Distribute the CONVENTIONS RUBRIC (or ask students to take out) and refer students to the Essay Structure Rubric on pages 14-15 of the Student Guide. Discuss the general Rubrics to ensure student understanding of FUNDAMENTAL STEPS structure and conventions expectations.
11. Distribute (and display) the REPORT OF INFORMATION RUBRIC and briefly review the requirements of this style. Note how the sample essay meets (and occasionally, falls short of) the expectations established in the Rubrics. Students keep the Rubrics in their writing folders to use throughout the writing process.
12. Inform students of the Report of Information topic. Note: Most districts have a pre-determined, grade-specific topic. If this is not the case in your district, you need to decide whether you will choose the topic or allow students to choose their own topics. If you choose the latter option, spend time assisting students with choosing appropriate topics.
13. Instruct students to write down a Focus Question and three related General Statements for the topic of choice (e.g., three most interesting things about the topic, three questions student has about the topic). Students begin work in class and continue for homework. Students bring their lists to class on Day Two for a discussion of their ideas.



In addition to using the color coding, students may enjoy using the symbols when identifying their Bing (green triangle), Bang (blue circle), and Bongo (red square).



Clearly establish for your students the criteria you expect their Report of Information Essays to meet. Add these to the Rubric, or post them in a prominent place in the classroom.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

14. End the lesson with a flourish of your choice.

15. **Optional**

If students need additional practice identifying BING, BANG, BONGO, and specific details, complete the following optional activity.

Distribute OUTLINING STUDENT SAMPLE, display the transparency, and have students turn to page 13 in their Student Guides (Report of Information Student Sample). Read the directions and work through the outline as a class. Use the following answers to guide your students in completing the outline.

1. **Topic/title:** *Early Mining Methods to Strike it Rich!*
2. **Focus Question:** What methods did miners use to take gold from rivers and streams?
3. **Preview Thesis:**
BING: *Panning*
BANG: *Using a Cradle*
BONGO: *Using a long tom*
4. Discuss appropriate bibliographic style, especially if it is different from what is presented in the student sample.
Abbott, Oliver. Mining for America's Gold. NY: Forrester and Company, 2001.
Friedman, Karen. "Gold Rush." Mining, Vol. 109, Fall 1999, pp.201-230.
Smith, James. "Early Methods of Mining." Mining Encyclopedia, 10th edition, 2000.
5. **BANG:** Using a cradle
Specific Detail: *It was covered with an iron sheet full of small holes (Friedman, 219).*
Specific Detail: *The bottom of the cradle had ridges of wood that caught the gold but allowed the sand and water to go out the one end that was open (Friedman, 219).*
Specific Detail: *"Using a cradle instead of panning, I could easily triple my nugget take," one forty-niner reported (Smith, 49).*
BONGO: Using a long tom
Specific Detail: *Smith: The long tom was built in a fashion similar to the cradle... This gold was then separated from the sand by panning (51).*
6. **Preview Thesis (Re-stated):** *In conclusion, these three methods of mining gold—panning, cradling, and using a long tom—helped many miners succeed in the California gold rush.*
Final Comment: *Who knows how much gold might have been missed without these mining methods.*



REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY TWO — PREWRITING

Objectives

- Organize General Statements
- Learn note-taking skills
- Begin research

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- NOTE-TAKING — *class set + transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Notecards (green, blue, and red) — *several of each per student/writing group*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*

Procedure

1. Ask students to take out their assignment/homework from Day One [their Focus Questions and Three General Statements for the topic of choice (e.g., three most interesting things about the topic, three questions about the topic)].
2. On the overhead or board write down the ideas that students share. As a class, discuss the various Focus Questions and General Statements. Have students begin to consider the sources they will use and the difficulty or ease of locating Specific Details to support each General Statement.
3. Ask how many students have used an encyclopedia. Have students describe why they used an encyclopedia in the past and what type of information they found. If an encyclopedia is available, have students suggest topics/general statements that interest them (use the information from Procedure step #2). Find an encyclopedia entry for one of the suggestions and have a student read the entry aloud. Discuss what kind of information an encyclopedia provides and when this type of information might be useful. Point out that in addition to an encyclopedia, a library and the internet contain many other useful sources of information.



If you are unable to find the colored notecards, use another way for students to distinguish their Bing, Bang, and Bongo notecards from one another.

An additional means of color-coding is the use of green (Bing), blue (Bang), and red (Bongo) pens for note-taking.



If students are having a difficult time coming up with solid General Statements instruct them to come up with four to five questions about the topic. These questions should require more than one word answers and should be of interest to them. The questions should begin with Who? What? When? Where? Why? and/or How? Ask students, which questions they already know the answer to, which they would like to know more about, and which they would like to answer in their report of information essays.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



4. Lead a class brainstorming session about ways in which to find facts for this report. Consider the following reference sources in your discussion.
 - Atlas — a book containing all kinds of maps
 - Almanac — a book of up-to-date facts published yearly
 - Encyclopedia — a set of books with information on many topics (with topics arranged in alphabetical order)
 - Special Subject Dictionaries — books that give brief information on specific topics (with topics arranged in alphabetical order), for example:
 - Biographical Dictionary — facts about famous people
 - Geographical Dictionary — facts about places in the world
 - Internet searches

5. Read or tell Bandman Bob's announcement sent via you, the teacher (alter as needed!):

Ladies and gentlemen...you have begun the process of writing a report of information essay. This type of essay is different from the other writing styles because it is based solely on facts and it requires an additional step...planning. This planning step includes finding facts, taking notes, and making an outline. All of these steps are part of the prewriting phase. Your teacher and I have come up with an easy way for you to do all of this planning. Good luck and good writing!

6. Refer back to the Student Guide example on page 13 to show how the author used specific facts from the research to support her general statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo). Remind students that in order to do this, the author made an organized plan, found facts, took notes, and made an outline before writing her essay.
7. Using the same overhead/board information generated earlier from Procedure step #2, instruct students to choose their Bing, Bang, and Bongo from the General Statements provided during the class discussion. **Note:** If students will be working in writing groups for their final report of information essay and/or oral presentation, be sure to group students at this time and have them choose their Bing, Bang, and Bongo as a group

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

(see **Before You Begin** for more information). Remind students to choose general statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) that they can support with at least two facts (specific details) each. They must use and cite resources in their reports.

8. Give students time to work (individually, in writing pairs, or in writing groups) to develop their Preview Thesis with Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Inform students that this is the initial phase on their planning.
9. Distribute NOTE-TAKING and illuminate the transparency. Instruct students to use this note-taking format (or another format which you find useful) when taking notes from each of their reference sources for Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Inform students that note-taking is a very important writing and learning tool. If students were to read the directions on how to construct something/how to get someplace, they may remember parts of the instructions. However, if they were given a list of directions, remembering would be a lot easier. And if they wrote the directions down themselves, they may not even need to refer to the information. That is how powerful writing is as a learning tool. Instruct students on the bibliographic format you want them to use (we have chosen the MLA style for our student example). Additionally, instruct students on the number of reference sources you are requiring as well as the minimum number of facts from each source.
10. Instruct students when taking notes they should write down just the important ideas—not every single word—as they read. They should rephrase what they read in their own words. Students should write neatly (so they will be able to read their notes later). Students can use pen or marker to highlight main points.
11. Distribute notecards and inform students of the color-coding organization (or other organizational format you have chosen) used for the note-taking. Allow time in class as well as time outside of class for students to locate reference sources and to begin note-taking. Conduct as many writing conferences as you can during this phase.
12. End the lesson with a flourish of your choice.



Remind students about appropriate ways to avoid plagiarism.



This is a nice time to have parent or other adult support to assist young writers in finding relevant facts to support their Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Additionally, this adult support is crucial in assisting students with using appropriate note-taking and bibliographic skills.

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY THREE — PREWRITING, continued

Objectives

- Organize Specific Details
- Learn outlining skills
- Continue research

Before students begin to draft their essays, it is essential that their prewriting has solid components, meeting the three fundamental organizational principles of STEPS writing. Today's main focus is to carefully check and complete prewriting work begun on Day Two.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- NOTE-TAKING — *transparency (Optional)*
- REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE — *class set*
+ *transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Notecards (green, blue, and red) — *several of each per student/ writing group*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*
- Paper, lined — *class set*

Before You Begin

Write these elements on the board. In Step 3 of today's lesson, refer to these questions about students' outlines and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.

- Does the outline have a clear preview thesis with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
"In the preview thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red."
- Does the Bing have at least two details to support it? Are these details specific facts from a cited resource?
"Underline the Bing in green."
- Does the Bang have at least two details to support it? Are these details specific facts from a cited resource?
"Underline the Bang in blue."
- Does the Bongo have at least two details to support it? Are these details specific facts from a cited resource?
"Underline the Bongo in red."

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

- Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”

Procedure

1. Direct students to take out their writing folders and Student Guides. Direct their attention to the notecards they have accumulated thus far. Discuss the note-taking thus far. Review NOTE-TAKING if students are having difficulty understanding how to organize their notes.
2. Distribute REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE and illuminate the transparency. Review the outline format, the specific components of the report of information outline, and address student questions. Instruct students to refer to their notecards and their papers from Day Two in which they wrote down their Bing, Bang, and Bongo as well as their Preview Thesis statement as they fill out the outline. Provide time for students to complete their outlines.
3. Either as a class or in pairs/writing groups, explain that students need to check for specific elements in the outline. Direct students to take out their colored writing materials. Refer to these elements on the board, and direct students with the prompts in *italics*.
 - Does the outline have a clear preview thesis with a Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the preview thesis, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
 - Does the Bing have at least two details to support it? Are these details specific facts from a cited resource?
“Underline the Bing in green.”
 - Does the Bang have at least two details to support it? Are these details specific facts from a cited resource?
“Underline the Bang in blue.”
 - Does the Bongo have at least two details to support it? Are these details specific facts from a cited resource?
“Underline the Bongo in red.”
 - Does the summary (“finale”) include Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
“In the summary, underline the Bing in green, the Bang in blue, and the Bongo in red.”
4. Monitor students as needed.
5. End the lesson with a flourish of your choice. Collect the completed and checked REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE and check and provide feedback for student work before beginning the next phase: drafting.



This is a nice time to have parent or other adult support to assist young writers in completing the outline.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FOUR — DRAFTING

Objectives

- Write a first draft report of information essay
- Include interest-catching first sentence and “concluding” final sentence

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- WRITING FRAMES: REPORT OF INFORMATION — *class set (Optional)*
- REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST (from Student Guide, page 12) — *transparency*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *enough for students to share*
- Overhead markers (black, green, blue, and red) — *one of each*
- Overhead projector — *one*
- Paper, lined — *class set*

Procedure

1. Return REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE to students with your feedback and comments. Ask students to take out their Student Guides and writing folders. Today they will need the Report of Information Checklist on page 12 of the Student Guide, and they may also use the Rubric from Day One.
2. If needed, conduct a mini-lesson to re-teach any skills with which many students struggled. For example, if quite a few students still do not have at least two solid facts for their Bing, Bang, and Bongo, use some authentic examples on the overhead to re-teach how to create and use appropriate Specific Details.
3. Distribute WRITING FRAMES: REPORT OF INFORMATION or lined paper.
4. Introduce (or review) two elements necessary for a good essay that are not in the students’ prewriting (outline): an interest-catching first sentence for the prelude/preview (first) paragraph, and a concluding sentence for the finale/summary (last) paragraph that summarizes the information shared. Tell students that good writers create openings that “capture” the audience’s attention and use closings that end what they have written in an interesting way.



Use these helpful frames for drafting if your students need the reminders for indentation, transitions, etc.

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

5. Brainstorm or provide a few examples of a solid interest-catcher. These do not have to be too sophisticated; however, they should relate to the topic of the essay. One simple way to encourage reluctant or “stuck” students is to work backwards from their preview thesis. Students can take the thesis and dramatize it a bit for audience interest.

Take the thesis statement: “In the world of ocean animals, dolphins are special because they are mammals, they have unique ways of communicating, and they have an interesting diet.” Give students the following two examples of first sentences and ask which would be more interesting: “Dolphins are neat ocean animals.” and “Wouldn’t you think a dolphin is in the fish family?”

Use the student sample essay as an additional example. The writer chose to begin with “Gold! Gold!” as a way to catch the audience’s attention. Another interest-catching sentence could have been, “Ever wonder how the gold rushers found GOLD?”

6. The summary paragraph’s concluding sentence can then be a simple modification of the interest-catching first sentence. Using the student sample as a model, have students notice the final sentence, “Who knows how much gold might have been missed without these mining methods.” Ask students to suggest other concluding sentences and discuss their appropriateness.
7. When students understand how to write the first and last sentences of their essay, they are ready to draft! If needed, project a transparency of the REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST and show how to use the checklist as they write. If students draft on lined paper, encourage (or tell!) them to write on every-other line. By double-spacing their rough drafts, they leave much more room for comments during the Revising and Editing phases. Enforce this policy! Soon it will become habit.
8. Remind students to use the Report of Information Checklist in their Student Guide, the Rubric, and their REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE when drafting. Remember: this is different from creative-writing drafting. This is a step-by-step essay program, and while normally the drafting phase is the time to “get your writing juices flowing,” the objective here is to craft an organized five-paragraph essay based on their research.



A question is always a good (and easy) first interest-catching sentence for students.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



To maximize your conference time and energies with students in Day Five's lesson, collect and read the incomplete student essays at this point. This will show you exactly which areas of need they have.

There is no hidden agenda! Remind students that their success is up to them. If they carefully follow the guidelines of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the other suggestions made by Bandman Bob, their essays will be wonderful.

9. Allow as much time as students need to write in class. Dedicate the language arts class lesson to drafting. Do not allow students to write at home; instruct them to place their drafts neatly into their writing folders and put them aside for the day. End the class with the flourish of your choice!

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY FIVE — DRAFTING, continued

Objective

- Complete the first draft of Report of Information Essay

Spend as much time conferring with individual students as possible during the lesson.

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*

Procedure

1. Begin class with the flourish of your choice. Students may need some motivation to keep writing today.
2. Set clear expectations for behavior during this writing period. Most students need silent writing time. Enforce the no-talking rule to maximize time on task.
3. Give students approximately 45 minutes to finish their first drafts. If students finish early, they may re-read their essays and begin revising and looking for ways to improve the essay's flow and means of informing.
4. Collect drafts if you plan to check them before students begin responding and revising.
5. End class with the flourish of your choice.

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Small Groups

Today's student roles: Wordsmith;
Fact Finder; Checklist Checker;
The Audience



Copy and distribute
VOCABULARY VARIETY if
students don't have it from a
previous writing style.



DAY SIX — RESPONDING AND REVISING

Objectives

- Check content and form of essay
- Improve essay through addition of facts, re-writing Specific Details, correctly citing resources in bibliography and within text, etc.
- Cooperatively assist peers in revision process

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- VOCABULARY VARIETY — *class set*
- REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST — *class set*
- RESPONDING AND REVISING: REPORT OF INFORMATION — *class set*
- Paper clips — *class set*
- Timer — *one*

Procedure

1. Begin the day with Bandman Bob's announcement sent via you, the teacher: (alter as needed!):

Well, ladies and gentlemen...you certainly have been working hard on these report of information essays! Your teacher shared some of them with me, and I can tell you are understanding the fundamental principles of FUNDAMENTAL STEPS! Your report of information essays are mighty informative, but I know that with a little more work you can be certain to inform your audience about your topic! Today after learning a bit about how to improve your essays, you're going to work together to strengthen your statements even more! By the time you're through, your audience will be fully informed!

Good luck, and good writing!

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

2. Distribute (or ask students to take out) VOCABULARY VARIETY. This reference tool helps add power to their essays by injecting variety into the ordinary words such as “said” and “good” students tend to overuse. In their groups today, one person will be the “Wordsmith.” This person will check the others’ essays for overuse of common words and make recommendations for improvement.
3. In this Responding and Revising phase, the three remaining roles are: “Fact Finder,” “Checklist Checker” and “The Audience.” The “Fact Finder” reads the essay looking to improve at least one sentence by checking the relevance of the facts, determining if a question remains unanswered, and evaluating whether appropriate bibliographic style was used. The “Checklist Checker” does just that — he or she uses the REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST to ensure the author included all the required elements in his or her draft. “The Audience” has a very important but less prescriptive role. These individuals within each group read the essay as if they were the intended audience. After reading the essay, “The Audience” must make helpful comments for the author.
4. Distribute RESPONDING AND REVISING: REPORT OF INFORMATION and review this with your class. Be sure that students are clear on the responsibilities before they begin to respond and revise each other’s work. Instruct students to write their names on their Responding and Revising form and attach it (with a paper clip) to their essay (if they have not done so already).
5. Divide students into their writing groups. Allow writing groups to sit together with their essays, writing folders, and any helpful writing resources (including those just distributed today). When groups must be larger than four, extra students assume the role of “The Audience.”
6. Assign roles for today, or allow students to select their own roles.
7. Once students understand their responsibilities for today’s revising session, let them know that they have 10 minutes (modify as needed) to read each essay and perform their responsibilities. At the end of the 10 minutes, announce the transition time and have students rotate essays around the group.



Encourage students to add to this list as the year progresses.



Even when a student has to be “The Audience” for him or herself, ask students to step outside of themselves and pretend they do not already know the information presented in the report of information essay!



If students did not use every other line and/or used the WRITING FRAMES when drafting, instruct students to use the margins for their comments during the Responding and Revising phase.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



You may very likely need to extend this lesson into the next day depending on your students' ability to stay on task.

8. This process takes from 40–60 minutes. Meet with students individually as necessary during this time. At the end of the time, ask students to return to their seats and spend a few minutes reviewing the comments made by their group-mates.
9. End today's lesson with the flourish of your choice. Announce that tomorrow, students will work with an editing partner (or group) on the writing conventions such as spelling and capitalization in their essay.

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY SEVEN — PROOFREADING AND EDITING

Objectives

- Find and correct writing convention errors

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- PEER EDITING GUIDE — *class set*

Procedure

In advance of the lesson, determine if students will edit and proofread in pairs, small groups, or as individuals. After the previous day's intense Responding and Revising session, your students may need a mellow day of independent or partner editing and proofreading.

1. Today students read their essays yet again (they may groan at this, but reassure them that all good authors read, re-read, write, and re-write countless times!). This time they read for the nitty-gritty mechanics. Introduce the lesson with a flourish of your choice.
2. Distribute the PEER EDITING GUIDE. If this is the first time your students have used this form, review it with them and be sure they understand the basic grammatical and mechanical elements to look for today. Refer students to Editing Marks on page 16 of their Student Guides. Students should use these marks when editing today.
3. Direct students to begin editing, either in groups, pairs, or individually. Remind students of the classroom resources they have (dictionaries, thesaurus, their writing folders, word walls, etc). Resources are there for their use; they are writers' most valuable tools!
4. While students proofread and edit (quietly), conduct writing conferences with individual students.
5. As students finish their editing guides, encourage them to begin the publishing phase if they are ready.
6. By the end of today, students should have plenty of suggestions that will improve their final drafts. End the lesson with the flourish of your choice.



*Writing Groups, Pairs, or
Individuals*



To avoid students becoming overwhelmed by the many grammatical and mechanical elements to check, focus on just a few for each writing style.

REPORT OF INFORMATION

DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

DAY EIGHT — PUBLISHING

Objectives

- Rewrite report of information essay, incorporating modifications and suggestions from Revising and Editing phases
- Inform the appropriate audience(s) on the topic
- Add an appropriate and interesting title

Materials

- Student Guides — *class set*
- Writing folders — *class set*
- Paper, lined — *class set*
- or
- Computer access — *up to one per student (Optional)*

Procedure

1. At last, the final day of the Report of Information! Some students will be tempted to rush through the re-writing of their original draft. Bandman Bob has a few reminders for them. Read the following letter from Bandman Bob to your students, altering as needed:



Ladies and gentlemen...musicians and writers alike. Congratulations! Your hard work during the writing process had led us to this point... performance day! You have finished the first four phases of the writing process, using the musical prelude (you called it a preview paragraph, I believe), Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the musical finale or concluding paragraph and making improvements to them every day. You have spent very valuable time and effort. Today you bring it all together for the grandest moment of the writing process! If you haven't titled your essay yet, today is the day for this crowning moment too!

Today you must very carefully use all the helpful and thoughtful comments your classmates and teacher have given you through the writing process. Do not ignore their wisdom! No one writes his or her best when writing alone.

In this Publishing phase of the Writing Process, you use your original draft plus the forms and comments from the Responding/Revising and the

REPORT OF INFORMATION DAILY DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Proofreading/Editing phases. This is a bit like putting a puzzle together. You need to look at the pieces and plan how to fit it all in. By the time you are done, though, the final draft will be so good, you could inform any audience in the world about your topic.

Your teacher may have a special way (she/he) wants you to publish the final draft of your essay. That's up to your teacher. When you're done, however, I hope you share your essay with the audience for whom you wrote it! Wouldn't that be such a rewarding experience — to see if you really can inform your intended audience, using the support of your researched facts? Once again, good luck, and good writing!

2. Reiterate to students not to rush the publishing process. If students will be publishing on the computer, plan accordingly.
3. Instruct students to **copy** their reports (taking all feedback into consideration), develop a **title** for their essay (find a catchy, short title that captures the essence of their essay in a few words), and **check** their final draft using the Report of Information Checklist in their Student Guides (as well as other resources). As a class determine a means for students to **share** their essays (oral reports or other means).
4. Continue conferencing with students in this phase of the writing process.
5. Students will finish at different times. On the board, write which of the following items you want the students to include with their essays. (We recommend that at least once in the STEPS process you require that students turn in all of these papers for your thorough review of their work.)
 - REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE
 - First draft of essay
 - RESPONDING AND REVISING: REPORT OF INFORMATION
 - PEER EDITING GUIDE (and any comments attached)
 - Final draft of essay
6. **Optional**
If students/writing groups will make oral presentations, schedule these at this time.



Be sure students are clear on your chosen bibliographic style.



REPORT OF INFORMATION MODEL TOPICS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Topic 1: My Pet Labrador Retriever

Topic 2: Labrador Retrievers

Topic 3: Purebred Dogs

Topic 4: Making a Doghouse

Topic 5: My Favorite Dog



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

EARLY MINING METHODS TO STRIKE IT RICH!

Written by: Dave

“Gold! Gold!” Miners of the 1840s used three methods to take gold from rivers and streams: panning, cradling, and using a long tom.

At the beginning, panning was the most popular method of mining. Miners used a shallow pan to scoop up a mixture of dirt and water from a streambed (Abbott, 110). By swirling the pan and tipping it slightly, miners separated the heavier gold. An early forty-niner claimed he was able to earn \$40 a day from panning gold (that was a lot of money in those times!) (Smith, 46).

Another method of mining was called cradling. A cradle was a wooden device built like a baby’s cradle. It was covered with an iron sheet full of small holes (Friedman, 219). Miners first placed a shovel-full of dirt on the top. Then they shook the cradle. Stones and large objects would roll off with the fine dirt, and the gold would go through. The bottom of the cradle had ridges of wood that caught the gold but allowed the sand and water to go out the one end that was open (Friedman, 219). “Using a cradle instead of panning, I could easily triple my nugget take,” one forty-niner reported (Smith, 49).

Finally, a third method of mining used the long tom. This was a better method than the cradle. Smith explains how it worked:

The long tom was built in a fashion similar to the cradle. It had an iron top with holes and a bottom with ridges. However, it was 12 to 20 feet long and was stationary. This device was placed so that the stream’s water would run through it and help wash away the dirt the miner would throw on its top. The gold would settle on the bottom with considerable sand. This gold was then separated from the sand by panning. (51)

In conclusion, these three methods of mining gold—panning, cradling, and using a long tom—helped many miners succeed in the California gold rush. Who knows how much gold might have been missed without these mining methods.

Works Cited

- Abbott, Oliver. *Mining for America’s Gold*. NY: Forrester and Company, 2001.
 Friedman, Karen. “Gold Rush.” *Mining*, Vol. 109, Fall 1999, pp. 201-230.
 Smith, James. “Early Methods of Mining.” *Mining Encyclopedia*, 10th ed., 2000.

Notice the interest catching first sentence. It catches the audience’s attention through its exclamatory nature.



The BING paragraph begins with an effective transition—“At the beginning...”



“Another method...” is an example of a useful transition to introduce the BANG paragraph.



Notice the many supporting detail sentences. When writing a report of information essay, you may need to provide more than two supporting details to make your point. It is better to have too many, than to have too few!

The use of the transition word “Finally” to begin the BONGO paragraph informs the reader that the end of the report of information essay is near.



Notice the author’s commentary in the sentence, “This was a better method than the cradle.” This commentary is supported by the quote.

Note three things about this long quotation:

- 1—It is indented extra space on both sides.
- 2—Because of its indentation pattern, it needs no quotation marks to identify it as a quotation.
- 3—Because the author is named in the text, only the page number is needed at the end of the quotation.

“In conclusion” is a transition introducing the Summary, which re-states the BING, BANG, and BONGO points.

Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4



CONVENTIONS RUBRIC

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



4: Exemplary — “Editing Expert”

Exceeds the Standard

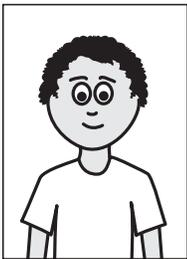
- Consistently uses proper paragraph form
- Effectively uses proper punctuation and capitalization
- Actively applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



3: Expected — “Detail Dynamo”

Meets the standard with quality

- Uses proper paragraph form
- Usually employs proper punctuation and capitalization
- Adequately applies correct grammar, spelling, sentence structure, and word variety



2: Nearly There — “Working Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

- Occasionally uses proper paragraph form
- Contains noticeable errors in punctuation and capitalization
- Inconsistently applies correct grammar, spelling, and sentence structure



1: Incomplete — “Struggling Scribe”

Has not met the standard

- Uses improper paragraph form (does not indent; does not include five paragraphs)
- Misuses punctuation and capitalization
- Incorporates many errors of grammar, spelling, and/or sentence structure

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Conventions Rubric Score: _____

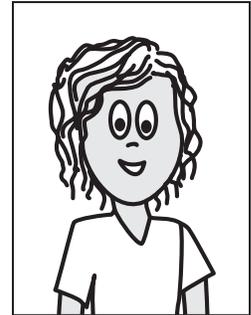


FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

4: Exemplary Essay—“Pulitzer Prize Winner”

Exceeds the standard

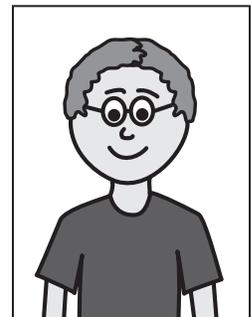
- Clearly and consistently contains all the following Report of Information elements:
 1. Clearly informs the audience on a particular topic
 2. Presents support through researched facts
 3. Uses appropriate bibliographic/referencing style
- Demonstrates true understanding and consistent application of all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes interesting, appropriate transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective, interesting first and last sentences
- Includes descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details



3: Expected Essay—“Published Author”

Meets the standard with quality

- Adequately contains all the following Report of Information elements:
 1. Clearly informs the audience on a particular topic
 2. Presents support through researched facts
 3. Uses appropriate bibliographic/referencing style
- Applies all three fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. All General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (facts; concrete examples)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Includes transitions to begin each paragraph
- Uses effective first and last sentences
- May include descriptive commentary such as feelings, opinions, observations, or reflections in addition to the concrete Specific Details





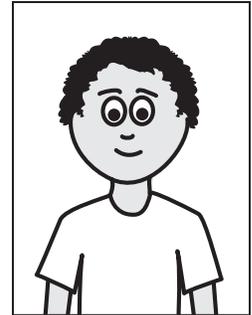
REPORT OF INFORMATION RUBRIC (2)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

2: Nearly There—“Apprentice Writer”

Inconsistently meets the standard

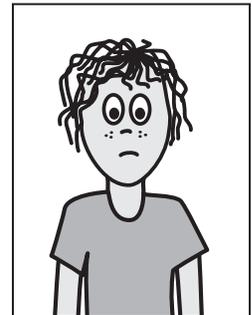
- Lacks some of the following Report of Information elements
 1. Clearly informs the audience on a particular topic
 2. Presents support through researched facts
 3. Uses appropriate bibliographic/referencing style
- Attempts to (or inconsistently) include the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (may not demonstrate understanding of concrete nature of Specific Details)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses transitions to begin paragraphs
- Inconsistently or incorrectly attempts interesting first and last sentences



1: Incomplete—“Fumbling Writer”

Has not met the standard

- Does not contain many of the following Report of Information elements:
 1. Clearly informs the audience on a particular topic
 2. Presents support through researched facts
 3. Uses appropriate bibliographic/referencing style
- Does not include some or all of the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, and Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses or does not use transitions to begin paragraphs
- Little or no attempt to write interesting first and last sentences



Date: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Explanatory Essay Rubric Score: _____

Comments: _____

REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINING STUDENT SAMPLE (1)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Directions: As you study the student sample in your Student Guide, follow the directions below, filling in the blanks as indicated.

1. **Topic:** Copy the **title** to indicate the topic the writer chose: _____

2. Complete the **Focus Question** that the author developed from the topic.

“What methods did miners _____”

3. Note how the Focus Question is rephrased as the **Preview Thesis**. Copy the three general statements from the Preview Thesis (the BING, BANG, and BONGO) on the appropriate lines.



BING: _____





BANG: _____





BONGO: _____



4. The author developed this essay from notes taken from three sources. Look at the student sample and copy the **Works Cited** on the following lines. Notice the format used in citing these sources. Discuss the format your teacher wants you to use (it may be different from the student sample). Notice that if there is a second line used for sources cited, it is indented.



REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINING STUDENT SAMPLE (2)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

5. Reread the BING paragraph (paragraph two) of the student sample. Note that two references appear in parentheses after the two sentences. The first reference refers to the last name of an author that is listed as an entry in the **Works Cited**. The number refers to the page in that entry. For example, (Abbott 110) means that on page 110 in the book Mining for America’s Gold, the reader can find information that the writer used in describing how a miner used a shallow pan to find gold. Using the model below, fill in the information for the remainder of the specific details (facts), for the BANG and BONGO paragraphs.

BING: Panning

Specific Detail: shallow pan to scoop up a mixture of dirt and water from a streambed (Abbott, 110)

Specific Detail: \$40 a day from panning gold (Smith, 46).

BANG: Using a cradle

Specific Detail: _____
 _____ (Friedman, 219).

Specific Detail: _____
 _____ (Friedman, 219).

Specific Detail: “ _____
 _____.”(Smith, 49).

BONGO: Using a long tom

Specific Detail: Smith _____

 _____ (51)*.

*Note: If you give the author’s name prior to the quotation, you only need to list the page number of the information in the parentheses at the end [for example, (51)]. If the quotation is a long passage, indent both margins and do not use quotation marks. For the purposes of this exercise, write in the first sentence “...” and the last sentence of the long quotation used in the student sample.

6. Note how the author re-stated the Preview Thesis and included a final comment in the **Summary** paragraph. Copy the sentences on the appropriate lines below.

Preview Thesis (Re-stated) _____

Final Comment _____

REPORT OF INFORMATION NOTE-TAKING



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

List your information source →

Book: _____



BING: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Student name: _____



List your notes →

List your information source →

Book: _____



BANG: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Student name: _____



List your notes →

List your information source →

Book: _____



BONGO: _____

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Student name: _____



List your notes →



REPORT OF INFORMATION OUTLINE

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

General Organization

1. **Topic:** _____
2. Write down the **Focus Question** you developed from the topic (the Focus Question is often rephrased as the Preview Thesis).

I. Preview Paragraph

Preview Thesis: _____

II. BING: _____

BING facts from Book 1: _____

1. _____

2. _____

BING facts from Book 2: _____

1. _____

2. _____



III. BANG: _____

BANG facts from Book 1: _____

1. _____

2. _____

BANG facts from Book 2: _____

1. _____

2. _____



IV. BONGO: _____

BONGO facts from Book 1: _____

1. _____

2. _____

BONGO facts from Book 2: _____

1. _____

2. _____



V. Summary

Re-state Preview Thesis (including Bing, Bang, and Bongo): _____

WRITING FRAMES: REPORT OF INFORMATION (1)



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Interest Catcher: _____

Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BING: _____

Provide at least two specific details — facts based on research:



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BANG: _____

Provide at least two specific details — facts based on research:



WRITING FRAMES: REPORT OF INFORMATION (2)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Transition Word(s): _____

Re-state BONGO: _____

Provide at least two specific details — facts based on research:



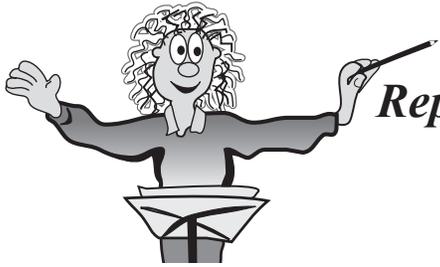
Re-state Preview Thesis with BING, BANG, and BONGO:

Concluding Statement: _____





FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Report of Information Essay Checklist

Preview Paragraph

- Did the author start his/her paragraph with a sentence that catches the audience's attention?
- Did the author clearly write his/her thesis statement and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo in his/her preview?

BING — General Statement #1



- Did the author re-state his/her Bing in the first sentence?
- Do the author have at least two details (research facts) that support his/her Bing statement?
- Will these details inform the audience?
- Did the author include appropriate references?

BANG — General Statement #2



- Did the author re-state his/her Bang in the first sentence?
- Do the author have at least two details (research facts) that support his/her Bang statement?
- Will these details inform the audience?
- Did the author include appropriate references?

BONGO — General Statement #3



- Did the author re-state his/her Bongo in the first sentence?
- Do the author have at least two details (research facts) that support his/her Bongo statement?
- Will these details inform the audience?
- Did the author include appropriate references?

Concluding Paragraph

- Did the author re-state his/her thesis with his/her Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- Did the author end his/her essay with an engaging comment?



VOCABULARY VARIETY

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“World-class writers...please keep this handy list of words. “Instead of Said” and “Better than Good” word lists keep you from re-using the same familiar words “said” and “good” too often in your writing. Add to this list as you go!

I’m sure you know some better words than those I gave you!”

Instead of Said, try...

added	explained
admitted	gaspd
answered	greeted
argued	hinted
asked	informed
babbled	insisted
bawled	laughed
blurted	murmured
bragged	muttered
bugged	ordered
called	pleaded
cautioned	promised
chatted	questioned
cheered	quoted
chuckled	ranted
coaxed	reminded
confessed	replied
corrected	requested
cried	roared
croaked	smiled
crowed	stammered
dared	suggested
decided	wailed
declared	wept
demanded	whispered
denied	wondered
exclaimed	yelled

Better than Good, try...

acceptable
adequate
ample
excellent
exemplary
first-rate
genuine
great
pleasant
pleasing
positive
praise-worthy
proficient
satisfactory
solid
splendid
substantial
superior
tiptop
valuable
useful
worthy



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Name: _____



Congratulations on completing your first draft! Now it's time to increase the focus and fine-tune the quality! First, write your name at the top of this paper. Then attach this page to the first draft of your essay. This page will stay with your essay as it goes around to each of the other people in your writing group. You will each have one of the following roles for today's Responding and Revising lesson. You will do this job for every essay that you read. Please take your job very seriously, as each of these roles is extremely important. Sign your name in the far right column when you have finished your job. Good luck!

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Role	Responsibilities	Resources	Signature
Wordsmith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Give at least three suggestions for more interesting words 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • VOCABULARY VARIETY • Thesaurus 	
Fact Finder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Select at least one sentence to improve <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — check to see if facts are related to topic and placed in the correct paragraph (BING, BANG, or BONGO) — check to see if questions are answered — check to see if works cited are written correctly in essay and at end of essay 		
Checklist Checker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Use the checklist to make sure every element is included 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST 	
The Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the essay carefully • Write one compliment about the essay <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write one suggestion for the essay <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer the question: do you now agree with the author's opinion? YES/NO (circle one) 		



PEER EDITING GUIDE

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



“Use this Peer Editing Guide during Phase Four (Proofreading and Editing) of the Writing Process to help you and your classmates become world-class writers!”

ESSAY CONTENT

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Interest catcher
- ___ Preview Thesis
- ___ BING
- ___ BANG
- ___ BONGO



Paragraph Two

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BING
- ___ Specific detail sentences



Paragraph Three

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BANG
- ___ Specific detail sentences

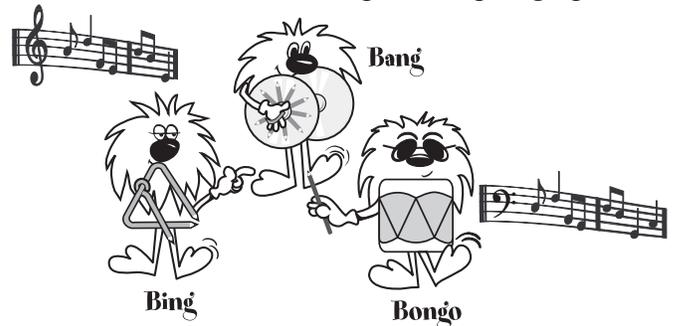


Paragraph Four

- ___ Transition word
- ___ General statement introducing BONGO
- ___ Specific detail sentences

Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Transition word
- ___ Summary Statement with BING, BANG, and BONGO in correct order
- ___ Closing – question or statement calling for reader reaction, similar to the interest catcher in preview paragraph



WRITING CONVENTIONS

Paragraph Form

- ___ Five paragraphs
- ___ Indented first line of each

Word Errors

- ___ Spelling
- ___ Capitalization (proper nouns, first word of sentences)
- ___ Word choice (is there a better word?)
- ___ Pronouns used correctly

Sentence Errors

- ___ Run on
- ___ Fragment
- ___ Hard to understand

Punctuation

- ___ Periods after sentences and in titles (i.e., Mr.)
- ___ Commas
- ___ Apostrophes (possessive nouns, contractions)
- ___ Quotation marks

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

With parent involvement, students experience greater success. Particularly at this early or pre-adolescent age, children’s response to “What did you learn (or do) in school today?” is often “Nothing.” This parent training involves those adults who might otherwise lose touch with their children’s academic progress. Many teachers and administrators seek new and meaningful ways of involving parents in their children’s education; with FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, we help you bridge the communication gap between school and home. Personalize this connection as best meets your needs.

Conducting a Parent Inservice

In San Diego, California, Dana Middle School has adopted the STEPS writing program for all of its students. Dana Middle School educates a wide spectrum of students, from very diverse backgrounds. A group of teachers at Dana have developed a parent inservice night, similar to Back-to-School night in the fall, when parents come to learn how their students are being taught to write. Titled “Oh, No!!! My Kid Has to Write an Essay!,” this parent training event has received glowing reviews from parents, administration, and the community.

By educating parents and providing a common language for essay writing, parents can support their children at home without writing the essay **for** their children. Throughout FUNDAMENTAL STEPS we stress that students must do their drafting in class. We’ve all seen the results of well-meaning parents’ help with an essay. This “help” is often no help at all in the long run. However, with the proper tools and proper boundaries (established and reinforced by you beginning with the parent inservice) parents can be extremely valuable allies in the writing process. During the year invite those parents who share the common STEPS language and understand the concepts of *helping* versus *doing it for them* into the classroom to assist during revising and editing phases.

After you have introduced the basic essay terminology to your students, schedule the parent inservice at a time when most parents can attend. Give them plenty of notice to ensure good attendance.



In one fourth grade class, the teacher sent a letter to the parents outlining the three organizational principles of STEPS and providing a basic glossary and overview. Parent response was overwhelmingly positive! Many parents came in to assist during the Drafting and Responding/Revising phases and gave great—appropriate—support.

PARENT CONNECTION

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Prepare a packet of resource information (perhaps provide a parent version of a STEPS writing folder) including:

- FUNDAMENTAL STEPS GLOSSARY
- SAMPLE ACTIVITY
- Rubrics you will use
- Examples of student work (from years past, or use the Sample Essays from the Student Guide)
- Your district writing requirements
- Approximate timeline/year-long plan
- Tips on appropriate help to give their children

Involve other teachers in your school who also use the STEPS writing program. This saves time and effort, and ensures that students and parents share the same language of Bing, Bang, and Bongo.



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Steps Essay Students work to produce a five-paragraph expository essay. *Expository* basically means that the students' essays explain something factual (such as a Report of Information on Thomas Edison) or experiential (such as an autobiographical Narrative). This model of organization works for creative essays, also, but this program teaches the essays of exposition as the foundation for all good, organized writing and thinking.

The Writing Process Students write in phases or stages. The Writing Process has 5 phases: Prewriting, Drafting, Responding and Revising, Proofreading and Editing, and Publishing. (See Student Guide pages 2-3)

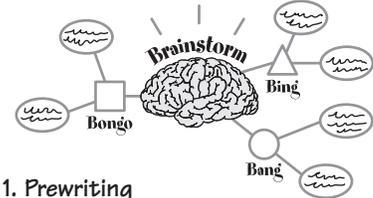
Fundamental Organizational Principles Three basic principles of writing guide the entire STEPS writing program. Essentially, these principles state that every well-organized essay has three key elements: the Preview Thesis, three General Statements supported by Specific Details, and a Summary.

Preview Thesis (also known in later STEPS units as the EGS: Enumerative General Statement). This thesis, or organizing sentence, introduces the purpose of the essay and states the Bing, Bang, and Bongo (General Statements) of the essay. We use the term "Preview" to encourage students to "tell the audience what they intend to tell them!" much like in the preview of a movie.

General Statements (*idea statements*) are the three main ideas/points of the essay. These must be supported by **specific details** (*concrete statements*). For example, students learn the difference between: "The car is beautiful" (*idea statement*) and "The car is bright red" (*concrete statement*). In FUNDAMENTAL STEPS, the General Statements are represented by the mnemonics Bing, Bang, and Bongo. Each General Statement constitutes a new paragraph.

Summary This sentence in the finale/concluding paragraph re-states the Preview Thesis and wraps up the essay in an engaging, summative manner. The Summary must also include Bing, Bang, and Bongo.

The Writing Process

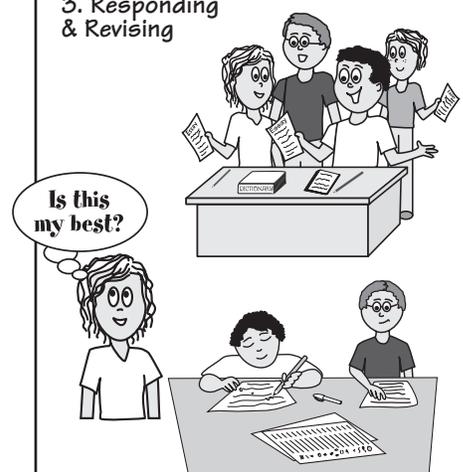


1. Prewriting

2. Drafting



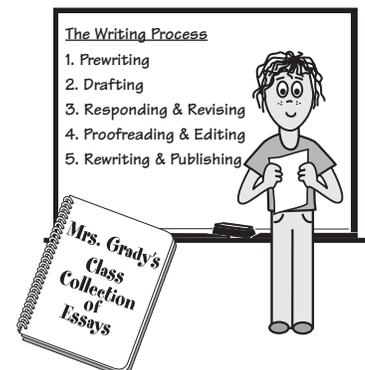
3. Responding & Revising



4. Proofreading & Editing



5. Rewriting & Publishing





FUNDAMENTAL STEPS GLOSSARY (2)

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



Bing

Bing: This is the first General Statement, and the first body paragraph (second paragraph of the essay). Bing plays the musical triangle, and is also represented by the color green and the shape of the triangle. Students write Bing three times in the essay: once in the Preview Thesis, once in the second paragraph, and once in the Summary.



Bang

Bang: This is the second General Statement, and the second body paragraph (third paragraph of the essay). Bang plays the cymbals, and is also represented by the color blue and the shape of the circle. Students write Bang three times in the essay: once in the Preview Thesis, once in the third paragraph, and once in the Summary.



Bongo

Bongo: This is the third General Statement, and the third body paragraph (fourth paragraph of the essay). Bongo plays the drum, and is also represented by the color red and the shape of the square. Students write Bongo three times in the essay: once in the Preview Thesis, once in the fourth paragraph, and once in the Summary.



Bandman Bob: This character, or leader of the band that “plays the music of the students’ words,” directs students at particular times through the unit. He appears in the Student Guide, on many of the reproducible pages, and occasionally sends letters to the students via the teacher to offer tips and encouragement.



The Prelude: This musical introduction is another name for the **Preview Thesis**. The first paragraph introduces the subject and catches the reader’s interest.



The Finale: This musical term is also known as the **Summary**; now that the students have clearly identified all their points and proven their thesis, the reader can enjoy the beautiful music of the writer’s words!



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Abstract: Abstract terms are ideas and other intangible nouns.

These cannot be experienced with the senses. Words such as *beauty, loyalty, truth, happiness, anger* are all abstract. These abstractions must be supported by concrete words/details to further explain them. Bing, Bang, and Bongo can be (and often are) abstract concepts, opinions, or ideas.

Concrete: In STEPS writing, Specific Details must be **concrete**.

A noun (person, place, or thing) that can be experienced with one or more of the senses: taste, touch, smell, sight, hearing. These words support and explain their **abstract** companions. For example, if a student writes about an incident in which he experienced *happiness*, he must support it with examples that “show” the happiness and tell the reader why (or how, or where, or when...) he was happy. *I felt happy when my grandma baked me the warm, gooey, sweet and sticky chocolate chip cookies. The cookie smell filled her entire house. When I awoke from my nap, my headache was gone and I was so happy because I got to eat the soft, chocolate morsels.*

Commentary: More advanced writers can include **commentary** in the body paragraphs of the essay in addition to their concrete Specific Details. Commentary lends further support and adds sophistication to students’ essays by involving personal opinions or reflections. Commentary can be: feelings, reflections, interpretations, insights, opinions, comments, evaluations. These ideas come from the student, and, if properly written, show synthesis (one of the highest levels of cognition) of the information presented.

Transitions: Words and phrases designed to allow thoughts to flow and connect smoothly. These introduce every paragraph except the Preview. Examples include: first, next, for instance, for example, in conclusion.

Interest-Catcher: This is the first sentence in the essay and is re-stated or re-worded again as the last sentence. Students use creative writing techniques to “hook” the audience. Often the interest-catcher is a question that invites the audience into the essay.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

TEACHING DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Teacher Background Information

The following Sample Activity provides an overview of the basic principles and a preview of one Introductory lesson in which students identify the key elements to any good STEPS essay. You could use this Sample Activity in the Parent Inservice to give the parents an idea of what their children experience.

Materials

- TREMENDOUS TRAVELS essay and outline — *class set + transparency*
- Overhead projector; overhead markers (black, green, blue, red) — *one of each*
- Coloring pencils, crayons, or markers (green, blue, and red) — *class set*

Procedure

1. Project the transparency of TREMENDOUS TRAVELS and distribute to students/parents.
2. Carefully read the essay with your parents as a shared read. Verbalize your own thinking as you identify the components of the essay, written in the margins. This model narrative essay demonstrates the three organizational principles of the STEPS writing program.
3. After reading TREMENDOUS TRAVELS, together, go back and carefully note the three fundamental organizational principles:
 - The **Preview Thesis**—This introduces the topic of the essay and lists Bing, Bang, and Bongo.
 - **General Statements** (Bing, Bang, and Bongo) or opinions introduced in the thesis must be supported by concrete **Specific Details**. Students expand on these in the three body paragraphs and add concrete details (facts) to support their statements.
 - **Summary**—the final paragraph restating the thesis and reviewing Bing, Bang, and Bongo.

“Dissect” the essay’s parts while thinking aloud. Read and note the first sentence (a question) which catches the interest of the audience. Underline the **Preview Thesis** with a black overhead marker; direct parents to underline the thesis (in pen or pencil).

The **musical prelude** represents the **thesis**. *The preview thesis is “I love traveling, and my favorite places I have visited are Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge.”*

4. Now use the green, blue, and red overhead markers to identify the **Bing** (green), **Bang** (blue), and **Bongo** (red) of the essay. Parents can share their colored markers with each other, but they should use the same colors you use for continuity’s sake. In both the intro paragraph AND in the individual body paragraphs, draw a green triangle around the Bing (*Washington D.C.*); draw a blue circle around the Bang (*Italy*); and draw a red square around the Bongo (*Columbia Gorge*).
5. In the summary paragraph, once again identify Bing, Bang, and Bongo with the colored markers. This “musical finale” re-states the three main points. The finale invites the reader to personalize the narrative with the concluding question, “What are your favorite places in the world?”
6. After parents have used the coloring materials to clearly identify the **Preview Thesis**, the **Bing, Bang, and Bongo**, and the **Summary** of the essay, encourage them to re-read the first body paragraph—the Bing paragraph—to identify the reasons the author gives for Washington D.C. as a favorite travel destination.
7. Help parents complete the outline of Bing, Bang, Bongo, and the supporting details. This solidifies the importance of the **second fundamental organizational principle**, that the **General Statements** listed in the preview thesis are supported by **Specific Details**.
 - I. Washington D.C.
 - a. Loved the White House (*This is really commentary; not a concrete detail! Use this as an example of how to enhance with abstract in addition to concrete.*)
 - b. Capitol and senators
 - c. Crisp January air
 - II. Italy
 - a. The Sistine Chapel
 - b. Delicious pasta and gelato
 - c. The Forum, old historical place
 - III. Columbia Gorge
 - a. Hiking on green trails
 - b. Visiting many waterfalls
 - c. Reading by the fireplace



There are a few “right” ways to outline/list the Specific Details. Accept a variety of correct answers as long as they resemble those presented here!

SAMPLE ACTIVITY

TEACHING DIRECTIONS

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

8. Now review the **third fundamental organizational principle**, the Summary re-states the thesis and wraps up the essay in an engaging, summative manner. Ask parents to write the summary statement on the final lines of Tremendous Travels outline: *For many reasons I loved Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge*. This musical finale reminds the reader of the main points the author included in the body of the essay.
9. Conclude the lesson with any parent comments or questions about the three fundamental organizational principles. If you are using a particular piece of music to signal the end of writing workshop, play it now!



FUNDAMENTAL STEPS



The first paragraph is the musical prelude with the Preview Thesis. The thesis statement introduces the topic of the essay: the author's favorite places she has visited. In the essay, the author has to explain why Washington D.C. (BING), Italy (BANG), and the Columbia Gorge (BONGO) are her favorite places.



The second paragraph is the BING. The author supports BING with specific details (concrete statements). *This second sentence is the author's opinion, which directly supports the General Statement and makes the paragraph more personal!



The third paragraph is the BANG. The author re-states that Italy is another favorite place she has visited. The rest of the paragraph uses specific details and comments to tell why she loved Italy.



The fourth paragraph is the BONGO. The first sentence is followed by concrete details and comments describing the BONGO point.



The fifth paragraph is the conclusion—the musical finale! The musical finale represents the ending and a reminder of all the author's three points. The author includes the reader with the last sentence, a question.



Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4

“Your five paragraph essays will be clear and easy for any audience to follow when you use Bing, Bang, and Bongo!”

TREMENDOUS TRAVELS

Do you like to travel? I love traveling, and my favorite places I have visited are Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge.

Washington D.C. was my favorite place to visit. *I loved seeing the White House. When I walked into the Capitol building, I heard all of the senators debating loudly. The crisp January air turned my nose into an ice cube!

My second favorite place was Italy. I saw the amazing Sistine Chapel with the ceiling painted by Michelangelo. I ate a lot of delicious food like pasta and gelato (like ice cream, but better!). I loved the Forum, a place where Italians worked and lived 2000 years ago.

My third favorite place to visit was the Columbia Gorge. I loved hiking on the many green and peaceful trails. I visited many waterfalls including the spectacular Multnomah Falls. When it rained, I enjoyed reading a book by the warm fireplace.

For many reasons I loved Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge. What are your favorite places in the world?

- **The purpose of this essay is to inform the reader.**
- **The audience could be your teacher, your friends, other students your age, or anyone else!**



SAMPLE ACTIVITY

FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

Use the **TREMENDOUS TRAVELS** essay as a model. Identify the following three principles of organization:

1. Preview Thesis (“The Prelude”)
2. Bing (triangle), Bang (cymbals), and Bongo (drums)—General Statements to prove your thesis point. These must have concrete Specific Details!
3. Summary in the final paragraph (“The Finale”)

1. What is the Preview Thesis? (Remember: this is the preview for your readers. The thesis tells them what is coming up!) *This is The Musical Prelude!*

2. What are the Bing, Bang, and Bongo and their Supporting Details?



Bing? _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____



Bang? _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____



Bongo? _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____



3. What is the Summary? *The Musical Finale!*

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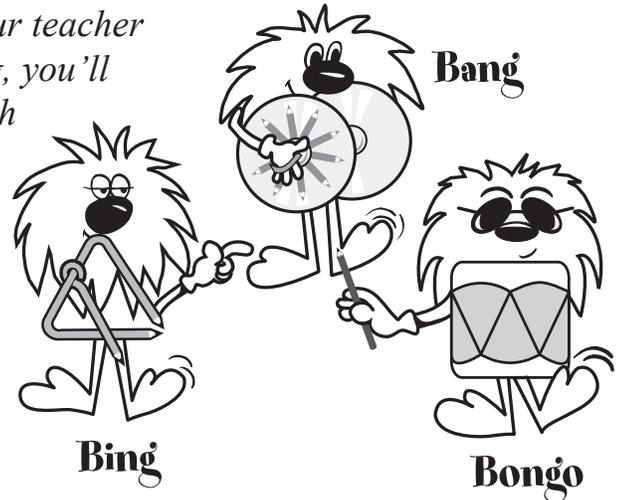


FUNDAMENTAL STEPS

A Step-by-Step Writing Program for Young Students

Hello Ladies and Gentlemen!

*Word 'round the studio is that you are learning one of the most important skills you need for life — how to write an excellent essay. Good for you! I'm thrilled your teacher asked for my assistance! Before long, you'll be writing five paragraph essays with the help of my musical assistants — **Bing**, the musical triangle, **Bang**, the cymbals, and **Bongo**, the drums! We will use them to help organize your essays. An essay without good organization is worse than a band with no music or leader... all jumbled up, it just doesn't make sense!*



*As we learn good essay-writing skills, I will pop in and out to give you some writing tips. I also want to see you using **Bing**, **Bang**, and **Bongo** in your essays. Every time you write, you write for a **purpose** and for an **audience**. You might not believe it now, but you have so much to say in your writing! Bing, Bang, and Bongo will help the music of your words play loudly, clearly and effectively!*

Happy Writing!

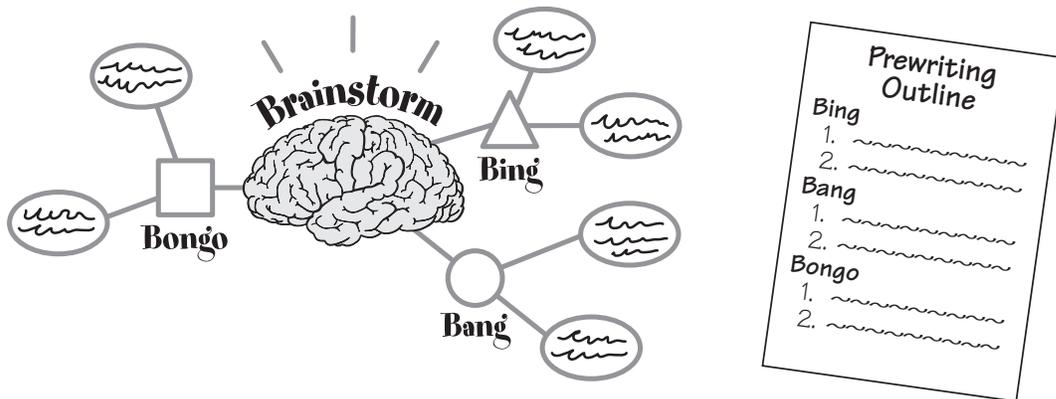
Bob
Bandman Bob



1. **Prewriting**

What do I want to say in my essay? What is my purpose? Who is my audience? What are my Bing, Bang, and Bongo points to support my thesis paragraph?

During the prewriting phase, you brainstorm, make notes, and organize your thoughts. The more time dedicated to this phase of writing, the better the end product.



2. **Drafting**

Use your prewriting work and write your first draft. At this stage you write freely without too much concern for spelling and conventions. Use the writing checklist for the particular writing style, to ensure you include all the necessary elements.



3. **Responding and Revising**

“Does my writing make sense? Does it fit the purpose? Did I follow the checklist?”

In this phase, you re-read your first draft. You also work with your teacher and your classmates to be sure you included all the important requirements. Work carefully and do your best!



4. Proofreading and Editing

“Is this my best? What do I need to fix? Can I use some of my writer’s tools to enhance my writing?”

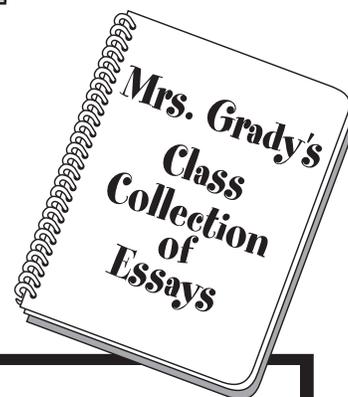
At this phase, you use specific proofreading and editing techniques. Use the peer editing guide provided by your teacher.



5. Rewriting and Publishing

“Now I make all the changes my teachers, friends, and I found. My next draft will be so much better!”

In this final phase, create a new, improved version of your original draft and share it with others!



The Writing Process

1. Prewriting
2. Drafting
3. Responding & Revising
4. Proofreading & Editing
5. Rewriting & Publishing





The first paragraph is the musical prelude with the Preview Thesis. The thesis statement introduces the topic of

the essay: the author's favorite places she has visited. In the essay, the author has to explain why Washington D.C. (BING), Italy (BANG), and the Columbia Gorge (BONGO) are her favorite places.



The second paragraph is the BING. The author supports BING with specific details (concrete statements). *This second sentence is the author's opinion, which directly supports the General Statement and makes the paragraph more personal!



The third paragraph is the BANG. The author restates that Italy is another favorite place she has visited. The rest of the paragraph uses specific details and comments to tell why she loved Italy.

The fourth paragraph is the BONGO. The first sentence is followed by concrete details and comments describing the BONGO point.



The fifth paragraph is the conclusion—the musical finale! The musical finale represents the ending and a reminder of all the author's three points. The author includes the reader with the last sentence, a question.



Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4

“Your five paragraph essays will be clear and easy for any audience to follow when you use *Bing, Bang, and Bongo!*”

TREMENDOUS TRAVELS

Do you like to travel? I love traveling, and my favorite places I have visited are Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge.

Washington D.C. was my favorite place to visit. *I loved seeing the White House. When I walked into the Capitol building, I heard all of the senators debating loudly. The crisp January air turned my nose into an ice cube!

My second favorite place was Italy. I saw the amazing Sistine Chapel with the ceiling painted by Michelangelo. I ate a lot of delicious food like pasta and gelato (like ice cream, but better!). I loved the Forum, a place where Italians worked and lived 2000 years ago.

My third favorite place to visit was the Columbia Gorge. I loved hiking on the many green and peaceful trails. I visited many waterfalls including the spectacular Multnomah Falls. When it rained, I enjoyed reading a book by the warm fireplace.

For many reasons I loved Washington D.C., Italy, and the Columbia Gorge. What are your favorite places in the world?

- The **purpose** of this essay is to **inform** the reader.
- The **audience** could be your teacher, your friends, other students your age, or anyone else!

Use the **TREMENDOUS TRAVELS** essay as a model. Identify the following three principles of organization:

1. Preview Thesis (“The Prelude”)
2. **Bing (triangle), Bang (cymbals), and Bongo (drums)**—General Statements to prove your thesis point. These must have concrete Specific Details!
3. Summary in the final paragraph (“The Finale”)

1. **What is the Preview Thesis?** (Remember: this is the preview for your readers. The thesis tells them what is coming up!) *This is The Musical Prelude!*

2. **What are the Bing, Bang, and Bongo and their Supporting Details?**



Bing? _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____



Bang? _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____



Bongo? _____

Detail _____

Detail _____

Detail _____



3. **What is the Summary?** *The Musical Finale!*



“*Learning to write a narrative is as easy as saying Bing, Bang, and Bongo!*”

- *First, we need to know the purpose.*
- *Listen carefully as your teacher shares this with you!*”

What is the purpose of a Narrative Essay? _____

What is the definition of a Narrative Essay?

1. _____
 2. _____
 3. _____
-
-

NARRATIVE ESSAY CHECKLIST

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Did I start my paragraph with a sentence that catches my audience’s attention?
- ___ Did I clearly write my preview thesis (the topic of my essay) and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo all in one sentence?



BING — General Statement #1

- ___ Did I re-state my Bing in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have two (or more) details that support my Bing statement?
- ___ Did I include concrete words, facts and examples?



BANG — General Statement #2

- ___ Did I re-state my Bang in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have two (or more) details that support my Bang statement?
- ___ Did I include concrete words, facts and examples?



BONGO — General Statement #3

- ___ Did I re-state my Bongo in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have two (or more) details that support my Bongo statement?
- ___ Did I include concrete words?



Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Did I re-state my thesis with my Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- ___ Did I write an interesting finale sentence?

FUN IN FLORIDA

Written by: Lisa

Where is the best place you have been on vacation? Florida was my favorite place to visit for many reasons, including the exciting theme parks, the beautiful beaches, and the warm, sunny weather.

The first reason Florida was my favorite place to visit was the exciting theme parks. Every park had so many different things to see and do. I loved going on rides and watching shows and parades. At one park, I saw all kinds of different animals that live in the ocean, such as dolphins, seals, and even whales.

The next reason Florida was my favorite place to visit was the beautiful beaches. I played in the waves and built a sand castle in the soft, white sand. In the evening, I watched the sunset over the water as the sky turned shades of pink and orange. I loved the combination of sun, surf, and sand.

The last reason Florida was my favorite place to visit was the warm, sunny weather. The temperature stayed in the high 80s, and I wore shorts and sandals everyday. When it rained, it only lasted a short while and then the sun came out again. I enjoyed doing outdoor activities in the nice weather, such as swimming and walking on the beach.

For many reasons, Florida was my favorite place to visit on vacation. Exciting theme parks, beautiful beaches, and warm, sunny weather make Florida a great place to go on vacation. Where would you most like to spend your next vacation?

This prelude paragraph is written in the first person. The author uses "I" and shares her thesis: "Florida was my favorite place to visit..." This narrative essay informs the reader why Florida is the author's favorite place to visit on vacation.

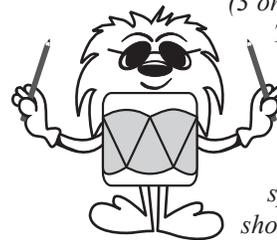


This paragraph would have been stronger with specific details of the rides, shows, and parades the author enjoyed.

The author used alliteration to end the paragraph: "... sun, surf, and sand."



This BONGO paragraph is a solid "Expected" (3 on the rubric) paragraph.



The author has a transition ("The last reason..."), the BONGO (warm, sunny weather), and specific details (wore shorts and sandals, enjoyed outdoor activities).

The finale paragraph restates the author's main points and engages the reader by ending with a question.



Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4



What is the purpose of a Explanatory Essay?

What is the definition of an Explanatory Essay?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

EXPLANATORY ESSAY CHECKLIST

Preview Paragraph

- Did I start my paragraph with a sentence that catches my audience’s attention?
- Did I clearly write my preview thesis (what I’m going to explain) and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo all in one sentence?



BING — General Statement #1

- Did I re-state my Bing in the first sentence?
- Do I have two (or more) details that further explain my Bing statement?
- Did I include concrete words and examples?



BANG — General Statement #2

- Did I re-state my Bang in the first sentence?
- Do I have two (or more) details that further explain my Bang statement?
- Did I include concrete words and examples?



BONGO — General Statement #3

- Did I re-state my Bongo in the first sentence?
- Do I have two (or more) details that further explain my Bongo statement?
- Did I include concrete words and examples?



Concluding Paragraph

- Did I re-state my thesis with my Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- Did I write an interesting finale sentence?

EXAMINING EGYPT

Written by: Cody

There are many ways authors develop the themes in their books. In The Golden Goblet, Eloise Jarvis McGraw shows the theme through the setting of Ancient Egypt by introducing three different places: the city of Thebes, the tombs, and the palace.

First of all, the story begins in the city of Thebes, also known as the city of the dead. This indicates objects made here must have had something to do with the deceased. Also, this shows that Thebes must have been a very important part of Ancient Egypt.

Next, the author takes the story to the tombs. The tombs were filled with jewels, gold, and carefully carved statues. This setting allows you to see the dead were greatly appreciated, since people had more elaborate homes after they die. This also shows you people may have yearned to die.

Lastly, the setting moved to the palace. The palace was home to the pharaoh, Queen, and other important people. This assured you that everyday laborers didn't usually see the inside of the palace. Furthermore, the palace must have been a very special place.

In summary, Eloise Jarvis McGraw describes Ancient Egypt using three different places: the capital of Ancient Egypt, the homes of the dead, and the homes of the Pharaoh and the Queen. When examined with the plot, the theme emerges: good conquers evil.

The purpose of this essay is to inform. The student/author is explaining how the author of The Golden Goblet uses three different settings of the novel to develop the theme of the book. An explanatory essay doesn't always have to be a "How-To" essay!

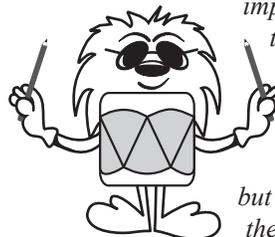


Great transition! The author gives good information about Thebes with specific details and good word variety (dead; deceased).

Again, the author uses great concrete details to show the audience the tombs. The last sentence is commentary, an idea the author has: "people may have yearned to die."



In this BONGO paragraph, the author changed the tense to past tense. It is important to use one verb tense (past, present, or future) in an essay. The final sentence is commentary—the author's opinion—but how is it related to the theme?



In the finale, the author uses different terms to describe the BING, BANG, and BONGO. The last sentence tells the theme of the book that the setting helped explain. This essay would have been better if the author had explained how the setting indicated "good conquered evil." This theme comes as a bit of a surprise at the very end! Structurally, this essay is Exemplary, but in content, it needed more of a link with the theme.



Structure and Content Rubric Score: 3



What is the purpose of a Persuasive Essay?

What is the definition of a Persuasive Essay?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

PERSUASIVE ESSAY CHECKLIST

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Did I start my paragraph with a sentence that catches my audience’s attention?
- ___ Did I clearly write my thesis statement (my opinion) and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo in my preview?



BING

- ___ Did I re-state my Bing in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have two (or more) details that support my Bing statement?
- ___ Will these details help persuade my audience?
- ___ Did I include concrete words?



BANG

- ___ Did I re-state my Bang in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have two (or more) details that support my Bang statement?
- ___ Will these details help persuade my audience?
- ___ Did I include concrete words?



BONGO

- ___ Did I re-state my Bongo in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have two (or more) details that support my Bongo statement?
- ___ Will these details help persuade my audience?
- ___ Did I include concrete words?



Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Did I re-state my thesis with my Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- ___ Did I invite my audience to share my opinion?

WE NEED MORE TIME!

Written by: David

Do you think recess is too short? I think school should have longer recess because recess is not long enough for conversations, snack, and play time.

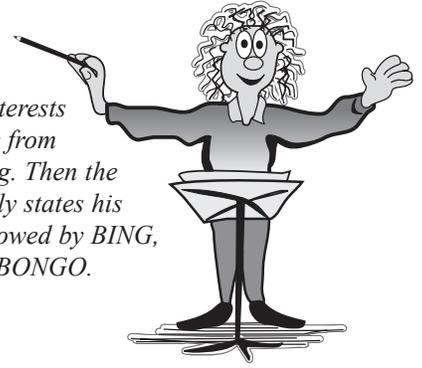
First, recess is not long enough to have a long conversation. Experts say that one of the most important life skills students learn in school is working together. Well, how can we work together if we don't have time to talk and get to know each other? When kids don't have enough time to talk at recess they end up talking more in class and that distracts the teacher and takes up learning time anyway. Recess might as well be longer because students will find a way to talk with each other one way or another.

Next, students do not have enough time to eat their snacks. With such a short recess, kids shove their food into their mouths like high-speed bulldozers scoop up huge mounds of dirt. Eating so quickly is unhealthy. If recess were longer, students could eat slowly and chew their food properly.

Finally, kids should have more play time. Everywhere around the world, kids have more homework, more tests, and more stress. Enough is enough! Schools should give 10 minutes to eat and then 15 minutes to play. It is time for kids to get outside and run, skip, jump, and be kids!

In conclusion, school should have longer recess because recess is not long enough for conversations, snack, and play time. Don't you think recess is too short?

The first sentence—a question—interests the audience from the beginning. Then the author clearly states his opinion, followed by BING, BANG, and BONGO.



This author used “expert opinion” to support his General Statement, explaining why conversations are important.



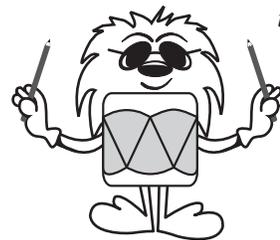
The question in the middle of the paragraph makes the reader think about the arguments explaining why students need conversations. Do you think these arguments are persuasive?



“Kids shove their food into their mouths like high-speed bulldozers scoop up huge mounds of dirt” is a descriptive writing device that helps put a picture in the mind of the audience.



The author uses the Persuasive Propaganda technique “Bandwagon,” stressing the idea that people like to do what others are doing and like to believe what others believe.



After the transition phrase, the author re-states the BING, BANG, and BONGO. The closing question invites the reader to share the author's opinion.



Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4



What is the purpose of a Report of Information Essay?

What is the definition of a Report of Information Essay?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

REPORT OF INFORMATION CHECKLIST

Preview Paragraph

- ___ Did I start my paragraph with a sentence that catches my audience’s attention?
- ___ Did I clearly write my thesis statement and include Bing, Bang, and Bongo in my preview?

BING



- ___ Did I re-state my Bing in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have at least two details (research facts) that support my Bing statement?
- ___ Will these details inform my audience?
- ___ Did I include appropriate references?



BANG



- ___ Did I re-state my Bang in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have at least two details (research facts) that support my Bang statement?
- ___ Will these details inform my audience?
- ___ Did I include appropriate references?



BONGO



- ___ Did I re-state my Bongo in the first sentence?
- ___ Do I have at least two details (research facts) that support my Bongo statement?
- ___ Will these details inform my audience?
- ___ Did I include appropriate references?



Concluding Paragraph

- ___ Did I re-state my thesis with my Bing, Bang, and Bongo?
- ___ Did I end my essay with an engaging comment?

EARLY MINING METHODS TO STRIKE IT RICH!

Written by: Dave

“Gold! Gold!” Miners of the 1840s used three methods to take gold from rivers and streams: panning, cradling, and using a long tom.

At the beginning, panning was the most popular method of mining. Miners used a shallow pan to scoop up a mixture of dirt and water from a streambed (Abbott, 110). By swirling the pan and tipping it slightly, miners separated the heavier gold. An early forty-niner claimed he was able to earn \$40 a day from panning gold (that was a lot of money in those times!) (Smith, 46).

Another method of mining was called cradling. A cradle was a wooden device built like a baby’s cradle. It was covered with an iron sheet full of small holes (Friedman, 219). Miners first placed a shovel-full of dirt on the top. Then they shook the cradle. Stones and large objects would roll off with the fine dirt, and the gold would go through. The bottom of the cradle had ridges of wood that caught the gold but allowed the sand and water to go out the one end that was open (Friedman, 219). “Using a cradle instead of panning, I could easily triple my nugget take,” one forty-niner reported (Smith, 49).

Finally, a third method of mining used the long tom. This was a better method than the cradle. Smith explains how it worked:

The long tom was built in a fashion similar to the cradle. It had an iron top with holes and a bottom with ridges. However, it was 12 to 20 feet long and was stationary. This device was placed so that the stream’s water would run through it and help wash away the dirt the miner would throw on its top. The gold would settle on the bottom with considerable sand. This gold was then separated from the sand by panning. (51)

In conclusion, these three methods of mining gold—panning, cradling, and using a long tom—helped many miners succeed in the California gold rush. Who knows how much gold might have been missed without these mining methods.

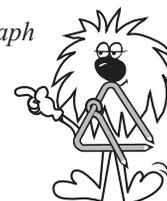
Works Cited

- Abbott, Oliver. *Mining for America’s Gold*. NY: Forrester and Company, 2001.
 Friedman, Karen. “Gold Rush.” *Mining*, Vol. 109, Fall 1999, pp. 201-230.
 Smith, James. “Early Methods of Mining.” *Mining Encyclopedia*, 10th ed., 2000.

Notice the interest catching first sentence. It catches the audience’s attention through its exclamatory nature.



The BING paragraph begins with an effective transition—“At the beginning...”

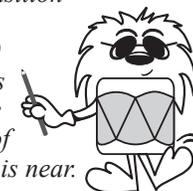


“Another method...” is an example of a useful transition to introduce the BANG paragraph.



Notice the many supporting detail sentences. When writing a report of information essay, you may need to provide more than two supporting details to make your point. It is better to have too many, than to have too few!

The use of the transition word “Finally” to begin the BONGO paragraph informs the reader that the end of the report of information essay is near.



Notice the author’s commentary in the sentence, “This was a better method than the cradle.” This commentary is supported by the quote.

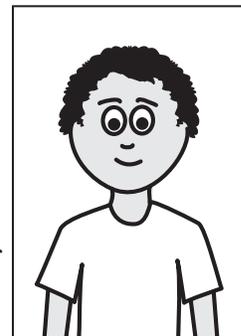
Note three things about this long quotation:

- 1—It is indented extra space on both sides.
- 2—Because of its indentation pattern, it needs no quotation marks to identify it as a quotation.
- 3—Because the author is named in the text, only the page number is needed at the end of the quotation.

“In conclusion” is a transition introducing the Summary, which restates the BING, BANG, and BONGO points.

Structure and Content Rubric Score: 4

2: Nearly There—“Apprentice Writer”
Inconsistently meets the standard



- Attempts to (or inconsistently) include the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details (may not demonstrate understanding of concrete nature of Specific Details)
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses transitions to begin paragraphs
- Inconsistently or incorrectly attempts interesting first and last sentences



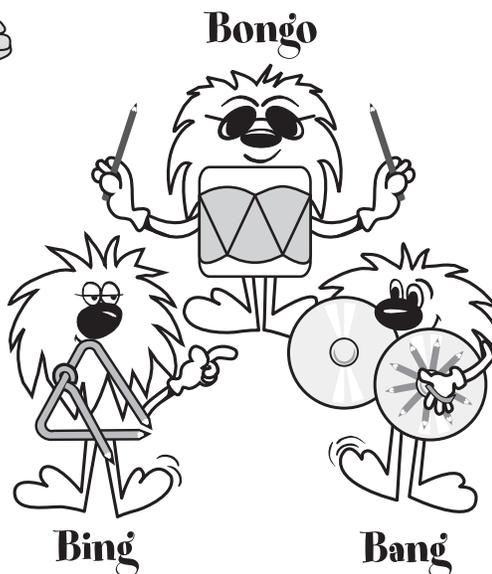
1: Incomplete—“Fumbling Writer”
Has not met the standard



- Does not include some or all of the fundamental organizational principles:
 1. Preview Thesis with related Bing, Bang, and Bongo
 2. General Statements (Bing, Bang, Bongo) have relevant support from Specific Details
 3. Summary re-states Thesis, including Bing, Bang, Bongo in same order
- Inconsistently uses or does not use transitions to begin paragraphs
- Little or no attempt to write interesting first and last sentences



Bandman Bob



Bing

Bang

EDITING MARKS

Editing Mark	Examples in Text	Meaning
	watch out! 	Capitalize the letter.
	I love D ogs.	Use lowercase.
	People ran qu ^u ckly.	Insert a letter. (This symbol is called a caret.)
	Place a period here 	Insert a period.
	When it rains the river overflows. 	Insert a comma.
	...with me. The next day...	Start a new paragraph.
	 Good morning,  Carrie called.	Insert quotations.
	pop  corn	Join words.
	Kristen and and Steve wrote this essay.	Delete this word.
	Stacy ^{and} Barb like it.	Insert a word.
	Can you  with  come  me?	Reverse word order.
	Make a wise  decision.	Insert a space.
	The old  baer growled.	Check spelling.