

## TEACHER TIPS FOR EXPOSITORY WRITING

Hickman Charter School

2012-2013 School Year

**READ** Once again, just like you've done with the previous domains, look at good examples of informative writing before the pencil hits the paper. If you're reading an article or section in a textbook, try completing a graphic organizer for what you're reading, just for practice. Start with short articles, and photocopy them. Teach your child to use a highlighter to identify the main points being made in the article.

**Need examples?** Both the Houghton Mifflin and the Prentice Hall books contain many examples of expository writing at each grade level. Read the examples in the text, or find your own. Student writing models for informative writing are included in the texts, as well as additional samples of informative writing.

Houghton-Mifflin Journeys 4 Text p. 654

4 Practice Book p. 364

Houghton-Mifflin Expeditions 5 Text p. 492

5 Practice Book p. 288

Houghton-Mifflin Triumphs 6 Text p. 384

6 Practice Book p. 228

Prentice-Hall Bronze 7 Text p. 242, 396, 586, 696, 766, 836

Prentice-Hall Silver 8 Text p. 510, 686, 902, 962

In addition, the Houghton-Mifflin website offers a good collection of benchmark papers for all types of writings, grades 2-8.

<http://www.eduplace.com/rdg/hme/>

**PROVIDE TOOLS** Once you've laid the groundwork, get out the graphic organizer, but don't just hand it over to them. Work on it together! The one provided can be used with younger writers by having them just fill in the main Roman Numeral points. More experienced writers can complete the detail parts as well. For other organizers, search the website that accompanies our Houghton Mifflin reading texts.

### **Expository writing:**

- requires careful organization
- relies on details to support the main points being made
- can be presented in a variety of formats
- should conclude by restating the topic and the main points

[http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/k\\_5/graphorg/index.html](http://www.eduplace.com/kids/hme/k_5/graphorg/index.html)

**ENCOURAGE** Look for ways to encourage his/her efforts! Select **one** area to emphasize when revising. Perhaps reorganizing

sentences would make the work easier to read. Being more intentional with word choice might make for more precise reading. Focus on **one** element at a time for editing as well: punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure. Keep those *Write Source* books handy (annex checkout). Teach your kids to use these books! Don't wear out the revision process by expecting perfection. Save something for next time!!

**SIX KIDS???** Like before, use the same topic for everyone. If you're using this method successfully, perhaps you can rotate so that each child has a chance to choose a topic sometime during the school year. Use a big a big piece of butcher paper for group brainstorming. When you're done, organize by cutting the paper up and grouping the ideas together, or circle them with colored markers. Next, start writing. A younger child might do well to produce a 5 sentence paragraph (topic sentence, 3 details and a concluding sentence). Older kids could follow the same model, but write 5 paragraphs instead of 5 sentences: an introductory paragraph followed by a paragraph for each main point, and a "restating" paragraph for a conclusion. That middle kid could do 3 paragraphs: beginning, middle, end.

Then, revise and edit by having a group sharing time and let everyone read his/her piece. Encourage input, but require that ideas be shared in pairs: first a compliment, then a constructive point!

Finally, have fun producing final drafts. If you're using a computer, try inserting some appropriate clip art. Let your students illustrate their handwritten drafts using crayons or colored pencils!

**NEED MORE?** Check out the annotated list of web reference posted on our school web page!

# STUDENT TIPS FOR EXPOSITORY WRITING

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## **What is expository writing?**

Has your mom (or other teacher) ever asked you to write a report, do a book report, pretend you are a newspaper reporter? If so, you've already done some expository writing! But wait...

expository writing doesn't have to be a typical report. It can take the form of a brochure, invitation, operating instructions, movie review or other piece of writing. The common element in all of these is that expository writing shares information with the reader!

**FOCUS!** Suppose you are studying Ancient Egypt for history, and you've become fascinated with King Tut. You've watched every Discovery Education video about him that you can find, and have checked out many library books as well. How could you turn some of that information into a piece of expository writing?

Before you ever start the writing process there are two important pieces of information you'll need.

First, you'll need to decide exactly what information you want to share. Perhaps your mom will give you a prompt or assignment, or she might just tell you to write about something that you've studied in Social Studies. In that case, narrow the focus and pick a specific topic!

Once you know what information you'll be sharing, you'll need to determine with whom you wish to share it and why. That's your target audience. Your writing will always reflect your "voice" as an author, but it will take on different tones depending on who will be reading what you write.

**ORGANIZE** Once you've decided on a topic for your writing (this is what we talked about in the "focus" section above), the next step is to gather ideas and organize them using a planner like the one included with this packet. Organization is a very important step for any kind of writing. A good rule is to always focus on 3's, just like you did for the persuasive piece you wrote. You'll have a beginning, middle and end (3 parts). Identify the 3 main points you want to make with

## **Expository Writing**

- informs the reader
- uses factual information
- requires good organization
- can be presented in a variety of formats

your writing. You'll list them in your beginning. For the second part (middle), you'll expand on each of the 3 main points by identifying 3 supporting details for each one. For your conclusion, be sure to restate those 3 main

points once again!

Do you see how it works? Once you've filled out the organizational outline, you're ready to write!

**WRITE** After you've gone through the process of focusing and organizing your information by recording it on some sort of planner, you're finally ready to write! Be sure to use specific, concrete details rather than vague ones. The details are what help the reader to "experience" what you're writing about instead of just reading about it. Good word choice is what helps you make your writing interesting so that others will want to read what you wrote. Keep your target audience in mind as you write. Provide whatever background information is necessary in order for your reader to easily understand what you're saying.

**REVISE** It makes your writing better! A good way to start the revision process is to find a good listener, and read it aloud to him/her. OR... have someone read it to you while you make notes about possible changes. Either way, it just seems different if you hear it instead of read it.

**EDIT** You're almost finished!! You have a nicely organized piece of writing that is focused and shares information that is appropriate for your target audience. Now, take a minute to be sure that your writing is correct. Check spelling, watch for missing punctuation and capital letters. Did you indent your paragraphs? No paragraphs??? Think about the parts—the 3's we talked about—you should have at least 3 paragraphs—beginning, middle, end!!

**SHARE!** After you're satisfied that you've done your best, print your story on fancy paper, add a border or picture or clipart. Send it to your grandma. Stick it on the refrigerator. Enter a contest. Or..... **give it to your EC!**

## Expository Writing Web References

<http://www.thewritesource.com/studentmodels/>

OK. This goes beyond expository writing to include models of student writing in various domains and for various grades, all the way through high school. A nice bonus is the short commentary provided that identifies the strengths of each piece. AND... if you're inclined, there is a procedure for submitting your own student's work to be published on the site!

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/>

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/student-interactives/essay-30063.html>

Both of these links refer to the same website. The first one will take viewers to a searchable lesson-plan archive. A search using various keywords related to expository writing (expository, informative, essay, etc.) turned up many lessons for various grade levels from K all the way through high school. Many of the lessons incorporate the essay map tool that is accessed via the second link above. After using the tool, students can print a graphic organizer that shows their plan.

[http://www.greatsource.com/iwrite/students/s\\_expos.html](http://www.greatsource.com/iwrite/students/s_expos.html)

With the page, start with the tutorial, then proceed to the various types of expository writing... The lesson goes step-by-step and offers good help for parents who need a boost in their confidence to teach writing! Included within the teaching are printable organizers and planners, as well as templates that students can use to actually prepare and print their pieces of writing.

<http://writing.pppst.com/expository.html>

This link will take you to a page full of more links!! If you can't find something to help you with expository writing here, I don't know where else to send you!! The various links are sorted into 3 sections: powerpoints, kids, teachers. Something for everyone!!

<http://www.boveecruz.com/teachers/ExpositoryWriting.pdf>

This document has been floating around online for years, and has probably landed on at least a dozen sites. It lasts because it is good! Nearly 100 pages of teaching tips and student work pages to help develop good expository writing skills. If you've been with Hickman Charter School for any length of time, you might have seen some of the content in prior writing packets or in the many classes we've offered!!



## Expository Writing Outline/Brainstorming

I. Introduction: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

II. Main Point #1 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A. DETAIL #1: \_\_\_\_\_

B. DETAIL #2: \_\_\_\_\_

C. DETAIL #3: \_\_\_\_\_

III. Main Point #2 \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A. DETAIL #1: \_\_\_\_\_

B. DETAIL #2: \_\_\_\_\_

C. DETAIL #3: \_\_\_\_\_

IV. Main Point #3: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A. DETAIL #1: \_\_\_\_\_

B. DETAIL #2: \_\_\_\_\_

C. DETAIL #3: \_\_\_\_\_

V. Conclusion (restate opinion and reasons) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# EXPOSITORY WRITING SAMPLE RUBRIC

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment/Title \_\_\_\_\_

**I think....**

**Parent/Teacher thinks...**

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

### Is it interesting to read?

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

Writing is easy to understand and follow. (*organization, idea*)

Detail is precise and rich.. (*word choice*)

Reader's attention is captured. (*idea, voice*)

Sentences show variety in length, beginning words, type and structure. (*fluency*)

An appropriate amount of information is given. (*idea*)

The text sounds good when read aloud. (*fluency*)

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

### Is it easy to read and understand?

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

The writing clearly has a beginning, middle and end. (*organization*)

The reader can clearly recognize the purpose for the writing.

The purpose is supported with 3 or more clear reasons.

Each reason is supported with details: facts or other appropriate information. (older students)

Appropriate transitional words and phrases enhance the paper's flow. (*organization*)

Sentences are grammatically and structurally correct: no run-ons or fragments. (*fluency, conventions*)

Paragraphs are structured: topic sentence, details, closing or bridge sentence. (*organization*)

Spelling, capitalization and punctuation are correct. (*conventions*)

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

### Is the assignment complete?

☺ 4 3 2 1 ☹

The writing is of a persuasive nature.

A graphic organizer or plan has been used and is attached.

A rough draft (attached) shows evidence of revision and editing.

The final draft is visually attractive and appropriate for the purpose of the assignment.

In complete sentences, use the vocabulary of this rubric to tell what you like about this piece of writing.

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Tell what you will seek to improve in your next piece of writing.

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