

WRITING FOR SHORT AMOUNTS OF TIME

summary | compare & contrast | comprehension
questions



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Teaching short writing is important because it allows your students to practice to the point of automaticity, and writing is so much easier when done often.

Additionally, mechanics should be taught systematically and reinforced in short writing exercises.

Writing summaries and comparing & contrasting based writing, both found in this guide, build up student comprehension and writing skills when used regularly.

With scaffolded support, lower elementary students can use the ideas in this book effectively.

Acknowledgements and Copyright Info

This work comes compliments of Dr. Anita Archer and has been simply redesigned and edited by the Strategic Instruction Team at Region 13 for free use by teachers and educational professionals. It is a free resource, not available for resale.

Why?

When we write *short products* more often we're more likely to improve our writing than writing *long products* seldomly.

Short products can be written in all classes.

What?

The following types of products will be particularly useful in terms of writing practice and comprehension:

- A** Writing Summaries
- B** Writing Comparison and Contrast
- C** Answering Comprehension Questions

Students' writing can be supported using:

- A** Writing Strategies
- B** Writing Frames
- C** Think Sheets

How?

Depending on the scaffolding used, the teacher can:

- A** Use: I do it. We do it. You do it.
- B** I do it. You do it.
- C** Illustrate the procedure with a completed example

Provide Feedback?

- A** Teacher provides feedback to individuals in real time by walking around, looking around, talking around.
- B** Teacher provides feedback to entire group.
- C** Students provide feedback on clarity to partners.
- D** Students reread their products and revise and edit.

Summary Strategy

The summary strategy is a great way to quickly summarize a topic and connect ideas while building a sentence or something else.

STEP 1 | LIST

Make a list of important ideas

STEP 2 | CROSS-OUT

Cross out any unnecessary or weak ideas.

STEP 3 | CONNECT

Connect ideas that could go in one sentence.

STEP 4 | NUMBER

Number the ideas in the order that they will appear in a paragraph

STEP 5 | WRITE

Write the paragraph.

STEP 6 | EDIT

Revise and proofread your answer.

LIST | PENGUIN'S BIRTH

Make a list of important ideas.

Male takes care of egg

Female lays egg

Female leaves

Female spends winter at sea

The water is very cold

Male puts egg on his feet under belly

Male stays on egg for two months

Male doesn't eat

Egg hatches

Male must care for baby

CROSS OUT & CONNECT | PENGUIN'S BIRTH

Cross out any unnecessary or weak ideas. Connect ideas that could go in one sentence.

Male takes care of egg

Female lays egg

Female leaves

Female spends winter at sea

~~The water is very cold~~

Male puts egg on his feet under belly

Male stays on egg for two months

Male doesn't eat

Egg hatches

Male must care for baby

NUMBER | PENGUIN'S BIRTH

Number the ideas in the order that they will appear in the paragraph.

- 3 Male takes care of egg
- 1 Female lays egg
- 2 Female leaves
- Female spends winter at sea
- ~~The water is very cold~~
- 4 Male puts egg on his feet under belly
- Male stays on egg for two months
- 5 Male doesn't eat
- 6 Egg hatches
- Male must care for baby

WRITE A SUMMARY | PENGUIN'S BIRTH

The birth process of penguins is fascinating and quite different from that of other animals. The female penguin lays an egg. However, the female penguin leaves soon after laying the egg and spends the winter in the sea. Meanwhile the male must take care of the egg. For two months, he places the egg on his feet under his belly. During this time, the male penguin doesn't eat. Even after the baby penguin hatches, the male penguin continues to take care of the infant penguin.

GREEK THEATER | EXAMPLE

- 1 Began as a religious ceremony
 - Honored the Greek god Dionysus
 - ~~Beliefs in Dionysus began to spread southward~~
- 2 Choruses chanted lyrics
- 3 Actors joined the choruses
- 4 The Dionysus festival in Athens became a drama competition
 - Amphitheaters were built
- 5 Performed tragedies that taught lessons
 - Performed comedies that made fun of life
- 6 Decline when playwrights died and the government changed.

GREEK THEATER | FINAL SUMMARY

The roots of modern theater can be found in early Greek theater. Greek theater began as a religious ceremony that honored the Greek god Dionysus. At first, choruses chanted lyrics. When actors were added to interact with the chorus, theater was born. Later, the Dionysus festival in Athens became a drama competition, and amphitheaters were built to accommodate the event. Both tragedies, which taught lessons, and comedies, which made fun of life, were performed. Greek theater declined when the great playwrights died and the government changed.

TRANSITION WORD LIST

Addition

furthermore
moreover
too
also
in the second place
again
in addition
even more
next
further
last, lastly
finally
besides
and, or, nor
first
second, secondly

Comparison

in the same way
by the same token
similarly
in the manner
likewise
in similar fashion

Contrast

yet
and yet
nevertheless
nonetheless
after all
but
however
though
otherwise
on the contrary
in contrast
notwithstanding
on the other hand
at the same time

Time

while
immediately
never
after
later, earlier
always
when
soon
whenever
meanwhile
sometimes
in the meantime
during
afterwards
now, until now
next
following
once
then
at length
simultaneously
so far
this time
subsequently

Clarification

that is to say
in other words
to explain
i.e., (that is)
to clarify
to rephrase it
to put it another way

Cause

because
since
on account of
for that reason

Place

here
there
nearby
beyond
wherever
opposite to
adjacent to
neighboring on
above, below

Example or Illustration

to illustrate
to demonstrate
specifically
for instance
as an illustration
e.g., (for example)
for example

Purpose

in order that
so that
to that end, to this
end
for this purpose

Qualification

almost
nearly
probably
never
always
frequently
perhaps
maybe
although

Effect

therefore
consequently
accordingly
thus
hence
as a result

Summarize

to summarize
in sum
in brief
to sum up
in short

Intensification

indeed
to repeat
by all means
of course
certainly
without doubt
undoubtedly
in fact
surely
in fact

WRITING ABOUT A PERSON

Use this writing schema to help jot down notes about a person to use in your writing activities. It's a great tool for getting all the necessary information about a person down before a writing activity. Adjust questions as necessary

Questions to Ask	Answers / Notes
Who were they?	
Why are they famous?	
What were their accomplishments?	
When did they live?	
Where did they live?	
What did they believe?	
Were there any unusual things about them?	

WRITING ABOUT A PERSON: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Questions to Ask	Answers / Notes
Who were they?	Benjamin Franklin
Why are they famous?	Famous inventor, scientist, author, printer, politician
What were their accomplishments?	Inventor - Franklin stove, bifocals, swim fins Scientist - Verified that lightening was not electricity Politician - Helped to write the Declaration of Independence; ambassador to France; signed Constitution. Author - Poor Richard's Almanack
When did they live?	January 17, 1706 - April 17, 1790
Where did they live?	Born in Boston Lived most of life in Philadelphia Spent time in Great Britain and France
What did they believe?	Wrote about 13 virtues including: order, justice, moderation, and humility Believed that the United States should be independent. Worked for Independence.
Were there any unusual things about them?	Ben was achieved in many domains.

WRITING ABOUT A PERSON: BENJAMIN FRANKLIN PARAGRAPH

Ben Franklin, a well-known American living from 1706 to 1790, gained fame as an inventor, scientist, author, printer, and politician. As an inventor, he developed a range of items including the Franklin stove, bifocals, and swim fins. His experiments verified that lightning was simply a form of electricity. As an author, he was best known for his annual Poor Richard's Almanack that supplied advice to readers on numerous subjects. As a politician, Franklin helped write the Declaration of Independence, signed the Constitution, and served as an ambassador to France. While Franklin's accomplishments spanned many domains, his life spanned three countries: the US, Great Britain, and France.

WRITING ABOUT THEORIES/ CONCEPTS/IDEAS

Use this writing schema to help jot down notes about theories, concepts, and ideas. It's a great tool for getting all the necessary information about a theory, concept, or idea down before a writing activity.

Questions to Ask	Answers / Notes
What is it called?	
What is its big idea?	
Who uses it? Who does it?	
How is it used? How does it work?	
Why is it important?	
Who first thought of it? When was it first thought of?	
Are there other related theories/ concepts?	

WRITING ABOUT GROUPS / ORGANIZATIONS/ INSTITUTIONS

Use this writing schema to help jot down notes about groups, organizations, and institutions. It's a great tool for getting all the necessary information about a group, organization, or institution down before a writing activity.

Questions to Ask	Answers / Notes
What is its name? Where is it located?	
What is its organizational structure?	
Does it have members? How are they determined? how are they similar?	
What is its purpose?	
When did it first begin?	
Does it have a symbol or flag?	

WRITING ABOUT PERIOD OR EVENT

Use this writing schema to help jot down notes about a period or event. It's a great tool for getting all the necessary information about a period or event down before a writing activity.

Questions to Ask	Answers / Notes
When did event occur?	
Where did it occur?	
What was the duration?	
What happened?	
What happened in the end?	
What caused the event?	
Why was it significant?	
What caused the event?	
What were the consequences?	

SUMMARY OF INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Use this writing frame to help you summarize your chapter and topic. Frames get students writing quickly, allow for a coherent, well written paragraph, can be used in all classes beginning in upper elementary, make students think, and help students use academic language.

CHAPTER: _____ **TOPIC:** _____

1. In this section of the chapter, a number of critical points were made about...
2. First, the author(s) pointed out that...
3. This was important because...
4. Next, the author(s) mentioned that...
5. Furthermore, the author(s) indicated...
6. This was critical because...
7. Finally, the author(s) suggested that...

SUMMARY OF INFORMATIONAL TEXT | EXAMPLE

CHAPTER: Drifting Continents
TOPIC: Wegener's Theory

In this section of the chapter, a number of critical points were made about *Alfred Wegener's theory of continental drift*. First, the authors pointed out that *Wegener believed that all the continents were once joined together in a single land mass that drifted apart forming the continents of today*. This was important because it *explained why the outline of the continents as they are today fit together*. Next, the authors mentioned that *Wegener argued that there were so many pieces of evidence supporting his theory of continental drift*. Furthermore, they indicated that *Wegener used evidence of similar landforms and fossils on different continents to prove his theory*. This was critical because *other scientists could validate this evidence*. Finally, the authors suggested that *despite this evidence, other scientists did not accept Wegener's theory because he could not explain the force that pushes and pulls the continent*.

COMPARE AND CONTRAST FRAME

Use this writing frame to help you compare and contrast.

SAME

_____ and _____ are similar in a number of ways.

First they both...

Another critical similarity is...

An equally important similarity is...

Finally, they...

DIFFERENT

The differences between _____ and _____ are also obvious.

The most important difference is...

In addition, they are...

In the final analysis, _____ differs from _____ in two other major ways:

COMPARE AND CONTRAST THINK SHEETS

Use this think sheet to help students compare and contrast. When setting up a think sheet, use parallel organization.

Point	Item 1 SENATE
Branch	Legislative Branch - Congress
Number	100 Senators
Number from State	2 Senators from each state
Term	6 Years
Qualifications	30 years old, US citizen for 9 years, resident of state
Shared Powers	Making laws, collecting taxes, establishing budget
Separate Powers	Ratify treaties Confirm presidential appointments Try impeached high officials

Point	Item 2 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Branch	Legislative Branch - Congress
Number	435 Representatives
Number from State	Depends on Population of State
Term	2 Years
Qualifications	25 Years old, US citizen for 7 years, resident of state
Shared Powers	Making laws, collecting taxes, establishing budget
Separate Powers	Initiate spending and tax bills Impeach high officials If electoral college ends in tie, house elects president

COMPARE AND CONTRAST THINK SHEET

Item 1 | Senate

Item 2 | House of Representatives

Similarities

Both are part of the legislative branch of government

Two parts of the Congress

Members of Congress are elected by citizens of states

Joint powers: make laws, declare war, collect taxes

Differences

	Senate	House of Representatives
Number	100 senators	435 Representatives
Number from each state	2 per state	Determined by population
Qualifications	At least 30 years old US citizen of 9 years Resident of state	At least 25 years old US citizen for 7 years Resident of state
Different Powers	Ratify treaties Confirm presidential Tries impeached officials	Starts spending bills Impeaches high officials If electoral college has tie, elects president

COMPARE AND CONTRAST THINK SHEET

Item 1 |

Item 2 |

Similarities

Differences

	Item 1	Item 2

COMPARE AND CONTRAST POINT BY POINT

Point	Item 1 Senate	Item 2 House of Representatives
Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 100 Senators 2 elected from each state Serve 6 year term Can be reelected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 435 Representatives Elected from state Number depends on state population Serves 2 year term Can be reelected
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 years old US citizen for 9 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 years old US citizen for 7 years
Joint Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting taxes Determining budgets Passing laws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collecting taxes Determining budgets Passing laws
Separate Powers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ratify treaties Try impeached high officials Confirm Presidential appointments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate spending and tax bills Impeach high officials If electoral college ends in tie, house elects president

COMPARE AND CONTRAST POINT BY POINT

Point	Item 1	Item 2

TRANSITION WORDS FOR COMPARE AND CONTRAST

To Compare (How the items are similar)

also
as
as well as
both
in the same way
have in common
like
likewise
most important
same
similar
similarly
the same as
too

To Contrast (How the items are different)

although
but
contrary to
differ
even though
however
in contrast
instead
never the less
on the contrary
on the other hand
unless
unlike
while
yet
differs from.

ANSWERING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS STRATEGY

This research validated strategy should be explicitly taught to all students using the “I do it,” “We do it” and “You do it” model.

1. Read the item.
2. Turn the question into part of the answer and write it down.
3. Think of the answer or locate the answer in the article.
4. Complete your answer.

ANSWERING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS STRATEGY

Question

Why were Adams and Clay accused of making a “corrupt bargain” (stealing the election?)

Frame

Adams and Clay were accused of making a “corrupt bargain” for a number of reasons.

First...

In addition...

Finally...

Question

Summarize the ways that Jackson tried to get the support of people in the election of 1828.

Frame

Jackson used a number of techniques to gain the support of voters.

First..

Next...

In addition...

Lastly ...

WRITING FRAMES FOR COMPREHENSION

Create frames that can be used multiple times.

Explanation

There are a number of reasons why...

The most important reason is...

Another reason is...

A further reason is...

So you can see why...

Explanation

There are differing explanations as to why...

One explanation for this is...

The evidence for this is...

An alternative explanation is...

The explanation is based on...

Of the alternative explanations, I think the most likely is...

Opinion

There is a lot of discussion about whether...

The people who agree with this idea claim that...

A further point they make is...

However, there are also strong arguments against this point of view.

People with the opposing view believe that...

They say that...

Furthermore, they claim that...

After examining the different points of view and the evidence for them, I think... because...

Argument

Though not everybody would agree, I want to argue that...

I have several reasons for arguing this point of view.

My first reason is...

A further reason is...

Furthermore...

Therefore, although some people might argue that...

I have shown that...