Common Core Standards

Protocol for Analysis of Informative/Explanatory Writing

Grades Six to Twelve

Macomb Intermediate School District

Common Core Informative/Explanatory Writing Protocol

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Introduction Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow.	**Conclusion** Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
Organization Organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.	**Development** Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
Precise Language/Domain-Specific Vocabulary Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.	**Transitions** Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
Formal Style Establish and maintain a formal style.	**Conventions of Standard English** Conform to the conventions of standard written English.

Informational/Explanatory Writing

Informational/explanatory writing conveys information accurately. This kind of writing serves one or more closely related purposes:

- to increase readers' knowledge of a subject,
- to help readers better understand a procedure or process, or
- to provide readers with an enhanced comprehension of a concept.

Informational/explanatory writing addresses matters such as types and components; size, function, or behavior; the way things work; and the reasons things happen.

To produce this kind of writing, students draw from what they already know and from primary and secondary sources. With practice, students become better able to develop a controlling idea and a coherent focus on a topic and more skilled at selecting and incorporating relevant examples, facts, and details into their writing.

Conclusion

6th Grade: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.

7th and 8th Grades: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from **and supports** the information or explanation presented.

9th-12th Grades: Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented **(e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).**

- Common Core Standards

A conclusion should…
- Stress the importance of the thesis statement.
- Give the essay a sense of completeness.
- Leave a final impression on the reader.

A writer may use a number of strategies for a conclusion:
- Answer the question "So What?"
- Synthesize, not summarize.
- Redirect the readers.
- Create new meaning.
- Echo the introduction.
- Challenge the reader.
- Look to the future.
- Pose questions.

- http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/conclude.html

Introduction   **Conclusion**

Introduction

6th Grade: Introduce a topic.

7th and 8th Grades: Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow.

9th-12th Grades: Introduce a topic.   - ***Common Core Standards***

An introduction is the best chance for a writer to make a good impression on the reader. The introductory paragraph:

1. Grabs the reader's attention with one of the following that leads to the writer's point:
   - A surprising statement/statistic: *In City A, only 25 percent of the students graduate from high school.*
   - A direct or rhetorical question: *How many entering sophomores read on grade level?*
   - A relevant quote: "*Just do it.*"
   - Historical background: *Back when phones were attached to the wall…*
   - An anecdote: *That is the sport my dad and I do together—watch football.*

2. Narrows the focus and connects the opening to the thesis: *It is a special kind of organism.*
3. States the thesis, claim, or key point: *Zoos treat animals inhumanely.*
       See also: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=clPtbFT23Bs

Thesis statements focus on a single topic, have more than one reasonable answer, convey specific information, and reveal the writer's stance or opinion on the subject.

They [students] are also able to use a variety of techniques to convey information, such as naming, defining, describing, or differentiating different types or parts; comparing or contrasting ideas or concepts; and citing an anecdote or a scenario to illustrate a point. Informational/explanatory writing includes a wide array of genres, including academic genres such as literary analyses, scientific and historical reports, summaries, and précis writing as well as forms of workplace and functional writing such as instructions, manuals, memos, reports, applications, and resumes. As students advance through the grades, they expand their repertoire of informational/explanatory genres and use them effectively in a variety of disciplines and domains.   - ***Common Core Standards, Appendix A***

The Protocol

This protocol focuses on the key elements of informative/explanatory writing: **introduction** (previews what is to follow), **organization** (definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect), development (with relevant facts, concrete details, quotations, other information), **transitions, precise language, formal style, conclusion** and **conventions of standard English**. The analysis uses non-judgmental language and specific examples. The Common Core Standards provide guidance for the kind and range of writing expected in each of these areas.

Definitions   **Protocol**

Formal Style

6th-8th Grades: Establish and maintain a formal style.

9th-12th Grades: Establish and maintain a formal style and **objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing**.

- Common Core Standards

Formal	Informal
Avoid using colloquial words/expressions. (*children, man/boy, wonderful, many*, etc.)	May use colloquial words/expressions (*kids, awesome, a lot*, etc.).
Avoid contractions. (Write out full words: *cannot, will not.*)	May use contractions (*can't, won't, shouldn't*, etc.).
Write in third person (except in business letters where first person may be used).	May use first, second, or third person.
Avoid addressing readers using second person pronouns. (Use *one, one's, the reader, the reader's*, etc.)	May address readers using second person pronouns (*you, your*, etc.).
Avoid using abbreviated words. (Use full versions —such as *photograph*, *television*, etc.)	May use abbreviated words (*photo*, *TV,* etc.).
Longer and more complex sentences are preferred. (Short, simple sentences reflect poorly on the writer.)	May use short and simple sentences.

http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Difference-Between-Formal-and-Informal-Writing&id=594208

Development

6th and 7th Grades: Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

8th Grade: Develop the topic with relevant, **well-chosen** facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.

9th-10th Grades: Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and **sufficient facts**, **extended definitions**, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples **appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.**

11th -12th Grades: Develop the topic **thoroughly by selecting the most significant** and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

- Common Core Standards

In an informational piece on football from Appendix C (p. 47) of the Common Core, the writer uses the following:

- **Relevant, well-chosen facts:** *Football is a physical game***. . . .**

- **Definitions:** *Playing defense, all you want to do is hit the man with the ball***. . . .**

- **Concrete Details:** *At times football can get grueling, which makes the game even more exciting. The first time you make contact with another player (even with all that equipment) you get very sore.*

- **Examples:** *For example, when you're carrying the ball or about to make a tackle, you want to make sure you have more momentum than the other guy. If you don't you'll be leveled.*

Organization   **Development**

Organization

6th and 7th Grades:

Organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

8th Grade:

Organize ideas, concepts, and information **into broader categories;** include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension

9th-10th Grades:

Organize **complex** ideas, concepts, and information **to make important connections and distinctions**; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

11th-12th Grades:

Organize complex ideas, concepts, and information **so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole;** include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.   - ***Common Core Standards***

Introduction
• Claim/Thesis
• Broad Context
Body
• Specific Information
• Concepts/ Details
Conclusion
• Full Circle
• Projection to the Future

Organizational Patterns

Description: Description is used to define the characteristic features and events of a specific subject or a general category.

Comparison/Contrast: Comparison and contrast structure is used to explain how two or more objects, events, or positions in an argument are similar or different.

Cause/Effect: Cause and effect writing is concerned with why things happen (causes) and what happens as a result (effects).

Conventions of Standard English

Language Progressive Skills, by Grade

L.3.1f.   Ensure subject-verb and pronoun antecedent agreement.

L.3.3a.   Choose words and phrases for effect.

L.4.1f.   Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.

L.4.1g.   Correctly use frequently confused words (e.g., *to/too/two; there/their*).

L.4.3a.   Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

L.4.3b.   Choose punctuation for effect.

L.5.1d.   Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.

L.5.2a.   Use punctuation to separate items in a series.

L.6.1c.   Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.

L.6.1d.   Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).

L.6.1e.   Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.

L.6.2a.   Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.

L.6.3a.   Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

L.6.3b.   Maintain consistency in style and tone.

L.7.1c.   Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.

L.7.3a.   Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.

L.8.1d.   Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.

L.9–10.1a. Use parallel structure   - ***Common Core Standards, Appendix A***

Formal Style   # Conventions

Precise Language

6th, 7th, and 8th Grades: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

9th-10th Grades: Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to **manage the complexity** of the topic.

11th-12th Grades: Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and **techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy** to manage the complexity of the topic.

- Common Core Standards

1. **Domain-specific Words and Phrases**—vocabulary specific to a particular field of study (domain).
   - English: *narrative, informational, plot, character, setting, text features, simile, metaphor*
   - Mathematics: *addition, subtraction, multiplication table, angle, formula*
   - Social Studies: *state, country, region, government, community, laws, politics*
   - Science: *scientific method, cell, digestion, photosynthesis, chlorophyll, hypothesis*
2. **Precise Language**:
   - Limit use of adjectives and adverbs.
     It is better to use one strong verb or noun than two or three adjectives or adverbs and one weak noun or verb: instead of *He very quickly left the gate,* use *He shot out of the gate.*
   - Use specific nouns: instead of *great big tree* say *giant Redwood.*

Transitions: *"Like a bridge that gets from one place to another"*

6th Grade: Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

7th Grade: Use appropriate transitions **to create cohesion and** clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

8th Grade: Use appropriate **and varied transitions** to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

9th-10th Grades: Use appropriate and varied transitions **to link the major sections of the text,** create cohesion, and **clarify the relationships among complex** ideas and concepts.

11th-12th Grades: Use appropriate and varied transitions and **syntax** to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.

- Common Core Standards

Words and phrases that indicate definition, example, or additional information	*for example, for instance, specifically, in this case, in another case, to demonstrate, to Illustrate, and, also, furthermore, likewise, in addition, let's not forget, besides, again, together, with, on top of that, what's more, further, moreover*
Words and phrases that indicate cause/effect	*because, then, as a result, for this reason, the result, therefore, what followed, in response, thus, because of this, consequently, so, the reaction…*
Words and phrases that indicate comparison	*like, in the same way, similar, in a similar way, similarly, likewise, also, in similar fashion, the same is true with*
Words and phrases that indicate contrast	*but, however, in contrast, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, still, yet, different from, in spite of*