

# The “Write” Stuff: Strategies and Conventions for Expository Writing

Grade Level: Sixth Grade

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Length of Unit: 5 lessons

## I. ABSTRACT

- A. The focus of this sixth grade unit is expository writing while integrating content from the sixth grade Core Knowledge literature, history, and science sequence. Students will develop an understanding of the writing process while learning strategies and conventions involved in forms of expository writing. The expository writing lessons will address summarizing, development of both nonfiction and fiction book reports, and the organization and development of both friendly and business letters. Writing topics will provide a means by which teachers can review and reinforce Core Knowledge content areas.

## II. OVERVIEW

- A. Concept Objectives (Jefferson County, CO Language Arts Content Standard: JCLAS).
1. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication (JCLAS 3,5)
  2. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing (JCLAS 8)
- B. Content from the *Core Knowledge Sequence*
1. Produce a variety of types of writing – including summaries, book reports, friendly and business letters (page 133)
- C. Skill Objectives
1. Students will distinguish main ideas of a piece of writing. (JCLAS 3.2)
  2. Students will produce an effectively written summary. (JCLAS 3.3)
  3. Students will apply spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage conventions correctly. (JCLAS 5.1)
  4. Students will examine and improve summaries. (JCLAS 8.1, 8.2)
  5. Students will adapt summarizing model to a variety of texts. (JCLAS 3.2)
  6. Students will produce an effectively written nonfiction-based book report. (JCLAS 3.3)
  7. Students will produce an effectively written fiction-based book report. (JCLAS 3.3)
  8. Students will produce an effectively written friendly letter. (JCLAS 3.3)
  9. Students will produce an effectively written business letter. (JCLAS 3.3)

## III. BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

- A. For Teachers
1. Kemper, D., Nathan, R., & Sebranek, P. *Writers Express: A Handbook for Young Writers, Thinkers, and Learners*. Burlington, WI: Write Source Educational Publishing House, 1994. 0-939045-93-1 (soft cover).
  2. *Writer’s Solution*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996. 0-13-828773-2
- B. For Students
1. Students will have produced a variety of types of writing – with a coherent structure. (Grades 5)

2. Students will have acquired the skills necessary for competent spelling, and usage of a dictionary to check and correct words that present difficulty. (Grade 5)
3. Students will have the understanding of how to use a topic sentence, how to develop a paragraph with examples and details, as well as the mechanics of the writing process. (Grade 4)

#### IV. RESOURCES

- A. *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Charlottesville, VA: Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999. 1-890517-20-8
- B. Hirsch, E.D. *What Your 6<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Core Publications, Inc., 1993. 0-385-31464-7
- C. Hirsch, E.D. *What Your 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Core Publications, Inc., 1993. 0-385-41120-0
- D. Kemper, D., Nathan, R., & Sebranek, P. *Writers Express: A Handbook for Young Writers, Thinkers, and Learners*. Burlington, WI: Write Source Educational Publishing House, 1994. 0-939045-93-1 (soft cover).
- E. Mayer, Marianna. *The Prince and the Pauper*. New York: Penguin Putnam Inc., 1999. 0-8037-2099-8
- F. Rau, Dana Meachen. *Marie Curie*. Minneapolis, MN: Compass Point Books, 2001. 0-7565-0017-6 (hardcover)
- G. *Writer's Solution*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996. 0-13-828773-2

#### V. LESSONS

##### **Lesson One: Summaries – Two forty-five minute sessions**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
  1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication (JCLAS 3,5)
    - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing (JCLAS 8)
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Summarizing information
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will distinguish main ideas of a piece of writing. (JCLAS 3.2)
    - b. Students will produce an effectively written summary. (JCLAS 3.3)
    - c. Students will apply spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage conventions correctly. (JCLAS 5.1)
    - d. Students will examine and improve summaries. (JCLAS 8.1, 8.2)
    - e. Students will adapt summarizing model to a variety of texts. (JCLAS 3.2)
- B. *Materials*
  1. Student Summary Copy (Appendix A {1}) – one per student
  2. Teacher Summary Copy (Appendix A {2}) – one for teacher
  3. Highlighters – one per student
  4. Copy of Summary Revision Checklist (Appendix A {3}) – one per student
  5. Copy of Summary Grading Form (Appendix A {4}) – one per student
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
  1. Summarizing: shortening, condensing version of an original text covering only main points

2. Paraphrasing: putting something into different words while retaining the same meaning and similar length
3. Plagiarism: claiming someone else's work as your own

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Discuss summarizing information as covering the main points of a piece of writing to help with the understanding and retention of important ideas. Emphasize the idea that a summary is a great deal shorter than the original text, because it only includes main ideas, rather than opinions or extraneous information.
2. Contrast paraphrasing from summarizing. Emphasize the idea that paraphrasing differs from summarizing because a paraphrase of a text is similar in length to the original piece.
3. Distribute Student Summary Copies. (Appendix A{1}) Read aloud "why Leaves Change color in Autumn", taken from *The Green Kingdom*.
4. Upon completion of reading the excerpt as a class, talk about the main ideas of the writing. List main ideas on the board while students highlight the same ideas on their student copies. Have students list these ideas on the original text section of the Main Idea Outline (Appendix A{1}). Glance at teacher version of text, as main ideas will be underlined. (Appendix A{2})
5. As a group, develop a paraphrase for each listed, or highlighted, idea. Check to make sure that the main idea of each selection remains intact while avoiding plagiarism.
6. Transfer paraphrased ideas to Main Idea Outline, included on the bottom portion of Student Summary Copy. As a group, use information from the paraphrased section of the Main Idea Outline to write a summary in clear and complete sentences. This summary will be developed by class and teacher on the board. Afterwards, students will transfer the summary from the board to the final summary section of Student Summary Copy. (Appendix A{1})
7. Teacher will then distribute student copies of the Summary Revision Checklist. (Appendix A{3}) As a class, go through the checklist to evaluate the quality and content of the class summary.
8. Teacher and class will then revise the class summary, if necessary. (Reference model summary included in Appendix A{2}).
9. Repeat steps one through eight using one of the Core Knowledge Summary Recommendations (Appendix A{5}), or any writing selection.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Students assess summaries using the Summary Revision Checklist (Appendix A{3})
2. Assess summaries using the Summary Grading Form (Appendix A{4})
3. Assign additional future summaries using the Core Knowledge Summary Recommendations. (Appendix A{5})

**Lesson Two: Nonfiction Book Reports – Two forty-five minute sessions**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication (JCLAS 3,5)
  - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing (JCLAS 8)

2. Lesson Content
  - a. Develop a nonfiction book report
  - b. Self-evaluate writing
  - c. Revise writing
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will distinguish main ideas of a piece of writing. (JCLAS 3.2)
  - b. Students will produce an effectively written nonfiction-based book report. (JCLAS 3.3)
  - c. Students will apply spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage conventions correctly. (JCLAS 5.1)

*B. Materials*

1. Overhead projector
2. Student selected/teacher approved nonfiction reading selection – one per student
3. Nonfiction Book Report Format (Appendix B{1.1}) – one per student
4. Nonfiction Book Report Format (Appendix B{1.1}) – as a blank overhead transparency
5. Quick Book Report Planning Form (Appendix B{2}) – as a blank overhead transparency
6. Quick book report planning form (Appendix B{2}) – one per student
7. Book Report Self-Evaluation Checklist (Appendix B{3}) – one per student
8. Copy of *Marie Curie* (see resource list for recommended bibliography of this title)

*C. Key Vocabulary*

9. Genre: Classification of book by form, style, or content
  - a. biography: book written about a person
  - b. autobiography: a book about a person’s life, written by that person
  - c. topic: a book written about a particular subject
10. Subject: The topic of the reading selection
11. Fact: Something that actually occurred and can be proven
12. Organization of Content: Order in which facts were put together
13. Cite: Include or list
14. Transitions: Words that link ideas together so writing is connected and flows

*D. Procedures/Activities*

15. Read aloud *Marie Curie*.
16. Distribute Quick Book Report Planning Form to students. (Appendix B{2})
17. Place blank teacher overhead copy of quick book report planning form on overhead projector.
18. As a class discuss items on the planning form, and fill in item by item. Have students fill in their copies item by item as well. Stop at “Type of Book”.
19. Discuss the idea of book genre, and types of nonfiction books (as defined in key vocabulary section).
20. Explain to students that *Marie Curie* is a biography because of the content of the book, as well as the way in which it is written. Have students place a check mark by “nonfiction”, and then circle “biography”.
21. Continue filling-in planning form by listing the main subject of the book as being Marie Curie.
22. Have students brainstorm things that they learned from the oral reading of the book. Write ideas on the board. Emphasize to students that it is acceptable for readers of the same book to vary in their view of items learned because people

retain different information based on their idea of importance in relation to their lives.

23. As a class, develop a quick summary of the book based on knowledge of summaries acquired in the previous lesson. Write class summary on the board, and have students transfer summary to quick summary lines.
24. Have students fill-in what they liked/didn't like about the book, as well as whether or not they would recommend *Marie Curie* to another student and why.
25. Have students take turns discussing their likes/dislikes and recommendations of the book.
26. Explain to students that by quickly filling-out this form they have prepared the information that needs to be transferred to a formal book report.
27. Place the blank overhead copy of the Nonfiction Book Report Format on the overhead projector. (Appendix B{1.1})
28. As a class, construct a formal book report section by section, relaying to the students that the information was simply transferred from the quick form to the formal form with the addition of formalized paragraphs.
29. Discuss the idea that books are geared for specific audiences, based on the content and ways they are written. Explain to the students that *Marie Curie* was written at a second or third grade level, targeting both boys and girls, and that is why "Target Audience" lists "primary".
30. Explain to students that paragraph one through three should serve to summarize the content of the book, but in greater depth than the information jotted on the quick form. Explain that the word "cite" means to list, as examples from the book need to be listed in the summary in order to provide a stronger summary.
31. Next, explain to students that paragraph four should serve as the opinion and recommendation portion of the report. Discuss ways to word this paragraph.
32. Pass out copies of the Book Report Self-Evaluation Checklist. (Appendix B{3})
33. As a class, evaluate the class-developed overhead copy of the *Marie Curie* book report by using the checklist. Explain to students that they will use this same checklist to evaluate their own formal book reports before they revise and turn in final copies.

*E. Assessment/Evaluation*

34. Have students read an approved nonfiction reading selection.
35. Have students use the quick report form to organize their information.
36. Check quick forms to make sure that students understand the required information.
37. Have students write formal book reports, assess and revise them, using the self-evaluation checklist, before they turn-in final copies.
38. Assess book report with the Book Report Grading Form. (Appendix B{4})

**Lesson Three: Fiction Book Reports – Two forty-five minute sessions**

*A. Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication (JCLAS 3,5)
  - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing (JCLAS 8)
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Develop a fiction-based book report

- b. Self-evaluate writing
- c. Revise writing
- 3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will distinguish main ideas of a piece of writing. (JCLAS 3.2)
  - b. Students will produce an effectively written fiction-based book report. (JCLAS 3.3)
  - c. Students will apply spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage conventions correctly. (JCLAS 5.1) Students will distinguish main ideas of a piece of writing. (JCLAS 3.2)

B. *Materials*

- 1. Overhead projector
- 2. Copy of *The Prince and the Pauper* (see resource list for suggested bibliography of this title)
- 3. Student selected/teacher approved fiction reading selection – one per student
- 4. Fiction Book Report Format (Appendix B{1.2}) – one per student
- 5. Fiction Book Report Format (Appendix B{1.2}) – as a blank overhead transparency
- 6. Quick Book Report Planning Form (Appendix B{2}) – as a blank overhead transparency
- 39. Quick Book Report Planning Form (Appendix B{2}) – one per student
- 40. Book Report Self-Evaluation Checklist (Appendix B{3}) – one per student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

- 1. Genre: Classification of book by form, style, or content
- 2. Plot: The five part action in a story (to be explained in greater detail in procedures)
- 3. Theme: Message about life that author is trying to make
- 4. Cite: Include or list
- 5. Transitions: Words that link ideas together so writing is connected and flows

D. *Procedures/Activities*

- 1. Read aloud *The Prince and the Pauper*.
- 2. Distribute the Quick Book Report Planning Form to students. (Appendix B{2})
- 3. Place blank teacher overhead copy of quick book report planning form on overhead projector.
- 4. As a class discuss items on the planning form, and fill in item by item. Have students fill in their copies item by item as well. Stop at “Type of Book”.
- 5. Discuss the idea of book genre, and types of fiction books. Emphasize that content and the way that it is written determines the type of book. Explain to the students that you will classify the different types of fiction when you fill-in the quick book report summary form.
- 6. Explain to students that *The Prince and the Pauper* is an adventure story because of the content of the book, as well as the way in which it is written. Have students place a check mark by “fiction”, and then circle “adventure”. Explain the reasoning behind defining *The Prince and the Pauper* as an adventure story.
- 7. Continue filling-in planning form by listing the protagonists as being Tom Canty and Edward, Prince of Whales. Understand that both are important, and can be considered heroes of our story.
- 8. Explain that there isn’t a true antagonist of in this story, but also explain that John Canty can be considered to be a villain because of his actions. Tell students that it is best to leave the antagonist portion of the form blank.

9. Have students brainstorm possibilities for the problems that both Tom and Edward face. Narrow these problems to one main problem. Have students transfer the problem developed on their board to the problem section on the quick report form.
10. Have students brainstorm possibilities for the solution to both Tom and Edward's problem. Narrow these solutions to one main solution. Have students transfer the solution developed on the board to the solution space on the quick report form.
11. Review the steps of plot development with the students. Explain that they are going to take the information that they just filled-in from the quick report planning form and expand upon it. Have them take out an additional sheet of paper to transfer information from the board to be used later.
12. Introduce "exposition" as being what happened before the story began, the setting of the story, and the introduction of *characters*. Have students brainstorm ideas for each portion. Write suggestions on the board, and finalize ideas as a class. Have students transfer finalized ideas to their papers.
13. Introduce "rising action" as being the central part of the story in which problems arise. Explain that the rising action leads to the climax, or turning point, of the story. Refer to the main problem from the quick report form, and brainstorm ideas that could be included in the "rising action" portion of the plot line. Write these ideas on the board. Have students transfer finalized ideas to their papers.
14. Introduce the "climax" as being the turning point in the action of the story. Explain that it is the "ah-ha!" moment, and it should be very clear. Brainstorm ideas that could be interpreted as the "climax" of the story. Finalize the climax on the board. Have students transfer finalized climax idea to their papers.
15. Introduce "falling action" as the part of the story that follows the climax, and has the action or dialogue needed to bring the story to an end. Again discuss ideas that aided in the "falling action" of the story, and write these on the board. Have students transfer finalized "falling action" ideas to their papers.
16. Introduce "resolution" as being the end of the story where the problems are solved, and refer to the solution portion of the quick report form. Have students transfer finalized "resolution" ideas to their papers.
17. Explain to students that what they have on their papers is a basic summary of the book, without formal paragraphs or transitions.
18. Instruct students to complete the opinion sections of the quick report form on their own. Discuss student opinions of the book.
19. Have students fill-in what they liked/didn't like about the book, as well as whether or not they would recommend *The Prince and the Pauper* to another student and why.
20. Place the blank teacher copy of the Fiction Book Report Format on the overhead projector. (Appendix B{1.2})
21. As a class, develop the formal book report section by section, showing to the students that the information was simply transferred from the quick form to the formal form with the addition of formalized paragraphs based on the plot summary developed as a class.
22. Discuss the idea that books are geared for specific audiences, based on the content and ways they are written. Explain to the students that this version of *The Prince and the Pauper* was written at a second or third grade level, targeting both boys and girls, and that is why "Target Audience" lists "primary".
23. Explain to students that paragraph one through three should serve to summarize the basic plot of the book, but in greater depth than the information jotted on the quick form. Explain that only important details should be included. Explain that

the word “cite” means to list, as examples from the book need to be listed in the summary in order to provide a stronger summary of the book.

24. Explain to students that paragraph four explains the lesson that can be learned by reading *The Prince and the Pauper*. Redefine the word “lesson” as being the theme of the book. Develop this paragraph as a class, and have students brainstorm other ways that this paragraph could be written. Reemphasize to students that the idea of theme is influenced by reader opinion, and that it is acceptable for readers of the same text to have different ideas for the book’s theme. Also explain, however, that ideas for the theme of the story must be backed up by examples from the text.
  25. Next, explain to students that paragraph five should serve as the opinion and recommendation portion of the report. Discuss ways to word this paragraph.
  26. Pass out copies of the Book Report Self-Evaluation checklist. (Appendix B{3})
  27. As a class, evaluate the class-developed overhead copy of *The Prince and the Pauper* book report by using the checklist. Explain to students that they will use this same checklist to evaluate their own formal book reports before they revise and turn in final copies.
- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Have students read an approved fiction reading selection.
  2. Have students use the quick report form to organize their information.
  3. Check quick forms to make sure that students understand the required information.
  4. Have students write formal book reports, assess and revise them, using the self-evaluation checklist, before they turn-in final copies.
  5. Assess book report with the Book Report Grading Form. (Appendix B{4})

#### **Lesson Four: Friendly Letters – One to two forty-five minute sessions**

- A. *Daily Objectives*
1. Concept Objective(s)
    - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication (JCLAS 3,5)
    - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing (JCLAS 8)
  2. Lesson Content
    - a. Develop a friendly letter
    - b. Self-evaluate writing
    - c. Revise writing
  3. Skill Objective(s)
    - a. Students will produce an effectively written friendly letter. (JCLAS 3.3)
    - b. Students will apply spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage conventions correctly. (JCLAS 5.1)
- B. *Materials*
1. Sample Friendly Letter (Appendix C{1}) – as an overhead transparency
  2. Overhead projector
  3. Friendly and Business Letter Checklist (Appendix C{2}) – one per student
- C. *Key Vocabulary*
1. Heading: Writer’s address and date of letter in upper right-hand corner of letter
  2. Salutation: Greeting of letter including recipient’s name
  3. Body: Portion that contains writer’s thoughts and ideas

4. Closing: Final word/s of a letter
5. Signature: Writer's name in cursive

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Discuss reasons why people write letters to people that they know. Write these ideas on the board. Students should list ideas like thanking relatives for gifts, informing people of the happenings in their lives, and inviting friends to events.
2. Place Sample Friendly Letter (Appendix C{1}) on overhead projector.
3. Read through the Sample Friendly Letter in its entirety.
4. Discuss the heading of the model. Write a model heading using a student address and the day's date on the board, explaining that it is placed in the upper right-hand corner of the letter.
5. Introduce the term "salutation". Explain that the word "dear" is often the salutation in a friendly letter. Write a model salutation on the board using a student name as an example.
6. Discuss the body of the letter as being the thoughts and ideas that the writer is trying to communicate. Explain the students that this portion of the letter should still have paragraphs containing separate ideas and connected by transitions, and that this portion should still utilize proper mechanics and spelling. Further explain that this style of letter can be written in an informal, conversation format and should be easy to read.
7. Introduce the term "closing". Brainstorm words that could be used as the closing to a friendly letter. Write a model closing on the board using a student name as an example.
8. Present the signature portion of the letter as needing to be in cursive.
9. Use the Friendly and Business Letter Checklist (Appendix C{2}) to assess the model letter.

E. *Assessment/Evaluation*

1. Have students write friendly letters to students from another class.
2. Have students assess letters using the Friendly and Business Letter Checklist. (Appendix C{2})
3. Have students revise letters and turn-in final drafts.
4. Assess student letters using the Friendly and Business Letter Grading Form. (Appendix C{3})
5. Use Core Knowledge Letter Writing Prompts (Appendix E) to assign the writing of additional friendly letters to students.

**Lesson Five: Business Letters – One to two forty-five minute sessions**

A. *Daily Objectives*

1. Concept Objective(s)
  - a. Understand how to write effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences while applying conventions of language for effective communication (JCLAS 3,5)
  - b. Understand how to evaluate and improve the quality of writing (JCLAS 8)
2. Lesson Content
  - a. Develop a business letter
  - b. Self-evaluate writing
  - c. Revise writing
3. Skill Objective(s)
  - a. Students will produce an effectively written business letter. (JCLAS 3.3)

- b. Students will apply spelling, punctuation, capitalization, grammar, and usage conventions correctly. (JCLAS 5.1)

B. *Materials*

1. Sample Business Letter (Appendix D) – as an overhead transparency
2. Overhead projector
3. Friendly and Business Letter Checklist – one per student

C. *Key Vocabulary*

1. Heading: sender’s address and date of letter in upper left-hand corner
2. Inside address: includes the name and address of the person or company to whom you are writing
3. Body: main part of letter without indentations

D. *Procedures/Activities*

1. Brainstorm reasons why people write business letters. Responses should include the requesting of materials or information, writing to an editor or official, and making a letter of complaint.
2. Place Sample Business Letter on overhead projector. (Appendix D)
3. Read through the model business letter in its entirety.
4. Discuss the heading of the model. Write a model heading using a student address and the day’s date on the board. Indicate to the students that the heading is written about an inch from the top of the page at the left-hand margin.
5. Introduce the term “inside address” as being the name and address of the person or company to whom they will be writing. Explain that it is placed at the left-hand margin, four to seven spaces below the heading. Further explain that if the person has a special title such as principal, that it should be added after the name. Explain that a comma is used to separate the person’s name from his/her title.
6. Introduce the term “salutation”. Explain that the word “dear” is often the salutation in a business letter, but that it is not uncommon for the person’s name alone to be the salutation. Write a model salutation on the board including a student name in the example. Include the word “dear” with one example, and just the student name as the other.
7. Discuss the body of the letter as being the main idea of the letter, begun two lines below the salutation. Indicate to students that they must double-space between paragraphs, while omitting indentations. Explain to students that this portion of the letter should still be written in paragraph form containing separate ideas and connected by transitions, and that this portion should still utilize proper mechanics and spelling. Further explain that this style of letter should be written keeping information brief and simple so the reader clearly understands what they are asking for or explaining.
8. Explain that the closing to a business letter usually utilizes the word “sincerely” because it is a formal word. Also explain that the words “very truly” and “yours truly” are also acceptable ways to close a business letter. Indicate to students that the closing should be placed at the left-hand margin, two spaces below the body. Emphasize to students that they capitalize only the first word of the closing, not the others, and that they place a comma after the closing. Write a model closing on the board using a student name as an example.
9. Tell students that they will end their business letters by writing their signature four lines below the closing. Tell students that they will then sign their names in cursive between their closing and written name.
10. Use the Friendly and Business Letter Checklist to assess the model letter. (Appendix C{2})

- E. *Assessment/Evaluation*
1. Have students write business letters to the principal requesting that additional food choices be added to the lunch selection.
  2. Have students assess letters using the Friendly and Business Letter Checklist.
  3. Have students revise letters and turn-in final drafts.
  4. Assess student letters using the Friendly and Business Letter Grading Form (Appendix C{3}).
  5. Use Suggested Core Knowledge Letter Writing Prompts (Appendix E) to assign the writing of additional business letters to students.

## VI. HANDOUTS/WORKSHEETS

- A. Appendix A(1-5) – Summary handouts, evaluation tools, Core Knowledge summary recommendations
- B. Appendix B(1-4) – Nonfiction and fiction book report handouts and book report evaluation tools
- C. Appendix C(1-3) – Friendly letter handouts and letter evaluation tools
- D. Appendix D – Sample business letter
- E. Appendix E – Core Knowledge letter writing prompts

## VII. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A. *Core Knowledge Sequence*. Charlottesville, VA: Core Knowledge Foundation, 1999. 1-890517-20-8
- B. Hirsch, E.D. *What Your 6<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know*. New York: Core Publications, Inc., 1993. 0-385-31464-7
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- H. *Writer's Solution*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996. 0-13-828773-2

## SUMMARY STUDENT COPY – APPENDIX A(1)

### Why Leaves Change Color in Autumn

Inside a leaf there are millions of tiny packages of color – yellow, orange, and green. The yellow is called xanthophylls, the orange is carotene, or carotin, and the green is chlorophyll. The green color covers up the others, and that’s why leaves are green all summer.

Near the end of summer, the green chlorophyll fades and disappears. Then the yellow xanthophylls and orange carotene can be seen. That’s why many leaves turn yellow and orange in autumn.

All summer, water goes into each leaf through tiny tubes in the leaf’s stem. Leaves make sugar, which is a plant’s food. Sap carries the sugar out of the leaf to other parts of the plant. Near summer’s end, a thin layer of cork grows over the tubes and seals them up. No more water can get into the leaf. Sugar often gets trapped inside leaves when the tubes are sealed up. This sugar may cause the sap to turn red or purple and make the leaves look red or purple.

When leaves are dry and dead, they turn brown.

From *The Green Kingdom*, Volume 6 of *Childcraft – The How and Why Library*. Copyright 1993 World Book, Inc.

### Main Idea Outline

Original Text Main Idea

Paraphrased Idea

_____	*	_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____	*	_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____	*	_____
_____		_____
_____		_____
_____	*	_____
_____		_____
_____		_____

### Final Summary

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## SUMMARY TEACHER COPY – APENDIX A(2)

### **Why Leaves Change Color in Autumn**

Inside a leaf there are millions of tiny packages of color – yellow, orange, and green. The yellow is called xanthophylls, the orange is carotene, or carotin, and the green is chlorophyll. The green color covers up the others, and that’s why leaves are green all summer.

Near the end of summer, the green chlorophyll fades and disappears. Then the yellow xanthophylls and orange carotene can be seen. That’s why many leaves turn yellow and orange in autumn.

All summer, water goes into each leaf through tiny tubes in the leaf’s stem. Leaves make sugar, which is a plant’s food. Sap carries the sugar out of the leaf to other parts of the plant. Near summer’s end, a thin layer of cork grows over the tubes and seals them up. No more water can get into the leaf. Sugar often gets trapped inside leaves when the tubes are sealed up. This sugar may cause the sap to turn red or purple and make the leaves look red or purple.

When leaves are dry and dead, they turn brown.

From *The Green Kingdom*, Volume 6 of *Childcraft – The How and Why Library*. Copyright 1993 World Book, Inc

### **Why Leaves Change Color in Autumn – Model Summary**

In autumn, changes take place inside a leaf causing it to change colors. The green chlorophyll that covers a leaf begins to fade away. This allows the other colors (yellow and orange) to be seen. Also, the tiny tubes inside a leaf close up at the stem and hold in sugar and sap. The sugar may turn the sap red or purple, which shows through the leaf. Then, once the leaf dries up, it turns brown.

Taken from Kemper, D., Nathan, R., & Sebranek, P. *Writers Express: A Handbook for Young Writers, Thinkers, and Learners*. Burlington, WI: Write Source Educational Publishing House, 1994. 0-939045-93-1 (softcover)

**SUMMARY REVISION CHECKLIST – APPENDIX A(3)**

Yes	No	
___	___	All main ideas are included in my summary.
___	___	All main ideas are written in my own words.
___	___	Another person will be able to understand the main idea of the original selection by reading my summary.
___	___	My summary does not contain my opinion.
___	___	My summary contains only complete sentences.
___	___	I used commas, periods, and other punctuation correctly.
___	___	I used correct spelling throughout my entire summary.

If you answered “no” to any of the above checklist items, you need to revise your summary. Do not complete your final draft until you are able to answer “yes” to all checklist items.

**SUMMARY GRADING FORM – APPENDIX A(4)**

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

**Format/Process**

1. Used the summary revision checklist	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2. All main ideas are included	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
3. All main ideas are written in own words	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
4. Main idea is understood from summary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
5. Summary does not include opinions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
6. Good flow of ideas or sequence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
7. Sentences contain proper capitalization and end marks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8. Other punctuation marks are correct	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
9. Summary written in complete sentences	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
10. Correct spelling utilized throughout summary	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

**Paper Total:** \_\_\_\_\_/100

Letter Grade \_\_\_\_\_

## CORE KNOWLEDGE SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS – APPENDIX A(5)

### Literature

1. Summarize the classical myths located in the Fiction and Drama section from the Core Knowledge Sequence. These myths can be found in E.D. Hirsch's *What Your 6<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* page 52-58 and in *Realms of Gold* Volume 1 page 52-64.
2. Summarize individual selections from *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* found in E.D. Hirsch's *What Your 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* page 28-41.

### History

1. Summarize the Sermon on the Mount, section by section.
2. Summarize the Industrial Revolution found in E.D. Hirsh's *What Your 6<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* page 107.
2. Summarize selections from The French Revolution found in E.D. Hirsch's *What Your 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* page 156-162.
3. Summarize selections from The Enlightenment found in E.D. Hirsch's *What Your 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* page 15-155.
5. Summarize selections from Susan B. Anthony's speech "Are Women Persons?" found in *Realms of Gold* Volume 1.
6. Summarize selections from W.E.B. Du Bois "Address at the Founding of the Niagara Movement" found in *Realms of Gold* Volume 1.

### Science

1. Summarize selections from Isaac Newton's science biography found in E.D. Hirsch's *What Your 5<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* page 383.
2. Summarize selections from *What Your 6<sup>th</sup> Grader Needs to Know* Human Health section, page 337-343.

\*Listed selections are simply recommendations that lend themselves to summarization. Any selection of reading can be adapted to fit this summarization model.

## NONFICTION BOOK REPORT FORMAT - APPENDIX B(1.1)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Pages: \_\_\_\_\_  
Genre of Book: \_\_\_\_\_ Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

In a well-written, four paragraph essay (approximately five sentences per paragraph) summarize the basic content of the book, what you liked/didn't like about the book, and whether or not you would recommend this title to another reader and why. Paragraphs one, two, and three should summarize the content, while paragraph four will be the recommendation paragraph. Be sure to cite specific examples from the book, while avoiding plagiarism.

Remember that grammar, handwriting, and spelling will all be graded. If you choose to type your report the handwriting grade will be excused for this assignment. Be sure that you use descriptive language, and that you utilize transitions between paragraphs to insure that your writing flows well.

\*\*\*\*Staple your proofread, final copy to this paper along with your Quick Book Report Planning Form.\*\*\*\*

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## FICTION BOOK REPORT FORMAT - APPENDIX B(1.2)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: \_\_\_\_\_  
Author: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Pages: \_\_\_\_\_  
Genre of Book: \_\_\_\_\_ Target Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

In a well written, five-paragraph essay (approximately five sentences per paragraph) summarize the basic plot of the book, the theme of the book, what you liked/didn't like about the book, and a reading recommendation. Paragraphs one, two, and three should summarize the plot of the story. Paragraph four will serve to explain the theme, or lesson learned, from the book. The fifth, and closing, paragraph will list what you liked/didn't like about the book, and whether or not you would recommend this title to another reader and why. Be sure to cite specific examples from the book, while avoiding plagiarism.

Remember that grammar, handwriting, and spelling will all be graded. If you choose to type your report the handwriting grade will be excused for this assignment. Be sure that you use descriptive language, and that you utilize transitions between paragraphs to insure that your writing flows well.

\*\*\*\*Staple your proofread, final copy to this paper along with your Quick Book Report Planning Form.\*\*\*\*

**QUICK BOOK REPORT PLANNING FORM – APPENDIX B(2)**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Book:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Illustrator (if applicable):** \_\_\_\_\_ **Number of pages:** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Category of Book (check one)</b>	<b>fiction</b> _____	<b>mystery</b>	<b>(circle genre of book)</b>		
			<b>fantasy</b>	<b>historical</b>	<b>realistic</b>
		<b>science</b>	<b>adventure</b>	<b>fairy tale</b>	<b>folk tale</b>
		<b>play/drama</b>	<b>humorous</b>	<b>tall tale</b>	
	<b>nonfiction</b> _____	<b>biography</b>	<b>autobiography</b>	<b>topic</b>	

**Fiction**

The protagonist (main character or hero) of this book is \_\_\_\_\_

The antagonist or villain, if there is one, is \_\_\_\_\_

The problem the main character has is \_\_\_\_\_

He/she solves it by \_\_\_\_\_

**Nonfiction**

The main subject of this book is \_\_\_\_\_

Two things I learned are \_\_\_\_\_

**All Books**

Quick Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What I like/don't like about this book is \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

I would/would not recommend this book because \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## BOOK REPORT SELF-EVALUATION CHECKLIST – APPENDIX B(3)

- | Yes   | No    |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | I filled-out the Book Report Quick Form.   |
| _____ | _____ | I transferred information from the Quick Form to Formal Form and developed paragraphs. |
| _____ | _____ | I made a new paragraphs each time that I introduced a new idea.                        |
| _____ | _____ | I utilized transitions to connect my paragraphs (my paragraphs flow well).             |
| _____ | _____ | I used commas, periods, and other punctuation marks where necessary.                   |
| _____ | _____ | Capitalization rules are followed in my writing  |
| _____ | _____ | Spelling is correct throughout my book report.   |
| _____ | _____ | I included a recommendation paragraph in my book report.                               |

\*\*\*\*Additional checklist item for nonfiction book reports only\*\*\*\*

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | I included facts about the subject or topic of my book |
|-------|-------|--|

\*\*\*\*Additional checklist items for fiction book reports only\*\*\*\*

- |       |       |  |
|-------|-------|--|
| _____ | _____ | My book report is developed including all five elements of a plot summary.     |
| _____ | _____ | My fourth paragraph explains the theme, or lesson, of the story.               |
| _____ | _____ | I included examples from my book in paragraphs one through four of my writing. |

If you answered “no” to any of the above checklist items, you need to revise your summary. Do not complete your final draft until you are able to answer “yes” to all checklist items.

## BOOK REPORT GRADING FORM – APPENDIX B(4)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Fiction    Nonfiction

### Format/Process

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Used the Book Report Planning Sheet<br>1   2   3   4   5    | 2. Neat, easy to read, well formed<br>1   2   3   4   5 |
| 3. Uses colorful, interesting words<br>1   2   3   4   5       | 4. Genre is stated correctly<br>1   2   3   4   5       |
| 5. Followed directions on this assignment<br>1   2   3   4   5 |   |

**Total Format/Process** \_\_\_\_\_

### Content of Piece

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Paragraphs are well-developed and transitions are used to connect the writing and make it flow well.        | 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 |
| 2. The topic or plot of the book is effectively communicated by the writer.                                    | 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 |
| 3. Sentences are clear, focused, and complete.   | 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 |
| 4. Ideas are supported with examples from the book   | 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 |
| 5. Sequence of content is coherent, and includes all required book report elements outlined in the directions. | 1   2   3   4   5   6   7   8   9   10 |

**Total Content:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Mechanics

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. End marks and capital letters used correctly<br>1   2   3   4   5 | 2. Other punctuation marks used correctly<br>1   2   3   4   5                  |
| 3. Piece is written in complete sentences<br>1   2   3   4   5       | 4. Variety of sentence types used in paragraph development<br>1   2   3   4   5 |
| 5. Spelling is correct throughout piece<br>1   2   3   4   5         |   |

**Total Mechanics** \_\_\_\_\_

Paper Total: \_\_\_\_\_/100

Letter Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE FRIENDLY LETTER - APPENDIX C(1)

123 Wixom Road  
Wixom, MI 48386  
January 8, 1994

Dear Grandma,

On the way to your house just outside of San Diego, we ran into a blinding snowstorm up in the mountains. My dad told you about it, but I wanted to let you know how we felt about it.

When we were going up the mountain, the weather was comfortably warm, as on an early summer day. Our old truck didn't seem to want to climb up the mountain. When we were more than halfway up, it looked like rain. To our surprise, though, it soon began to snow!

On the mountain we saw a police car crash into a big rock. Lus and Elena were scared, and I was too, but I was trying to act brave. We couldn't see the road. It also began to hail hard.

As we were leaving the mountain, the weather was not as bad as the peak of the mountain. It took a long time to get to the bottom. All the way down our ears popped. We didn't stop until we got to San Diego!

Love,

*Enoch*

P.S. I miss you so much!

Taken from *Writer's Solution*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1996.

## FRIENDLY AND BUSINESS LETTER CHECKLIST – APPENDIX C(2)

Yes	No	
_____	_____	I used complete sentences.
_____	_____	I created new paragraphs when I introduced new ideas.
_____	_____	I used commas, periods, and other punctuation marks correctly.
_____	_____	I used correct spelling throughout my letter.
_____	_____	My heading is written correctly.
_____	_____	My inside address is written correctly (business letters only).
_____	_____	My salutation or greeting is written correctly.
_____	_____	My body of letter is developed correctly, and is easy to understand.
_____	_____	My closing is written correctly.
_____	_____	My signature is written in cursive.
_____	_____	My name is written-out below my signature (business letters only).

If you answered “no” to any of the above checklist items, you need to revise your summary. Do not complete your final draft until you are able to answer “yes” to all checklist items.

**FRIENDLY AND BUSINESS LETTER GRADING FORM – APPENDIX C(3)**

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

**Format:**

- |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. Heading is written correctly                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2. Salutation or greeting is written correctly | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3. Body conveys thoughts and ideas of writer   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4. Closing is written correctly                | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5. Signature is written correctly              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

**Format Total:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mechanics:**

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1. End marks and capital letters used correctly               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 2. Other punctuation marks used correctly                     | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 3. Writing utilizes complete sentences                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 4. Variety of sentences are utilized in paragraph development | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 5. Spelling is correct throughout piece                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

**Total Mechanics** \_\_\_\_\_

**Paper Total:** \_\_\_\_\_/100

**Letter Grade** \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE BUSINESS LETTER – APPENDIX D

4824 Park Street  
Richland Center, WI 53581  
January 1, 1994

Mr. David Shore, Park Ranger  
Yellowstone National Park  
Box 168  
Yellowstone National Park, WY 82190

Dear Mr. Shore:

We're having a contest in my family to see who can plan the best summer vacation. I want to convince everyone that a trip to Yellowstone National Park would be better than going to New York City or even to Disneyland for a week. This is not going to be easy!

I would appreciate any help you could give me. I am most interested in some up-to-date brochures of the park with photos and maps. I will also need information on where we can stay and what we can do there.

Thank you for your help. Maybe I'll see you next summer.

Sincerely,

*Luke Johnson*  
Luke Johnson

Taken from Kemper, D., Nathan, R., & Sebranek, P. *Writers Express: A Handbook for Young Writers, Thinkers, and Learners*. Burlington, WI: Write Source Educational Publishing House, 1994.

## CORE KNOWLEDGE LETTER PROMPTS – APPENDIX E

### FRIENDLY LETTERS – History Topics

1. Write a letter to Socrates to explain your view of what wisdom truly is.
2. Write a letter to Alexander the Great to either commend or reproach his style of conquest.
3. Write a letter to Julius Caesar to either commend or reproach his style of rule.
4. Write a letter to either Thomas Hobbes or John Locke to explain your ideas of human nature.
5. Write a letter to Thomas Jefferson to state what you believe the natural rights of man are.
6. Write a letter of sympathy to the family of Marie Antoinette.
7. Write a letter to James Watt to thank him for his developments in steam power.
8. Write a letter to Adam Smith to either commend or reproach his idea of laissez faire economics.
9. Write a letter to either Karl Marx or Friedrich Engels to either commend or reproach the idea of the Communist form of Socialism.
10. Write a letter to one of the Mexican liberators to commend his courage in the face of persecution.
11. Write a letter to Emma Lazarus to tell her your interpretation of her poem “The New Colossus”.
12. Write a letter to Susan B. Anthony to thank her for her contribution towards equal rights for women.

### FRIENDLY LETTERS – Science Topics

1. Write a letter to Marie Curie, Lewis Howard Latimer, Isaac Newton, or Alfred Wegner to thank \ him/her for his/her contributions in the field of science.

### BUSINESS LETTERS – History Topics

1. Write a letter to an embassy of a Middle Eastern country to request information about their country.
2. Write a letter to the Olympic Planning Committee in Utah to request information about the upcoming Olympics.
3. Write a letter to the Roman government to complain about the unjust persecution of Christians.
4. Write a letter to Napoleon Bonaparte to request information about his military strategy.
5. Write a letter to a local newspaper to complain about the unjust treatment of people in communist countries.
6. Write a letter to a local immigration agency to request information about the immigration and naturalization process.
7. Write a letter to Andrew Carnegie, J.P. Morgan, Cornelius Vanderbilt, or John. D. Rockefeller to request information about his business.
8. Write a letter to President Theodore Roosevelt to request information about his plans for conservation.

### BUSINESS LETTERS – Science Topics

1. Write a letter to Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) to request information about how to help earthquake survivors.
2. Write a letter to a local geological survey group to request information about site upon which your school is built.
3. Write a letter to a fish packing plant associated with the inhumane treatment of dolphins to complain about their treatment.
4. Write a letter to a local observatory to request information about upcoming atmospheric occurrences.
5. Write a letter to a local energy plant to complain about the rising costs of energy.
6. Write a letter to local officials to suggest that alternative forms of energy be utilized to help lower energy costs.
7. Write a letter to a local hospital to request information about how they treat patients with immune system disorders.