

GRADE 8

Composition Practice

Contents

Unit 1

Personal Writing

1.1	Writing for Yourself	1
1.2	Writing to Learn	2
1.3	Writing About Wishes and Dreams	3
1.4	Writing One’s Own Story	4
1.5	Responding in a Journal	5
1	Writing Process in Action	6

Unit 2

The Writing Process

2.1	Working with the Writing Process	7
2.2	Prewriting: Determining Audience and Purpose	8
2.3	Prewriting: Investigating a Topic.	9
2.4	Prewriting: Organizing Ideas	10
2.5	Drafting: Writing It Down	11
2.6	Revising: Taking a Fresh Look	12
2.7	Revising: Writing Unified Paragraphs.	13
2.8	Revising: Writing Varied Sentences.	14
2.9	Editing/Proofreading: Fine-tuning Your Work.	15
2.10	Publishing/Presenting: Sharing Your Writing.	16
2	Writing Process in Action	17

Unit 3

Descriptive Writing

3.1	Writing Descriptions.	18
3.2	Collecting Sensory Details	19
3.3	Using Precise Language.	20
3.4	Using Spatial Order.	21
3.5	Describing a Thing	22
3.6	Describing the Subject of a Biography	23
3	Writing Process in Action	24

Unit 4

Narrative Writing

4.1	Writing the Stories of History.	25
4.2	Using Chronological Order.	26
4.3	Establishing Point of View	27
4.4	Writing Realistic Dialogue	28

Contents

4.5	Relating a Historical Event	29
4.6	Writing a News Story	30
4.7	Responding to a Historical Narrative	31
4	Writing Process in Action	32

Unit 5 Expository Writing

5.1	Conveying Information.	33
5.2	Structuring an Explanation.	34
5.3	Writing to Compare and Contrast	35
5.4	Writing About a Process	36
5.5	Explaining Connections Between Events	37
5.6	Answering an Essay Question.	38
5.7	Reports: Researching a Topic	39
5.8	Reports: Writing a Business Letter to Request Information.	40
5.9	Reports: Planning and Drafting	41
5.10	Reports: Revising, Editing, and Presenting.	42
5.11	Comparing Two Poems.	43
5	Writing Process in Action	44

Unit 6 Persuasive Writing

6.1	Writing Persuasively	45
6.2	Determining a Position.	46
6.3	Evaluating Evidence	47
6.4	Developing a Strategy	48
6.5	Strengthening Your Argument	49
6.6	Creating an Ad	50
6.7	Writing a Letter to the Editor	51
6.8	Writing a Book Review	52
6	Writing Process in Action	53

Answers	54
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Composition Practice

Name Class Date

1.1 Writing for Yourself

Key Information

Writing is a way of keeping track of your thoughts and feelings. It can help you to remember how you felt in the past and to understand how you feel now.

■ A. Writing About Your Thoughts and Feelings

What happened to you today? Write about one thing that happened and how you feel about it. It could be what you learned in health class, what you ate for lunch, or even the song you heard on the radio as you were getting ready for school.

■ B. Making Your Journal Personal

Make a list of things other than writing that you might include in your journal, such as favorite photographs, drawings, or magazine articles. Then give your reason for including each one.

Item	Reason
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
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Composition Practice

Name Class Date

1.2 Writing to Learn

Key Information

Writing can help you understand what you learn in other classes.

■ A. Getting Ready to Start a Learning Log

Before beginning your learning log, try writing something about each of the subjects below. You can write about what you learned this week, how well you like the subject, or anything about it that you find interesting.

1. math _____

2. science _____

3. U.S. history _____

4. health _____

5. (your choice) _____

■ B. Using Your Learning Log

After you have started your learning log, explain how it helps you understand your subjects.

Name Class Date

1.3 Writing About Wishes and Dreams

Key Information

Writing about your own goals and dreams can help you understand yourself and make plans for the future.

■ A. Mapping Your Future

List three goals you would like to achieve. After each, list things you can start doing right now and things you plan to do in the future to help you achieve the goal.

Goal	What I Can Do Now	What I Plan To Do
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

■ B. Reviewing a Movie

Picture your future life as a movie with yourself as the star. Then write a review of the movie. Include a description of at least one important scene. What are you doing in that scene? How does the event fulfill one of the goals you listed in Part A?

1.4 Writing One's Own Story

Key Information

To write your own story, begin by remembering the important events in your life. Write about them as clearly as you can. Use details to bring the events and your feelings to life.

■ A. Writing About Turning Points

To begin writing about the important events in your life, complete the following sentences.

1. The day I met my best friend _____

2. I started my hobby when _____

3. The relative who has most influenced me is _____

4. My fondest memory is _____

5. This year is important because _____

■ B. Beginning Your Story

Your story can begin with an account of the first turning point in your life or of the most important event in your life. Write about an important event, using plenty of details. Use additional paper if necessary.

1.5 Responding in a Journal

Key Information

Writing is one way to respond to literature. Writing about the thoughts and feelings you have when you read something can help you understand it better.

■ A. Responding to Images

The images below sometimes appear in stories and poems. Record the thoughts or feelings that each image brings to mind.

- 1. fog covering the tops of city buildings _____
- 2. a calm lake _____
- 3. a mother rocking her child to sleep _____
- 4. a truck speeding down the highway _____
- 5. a farmer planting crops _____

■ B. Responding to Your Reading

Choose a favorite story or poem. It can be one you are reading in school, a book you checked out of the library, or a book or poem you have at home. Think about how you felt when you read it and what you liked about it. What lines did you respond to most readily? Was there a certain character or idea that impressed you strongly? Did you sometimes imagine yourself as part of the story? Write a brief paragraph explaining your feelings.

1 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Writing is one method of sharing a personal experience. Recalling the facts and recording your feelings will help you write about the experience in a vivid, informative way.

■ A. Telling the Facts

To share a personal experience with others, you have to tell them what happened. Choose a time when you did something or tried to do something—for example, the day you made the basketball team, the time you moved to a new school, the first moment a certain math or science idea made sense to you, or the time you viewed a stunning sunset. Imagine that a television reporter is interviewing you about the event, and answer the following questions.

1. How did you get the idea to do this? _____

2. What did you do first? _____

3. What happened next? _____

4. How did the event turn out? _____

5. What was the best part? _____

■ B. Recording Your Feelings

Using the experience above, describe your feelings during each part of the event. Include your feelings at the beginning, middle, and end of your endeavor.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

2.1 Working with the Writing Process

Key Information

Writing is easier when you divide the process into the following steps: **prewriting, drafting, revising, editing/proofreading,** and **publishing/presenting.**

■ A. Prewriting

Suppose you are asked to write an article for your favorite magazine. In the prewriting stage you choose a topic and decide how to organize the details. Select a topic you think the magazine would cover, and jot down three ideas for an article on that topic.

Magazine _____

Topic _____

Ideas _____

■ B. Drafting

In the drafting stage you turn your prewriting ideas into sentences. Using a separate sheet of paper, write three or four sentences on the topic of your article.

■ C. Revising

When you revise, you look over what you have written, and ask yourself if it is understandable and interesting. Look at the sentences you drafted. Is the meaning of each sentence clear? Is there a better way to state the information? Rewrite your sentences on a separate sheet of paper with these questions in mind.

■ D. Editing/Proofreading

The editing/proofreading stage is the time to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Using a different color pen or pencil, correct any errors in the sentences you wrote in Part C.

■ E. Publishing/Presenting

In the final stage you present your writing to its audience. Rewrite your sentences making the changes marked in editing. Share your writing with one or more classmates.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

2.2

Prewriting: Determining Audience and Purpose

Key Information

Before you begin writing, you must determine your audience, or readers, and your purpose—to describe, to narrate, to inform, or to persuade.

■ A. The Audience

When you see a movie or read a book, you are part of the audience. That movie or book was probably made with someone like you in mind. Suggest an audience for each book or movie listed below.

1. *Beauty and the Beast*
2. *Little Women*
3. *The Yearling*
4. *Common Sense Book of Baby and Child Care*
5. *The Hardy Boys*

■ B. Why Write?

Every piece of writing has a purpose. Choose a topic that interests you. Write a sentence that serves each purpose listed.

1. to describe (paint a picture with words) _____

2. to narrate (tell a story) _____

3. to inform (give facts) _____

4. to persuade (get the audience to act) _____

2.3 Prewriting: Investigating a Topic

Key Information

You can explore a writing topic by using discovery techniques such as **brainstorming**, **freewriting**, **clustering**, and **listing**. You can gather additional information through research, including **personal interviews**.

■ A. Clustering

Choose one of the following topics to investigate: a career you would like to pursue, a place you would like to visit, an activity you would like to try. On a separate sheet of paper, construct a cluster diagram. Extend the diagram as you discover ideas.

■ B. Gathering More Information

Once you have explored a topic, you may decide you need more information about it. List five specific sources that you could consult to gather additional information on your topic. Write a question for which each source might provide an answer.

Topic _____

Book _____

Magazine _____

Newspaper _____

Film or television show _____

Person _____

2.4 Prewriting: Organizing Ideas

Key Information

Selecting and **organizing** ideas is a part of the prewriting stage of the writing process. First, you must decide which ideas to keep and which ones to take out. Then you need to organize your ideas in a way that makes sense.

A. Selecting Ideas

You may not want to use every idea your prewriting produces. Some ideas may not suit your audience and purpose. Here is a list of ideas for an article on amusement parks.

hours parades roller coasters live shows healthful snacks
traffic fireworks admission price hotel rooms educational value
exhibits location children's rides souvenir shops number of attractions

Which of these ideas would you include in articles with the following titles?

1. Choosing a Family Vacation Spot (audience: parents) _____

2. My Day at the Amusement Park (audience: other students) _____

B. Arranging Ideas

Once you decide which ideas to use, you need to organize them. The method of organization you choose will depend on your audience and purpose. For each title, organize the list of ideas you have chosen according to audience and purpose.

1. Choosing a Family Vacation Sport (audience: parents; purpose: to persuade) _____

2. My Day at the Amusement Park (audience: other students; purpose: to narrate) _____

2.5 Drafting: Writing It Down

Key Information

In the drafting stage you can begin with the beginning, middle, or end of your piece of writing. Let your ideas flow as you put sentences on the page.

■ A. Introducing Your Ideas

The person known as the “lead” in a play has an important role. Likewise, the lead, or introduction, plays an important role in the finished piece of writing. Write interesting leads for the following topics. Remember that the lead is the first sentence or sentences in an article.

1. a humorous essay on insects _____

2. an article describing your neighborhood _____

3. a biographical sketch of George Washington _____

4. a review of your favorite television program _____

5. a newspaper account of a sports event _____

■ B. Plunging In

The drafting stage is a time to put your ideas into sentences, even if you are not sure how the sentences will eventually fit together. Choose one of your leads, and list a few ideas about the topic. Then draft a paragraph. Write freely, putting the sentences on paper as they come to you.

2.6 Revising: Taking a Fresh Look

Key Information

When you revise, you look at sentences and paragraphs and decide how they could be improved. Are they clear? Do they make sense? Did you choose the right words? How do the sentences and paragraphs sound?

■ A. Revising With a Purpose

When you write in a journal, the audience is yourself; you may have no purpose other than self-expression. Journal entries provide good opportunities for revising with a purpose. Choose a journal entry that you like, and select another audience and purpose for it.

Audience _____

Purpose _____

In your journal or on a separate sheet of paper, revise the entry as follows.

1. Put a line through any sentences not suited to the new purpose.
2. Change the order of the sentences as necessary to suit the new purpose.
3. Add sentences necessary to expand and clarify the ideas.
4. Copy your revised piece on a separate sheet of paper.

■ B. Reviewing Another Writer's Work

Suppose another student asked you to review the paragraph below. Its purpose is to describe what the writer saw in Washington, D. C. What advice would you give this writer? What do you like about the paragraph? Is it clear or confusing? Is it descriptive? Would you suggest any changes? If so, write them on the lines below.

I recently visited our nation's capital, Washington, D. C. It was cold and snowy, but I saw a great many places of interest. First, we visited the Jefferson Memorial. It is a round building on the banks of the Potomac River. Next, we saw the White House. There are portraits of all the presidents inside. Although we visited the Smithsonian Institution last, I liked it the best. They had Dorothy's ruby red slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* and the gowns worn by many of our first ladies. The Smithsonian Institution needs several buildings to house the items collected over many years. Before we went to the Smithsonian, we saw the Lincoln Memorial, which has a huge statue of Abraham Lincoln sitting in a chair.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

2.7 Revising: Writing Unified Paragraphs

Key Information

Each paragraph should have a single focus or main idea. The topic sentence states this focus. Transition words connect the ideas within a paragraph.

■ A. Writing Topic Sentences

Topic sentences can occur at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph. Wherever they appear, they have one purpose—to express the paragraph’s main idea. Write a topic sentence for a paragraph about each topic listed.

1. your favorite class _____

2. the funniest thing that has happened this week _____

3. your home _____

4. the route you take to school _____

5. an activity you enjoy _____

■ B. Using Transitions

Transitions connect the ideas within a paragraph. Transitions such as *first* and *after* make time order clear in narrative writing. Spatial transitions such as *above* and *beside* make descriptions clearer. Transitions such as *therefore* and *since* help to explain cause and effect. Draft a paragraph using one of the topic sentences you wrote for Part A. Revise your paragraph by inserting appropriate transition words.

2.8 Revising: Writing Varied Sentences

Key Information

To make your writing more interesting, vary the length and structure of your sentences.

■ A. How Varied Are Your Sentences?

Imagine a fruit salad made only of pineapple chunks. Just as a fruit salad requires a mixture of apples, bananas, grapes, or other fruits, a paragraph requires a variety of sentence structures. Read the following paragraph aloud. How does it sound? Revise the paragraph to add sentence variety. Make sure that not every sentence begins with a subject.

The city pulsed with action and noise. Cars and trucks rolled downtown. Drivers honked horns. Buses discharged passengers onto crowded sidewalks. Shoppers strolled from shop to shop. Neon signs flashed advertisements. A street musician played a saxophone. His audience dropped coins into the open saxophone case.

■ B. How Do Your Sentences Sound?

Choose a paragraph you have written as a journal entry or for an assignment. Read it aloud. Does your paragraph have a pleasing sound? How many sentences are short? How many are long? Revise your paragraph to vary sentence length and structure. Write your revised paragraph below.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

2.9 Editing/Proofreading: Fine-tuning Your Work

Key Information

At the editing/proofreading stage, you prepare to share your writing with others. **Editing** involves checking your sentence structure and **proofreading** for mechanics—punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

■ A. Editing Another Writer’s Work

Edit the following paragraph. Note any sentence fragments or run-on sentences. Use proofreading symbols to make changes in word choice, spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation.

Jazz is a truly american form of music. The direct result of blending cultures. Its roots can be traced to the rhythms of African music and the harmony of European classical music, beyond that the hallmark of jazz are group improvisation. jazz musicians might play a familiar melody. But it is the creativity they bring to that melodie that turns it into a jazz tune. without the mixture of cultures provided by americans proud of their heritage. We would not had jazz music.

■ B. Editing Your Own Work

Write an account of one of your favorite school activities. What do you like about the activity? How is it helpful to you? Does it fit in with any of your long-range goals? Prewrite and draft your paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. After revising your draft, copy it below. Then use the appropriate proofreading symbols as you edit it for sentence structure and mechanics.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

2 Writing Process In Action

Key Information

You can compose a well-written paragraph by first choosing an audience and a purpose for the topic. Then, using the five stages of the writing process, you gather ideas and information, refine them, draft and edit your writing, and present the finished paragraph to your reader.

■ Thanks for the Memory

Small events can change our lives. Imagine being the tenth caller in a radio contest and winning backstage passes to a concert by your favorite performer. That memory will always be important to you. Write a paragraph about a small event that has had a big impact on your life.

1. Identify a writing topic, and choose a specific audience and purpose.

Topic _____

Audience _____

Purpose _____

2. Perform the first four stages of the writing process on separate sheets of paper. Label each page: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising, Editing/Proofreading.
3. Present the paragraph by copying your edited draft below. Underline your topic sentence.

3.1 Writing Descriptions

Key Information

A good description recreates a writer's impressions. Descriptions can be made more vivid by using sensory images and precise details.

A. Creating Images

Images make a description clearer. List words and phrases to create an image of each item below.

- 1. the entrance of your school
2. leaves falling from a tree
3. your favorite place to eat
4. traffic on a busy street near your home
5. your best friend's style of clothes

B. Details, Details

Writers can help readers understand what they are describing by using precise details. Write a paragraph using details to describe one of the subjects in Part A.

Lined writing area for paragraph composition.

3.2 Collecting Sensory Details

Key Information

Effective descriptions include sensory information. When you write a description, take time to observe how something looks, feels, tastes, sounds, and smells.

■ A. Observation Skills

Before you can describe something, it helps to first observe it. Choose something in the room or outside the window to observe. Write down everything you notice about it.

■ B. Using Sensory Details

You can use all five senses to make a description more lively. List words and phrases to describe each of the following items. Try to use all five senses.

1. pizza _____

2. a marching band _____

3. a field of wildflowers _____

4. an infant _____

5. an airplane _____

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

3.3 Using Precise Language

Key Information

A good description includes precise words. A precise word gives the reader more information than a general term. Use precise words to make your writing more descriptive.

■ A. Precise Nouns and Adjectives

Below is a list of general nouns and adjectives. For each word, list three more specific words that could be used in its place.

Example: story—novel, myth, play

1. fruit _____
2. nice _____
3. building _____
4. big _____
5. game _____

■ B. Precise Verbs and Adverbs

For each pair of words below, choose the more precise word, and use it in a sentence.

1. walked, waddled _____

2. carelessly, recklessly _____

3. screamed, responded _____

4. soon, instantly _____

5. swallow, gulp _____

3.4 Using Spatial Order

Key Information

Spatial order is a method of organization you use to guide a reader through the place you are describing. It helps you decide where in your description to place the details.

■ A. Identifying the Space

To write a description using spatial order, you must first understand how each part of the space you are describing is related to every other part. In the space below, sketch one of your favorite places. Include large objects, such as furniture or a tree, and any interesting or unusual features. Label everything.

■ B. Describing the Space

Using spatial order, write a description of the area you sketched. Include each item you labeled. Choose the type of spatial order that will help your reader to see the space you are describing.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

3.5 Describing a Thing

Key Information

When you write a description of an object or an event, include meaningful details. Grouping details can help a reader follow your description.

A. Digging for Details

Sometimes asking yourself questions helps you to remember the meaningful characteristics of a thing you want to describe. Think of something that is important to you, and respond to the following questions. Notice how many details you uncover.

1. What made me think of this thing? _____

2. How can I compare it to something else? _____

3. What is its most unusual feature? _____

4. What do I like best about it? _____

B. Grouping Details

Once you have gathered details, you can group them according to different principles. The list below includes details about a circus. Choose four principles by which to organize the details. Write them at the top of the columns. Then list the appropriate details under each heading.

clowns	big tent	peanuts	elephants	marching band
lions	bareback riders	ringmaster	apples	horses
circus ring	lion tamer	high wire	bleachers	trapeze artists
acrobats	trapeze	popcorn		

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

3.6 Describing the Subject of a Biography

Key Information

When you write a description of a person, consider the person's appearance, personality, actions, and attitudes.

A. Gathering Information

Before you can write about someone, you must know a great deal about him or her. Do you know someone who would make a good subject of a biography? Respond to the following questions with this person in mind.

- 1. What does this person look like? _____

- 2. What hobbies does he or she have? _____

- 3. What are this person's outstanding personality traits? _____

- 4. What do you admire about him or her? _____

- 5. Why would the subject be of interest to a reader? _____

B. Creating a Biographical Sketch

Using the information you gathered in Part A, write a brief biographical sketch of your subject. You can write it as a letter to a friend who has never met this person or as a feature article for a magazine. Continue on another sheet of paper if necessary.

3 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Writing vivid descriptions can help you share your experiences with others. Even people who have had completely different experiences will be able to understand and enjoy your description.

■ A. Prewriting

You are visiting a place your classmates have never seen. The place may be real or imagined. List details that will help you describe it.

■ B. Drafting

On another sheet of paper, write a letter to a classmate. Describe the place you are visiting as completely as you can.

■ C. Revising

Revise the draft of your letter. Did you use colorful details? How did you organize your description? Did you use the ideas listed in Part A? Is your description clear? Write your revision on a separate sheet of paper.

■ D. Editing/Proofreading

Edit your letter in Part C. Proofread for errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Write your letter on the lines below. Use additional paper if necessary.

■ E. Publishing/Presenting

Give the finished letter to a classmate. Can he or she see the place you are describing? Does your letter convey the information you hoped it would?

4.1 Writing the Stories of History

Key Information

A historical narrative is a story about events in history. Realistic details are important in telling about a historical event.

■ A. Making the Past Come Alive

Did you ever wish you could visit a person or event in history? Suppose you were given a time machine. In order to activate the machine, you must name a place you want to go, set a time to be there, and identify the person you want to see. Set your time machine by completing these instructions.

1. I want to go to _____
2. I want to talk to _____
3. The time I would like to be there is _____

■ B. The Journey Backward

Now that your time machine is set, imagine that you make the trip. Write an account of your adventures. Be sure to include realistic, exciting details. Whom did you talk to? What did you learn? What event was taking place? Was anything familiar to you? What was unfamiliar?

4.2 Using Chronological Order

Key Information

When you write a narrative, you have to decide on a time frame—when your story will begin and end. If you describe events in the order in which they happened, you are using chronological order. Transition words can help make the order of events clearer.

■ A. What Happened?

Suppose something special happened to you today—you won a contest, played a difficult piece of music, received an unexpected compliment, or scored a winning goal. You wish your best friend had been there to see it. Choose a special event you want to share, and list what happened in chronological order.

■ B. Telling the Story

Your friend is on vacation. You decide to write a letter explaining the special thing that happened to you. Include each item listed in Part A, and be sure to use transition words related to time (*first*, *next*, *later*, *afterward*, and so on) to connect the events in your narrative.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

4.3 Establishing Point of View

Key Information

Before writing a story, you need to choose a point of view. You could use the first-person point of view, describing everything as you saw it, or the third-person, describing events as another saw them.

■ A. Eyewitness to History

First-person point of view uses the pronouns *I* and *me*. Think of an event that you witnessed. It could be the visit of an important person to your hometown or neighborhood, a championship basketball game, a children's author visiting your local library, a family reunion, or a holiday parade. Write a first-person account of the event.

■ B. A Great Moment in History, As Seen By . . .

Choose an interesting event from history and a person who would have been there. Tell a story about that person's part in the event. For example, you might write about the wife of a forty-niner during the California gold rush or a particular athlete at the most recent Olympic games. Remember to use the pronouns *he*, *she*, and *they* when you tell a story from the third-person point of view.

4.4 Writing Realistic Dialogue

Key Information

When you write a conversation between characters, you are writing dialogue. Your dialogue will sound natural if your characters talk the way real people do.

■ A. Choosing Characters

Before you begin writing dialogue, you must know something about the characters who will be speaking. Choose two real people or invented characters. Jot down notes about them. Describe them, using details that will help you determine what they are likely to say and what kind of language they will use. Consider their tone of voice, body language, personality traits, and hobbies or interests.

■ B. Creating Dialogue

Now that you have your speakers clearly in mind, write a conversation between the two. Be sure to identify each speaker and make the words as realistic as possible. You might want to use as a guide conversation you heard or participated in. Use additional paper if necessary.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

4.5 Relating a Historical Event

Key Information

You can choose to relate a historical event in the voice of a character. Choose or create a character who will experience the event. Then choose the format for your narrative.

A. Creating Characters

For each event below, describe a character who might have experienced it. Draw on your knowledge of history as well as your imagination.

1. the signing of the Declaration of Independence _____

2. the building of an Egyptian pyramid _____

3. a wild west show in the late 1800s _____

4. the arrival of the first horses in the Americas _____

B. Choosing an Approach

For each event listed in Part A, decide on a format that would be effective for your narrative. Would you write a series of letters or journal entries? A short story? A poem? Describe your approach, and give a reason for your choice.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

4.7

Responding to a Historical Narrative

Key Information

You can respond to a historical narrative by telling how an event made you feel or by exploring similarities between yourself and a historical character.

■ A. Responding to Events

Choose a historical narrative you enjoyed reading, and answer the following questions.

1. What important event was narrated in the story? _____

2. How did the narrative make you feel? _____

3. What was your favorite part? _____

4. Would you recommend the narrative to a friend? Why or why not? _____

■ B. Responding to Characters

Choose a character from the historical narrative you wrote about in Part A. It should be the character you felt closest to as you read. Write a letter to the character. Explain why you could imagine yourself in his or her position. Describe yourself, and note the ways in which you are similar to and different from the character.

4 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Historical narrative offers a glimpse of the past as it was viewed—and lived—by a particular person or group.

■ A. Prewriting

You have decided to spice up the historical narrative you wrote for the assignment on pages 184–187 in your textbook by adding dialogue to it. On a separate sheet of paper, use a prewriting technique such as freewriting, clustering, or listing to gather ideas for possible conversations in your narrative.

■ B. Drafting

Choose a scene in your story where dialogue seems appropriate. Identify the speakers, and draft a possible conversation for that scene.

■ C. Revising

Read your dialogue aloud, either by yourself or with a peer reviewer. What changes will you have to make so that the dialogue fits into your story? How can you let your characters show what they are like and how they feel?

■ D. Editing/Proofreading

Edit the dialogue for grammatical errors. Your characters may speak in sentence fragments, but be sure any incomplete sentences sound realistic when spoken. Use the models on pages 169 and 170 of *Writer's Choice* as examples of how to paragraph and punctuate dialogue. Write your edited dialogue on a separate sheet of paper.

■ E. Publishing/Presenting

Have classmates take the parts of the characters in your narrative and read the dialogue aloud. How does it sound? On a separate sheet of paper, write down your response to the presentation of your dialogue.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

5.1 Conveying Information

Key Information

Expository writing is writing that explains and informs. A familiar form of expository writing is the essay. Exposition may involve writing a definition, explaining a process, comparing and contrasting, or showing a cause-and-effect relationship.

■ A. Thesis Statements

The introduction to an essay should include a thesis statement—a sentence that states the main idea of the essay. For each topic below, write a thesis statement that you could use in an essay for a class assignment.

1. my favorite holiday _____

2. an activity I want to try _____

3. the perfect pet _____

4. a fascinating person from history _____

■ B. Types of Expository Writing

Select the exposition format you feel would work best for these topics. In the space provided, write *definition*, *process*, *compare and contrast*, or *cause and effect*.

1. why volcanoes erupt _____
2. how snowflakes form _____
3. differences between college and professional basketball _____
4. how to recycle cans and bottles _____
5. what organic gardening is _____
6. how writing and painting are alike _____
7. how getting a driver's license changes your life _____
8. what a slam-dunk is _____

5.2 Structuring an Explanation

Key Information

Supporting details provide the information in expository writing. Expository writing may explain how something works or how to perform an activity. When organizing details, consider your purpose and your audience.

■ A. Choosing Details

Choose a topic from the list below, or choose one of your own. Imagine explaining it to a younger friend or family member. Write six details, such as facts, statistics, and examples to support your explanation. If necessary, use a reference, such as an encyclopedia or a manual, to help you add details or to check your accuracy.

how to make the world's best salad

how to ride a bicycle

how to play a particular sport

how a computer works

how to make applesauce

how to play a particular video game

■ B. Arranging Details

Your purpose is to explain your topic to a younger person. Decide which type of order, such as chronological order or order of importance, best suits your needs. Then write a paragraph, arranging the details listed in Part A in a logical order. When your paragraph is complete, use the following checklist. Write your final copy below.

Does my paragraph suit my purpose and audience?

Do I include a topic sentence?

Are the supporting details in a logical order?

Do I use transition words?

Do I include a concluding sentence?

5.3 Writing to Compare and Contrast

Key Information

When you compare two things, you explain how they are similar. When you contrast two things, you explain how they are different. Compare-and-contrast writing can be organized by subject or by feature.

A. Noting Similarities and Differences

Suppose you have been asked to enter an essay contest. The theme of the contest is "Our State One Hundred Years Ago and Today." The winning essay will be published in the local newspaper. In the left column, list the ways in which your state is the same as it was a hundred years ago. In the right column, list the ways it has changed.

Similarities

Differences

Handwriting lines for the comparison and difference columns.

B. Comparing and Contrasting

Write two paragraphs comparing and contrasting your state then and now. You can choose to organize the details by subject. Explain what the state was like a hundred years ago, giving all of the details. Then explain what the state is like today. Or you can choose to organize by feature. Compare or contrast one feature, telling how it was and how it is now. Then go on to compare or contrast the next feature.

Handwriting lines for the paragraph writing section.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

5.4 Writing About a Process

Key Information

Before you begin to write about a process, consider your audience, gather the information you will need, and list the steps of the process in the correct sequence.

■ A. Identifying a Process

Imagine that you are the president of a company. Plan to write an article for middle-schoolers explaining how your company makes a product. List in order the steps involved in its manufacture. You may write about a real product or an imaginary one.

Product _____

Steps in process _____

■ B. Explaining a Process

Draft an expository paragraph from the steps you have listed in Part A. Use transition words to link the steps in the process. Use additional paper if necessary.

5.6 Answering an Essay Question

Key Information

Read an essay question carefully; the words used in the question determine the information needed in the answer. Then plan your essay answer to include a thesis statement, supporting information, and a conclusion.

■ A. Tackling an Essay Question

Suppose your social studies teacher gave you these two questions on an exam. Choose one, and list the key words you will use in your answer. Then write a thesis statement for your answer.

1. Explain the importance of studying American history.
2. Explain the role of the electoral college in a presidential election.

Key Words _____

Thesis Statement _____

■ B. Constructing an Answer

Using the thesis statement and key words listed above, construct an answer to the essay question you have chosen. Be sure to include a conclusion that refers to the thesis.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

5.8 Reports: Writing a Business Letter to Request Information

Key Information

Writing a business letter can help you get information you cannot find in another source.

■ A. What Would You Like to Know?

Suppose you would like to participate in a local event, such as a walkathon for charity, an audition for a play, or a community festival. You decide to write a letter to a person on the organizing committee for the event. Write down some questions to ask the committee member. Try to think of questions that could not be answered by any other source.

■ B. Drafting Your Letter

Using the questions above, draft a letter to the committee member. Be sure to state your purpose in writing and to request the information you need. Use additional paper if necessary.

5.9 Reports: Planning and Drafting

Key Information

When you have completed the research for a report, write a thesis statement. Then use this preliminary statement to organize an outline. Major headings of the outline state the main ideas of the paragraphs, while subheadings give supporting details. Use the outline and notes as you begin drafting an essay.

■ A. Getting Organized

Examine the following information for a two-page report on delivering an effective speech. Organize the material into a workable outline with major headings and sub-headings. Use a separate sheet of paper.

- Rehearse the speech
- Analyze audience and occasion
- Determine the purpose
- Organize the body of the speech
- Construct visual aids
- Select major points
- Create a suitable conclusion
- Create a lively introduction
- Research the topic
- Choose a topic
- Delivering the speech
- Utilize personal strengths
- Use visual aids
- Planning the speech
- Choose anecdotes and examples
- Preparing the speech
- Use notecards to remember major points

■ B. Writing a Thesis Statement

Look over your outline and decide on a main or controlling idea for your report. Write a thesis statement expressing that main idea.

■ C. Drafting Your Report

Draft an introduction to your report.

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

5.11

Comparing Two Poems

Key Information

Poems evoke personal reactions, creating pictures in your mind, stirring feelings, and bringing back memories. Writing about your reactions to poetry can help you understand it.

■ A. Reacting to Poetry

“Kidnap Poem” by Nikki Giovanni and “Poetry” by Marianne Moore are about the reading and writing of poetry. On a separate sheet of paper, record similarities and differences between these excerpts. Ask yourself what the writer says a poem can do. To whom is the poem addressed? Can you identify several metaphors?

Kidnap Poem

ever been kidnapped
by a poet
if i were a poet
i'd kidnap you
put you in my phrases and meter
you to jones beach
or maybe coney island
or maybe just to my house
.....
show you off to mama
yeah if i were a poet i'd kid
nap you

Poetry

I, too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in it after all, a place for the genuine.
Hands that can grasp, eyes
that can dilate, hair that can rise
if it must, these things are important not because a
high-sounding interpretation can be put upon them but because they are
useful.

■ B. Writing About Poetry

Write a brief compare-and-contrast essay using your reactions to the two poems from Part A. Use additional paper if necessary.

5 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Expository writing explains something to the reader. Identify the purpose and audience for your writing. Then select a topic, gather information, and select a type of exposition.

■ Staying Informed

The current events class at your school is creating a display for the school lobby. You have been asked to write a two-page report to accompany the display. Use the steps in the writing process to produce the finished report.

■ A. Finding a Topic and Gathering Information

On a separate sheet of paper, use a prewriting technique such as freewriting, clustering, or listing to discover possible topics. A recent news magazine or newspaper may suggest ideas. Choose the best topic and write it in the space provided.

Topic _____

Gather ideas about the topic and list them.

■ B. Getting Organized

1. Select the type of exposition suitable for the report. Write *definition*, *process*, *compare and contrast*, or *cause and effect* in the space provided.

Type of expository writing _____

Write a preliminary thesis statement.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, organize your ideas and supporting details into an outline. Use the thesis as a guide. Indicate major headings and subheadings.

6.2 Determining a Position

Key Information

Taking a position means deciding which side of an issue you support. To write persuasively about your position, you need to know your audience, including how much they already know about the issue.

■ A. Pros and Cons

Your school has decided to lengthen the school day by an hour. The hour will be a “homework hour” that students will spend doing homework. During that time, students will be allowed to ask questions and discuss subjects or homework with their teachers. Do you think this is a good idea? List both pros and cons.

Pros

Cons

■ B. The Audience

How you present your position will depend on whom you are addressing. Some arguments may be more useful than others in relation to a particular audience. Explain how you would approach each audience to convince it that your position on school hours is the best one.

1. your parents _____

2. your classmates _____

3. the school board _____

4. a friend who holds the opposing view _____

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

6.3 Evaluating Evidence

Key Information

To make a persuasive argument, you must present evidence supporting your position.

A. Fact Versus Opinion

Both facts and opinions can be used to support a position. Facts can be proven. Opinions are personal judgments. Indicate whether each item listed is a *fact* or an *opinion*.

1. Basketball is the best sport. _____
2. Ronald Reagan was the fortieth president of the United States. _____
3. Complex carbohydrates are a good source of energy. _____
4. The *Mona Lisa* is the most beautiful painting in the world. _____
5. Mysteries are more interesting than science fiction. _____

B. Selecting Useful Evidence

Some evidence will be more compelling than other evidence. Choose a paper that you have written. List some facts you used as evidence. List some opinions. Which pieces of evidence are most compelling? Why? Which evidence is less persuasive? Why?

6.4 Developing a Strategy

Key Information

Before you can persuade your readers, you must first get their attention. Then you can begin making your case.

■ A. May I Have Your Attention, Please?

Creativity is the key to gaining your audience's attention. A distinctive image, a surprising revelation, or an unexpected approach can attract attention. How would you capture your audience's attention to discuss these topics?

1. the need for more healthful food in the school cafeteria _____

2. a new campaign to promote recycling _____

3. the importance of the arts (for example, dance, painting, opera, theatre, the symphony) to your community _____

4. a major company planning to relocate to your area _____

■ B. Stating Your Case

Your case, or argument, is a statement of your position and includes supporting evidence arranged in an orderly manner. Suppose you are the editor of a new magazine that presents information on part-time jobs for teens. Write a letter to prospective subscribers persuading them to buy your magazine. Why should they subscribe to it? What evidence can you offer to support your position? Be sure to attract their attention at the beginning, and state your case as convincingly as you can. Use additional paper if necessary.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

6.6 Creating an Ad

Key Information

The purpose of advertising is to persuade. The effective use of language is an important part of writing ads. They are carefully planned with a specific audience in mind.

■ A. The Pitch

Your store sells videotapes (movies, music videos, exercise tapes, and so on). Choose three of the audiences listed below. Then write a slogan to persuade each audience to come to your store.

1. middle school students _____

2. senior citizens _____

3. factory workers _____

4. parents _____

5. rural families _____

■ B. The Sell

Now it is time to produce a television commercial aimed at selling your videotapes to one of the groups above. Choose your audience. Then describe your commercial. Who will be in it? What will they say and do?

Audience _____

Description of commercial _____

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

6.7 Writing a Letter to the Editor

Key Information

A letter to the editor is really a letter to the readers of the newspaper or magazine, persuading them to understand or adopt your position on an issue.

■ A. Preparing to Persuade

Read one of your favorite newspapers or magazines, choose an article you find interesting, and then answer the following questions.

1. What is the writer's main point? _____

2. What arguments does the writer use to support the main point? _____

3. Do you agree or disagree? Why? _____

4. What main point would you make in responding to this article? _____

5. What evidence can you use to support your position? _____

■ B. Writing the Letter

Use your answers to the questions in Part A to write a letter to the editor. Be sure to state your main point clearly and to provide as many persuasive supporting statements as you can. Your audience is the other readers of the magazine or newspaper.

Composition Practice

Name Class Date

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

6.8

Writing a Book Review

Key Information

Book reviews help readers decide whether they would be interested in reading a book. The reviewer explains what the book is about, whether the reviewer considers it worthwhile, and why.

■ A. Impressions

Most readers are interested in a reviewer’s response. Choose a book you have read recently. Describe the content of the book and your opinion of it.

■ B. Opinions

Would you recommend this book to your classmates? Why or why not? Write a paragraph persuading your classmates either to read this book or to find another.

6 Writing Process in Action

Key Information

Successful writing can affect events in the future.

■ A. Prewriting

Your student government is giving an award for most outstanding teacher. It is accepting nominations. Identify three qualities you value in a teacher, and explain why those qualities are important to you.

Qualities

Importance

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

■ B. Drafting

On another sheet of paper, draft a persuasive letter nominating a teacher (either real or imaginary). Try to be as vivid and convincing as possible.

■ C. Revising

Is your letter convincing? Do you clearly explain why your nominee should get the award? Examine your letter, and make any revisions you feel will make it more effective.

■ D. Editing/Proofreading

Edit your revised letter for errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Write your final draft on the lines below.

■ E. Publishing/Presenting

Share your letter with a partner. Compare the qualities each of you included. If your school does give outstanding teacher awards, consider submitting your recommendation.
