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Writer’s Notebook: Introducing a Topic in Non-Fiction

Information for students

Your writer’s notebooks should be filling up with lots of quick-write ideas and even a longer and more polished piece of writing. This week, we are switching modes and focusing on non-fiction writing. Below, you will begin by considering what expertise you might have on a topic. You will then narrow down a writing idea and craft an introduction.

Instructions

Part 1: Find your focus topic

- The best non-fiction writing comes from writing about a topic that you are passionate and knowledgeable about. You might not think you are an expert on many things, but you would be surprised! Start by turning to a fresh page in your notebook and create a list titled “My Expert List”. Make a list of topics that you know a lot about. List as many things as you can in three minutes. Anything goes: setting the table for dinner, fishing, dinosaurs, skateboarding, etc.
- Once you have completed your list, circle one topic that you are most interested in exploring further: this is your “expert topic.” Now, think about all the different aspects of that one topic that you could teach to someone. Make a new list with your expert topic at the top. Narrow your focus by listing all the smaller, more specific topics you could explore underneath. This is your list of “focused topics.” Once you have created your list of focused topics, circle the one that you are most interested in writing about. See appendix 1 for an example of an expert topic list and a list of more focused writing topics.

Part 2: Craft your introduction

- There are many ways to introduce non-fiction topics. The best way to learn how to do this is to study the introductions of non-fiction books. Take a look at the four types of introductions below and study the examples in appendix 2.
- In your writer’s notebook, write a brief introduction to your topic. Try at least two different kinds of introductions (or more if you like) in order to pick the one that you feel works best. See appendix 3 for examples of a student trying out different introduction techniques.

Four ways to introduce non-fiction texts:

1. Start with a question: What would your reader want to know? What would your reader find interesting?
2. Create a scene: Write three or four descriptive sentences about your topic. Would these sentences leave the reader wanting to know more about your topic?
3. Share a secret: Let the reader know that it is worth it to invest the time to keep reading.
4. Define: Define your topic and introduce key vocabulary. Definitions don’t need to come from a dictionary!

Materials required

- Notebook or lined paper
- Pen or pencil

Information for parents

Children should:

- take 20-30 minutes each day to write in their writer's notebook
- extend the activity by creating introductions to different topics from their expert list
- extend the activity by looking at non-fiction books, if available, to see what kind of introductions they use and attempt to mimic these in their own writing

Remember, skillful writers are also skillful readers. Writers look to reading to inspire and guide them. Make sure you are reading for 30-45 minutes each day. The more you read, the better you get!

Parents could:

- read the instructions to your child if necessary
- ensure your child understands the task
- support your child in thinking of topics for their expert list by making suggestions
- invite your child to share their writing with you

Appendix 1: Expert & Focused Lists

My Expert List

- Cats
- Gardening
- Cooking
- Books
- Fall (my favorite season)
- Vacuuming
- The Dora Movie
- Biking

Narrowing My Focus: FALL

- trees
- Halloween
- Harvest
- Fall fashion
- Fall baking
- Weather

Appendix 2: Introductions

	<h3>Start with a Question</h3> <p>You're swimming in the warm blue sea. What's the one word that turns your dream into a nightmare? What's the one word that makes you think of a giant man-eating killer?</p>
<h3>Create a Scene</h3> <p>Outside a border fort in the desert of Western Iraq, a small, thin dog watched and waited.</p>	
	<h3>Share a Secret</h3> <p>You think you know everything about Thanksgiving, don't you? Well, listen up. I have a news flash... WE ALMOST LOST... THANKSGIVING! Didn't know that, did you? It's true.</p>
	<h3>Define</h3> <p>The word TORNADO comes from the Spanish word <i>tronada</i>, meaning "thunderstorm."</p>
<p>At sunrise, the sun, low in the sky, peeks through dusty air. Dust from us and dirt and dinosaurs scatters light, painting the sky like fire. Dust is made everywhere, every day. A flower drops pollen. A dog shakes dirt from its fur. A butterfly flutters, and scales fall off its wings. That's dust. Dust is little bits of things.</p>	

Fall Harvest Introductions

Start with a question:

Have you ever stopped to think about where that delicious pumpkin pie you are eating came from? Who picked the pumpkin? Who planted it? Where do pumpkins even grow? Time to find out!

Create a scene:

I pull on my brother's old rain boots, caked in cracking mud, and just a little too big for my feet. I can hear the tractor mumbling and grunting outside, my father and brother probably already sipping steaming coffee in the damp chilly morning air. They are deciding where we will start today. Because, you see, living and working on an apple farm at harvest time ain't easy. Especially when you've got big boots to fill.

Share a secret:

Psst! Come in close... I bet you can't guess my favourite time of year? Nope. It's not Christmas, not Valentine's day either. No, not even spring with all the pretty flowers and birds. Tired of trying? Ok. I'll tell you! It's fall. Also known as autumn. Yup. Fall. And you wanna know the best part of fall? The harvest!

Define:

The cornucopia, or horn of plenty, is a symbol of abundance and nourishment. Often seen overflowing with nature's bounty, this ancient symbol reminds us that fall's harvest has arrived.

Jouons avec les mots !

Information for students

Profite de ces jeux pour t’amuser tout en apprenant des nouveaux mots.

1^{er} jeu

Trouver un mot correspondant à chaque catégorie. Les mots de chaque catégorie doivent commencer par la lettre indiquée dans la première colonne.

Lettre	Animal	Légume ou fruit	Couleur	Sport
EX : G	Girafe	Grenade	Gris	Golf
B				
R				
T				
K				
M				

2^e jeu

- Commencer avec un mot.
- Changer une lettre de ce mot pour créer un autre mot.
- On ne peut changer qu’une lettre à la fois, mais on peut changer l’ordre original des lettres.

EX. :

m a r i
r i m e
m a r e
l a m e
a m i e
m a i n

l a p i n

r o u t e

French as a Second Language

3^e jeu

Regrouper les syllabes ci-dessous afin de former le plus de mots possible.

la	ma	ra	fa	pa	va
fo	bo	no	so	do	mo
ni	di	vi	fi	li	ri
te	de	re	pe	ne	fe
lu	du	nu	bu	su	du
té	fé	dé	lé	mé	ré
tra	fro	bru	cri	vre	dré
bou	fou	dou	pou	cou	sou
tau	pau	vau	rau	nau	fau
cli	blo	plo	flu	blé	pla
feau	beau	veau	leau	meau	deau
ron	fon	bon	ton	don	son

Réponses :

EX: ri-deau

Materials required

- Du papier
- Un crayon
- Une imprimante

Information for parents

Parents could:

- read the instructions with their child, if necessary
- discuss the questions together
- help their child find the answers

Translating Words into Equations

Information for students

This activity will help you translate mathematical word problems into equations. We will first start by looking at simple problems and see what they would look like when expressed mathematically. We will slowly move towards more complex examples. Remember that BEDMAS must continue to be considered when going from words to mathematical symbols.

You can get help from anyone to do this activity. Learning how to go from words to equations is not easy, and may require help from friends, siblings, parents or teachers. Don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it, as you are still learning how to do this. You're not expected to know how already!

Instructions:

- Follow the examples provided to see the relationship between the words and what they translate into mathematically. The most important thing is writing the mathematical symbols properly. You can solve the equations after you have written them down.
- If you are unfamiliar with phrases used in word problems, review those provided in Appendix B and try to make sense of them before doing the questions in Appendix A.

Materials required

- Pencil, paper, calculator
- Appendix A: Activity Questions
- Appendix B: Translating Words into Equations
- Appendix C: Answers to the Activity Questions

Information for parents

About the activity

Children could:

- ask for help reading the problems
- require assistance in making sense of the examples provided
- use their calculators to help them make sense of the questions and to check their answers
- get assistance from friends, siblings, parents or teachers

Parents should:

- be prepared to print the material needed
- read the activity, if required
- provide guidance to point their child in the right direction
- allow collaborative work between individuals
- encourage their child to persevere
- reinforce the notion that hard work leads to success and cultivate a growth mindset
 - Click here to read more on [Mindset](#)

Appendix A – Activity Questions¹

First, let's look at a simple multi-step problem:

Cindy had 18 pieces of candy. She ate six pieces in the morning and four more pieces in the afternoon. How many pieces of candy does she have left?

Start by clarifying what you understand and what you are being asked to solve.

- **18** pieces is the total amount of candy.
- **Six** pieces is the amount she ate in the morning.
- **Four** pieces is the amount she ate in the afternoon.

“How many pieces of candy does she **have left?**” is the question being asked.

Step 1: First add 6 and 4 to find the total number of candies eaten: 10 ; $6 + 4 = 10$

Don't be fooled into stopping there. The question being asked is “how many are left?” not “how many have been eaten?”

Step 2: Subtract the total eaten, 10, from the total number of candies, 18; $18 - 10 = 8$

This means that Cindy has 8 pieces of candy left. The complete equation could therefore look like this: $18 - (6 + 4) = 8$ or $18 - 6 - 4 = 8$; which do you prefer?

Now it's your turn. Solve each problem below. First read the problem carefully, and clarify what you know and what you need to know to answer the question being asked. Solve the first step to get the rest of the information you need. Use that information to solve the second step to get the final answer. Check and make sure your answer is reasonable.

1. Jerry had a box of 64 crayons. He lost eight of them, and his little sister lost three of them. How many crayons does Jerry have left?

Step One: _____

Step Two: _____

Jerry has _____ crayons left. Since the problem says that Jerry lost crayons in two ways, he should have fewer crayons than he started out with. Is your answer reasonable?

Rewrite the complete equation in two different ways.

First way: _____

Second way: _____

¹ David Burns, “Multi-step Word Problems,” n.d.,

https://www.helpingwithmath.com/printables/worksheets/word_problems/4oa3word_problems01.htm accessed on May 29, 2020.

Mathematics

2. Samantha and Krystal are walking to school and have twenty minutes to get there. It takes them six minutes to get to the corner where the library is. It takes them another seven minutes to get to the fire station. How much longer do they have to get to school without being late?

Step One: _____

Step Two: _____

They have _____ minutes left. Since the problem says that the girls have used up two amounts of time while walking, the amount of time they have left should be less than the amount of time they started with. Is your answer reasonable?

Rewrite the complete equation in two different ways.

First way: _____

Second way: _____

3. Robert wants to practice goal kicks for soccer. He decides to take 12 kicks before going home from the park. He takes 5 kicks before taking a break to get a drink of water. He then takes another 4 kicks. How many more kicks does he need to take before he goes home?

Step One: _____

Step Two: _____

He still needs to take _____ kicks. Since the problem gives us two amounts that tell us the number of kicks he has already taken, the number of kicks he has left to take should be less than the number of kicks he needed to take in the beginning. Is your answer reasonable?

Rewrite the complete equation in two different ways.

First way: _____

Second way: _____

4. Ashleigh runs 2 kilometres on Monday and three times that many on Tuesday. If she wants to run a total of 20 kilometres this week, how many more kilometres does she need to run?

Hint: Each step involves only one mathematical operation.

Step One: _____

Step Two: _____

Step Three: _____

She needs to run _____ more kilometres. Since the problem gives us two amounts that tell us the number of kilometres she has already run, the number of kilometres she has left to run should be less than the number of kilometres she set as her goal for the week. Is your answer reasonable?

Rewrite the complete equation in two different ways.

First way: _____

Second way: _____

Mathematics

5. Dawn has 21 candies that she wants to put into bags of 3. She wants to give these bags to 5 of her friends. How many bags will she have left over?

Step One: _____

Step Two: _____

Step Three: _____

She will have _____ bags left over. Since she is dividing the total number of candies, the number of groups or bags should be less than the total. Also, the number of bags left over should be less than the total number of bags. Is your answer reasonable? Rewrite the complete equation in two different ways.

First way: _____

Second way: _____

6. John earned \$12 on Saturday, but he only managed to earn half that amount on Sunday. He earned \$26 the previous weekend. How much more does he need to earn to have the \$60 he needs to buy a new hockey stick?

Step One: _____

Step Two: _____

Step Three: _____

He needs \$ _____ more. Since the problem give us three amounts of money that he has already earned, the amount still required should be less than the total amount required. Is your answer reasonable?

Rewrite the complete equation in two different ways.

First way: _____

Second way: _____

Appendix B – Translating Words into Equations²

Information for students

When writing an equation, you need to know the meaning of many operation symbols. You also need to remember how to write them using BEDMAS so everyone gets the same answer. We will now look at how operations are expressed in words and what they look like once they are translated into mathematical symbols and equations. Some of the phrases used are summarized in the table below:

Operation	Phrase	Expression
Addition	a plus b the sum of a and b a increased by b b more than a the total of a and b b added to a, a added to b	$a + b$
Subtraction	a minus b the difference of a and b b subtracted from a b less than a	$a - b$
Multiplication	a times b the product of a and b	$a \cdot b$, $a \times b$, ab , $a(b)$
Division	a divided by b the quotient of a and b b divided into a	$a \div b$, a/b , $\frac{a}{b}$
Equal	is equal to is the same as is gives was will be	=

² “Module 2: “Calculations and Solving Equations,” Lumen, accessed May 29, 2020, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-accountingformanagers/chapter/translating-word-problems-into-equations/>

Examples

Operation	Phrase	Expression
Addition	Bobby gets a \$5 allowance every week. His father gave him \$0.75 more per week. How much does he get now?	$5.00 + 0.75 = 5.75$
	Lisa had \$234 in her bank account. Last week, she mowed a few lawns and made another \$57. How much does she have in total?	$234 + 57 = 291$
Subtraction	Darryl had 24 tulips in his garden. Laura had 8 fewer tulips in her own garden. How many tulips does Laura have?	$24 - 8 = 16$
	Ali put 27 popsicles in his freezer for his party. By the end of the party, 12 popsicles were eaten. How many popsicles were left in his freezer?	$27 - 12 = 15$
Multiplication	Sasha baked 24 mini muffins on the week-end. His sister Maya baked 3 times that amount. How many did Maya bake?	$3 \times 24 = 72$, $3 (24) = 72$
	Jordan has 127 friends on Facebook. If Fred has twice that amount, how many does he have in total?	$2 \times 127 = 154$, $2 (127) = 154$
Division	Lieutenant Broderick had to ration the water during the training retreat. He had 200 water bottles to divide among 50 soldiers. How many water bottles did each soldier receive?	$200 \div 50 = 4$, $200/50 = 4$, $\frac{200}{50} = 4$
	One hundred and twelve (112) balloons were divided between 7 teams. How many balloons did each team get?	$112 \div 7 = 16$, $112/7 = 16$, $\frac{112}{7} = 16$

Appendix C – Answers to the Activity Questions

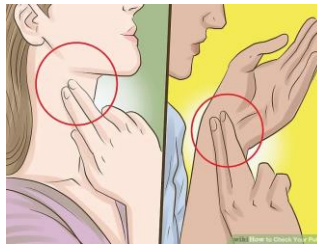
1. Step One: $8 + 3 = 11$
Step Two: $64 - 11 = 53$
Jerry has 53 crayons left.
First way: $64 - (8 + 3) = 53$
Second way: $64 - 8 - 3 = 53$
2. Step One: $6 + 7 = 13$
Step Two: $20 - 13 = 7$
They have 7 minutes left.
First way: $20 - (6 + 7) = 7$
Second way: $20 - 6 - 7 = 7$
3. Step One: $5 + 4 = 9$
Step Two: $12 - 9 = 3$
He still needs to take 3 kicks
First way: $12 - (5 + 4) = 3$
Second way: $12 - 5 - 4 = 3$
4. Step One: $2(3)$ or 2×3
Step Two: $2 + 6 = 8$
Step Three: $20 - 8 = 12$
She needs to run 12 more kilometres
First way: $20 - (2 + 2 \times 3) = 12$
Second way: $20 - 2 - 3(2) = 12$
5. Step One: $21 \div 3 = 7$
Step Two: $7 - 5 = 2$
She will have 2 bags left over.
First way: $(21 \div 3) - 5 = 2$
Second way: $21/3 - 5 = 2$
6. Step One: $12 \div 2 = 6$
Step Two: $12 + 6 + 26 = 44$
Step Three: $60 - 44 = 16$.
He needs \$16 more.
First way: $60 - (12 + 12/2 + 26) = 16$
Second way: $60 - 12 - 12 \div 2 - 26 = 16$

Heart Rate

Information for students

Activity 1

- Have you ever noticed that your heart beats faster or slower depending on what type of activity you do? Try to think of times when your heart was beating faster (e.g. running, swimming, activities during your physical education classes) or slower (e.g. reading, playing cards).
- Do you know why our hearts beat faster and slower? Check out [this video](#) to find out!
- After watching the video, you've learned not only how and why our hearts beat, but also how to take your pulse.
- Now take your own pulse! Sit on the floor or on a chair, relax and find your pulse. Your pulse can be found easily on your wrist or on your neck right underneath your ear.



- Set a timer for 30 seconds. When the timer starts, count each heartbeat you feel. Once the timer is up, double that number. For example, if you felt your heartbeat 30 times, double your number and you will get 60 BPM (beats per minute). This number is your resting heart rate.

For example:

$$\begin{array}{r} 30 \\ + \quad \underline{30} \\ \hline 60 \end{array}$$

Activity 2

- Let's try to find out what type of activities make our hearts beat fastest!
- Follow the instructions in Appendix A.

Materials required

- Device with Internet access (for the video)
- Paper, pen/pencil
- Timer

Information for parents

About the activity

Children should:

- learn about the heart, its main functions and how to take their own pulse
- learn to feel the difference between a faster and slower heart rate


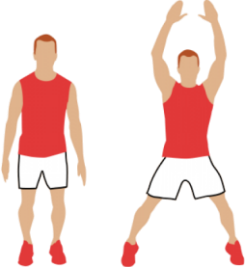

Parents could:

- participate in the activities with their children and take their own pulse
- discuss how different physical activities can alter our heart rates
- continue learning by choosing other physical activities followed by taking the heart rate


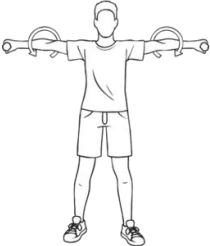

Appendix A

Measure your heart rate with different activities

Make sure you are in a safe space with enough room to move for the activities. You should also take a small break in between each exercise so you can recover and get back to your resting heart rate. If you are feeling too tired or unwell, you do not need to complete the chart. Do as much as you can! Perform each exercise for 30 seconds. Then, take your pulse like we practised in the first activity. Don't forget to double your number!

Exercise	BPM
<p data-bbox="370 730 792 768">Walking around your house</p> 	<p data-bbox="997 730 1317 768">___ beats per minute</p>
<p data-bbox="467 1031 699 1068">Jumping Jacks</p> 	<p data-bbox="997 1031 1317 1068">___ beats per minute</p>
<p data-bbox="493 1362 672 1400">High Knees</p>  <p data-bbox="691 1577 769 1598">twinkl.com</p>	<p data-bbox="997 1362 1317 1400">___ beats per minute</p>

Physical Education and Health

<p style="text-align: center;">Mountain Climbers</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">twinkl.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">___ beats per minute</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Arm Circles</p>  <p style="text-align: right; font-size: small;">twinkl.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">___ beats per minute</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Toe Touches</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;">___ beats per minute</p>

1. Which exercise got your heart beating fastest? Write down your answers from highest BPM to lowest BPM

	___ beats per minute
	___ beats per minute
	___ beats per minute
	___ beats per minute
	___ beats per minute
	___ beats per minute

2. Think of other activities you can try to lower or raise your BPM!