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16 Informative Writing

Informative writing is based on facts. You use this kind of writing to answer a question on a test. You use it to write a report, too. This is the writing you do most often.

This type of writing should be clear and direct. The reader should understand right away what you are writing about. Informative writing needs to be well organized. This helps the reader to follow your main points.

There are many ways you can organize your writing. You can use main idea and details. Or, you can tell the cause and its effects. Another way is to use a sequence of steps. Step-by-step directions are organized in order, or **sequence**. The steps must be in the right order or the directions will not work. You can also choose to compare and contrast information.



Guided Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

Your school is asking for ideas for activity clubs to add to its after-school program. School rules state that any such activity must be educational.

Write one or more paragraphs for your teacher and classmates explaining one activity that you would like to have as part of the program.

Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- begin with a topic sentence
- give details about the activity
- tell why it would be educational



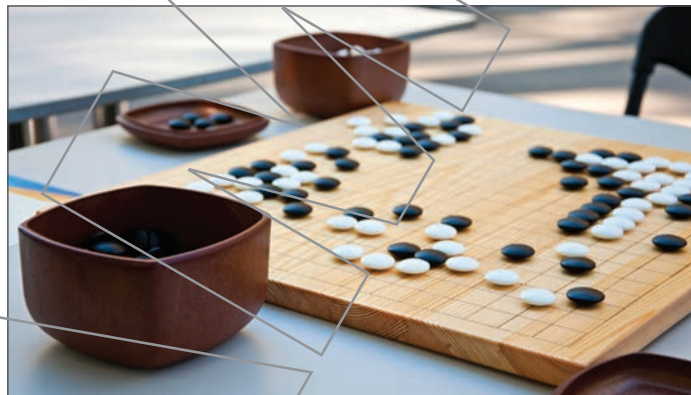
Step 1: Prewrite

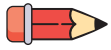
Here is how one student, Kai, begins the assignment. First, he reads the question carefully. Then he reads the question again for key words about the audience and how to write his paper. He makes sure he understands exactly what it is asking before he plans what to write.

What words help Kai know what he will do for this assignment?

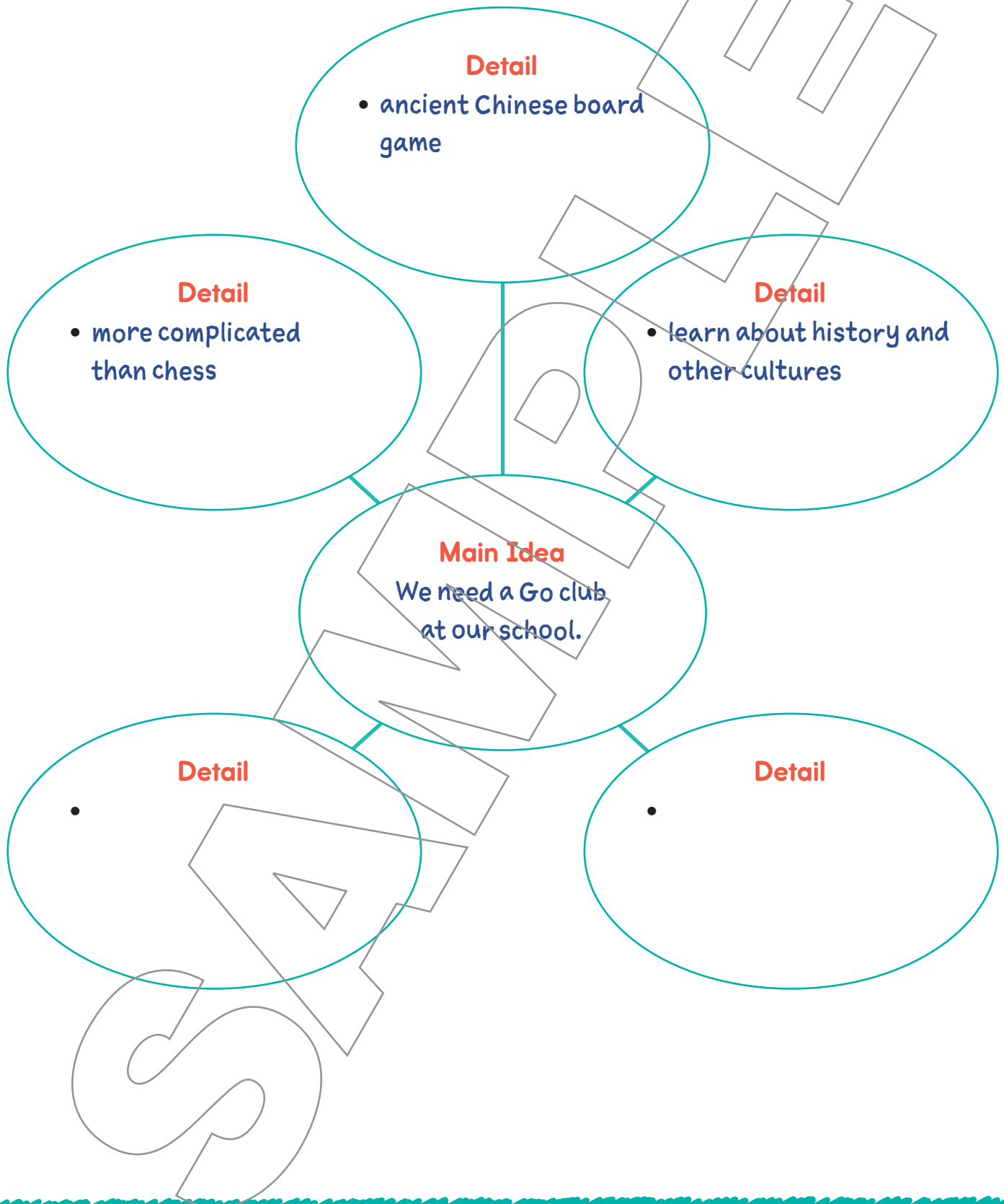


The assignment tells him what type of writing he will do and who the audience is. It also tells him the subject.





The next step is to make a plan of what he will write. Kai wants to use a graphic organizer to help him put his ideas in order. He uses a web to tell about the activity. Here is the web that Kai uses:



Which items below also fit in the web supporting Kai's main idea that the game of Go is educational? Put an X next to two that fit.

- _____ popular in Japan
- _____ uses math—patterns comparing territory
- _____ have computer and math clubs
- _____ game of strategy and skill



Details should support the main idea. The main idea is that the school needs a Go after-school club.

The next step is to write the draft.

Step 2: Draft

Read Kai's draft. Then answer the questions.

Our school has a chess club a computer club, and a math club.

We have classes in spanish and French. There are sports clubs for basketball soccer, and track I think a Go club would be an excellent choice, too.

Go is an ancient game of strategy and skill. It was invented in China more than 3,000 years ago. It is most popular in japan. It is played on a board with crisscrossing lines. Two players take turns placing small counters where the lines cross to try capture territory. The winner gets the most territory.

The rules are simple and easy to learn. A beginner can have a chance against an expert. But the strategy and thinking involved are more complicated than in chess. It is my favorite game, and I think other kids would like it.

Here are three reasons why it is educational.

1. You need thinking skills and strategy.
2. You use math in planning how to capture territory and defending against the other player.
3. You learn something about the history and culture and legends of other countries (Japan).

What is the focus of paragraph 2?



What is the main point of the paragraph? What does the reader learn?

Step 3: Revise

Read the revised draft. Then answer the questions.

Our school has a chess club a computer club, and a math club.

We have classes in spanish and French. ~~There are~~ sports clubs

for basketball soccer, and track I think a Go club would be an

excellent choice, too.

I am writing to ask you to add a Go club to our after-school activities program.

Go is an ancient game of strategy and skill. It was invented

in China more than 3,000 years ago. It is most popular in

japan. It is played on a board with crisscrossing lines. Two

players take turns placing small counters where the lines cross

to try capture territory. The winner ~~gets~~ the most territory.

The rules are simple and easy to learn. A beginner can have

a chance against an expert. But the strategy and thinking

involved are more complicated than in chess. ~~It is my favorite~~

~~game, and I think other kids would like it.~~

~~Here are three reasons why it is educational.~~

Go is a lot of fun to play. But it also improves your mind. It teaches you

~~1. You need~~ thinking skills and strategy.

~~2.~~ You use math in planning how to capture territory and

defending against the other player.

~~3.~~ You learn something about the history and culture and

legends of other countries (Japan).

Why did Kai move the first paragraph and add a new sentence?



Think about how the writing is organized. Is the main idea clear? Do the details support it?

Why did Kai replace the numbered list with sentences in paragraph form?



Think about the organization of the information and the flow of the writing.

Why did Kai add and delete words and sentences in paragraphs 2 and 3?



Revising means adding and deleting words and sentences to make your meaning clearer. It also helps improve the flow of the writing.



Peer Review

Use the rubric on the next page to review Kai's writing and give it a score. This is called **peer review**. A number is assigned to tell how well the question was answered. The rubric tells what is needed for the highest score. It also tells why some writing might receive lower scores.

SAMPLE

Informative Writing Rubric

Score 3

- The writing answers all parts of the question.
- The ideas are well developed and organized in a way that makes sense.
- There is a clear main idea and details to support it.
- The writing is easy to read and holds the reader's attention.
- Words are used correctly and well.
- There are almost no mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Score 2

- The writing answers almost all parts of the question.
- At least a few ideas are well developed and organized in a way that makes sense.
- There is a main idea and some details to support it, though they could be clearer.
- The writing mostly stays on the subject but may have some details that do not belong.
- Some words may be misused.
- There are some mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Score 1

- The writing answers only part of the question.
- The ideas do not go together well, and they are not organized in a way that makes sense.
- The main idea is unclear, or there may be several main ideas.
- The writing strays from the main subject and is hard to follow.
- Many words are overused or misused.
- There are many mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

What score would Kai's draft receive?

Score: _____



Is the writing clear? Does it answer the question?

Why do you think it would receive this score?



Are there any mistakes?

The next step is to edit the draft.

Step 4: Edit

Kai made the big corrections. The next step is to edit the draft. Kai will read the draft again. He will check for mistakes in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. He will use proofreading symbols to mark changes to be made.



Proofreading Chart

Symbol	Example
^ Add letters or words.	The dolphins ^{were} beautiful.
⊙ Add a period.	I heard them whistle ⊙
≡ Capitalize a letter.	Then <u>i</u> was scared.
○ Close up space.	They swam under <u>water</u> .
↵ Add a comma.	He wanted to play, ↵ but the dolphin didn't.
/ Lowercase a letter.	He wanted to play, but the D olphin didn't.
¶ Begin a new paragraph.	¶ The diver was all alone.
↵ Delete letters or words.	The diver was all at alone.
↻ Switch the position of letters or words.	They <u>played</u> <u>also</u> music.

Read Kai's draft. Find and correct any mistakes. Use proofreading symbols to show changes.

I am writing to ask you to add a Go club to our after-school
activities program.

Go is an ancient game of strategy and skill. It was invented
in China more than 3,000 years ago. It is most popular in Japan.

It is played on a board with crisscrossing lines. Two players take turns placing small counters where the lines cross to try capture territory. The winner is the player who captures the most territory. The rules are simple and easy to learn. A beginner can have a chance against an expert. But the strategy and thinking involved are more complicated than in chess.

Go is a lot of fun to play. But it also improves your mind. It teaches you thinking skills and strategy. You use math in planning how to capture territory and defending against the other player. You learn something about the history and culture and legends of other countries (Japan).

Our school has a chess club a computer club, and a math club. We have classes in spanish and French, and sports clubs for basketball soccer, and track. I think a Go club would be an excellent choice, too.

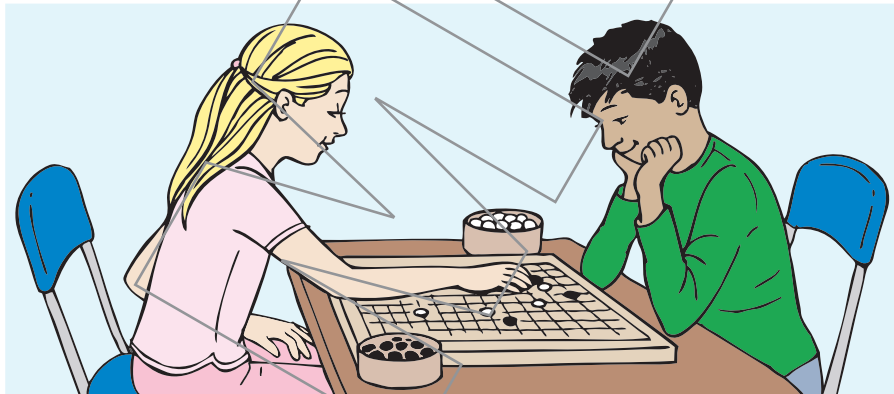
How many mistakes did you find?



Are there any mistakes in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, or spelling?

Step 5: Publish

All mistakes and problems have been corrected. The final step is for Kai to share his writing with his teacher and classmates. His teacher may read his writing aloud, or he may be asked to read his writing to the class.





Independent Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

Step 1: Prewrite

People all over the world play games. Some games, such as chess and running games, are very old. Other games, such as video games, are newer. Think about a game that you enjoy.

Write an essay for your teacher and classmates explaining how to play a game you enjoy.

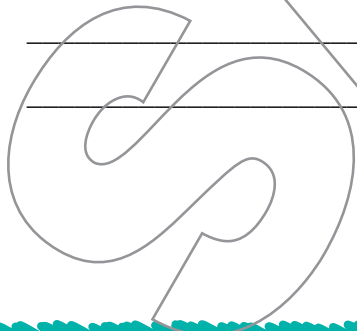
Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- give a topic sentence that tells the main idea
- arrange the details in an order that makes sense
- use connecting words



1. Who is your audience?

2. What kind of writing are you being asked to do?



3. Fill in the graphic organizer to plan your writing.

My Game

1

2

3

4

5

6

Step 2: Draft

4. Write your draft below. Use the graphic organizer on the previous page to help you write your draft. Be sure your topic sentence tells the main idea. Then write each step in your game.

The page features a large, faint watermark of the word "DRAFT" in all caps, oriented diagonally from the top right towards the bottom left. The background consists of horizontal lines for writing, with a margin at the top. The watermark is composed of simple outlines of the letters.

Step 3: Revise

Step 4: Edit

5. When you have finished your draft, go back over it. Make your revision on this page. Then edit your revised draft. Use the rubric on page 206 and proofreading chart on page 208 to review your writing. Ask a peer to review your writing, too.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 15 horizontal lines. A large, faint watermark reading 'WRITING' is oriented diagonally across the page.

Step 5: Publish

6. Write or type your final answer on a separate sheet of paper. Publish your writing by turning it in to your teacher or sharing it with the class.