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# 16 Informative Writing

**Informative writing** usually answers a question or gives information. It is supported by facts, details, and examples. You use this type of writing to write reports or answer test questions. You can use informative writing to tell people about the steps in a process, too. You do this type of writing most often in class.

Informative writing needs to be well organized. You can organize it in a number of ways: main idea and details, cause and effect, comparison and contrast, or sequence of steps.

Connecting words help link together ideas in an informative writing essay. In a report, you might use connecting words such as *another*, *also*, and *but*. In a set of directions, you might use connecting words such as *then* and *next*.

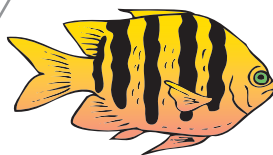


## Guided Practice

Read the passage and the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

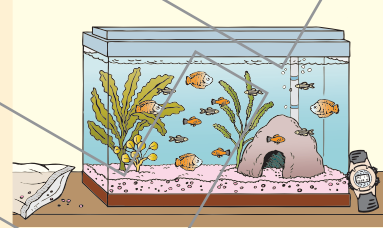
### Benefits of Fish Aquariums

Fish aquarium-watching is known to have many benefits. Watching beautiful, colorful fish gliding through the water can be fascinating. It is relaxing, calming, and satisfying. In fact, there is scientific evidence to prove that it has therapeutic benefits for both adults and children. Scientists discovered that this quiet, soothing activity can reduce fear, anxiety, and depression. It can improve focus, mood, and promote a positive attitude. In addition, many health professionals acknowledge the use of animal-assisted therapy (AAT). Use of AAT can contribute to an increased healthy mindset. Interaction with pets can make people feel better. Owning fish as pets can be an excellent choice rather than having typical pets such as dogs and cats.



Setting up an at-home aquarium can be a great way to benefit from owning a pet. Fish are quiet, inexpensive, and easy to care for. You can buy all the necessary supplies at a pet store: a tank, small rocks, a filter, fish toys, plants, water-treatment chemicals, and, of course, the fish. Ask a pet store associate or find a book at the library to find out how to get started. Soon you will be watching, relaxing, and enjoying your own fish aquarium.

**Write an informative essay for your classmates explaining how to make a fish aquarium. Use sequential order to explain the steps you would take to make your aquarium.**



Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- write a topic sentence
- use sequential order to explain the steps
- give details that explain what to do



## Step 1: Prewrite

Here is how one student, Izzy, answers the question. First, she reads the question. Then she underlines key words.

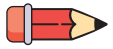
What words or phrases does Izzy most likely underline?

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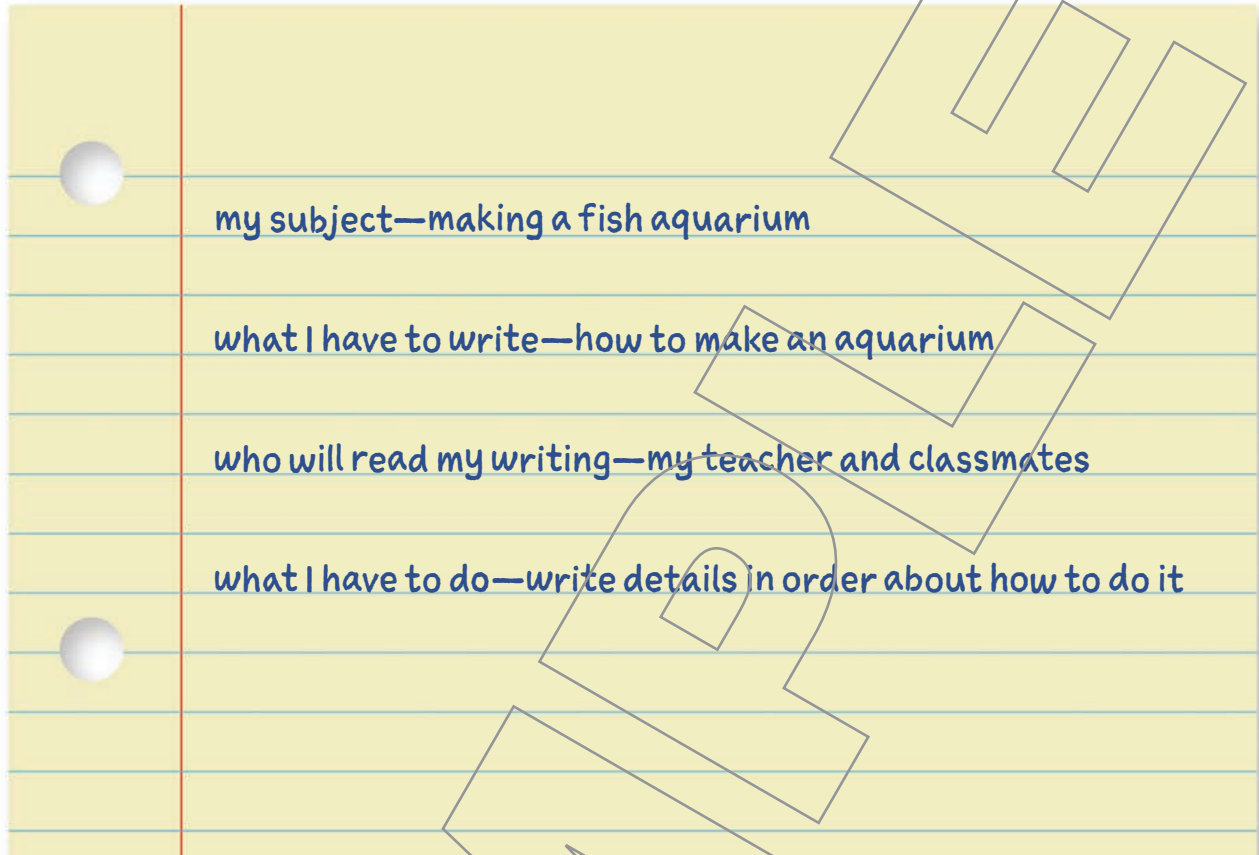
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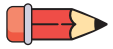
Think about who will read the assignment. Think about what Izzy will write about.



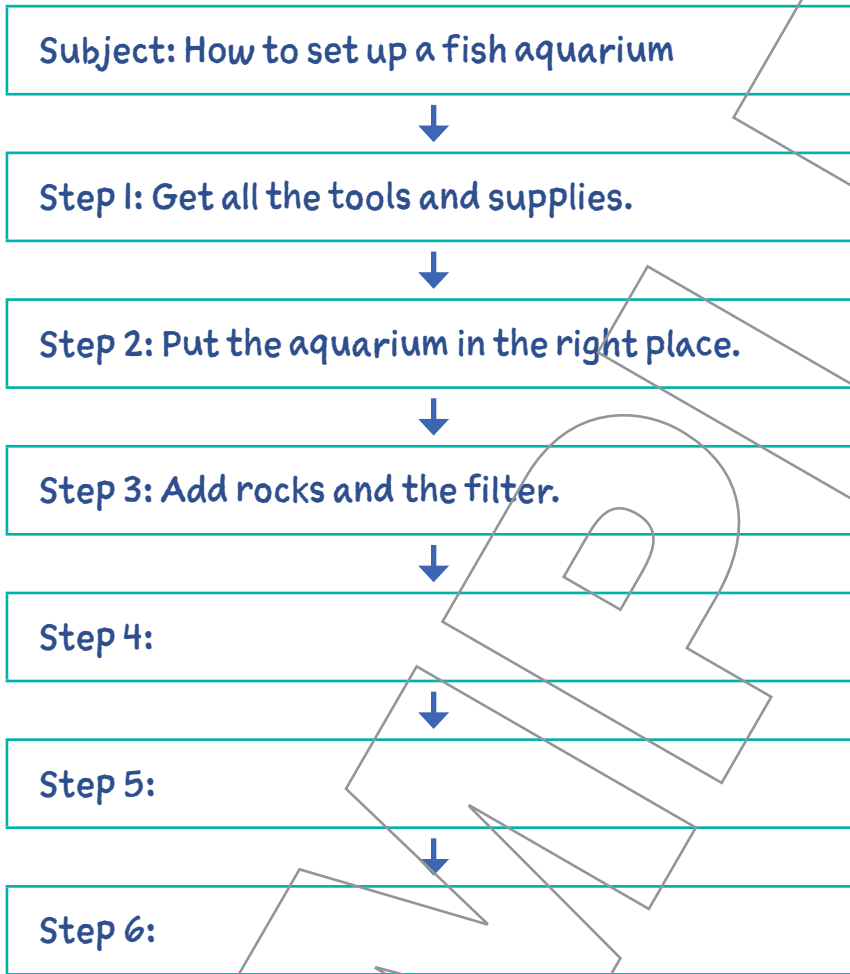
The next step is for Izzy to make a plan of what she wants to write. Izzy writes notes about her assignment while she reads about it.



SAMPLE



Izzy uses a graphic organizer to plan her writing. She uses a sequence chart to show the steps in order. Here is the sequence chart Izzy uses:



The steps below complete the sequence chart. Label your choices 4, 5, 6 to complete the sequence chart.

\_\_\_\_\_ Feed the fish and cover the tank.

\_\_\_\_\_ Put fish into the tank.

\_\_\_\_\_ Add water to the aquarium.



The steps must be done in a certain order to make sense. Think about the order that would make the most sense to complete the aquarium.

The next step is to write the draft.

## Step 2: Draft

Read Izzy's draft. Then answer the questions.

A fish aquarium is a grate choice for the hole family. Taking care of the fish and the aquarium is eaiser than caring for a dog or cat. Watching the fish swim helps reduce stress and anxiety, too. To set up your own fish aquarium, follow these steps.

First, purchase all the supplies you need. You will need a tank, water, small rocks, and a water filter. You can also use water-treatment chemicals and toys for the fish. Don't forget to buy the fish, too.

Place the aquarium where you will look at it. Put it in a safe place. Add small rocks into the bottom. Put rocks in the bottom. Put the filter on the tank. You can also put on a heater if you plan to have fish that need warmer temperature.

Next add water to the tank. You can treat the water. The treatments help make the water safe for the fish. Another thing you can do in this step to add toys and plants for the fish to enjoy.

Wait for one or two days. After waiting. Add the fish.

Finally, put the cover on the tank. The cover helps keep the fish safe.

What is the topic sentence?



The topic sentence helps readers understand the main point of the writing.

List two things that Izzy states are needed for the project.



Think about what the fish need to live.



What connecting words does Izzy use in the draft?



Think about the words that help readers understand the order of the steps.

Are the steps in the right order? How do you know?



What would happen if you did all the steps in the order Izzy put them?

The next step is to revise the draft.



## Step 3: Revise

Read the revised draft. Then answer the questions.

A fish aquarium is a grate choice for the hole family. Taking care of the fish and the aquarium is eaiser than caring for a dog or cat. Watching the fish swim helps reduce stress and anxiety, too. To set up your own fish aquarium, follow these steps.

First, purchase all the supplies you need. You will need a tank, water, small rocks, and a water filter. You can also use water-treatment chemicals and toys for the fish. Don't forget to buy the fish, too.

from a pet store

The tank should be big enough to hold all the supplies and for the fish to easily swim around.

Place the aquarium where everyone will see you will look at it. Put it in a safe

where it will not get bumped. After the tank is in the write spot, at least three inches of

bottom. The rocks hold food and give the fish a place to hide. Put the filter on the tank. You can also put on a

heater if you plan to have fish that need warmer temperature.

Next add water to the tank. You can treat the water with special chemicals. The treatments help make the water safe for the fish. Another

thing you can do in this step to add toys and plants for the  
fish to enjoy.

**Before adding the fish,** **This helps get rid of the bad chemicals in the water.**  
**Wait for one or two days. After waiting. Add the fish.**

Finally, put the cover on the tank. The cover helps keep the  
**fish safe.**  
**Then enjoy watching the fish swim and play in the water.**

What connecting words did Izzy add to the draft?



Connecting words help readers understand how two events are related.

How did Izzy make her writing clearer for readers?



Look at the parts that Izzy added. Think about why she added them and how they affect the writing.

What other information might have Izzy included?

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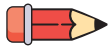
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Is there anything you want to know more about after you finish reading? What do you want to know?



### Peer Review

Use the rubric on the next page to review Izzy's writing and give it a score. This is called **peer review**. Readers assign a number to tell how well the writer answered the question. 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.
- There is a topic sentence with a clear main idea.
- All details support the main idea.
- Clear details are used to explain the steps in order.
- 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.
- The topic sentence states the main idea, but it could be stronger.
- Most details support the main idea, but some do not belong.
- Some details explain the steps in order.
- Some words are not used correctly.
- There are some mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

### Score 1

- The writing answers only part of the question.
- The topic sentence is missing or unclear.
- Some details are confusing or do not belong.
- The details are not explained in order.
- Many words are not used correctly.
- There are many mistakes in grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

What score would Izzy's draft receive?



Look at the rubric. Which score best describes Izzy's revised draft?

Why do you think her writing would receive this score?



Are there any mistakes?

The next step is to edit the draft.

## Step 4: Edit

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

## Proofreading Chart

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

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

A fish aquarium is a grate choice for the hole family. Taking care of the fish and the aquarium is eaiser than caring for a dog or cat. Watching the fish swim helps reduce stress and anxiety, too. To set up your own fish aquarium, follow these steps.

First, purchase all the supplies you need from a pet store.

You will need a tank, water, small rocks, and a water filter. You can also use water-treatment chemicals and toys for the fish.

The tank should be big enough to hold all the supplies and for the fish to easily swim around. Don't forget to buy the fish, too.

Place the aquarium where everyone will see it. Put it in a safe place where it will not get bumped. After the tank is in the write spot, add small rocks into the bottom. Put at least three inches of rocks in the bottom. The rocks hold food and give the fish a place to hide. Put the filter on the tank. You can also put on a heater if you plan to have fish that need warmer temperature.

Next add water to the tank. You can treat the water with special chemicals. The treatments help make the water safe for the fish. Another thing you can do in this step to add toys and plants for the fish to enjoy.

Before adding the fish, wait for one or two days. This helps get rid of the bad chemicals in the water. After waiting. Add the fish.



Finally, put the cover on the tank. The cover helps keep the fish safe. Then enjoy watching the fish swim and play in the water.

How many mistakes did you find?



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

## Step 5: Publish

The final step is for Izzy to publish her writing. She will turn in her paper to the teacher. The teacher or Izzy will share her writing with her classmates so they will learn how to set up an aquarium.



# Independent Practice

Read the writing assignment. Then answer the questions.

## Step 1: Prewrite

When people look back at the last 100 years, which person will stand out as an important figure in United States history? Write an informative essay to tell about a person who has been an important figure in the last 100 years.



Be sure to:

- follow the five steps of the writing process
- write a topic sentence that names the person
- explain your choice
- tell how this person is influential or memorable to US history
- use specific facts and examples



1. Who is your audience?

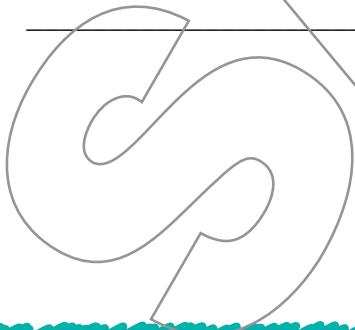
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2. What kind of writing are you being asked to do?

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

**Topic:**

↓

**Fact/Detail**

↓

**Fact/Detail**

↓

**Fact/Detail**

↓

**Fact/Detail**

↓

**Fact/Detail**

## Step 2: Draft

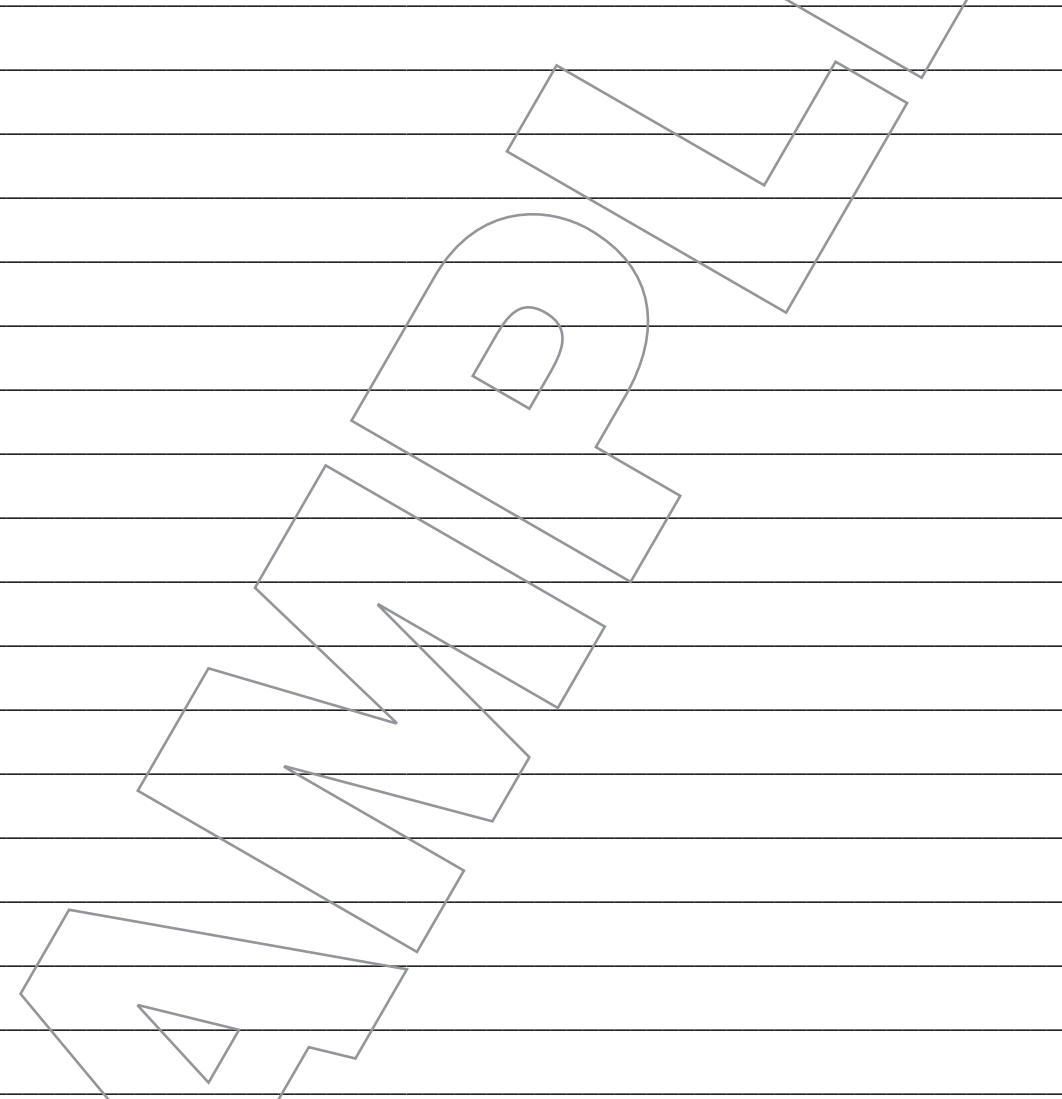
4. Write your draft below. Use the graphic organizer on the previous page to help you write your draft. Be sure your topic sentence tells the main idea. Use facts and details to support your main idea.

Lined writing area for drafting the response.

## Step 3: Revise

## Step 4: Edit

5. When you have finished your draft, go back over it. Make your revisions on this page. Then edit your revised draft. Use the rubric on page 207 and the proofreading chart on page 209 to review your writing. Ask a peer to edit your writing, too.



A series of horizontal lines for writing, overlaid with a large, faint, diagonal watermark that says "DRAFT". Several rectangular boxes are drawn over the watermark, appearing to be part of a proofreading or editing process.

## 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.