

GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS AND STUDENTS' WRITING

The Effect of Graphic Organizers on Students' Writing

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## The Effect of Graphic Organizers on Students' Writing

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this action research project was to study the effects of graphic organizers, specifically a concept map, on students' writing. Our school believes that writing is the key to success, so writing instruction is a priority. I was particularly interested in investigating students' writing through graphic organizers with personal narrative writing prompts given in the classroom. Graphic organizers can help writers keep to the topic by having their ideas in front of them as they are writing. They also help the writer to keep things in the correct sequential order. Graphic organizers are credited to be tools that can guide students through the four stages of the writing process: prewriting, drafting, revising, and publishing and sharing. This study investigated whether there would be any significant difference in scores between students' writing with the use of graphic organizers and students' writing without the use of graphic organizers. One third-grade class was involved in the 6-week study, and was given two personal narrative writing assignments. The two writing assignments were each graded using a writing rubric provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Results indicated that the students using the graphic organizers showed an improvement in their creative writing. Good Abstract!

### **Introduction**

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of graphic organizers on students' writing. Learning to write can be a rewarding, yet often wearisome experience for young learners. Each year, I observe many of my third grade students feeling frustrated and anxious about beginning to write. What can educators do to ease this process and improve writing proficiency? According to Novak (1991), graphic organizers are used to represent children's conceptual understanding. One of the powerful uses of graphic organizers is not only as a

learning tool but also as an evaluation tool, thus encouraging students to use meaningful-mode learning patterns. Perhaps by using graphic organizers in my classroom, my students' writing will significantly improve.

This research attempted to determine whether using graphic organizers helped facilitate the performance of students' writing as determined by scores from a writing proficiency rubric. One basic question is suggested:

- Will the use of graphic organizers help facilitate the performance of students' writing?

### **Literature Review**

The purpose of this study was to determine the effect of graphic organizers on students' writing. This study compared writing samples taken when a graphic organizer was used with writing samples taken when a graphic organizer was not used.

One way to help make a curriculum more supportive of students and teachers is to incorporate graphic organizers. A graphic organizer is a visual and graphic display that depicts the relationships between facts, terms, and or ideas within a learning task. Graphic organizers are also sometimes referred to as knowledge maps, concept maps, story maps, cognitive organizers, advance organizers, or concept diagrams. Graphic organizers come in many varieties and have been widely researched for their effectiveness in improving learning outcomes for various students. The visual representations of ideas and concepts are linked to studies that have shown student achievements in writing. Through my study, graphic organizers will be used to help develop the skill of writing. Concept mapping was developed in the 1960s by Joseph Novak of Stanford University. Most of the research followed it immediately, thus accounting for dated references. According to Novak (1991), graphic organizers are used to represent children's

conceptual understanding. One of the powerful uses of graphic organizers is not only as a learning tool but also as an evaluation tool (1991), thus encouraging students to use meaningful-mode learning patterns. Perhaps by using graphic organizers in my classroom, my students' writing will significantly improve.

Researchers have found that the effectiveness of using this concrete model assists students “. . . to develop and internalize their cognitive skills to a higher degree” (Kroll & Paziotopoulos, 2004). Kroll and Paziotopoulos (2004) described a graphic organizer as a concrete Skyscraper Model, to help students become creative and analytical thinkers. It is a step by step process from general knowledge at the lowest point to being able to connect to real life and give an opinion at the highest point, which allows students to understand information. This helps students develop further skills interactively through our ever changing “visual” world.

Sakta (1992) believes that before expecting children to use graphic organizers, the teacher must first help the students understand the main idea and supporting details of a topic. Research indicates that for best results, the teacher should initially model each map representation on the white board or with an overhead projector. Washington (1988) believes that the teacher needs to model for the children the way a paragraph is developed by using one strand of the organizer and having the children make up sentences to correlate with the phrase in the map.

Some students need assistance in learning how to group information. Fleener and Marek (1992) support the concept that this clustering process will furnish valuable information to the teacher revealing gaps or misconceptions in the students understanding. After the student forms word groups, the student can then provide category names for the headings (Fleener & Marek, 1992).

Sinatra and Pizzo (1992) believe that when the map is completed, students see how major ideas are related to subordinate ideas and how subordinate ideas contain factual information. They also advocate that using graphic organizers is a practical way to teach thinking and language development within the context of specific content course work. It allows a student to cover a topic in greater depth. During the writing process the author must be able to state the topic and then support his topic with details. These supporting ideas must also be in sequential order. Graphic organizers help the student visualize the relationships between prior knowledge and the newly acquired knowledge. Graphic organizers are tools that can guide the students through the four stages of the writing process.

Sinatra and Pizzo (1992) advocate that map configurations will assist children who are weak in paragraphing. It helps them compose paragraphs to match the number of central ideas they perceive in the overall map whether it is in reading or writing. They also believe that writing about the mapped information strengthens the student's understanding of the information that is contained in the organizer. Washington (1989) states that each strand of a map is made up of a main idea and supporting details. She advocates that each of these strands should make up a paragraph, and she advocates that each of the category labels become the topic of the paragraph and that the details support the topic.

“Creating new meaning requires the construction of new propositions. The acquisitions of new concepts is accomplished either by discovery, which is mainly the way young children acquire their first concepts and language, or by reception learning, which is the way school children and most adults acquire most of their new meaning” (Novak, 1991). Sinatra and Pizzo (1992) advocate that since many students have difficulty expressing relationships between ideas, a good technique to use is to provide students with a list of transition words and phrases

appropriate to the organizational style of writing. This expressive task should require pupils to decide on a main idea and select appropriate examples to illustrate their main idea. In this way the skill is practiced and integrated into both receptive (reading and listening) and expressive (writing and speaking) language (Grossen & Carnine, 1992).

Wesley and Wesley (1990) believe that conceptual maps may be used in many ways, ranging from evaluating students' prior knowledge to assessing the learning of the content area. It is also a classroom technique that helps students to reflect on their understanding or misconceptions of concepts. Conceptual mapping can be a powerful tool for self reflection and teacher evaluation.

Vargas and Alvarez (1992) support the idea that concepts maps can be useful for determining students' cognitive structuring of information and assessing how thorough their understanding is of a topic. They believe that concept maps should be added as an evaluation tool to every classroom assessment repertoire. These tools allow for a more accurate view of student learning and conceptual linkages. Mental modeling and semantic mapping allow for individual student differences in terms of rate of learning, prior knowledge and growth, developmental readiness, interest misconceptions and errors (Fleener & Marek, 1992).

Research shows that students who use visual organizers gain a foundation to connect content and ideas, which are essential to establish in the classroom environment. One of the reasons concept mapping is so powerful for the facilitation of meaningful learning is that it serves as a kind of template or scaffold to help to organize knowledge and to structure it, even though the structure must be built up piece by piece with small units of interacting concepts and propositional frameworks. Many learners and teachers are surprised to see how this simple tool facilitates meaningful learning and the creation of powerful knowledge frameworks that not only

permit utilization of the knowledge in new contexts, but also the retention of the knowledge for long periods of time (Novak, 1991). The readers are said to be able to apply the knowledge map techniques to comprehending a text with benefits to linguistic skills (Chang, Chen, & Sung, 2002). The more mental pictures that we use nonlinguistic and linguistic, “the better we are able to think about and recall knowledge” (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). It provides a fundamental focus from “learning to write” to “writing to learn” (Jefferies, & Merkley, 2001).

Researchers have linked the reading and writing process together. This is known as the reading and writing connection. Using graphic organizers have helped children in both reading comprehension and writing because the procedure increases processing (Avery, 1994). Both of these processes have certain steps that must be followed in order to have a successful outcome. Graphic organizers help the children put things in sequential order. Lehman (1992) believes that these organizers provide structure, organization, format and a place for the student to relate information to their personal experiences. Such a procedure is invaluable to the reading and writing processes.

As reported in an article written by Cronin, Barkley and Sinatra (1992), the Moss Point School District in Mississippi worked up a comprehensive plan to help students with writing, text organization, reading comprehension and thinking. Semantic maps and graphic organizers were used as a facilitator to increase reading and writing scores on Mississippi’s state-wide test. The first job of the school district was to train teachers and help them to begin the classroom applications. Then the students were guided to use higher level thinking skills and apply these skills to their writing.

Assessment and documentation of this program and students’ progress was done by the use of a checklist. This checklist focused on five major areas which were; understanding of the

task, semantic structure, sentence structure, vocabulary, and language and mechanics. Following the completion of a writing assignment, both the teacher and student used the checklist to evaluate the writing sample.

The end result of this work and evaluation of data over a four-year period of time indicated constant improvement in both the high school and junior high school test scores. More of the students began to pass the Mississippi state test in the above average range and less scored in the below average range.

Visual organizers encourage higher level thinking with comprehension and other skill areas. Through this thinking strategy, Clarke (1991) explains two key purposes being involved with graphic organizers: bottom up graphics and top down graphics. Bottom up graphics help the students sort and scan information to draw conclusions inductively, while top down graphics assist students to apply decisions through problem solving deductively. By using these visual representations, one of the most commonly used nonlinguistic depictions, learning theorists believe that they help organize information in the mind. Furthermore, with the cognitive theory the graphic organizers promote more memorable experiences. By building upon prior knowledge, the students are making important connections that develop their thinking with explanations and rationalizations. These concrete representations create images that portray relational knowledge being learned and processed in the brain. The engaging organizer patterns that are commonly used for information such as writing are: descriptive, cause/effect, sequence, principle and concept patterns. They provide some structure for all the information being produced and calculated in the brain to either commit to memory or release (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001).

By elaborating on nonlinguistic representations, the teachers can actively engage students in their thought process. The imagery and auditory knowledge aids students in committing material to memory. (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2001). The working memory should not be emphasized so much with following simple directions. However, working memory capabilities should increase with the complexity of various directions. The working memory of a child tends to increase over time with developmental level as from first to sixth grade.

Researchers conclude from the results of a study that children with Learning Disabilities (LD) using graphic organizers seem to recall more knowledge as seen through some essays. Also, the nature of the measures used to assess the effects of graphic organizers did make a difference in the outcomes of the evaluations. When the students wrote during the assessments, the graphic organizer group demonstrated more application of relational knowledge retained (DiCecco & Gleason, 2002). Research studies indicate that graphic organizers are effective and coherent when they are clear-cut. Finally, Baxendell (2003) describes how graphic organizers “benefit learners who have difficulty in organizing information” in his article *Consistent, Coherent, Creative: The 3 C's of Graphic Organizers*. He shows that graphic organizers assist students in “understanding relationships between complex ideas,” “arrange information to facilitate retention and recall,” and “provide concrete representations;” therefore, when using Graphic Organizers we must be consistent, coherent and creative.

We must “establish a routine” for using graphic organizers with our students (Baxendell, 2003). Usually, I use graphic organizers before reading and/or after reading depending on the type of text I am reading to my students. Many students thrive on a regular routine and keeping with a consistent plan for the use of graphic organizers is one of those

important factors to keep in mind. This plan of consistency may play a major role in whether or not a child will comprehend more or less from stories read aloud.

Children have used concept maps to illustrate main points in a piece of literature, to develop the plan for a piece of creative writing, to isolate variables for an experiment, to develop a plan for investigating a topic, and to write the report for an experimental procedure. Children use concept maps to keep track of where they have been, where they are now, and where they are going in a course of study (Martin, 2009). While at first glance concept maps may appear to be just another graphic representation of information, understanding the foundations for this tool and its proper use will lead the user to see that this is truly a profound and powerful tool. It may at first look like a simple arrangement of words into a hierarchy, but when care is used in organizing the concepts represented by the words, and the propositions or ideas are formed with well-chosen linking words, one begins to see that a good concept map is at once simple, but also elegantly complex with profound meanings. Concept mapping has been shown to help learners learn, researchers to create new knowledge, administrators to better structure and manage organizations, writers to write, and evaluators to assess learning.

After reading all the research that discussed how important graphic organizers are in writing, I now believe that it directly impacts a student's ability to write effectively. As the research stated, graphic organizers are used to represent children's conceptual understanding. Graphic organizers help students make many connections and with connections come understanding. Concept mapping has been shown to help learners learn, researchers create new knowledge, administrators to better structure and manage organizations, writers to write, and evaluators access learning.

## **Methodology**

### Problem Statement

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of graphic organizers on students' writing. Teaching third grade students to use graphic organizers when they write may facilitate the performance of students' writing.

### Design

My study was done at an elementary school in a rural area. The majority of the students live in single family residences. Four percent of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. The changing student population of 1289 students is 80% White, 13% Hispanic, 4% African American, 1% Asian, and 2% Multi-Racial.

My sample was the eleven boys and ten girls in my 2007-2008 third grade class. Of the nineteen students, seventeen were Caucasian and two were African American. The participants were organized as a whole class using direct instruction. The students were in their own seats and not placed in groups. The study was conducted during our normal writing time.

This research study was carried out over a six-week period of time. My investigation began on September 24, 2007 and concluded on November 2, 2007. I began with giving the students a writing prompt. I then asked them to use the writing prompt to write their stories. I told the students that they needed to write a five paragraph essay. At the beginning of the year I had taught the students how to write a five paragraph essay. The students' did not have the chance to use graphic organizers. The students had one week to finish this piece of writing. The second week I assessed the students' writing using a writing rubric provided by the Georgia Department of Education. Example of the rubric shown in Appendix A. I then had another third grade teacher assess the students' writing using the same rubric. If there was a discrepancy of 5 points,

a third teacher read the writing to help resolve the discrepancy. The students were not writing this week. The third-week I modeled and discussed the ways that graphic organizers could be used in writing. The students had the opportunity to create and use graphic organizers. The students learned to first identify the key concepts of the topic to be mapped. Then they decided the concepts relative importance and then ranked the concepts from most inclusive to most specific. The students then learned to arrange the topics in a hierarchical fashion from most general to more specific. The students used graphic organizers in all subject areas to organize the topics and ideas being discussed. The children “talked their way” through their maps with their peers and myself. The fourth-week I gave the students another writing prompt and asked them to write their stories. The students used graphic organizers to complete this piece of writing. The students completed this writing piece during the fifth week. The sixth week I assessed the student’s writing using the same writing rubric for the writing piece without the graphic organizer. I then had another third grade teacher assess the students’ writing using the same rubric. If there was a discrepancy of 5 points, a third teacher read the writing to help resolve the discrepancy. The same writing prompt was used for both writing samples; the students wrote personal narratives for both writing samples.

#### Nature of Data

This quantitative research study was designed to explore the effects of graphic organizers on students’ writing. The research design used was a writing sample without the use of a graphic organizer and a writing sample with the use of a graphic organizer. The students’ writing samples were assessed using the same writing rubric. The writing rubric gave a score for each writing sample. I used a t-test to analyze the differences in quality of the writing sample with the use of graphic organizers compared with writing samples produced without the use of graphic

organizers. This design allows an individual to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of graphic organizers in regard to writing.

#### Instruments for Data Collection

During my data collection with my students, I used a variety of materials to collect data including the students' writing samples with and without the use of graphic organizers and a third grade writing rubric provided by the Georgia Department of Education (see Appendix A). The writing rubric assessed the students' writing in for areas; ideas, organization, style and conventions. The students could receive a four for exceeding expectations, a three for meeting expectations, a two for approaching expectations and a one for not meeting expectations. The scores could range from sixteen to four.

#### Method of Analysis

I first analyzed the data using the writing rubrics. I then inserted the students' grades, which I obtained from the rubrics, into Excel. The findings were summarized in graph form. I described what I found. I then tested for things statistically in my data set. I compared the variables and looked at certain outcomes. I used the descriptive statistics, based on the scores from the first and second writing rubric. I compared the writing without graphic organizers to the writing with graphic organizers. I then checked to see the significance (p-value) using a t-test. I interpreted the analysis by looking at the scores on the writing rubric without the use of a graphic organizer. Then I looked at the scores on the writing rubric when the students' used a graphic organizer. I looked at the mean of the scores and measured the amount of gain. I looked at the T-test and the P-value. I then discussed my findings with other students at the conference. I discussed the findings from the literature itself and from my own perspective and analysis. I

provided a comprehensive explanation of the main findings of my study. I then cited two or three limitations of my study.

### **Results**

The purpose of this action research project was to study the effects of graphic organizers, specifically a story map, on students' writing. Our school believes that writing is the key to success, so writing instruction is a priority. I was particularly interested in investigating students' writing through graphic organizers with personal narrative writing prompts given in the classroom. The writing program at our school promotes higher level thought processes when a graphic organizer is used.

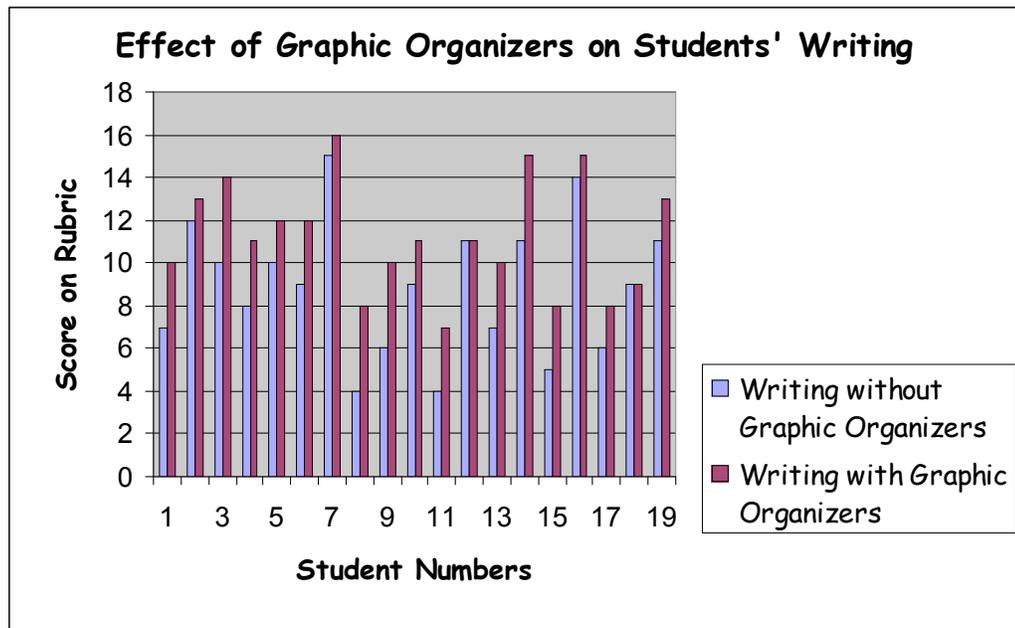
Data was collected from writing rubrics that assessed the students writing samples when they did not use a graphic organizer compared to when they used a graphic organizer. In phase 1 of the research the students were given writing prompt to write a story. The students were told to write a traditional 5 paragraph essay. They were not given any other directions. In phase 2 of the research the students participated in a lesson about concept mapping. They were taught the procedures for constructing concept maps. The students practiced drawing concept maps using familiar topics. The students then learned how to talk about their concepts maps with their peers. The students were then given writing prompt to write their second piece of writing. For this piece of writing the students had to use a concept map before they begin this piece of writing. The students were told to write a traditional 5 paragraph essay. The writings were assessed by use of a writing rubric created by the state to determine the level of writing following each phase of the study. The descriptive statistics for this study are shown in Figure 1 below.

The mean score for Phase 1 was 8.94, and the mean for Phase 2 was 11.28. The difference in means between Phase 1 and Phase 2 was 2.34. Students writing with graphic organizers, which is Phase 2, shows a higher mean than students writing without graphic organizers, which is Phase 1. The higher mean of Phase 2, is a positive indication that using graphic organizers increased students' writing. By observing this improvement, I feel that my research proved to be effective for my students who used a graphic organizer to complete their writing samples. See Figure 1 below. According to Figure 2, 17 students showed more growth during instructional Phase 2 with graphic organizers than in Phase 1 without graphic organizers. Two students showed no increase in their score from Phase 1 to Phase 2. Results are summarized in Figure 2.

Figure 1

<i>Writing without graphic organizers (Phase 1)</i>		<i>Writing with graphic organizers (Phase 2)</i>	
Mean	8.944444444	Mean	11.27777778
Standard Error	0.751783162	Standard Error	0.635576808
Median	9	Median	11
Mode	9	Mode	11
Standard Deviation	3.189545832	Standard Deviation	2.696524027
Sample Variance	10.17320261	Sample Variance	7.27124183
Kurtosis	-0.580116067	Kurtosis	-0.968531529
Skewness	0.093463063	Skewness	0.133671881
Range	11	Range	9
Minimum	4	Minimum	7
Maximum	15	Maximum	16
Sum	161	Sum	203
Count	18	Count	18

Figure 2



A paired-samples t-test was applied to the data for all students to compare students' writing without a graphic organizer to students' writing with a graphic organizer. The results that I received after analyzing the paired t-test, is that using graphic organizers did effectively help my students' writing with significance rates in the two-tailed analysis as follows in Figure 3. My analysis of data was formulated through a paired t-test, where the values represent repeated measures on the particular skill of writing. It allowed me to test whether the mean of Phase 1 significantly differed from the mean of Phase 2. In this case, the use of graphic organizers before completing a personal narrative writing sample was valuable. The P-value of the growth made in Phase 1 (without the use of graphic organizers) compared to the writing growth made in Phase 2 (with graphic organizers) is significant at 0.01. This means that ninety-nine times out of one hundred the students would have made this growth because of what I did and not because of chance. Only one out of one hundred times would students show this growth because of chance.

Figure 3

t-Test: Two-Sample Assuming  
Unequal Variances

	<i>WO Graphic Organizers (Phase 1)</i>	<i>With Graphic Organizers (Phase 2)</i>
Mean	8.722222222	11.21052632
Variance	10.09477124	6.953216374
Observations	18	19
Hypothesized Mean Difference	0	
df	33	
t Stat	-2.584730529	
P(T<=t) one-tail	0.007177935	
t Critical one-tail	1.692360258	
P(T<=t) two-tail	0.014355871	
t Critical two-tail	2.034515287	

### **Conclusions**

After analyzing the results of this research, I can conclude that students show more growth in writing when using a graphic organizer as a part of the writing process.

The use of graphic organizers at the third grade level did have a significant influence on students' writing.

### **Limitations**

The objective of this action research project was to study the effects of graphic organizers, specifically a story map, on students' writing. The most significant limitation on this study was interference with instructional time. School performances, fire drills, and a variety of other events often interrupted writing instruction. The last week of the study fell during parent-teacher conference week, so each day was cut short by one hour. This meant that the writing instruction and journaling time was shortened each day. Some of the other challenges I faced was the time and interruptions in the schedule. There were some weeks that the students were only in school for out of five days. The amount of time spent on this research each day was often hard to keep to.

Another noteworthy limitation occurred with the scoring system. The colleague who scored the writing samples noted that the rubric did not award any points for drawing a picture to tell a story. Since the picture is an important developmental feature for beginning writers, it should have been given some value on the scoring rubric. Also, 5 of my gifted students were not in the classroom one out of the five days during the week to write and than caused the students to be behind on their writing samples.

### **Implications**

Through classroom discussions and meetings I learned that the students loved using graphic organizers. They asked if they could use them across all subject areas. I found that my struggling writers wanted to write more which surprised me. I would change the variety of concept maps that I used during the lesson. Starting out with all the students using the same concept map proved to be boring to those who had a better way of organizing their thoughts. I would also spend more time modeling the concept maps and give the students more time to explore with the maps. I would also adjust how often I introduced new concept maps. New concept maps each week was too much for the students to handle. Possibly doing one concept map every other week or one a month might prove to be enough. This was an experience that I will continue to implement in my writing instruction.

**Appendix A**  
**Standards Based Assessment Rubric**  
**Mode and Grade of Writing: Third Grade Narrative**

	Exceeds Expectations 4	Meets Expectations 3	Approaching Expectations 2	Expectations Not Met 1
<b>Ideas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Reader's interest is sustained by setting a purpose and developing a point of view.</li> <li>♦ Demonstrates awareness of audience through use of relevant examples, facts, anecdotes, and details.</li> <li>♦ Consistent and clear character development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Captures reader's interest by setting a purpose and developing a point of view.</li> <li>♦ Some evidence awareness of audience through use of relevant examples, facts, anecdotes, and details.</li> <li>♦ Character development is evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Begins to capture the reader's interest by setting a purpose or developing a point of view.</li> <li>♦ Little evidence awareness of audience with few examples of relevant facts, examples, anecdotes, and details.</li> <li>♦ Minimal character development.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Little or no topic development.</li> <li>♦ No awareness of audience; lacks details, relevant examples, facts, anecdotes.</li> <li>♦ Little or no character development.</li> </ul>
<b>Organization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Organization pattern clearly supports purpose, with strong beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>♦ Information is conveyed using appropriate organization patterns (e.g. chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, questions and answers).</li> <li>♦ Varied transitional elements effectively link ideas and parts of the paper (e.g. words, phrases, bullets, etc).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Organization pattern is based on purpose, with a beginning, middle, and end.</li> <li>♦ Information is loosely conveyed using appropriate organization patterns (e.g. chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, questions and answers).</li> <li>♦ Transition is evident throughout but lacks variety</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Organization is uneven.</li> <li>♦ Information is loosely conveyed.</li> <li>♦ Some transition evident.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Little or no organization</li> <li>♦ Lacking information.</li> <li>♦ Little or no transitions.</li> </ul>
<b>Style</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Uses elements of style (e.g. strong verbs, adjectives, character action and dialogue) to enhance descriptive effect.</li> <li>♦ Uses complete, coherent and increasingly complex sentence structure.</li> <li>♦ Demonstrates knowledge of when to use formal or informal language exchanges (e.g., slang, idioms, etc.).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Uses some sensory details to enhance descriptive effect.</li> <li>♦ Begins to use novel language and varied sentence patterns.</li> <li>♦ Begins to demonstrate knowledge of when to use formal or informal language exchanges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Limited use of sensory details.</li> <li>♦ Minimal variety of sentence patterns.</li> <li>♦ Little knowledge of when to use formal or informal language exchanges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Lacks sensory details.</li> <li>♦ Simple word choice and sentence patterns.</li> <li>♦ Uses informal language exchanges inappropriately</li> </ul>
<b>Conventions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Strong and consistent command of grade appropriate usage and grammatical conventions evident.</li> <li>♦ Application of spelling rules is consistent; errors do not interfere with understanding.</li> <li>♦ Strong evidence of application of the writing process to improve the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Some errors in usage and grammatical conventions are present, but they do not interfere with meaning.</li> <li>♦ Application of spelling rules is uneven; errors do not interfere with understanding</li> <li>♦ Evidence of application of the writing process to improve the piece.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Errors interrupt the flow of communication and may interfere with meaning.</li> <li>♦ Application of spelling rules is uneven; errors sometime interfere with understanding</li> <li>♦ Little evidence of application of writing process,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Errors prevent the reader from understanding the writer's message.</li> <li>♦ Errors in spelling interfere with understanding</li> <li>♦ No evidence of application of the writing process.</li> </ul>

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