



## Support: Writing Frames

**ELA**

**Math**

**Science**

**Social Studies**

- when constructing well-thought out sentences, paragraphs, or essays that convey the essential information from that day's lesson or from a series of lessons

**Who could this support?**

This could help students who may need more support in writing about a topic to demonstrate mastery. This is especially helpful for English Learners and students with disabilities.

**Purpose:**

- to give students a structure to communicate what they are trying to say in a coherent and academic manner
- to develop an understanding and application of the concepts of the content area text
- to understand the parts of sentences and paragraphs, as well as improve overall writing proficiency

**Communicating the purpose:**

It is very important to communicate the purpose of the strategy with the students so that they know what they are doing and why. This helps with motivation and buy-in for the lesson and topic.

## Process

**Prework**

- Understand what a writing frame is: "A writing frame consists of a skeleton outline to scaffold children's non-fiction writing. The skeleton framework consists of different keywords or phrases, according to the particular generic form." (Wray and Lewis). The intention is to provide the support as long as it is needed and start to scaffold it away as students become more proficient. Preview or create a writing prompt or task question. Consider what type of writing the students are doing, and what writing frame works best. Examples included here are: explanation, argumentative, analysis/prediction, and cause and effect, but you are free to create your own or use others as you understand the process of how to implement. Develop an exemplar using the frame so your own thought process and expectations for students are clear.

**Step 1**

- Display the writing prompt and help students deconstruct it so that students know what is being asked of them.

**Step 2**

- Display the writing prompt and explicitly model filling out the writing frame. You can use a similar prompt to do this or select a potential response for the prompt presented. Try not to pick the most obvious response because that will leave students wondering what to write about. In your explicit model, include your thinking for why you chose those words and where or how they can be found or developed. Model your use of transition words and connectives, and why you chose those. Students can use your thought process when filling theirs out as a guide. They can add and take away from your process as needed, but they should have a firm starting point and process that they could use.



## Process (continued)

- Step 3** Allow students the opportunity to fill out the writing frame and include scaffolds as needed. Students may need a few opportunities for whole-class construction of the writing frame before they move to a cooperative group or partners and eventually to an independent practice with feedback.
- Step 4** Provide the answer inside of the frame, as well as in a paragraph format, so that students can see that the paragraph needs to flow and make sense as ideas and sentences build on each other.
- Step 5** Have students proofread their frame to ensure their answers make sense.
- I know I'm successful when...**
- You will be successful when you see students are more comfortable writing in the proper structure with or without the need for the writing frame. You will also notice the students using more transition words and connectives in their writing. Their writing should be organized, developed, and academically appropriate due to the use of frames.

## Potential Writing Frames

<p><b>Explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(Provide a direct answer to the question here)...</li> <li>There are many reasons for ... The chief reason is...</li> <li>Another reason is...</li> <li>A further reason is...</li> <li>Therefore, this is why...</li> </ul>	<p><b>Argumentative (claim and counterclaim)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(While/Although) some may say that ..., it's clear that ...</li> <li>This is critical because ...</li> <li>It is also important to note that ...</li> <li>One point that ...(evidence for counterclaim) makes is that ...however it can be refuted because ...</li> <li>Consequently ...</li> </ul>	<p><b>Opinion Writing (Grades 3-5)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I agree/disagree with ...</li> <li>The first reason is...</li> <li>Another reason is...</li> <li>Finally,...</li> <li>In conclusion,...</li> </ul>
<p><b>Analysis/Prediction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I anticipate that... causes ...</li> <li>I predict that ... will happen because ...</li> <li>I think ... might ... because I know that ...</li> <li>If ... then ...</li> </ul>	<p><b>Cause and Effect</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>... is the most likely cause for ... happened then ... to place as a result.</li> <li>I think ... was caused by ... because ...</li> <li>The effects of ... were ...</li> <li>The reason for ... was ... occurred, and consequently ...</li> <li>That wasn't caused by ... because ...</li> <li>If ... then ...</li> </ul>	<p><b>Personal Narrative Paragraph</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I'll never forget the time ... (This can be changed to any prompt students are responding to.)</li> <li>It all began when ...</li> <li>One day ...</li> <li>Later ...</li> <li>Finally, ...</li> <li>That's when I realized ...</li> </ul>



## Potential Writing Frames Notes

For secondary students in the upper grades, a semantic map of the elements of a narrative may be more helpful. See [Using Student Exemplars](#) as Part of the Writing Process for more assistance.

\*Note: All of the lines may not be used when constructing the paragraph. Instruct students to choose the frames that fit best with their prompt and text source. Include how to choose the correct frames in your model as well. When you are finished filling in the frames, you should have all the most important information, but it should flow as well.

## Additional Considerations

- Consider the ability of each student and their progression as you are teaching and as you move through the different levels of scaffolding: explicit model, whole-class, cooperative group, partner, and independent.
- Some students may need the frame longer than others. Consider creating anchor charts for the frames that you use often for students to refer to.
- Do not feel the need to box students into writing frames if they are already proficient writers. You can offer it as a strategy if they would like to borrow some connectors or transitions to add to their repertoire, but these are most beneficial to average and below average writers.
- Ensure students know that this is a support and way of thinking and that the intent is to eventually not need it. Let students know that this will become part of their thinking and practice, and they will no longer need it.
- Other writing frames, sentence starters, and signal words can be found at [Achieve the Core: ELL Supports for Writing and Discussion](#).

## References

“Scaffolds to Support English Language Learners in Writing and Discussion.” *Achieve the Core*, Student Achievement Partners, 2017,

<https://achievethecore.org/content/upload/ELL%20Supports%20for%20Writing%20and%20Discussion.pdf>.

“Teaching Foundational Skills to Help Students Become Effective Writers.” *What Works Clearinghouse*, U.S. Department of Education, July 2012, [https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc\\_writing\\_pg\\_fs.pdf](https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/PracticeGuide/wwc_writing_pg_fs.pdf).

Wray, David, and Maureen Lewis. “An Approach to Scaffolding Children's Non-Fiction Writing: the Use of Writing Frames.” *The University of Warwick*, University of Exeter,

<https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ces/research/teachingandlearning/publications/framesrai.pdf>.