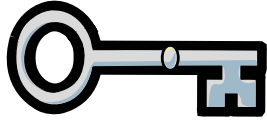
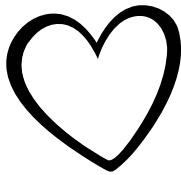


# Elements of Informative/Explanatory Writing



## Organization is the key.

Use informal outlines and Traffic Light colors to plan a paragraph, essay, or report.



## Topic sentences are the heart.

Use green to remember that topic sentences tell readers what you are *going* to explain. In essays, the topic sentence is called a thesis statement.



## Transitions are the glue for the key/star ideas.

Use yellow to remind yourself to *slow down* and make smooth, clear transitions when you introduce a new key/star idea.



## Examples, evidence, and explanation are the meat.

Use red to remind yourself to *stop* and explain. Examples, evidence, and explanation support your key/star ideas.





## Conclusions tie it all together with a ribbon.

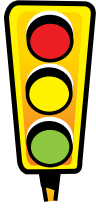
Use green again. Remember to *go back* to your topic. A good conclusion reminds readers of the purpose of your paragraph or essay.

# Twelve Steps to Writing an Essay or Report

<b>Step 1</b>	Write a draft <u>title</u> .
<b>Step 2</b>	Refine the topic and write a draft of your <u>topic sentence</u> or <u>thesis statement</u> .
<b>Step 3</b>	Write a <u>plan</u> sentence using or referring to your key/star ideas in the draft introductory paragraph.
<b>Step 4</b>	<u>Block out</u> what you want to cover in each paragraph.
<b>Step 5</b>	Create an <u>informal outline</u> based on your plan and how you have blocked out the paper.
<b>Step 6</b>	Choose <u>transitions</u> to introduce your key/star ideas. Add these to the informal outline.
<b>Step 7</b>	Jot down ideas for your <u>conclusion</u> .
<b>Step 8</b>	Write the <u>first draft</u> .
<b>Step 9</b>	<u>Revise</u> your first draft to improve content, sentence structure, vocabulary, and organization.
<b>Step 10</b>	<u>Edit</u> your paper. Repeat steps 8, 9, and 10 as needed.
<b>Step 11</b>	Create a <u>final copy</u> of your essay or report.
<b>Step 12</b>	<u>Proofread</u> and <u>prepare to share!</u>

# Argument Writing

<b>Topic =</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Your clear, stated claim</b> <i>“I have something important to say.”</i></li> </ul>
<p>T=</p> <p>☆ —</p> <p>☆ —</p> <p>C=</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Clearly organized support (with powerful transitions) for your claim</b> <i>“I have taken a stand on this issue, and I can support my claim with strong and logical reasons. As a result, readers will agree with me or be ready to take action.”</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Believable and relevant examples, explanations, and evidence</b> <i>“This makes sense. My information is accurate and supported by facts. Readers will pay attention.”</i></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Acknowledgment of and respect for opposing views, with facts to counter them</b> <i>“I have studied my topic and know how others might feel. I can ‘head off’ their opposition with logical evidence.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion =</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>A conclusion that people will remember</b> <i>“I want to give readers one last powerful idea related to my claim so that they will either agree with me or take action.”</i></li> </ul>



# Traffic Light Colors for Argument Writing

Use the colors of a traffic light to help you write a paragraph.



**green**

**Go!**

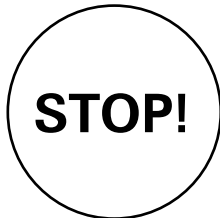
State your claim.



**yellow**

**Slow down!**

Introduce a key/star idea (big idea)—a reason or an opposing claim by using a transition word or phrase.



**red**

**Stop!**

Elaborate by providing an example, evidence, or explanation to support your reasons or to address an opposing claim.



**green**


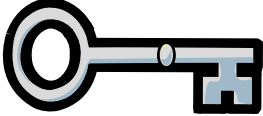



**Go back!**

Remind readers of your claim in light of the evidence you presented.

## Turn Classrooms into Gyms!

I have the perfect solution for the obesity epidemic: install stationary bikes and treadmills in classrooms! We would all be healthier. School would become a health club where kids get to stay in shape as they learn. In addition, we would be better students. Many studies indicate that exercise makes the brain work better because of increased blood flow. Exercising would also fend off boredom and would prevent students from getting sleepy in class. Some teachers and parents say that exercise equipment would be distracting. It would be easy, however, to limit equipment use to lectures, reading periods, and study halls. When kids have to write or type, they can have their hands free. But it's no problem to listen to a lecture or read a book while cycling or walking. Building exercise into every classroom's routine is a creative way to make healthier, better students and to make some headway against the obesity epidemic.

# Argument Accordion Essays and Reports

<p><b>Introduction (green) + (blue)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your claim in a thesis statement or topic sentence plus</li> <li>• Plan sentence plus</li> <li>• “The Blues” lead—if needed!</li> </ul>
<p><b>Organization and Planning</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blocking out plus</li> <li>• Informal outline</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key/Star Ideas and Transitions (yellow)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transition topic sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Start body paragraphs</li> <li>- Help organization of logical reasons and opposing claims</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Support claim</li> <li>• Lead to elaboration</li> </ul>
<p><b>Elaboration (red)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logical</li> <li>• Accurate</li> <li>• Detailed</li> <li>• Specific</li> <li>• Convincing</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conclusion (green)</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draws reader’s attention to the claim in the thesis or topic sentence</li> <li>• Restates claim in light of reasons and evidence presented</li> <li>• Focused, specific, convincing</li> <li>• Statements are relevant and interesting to the reader</li> </ul>

# Vocabulary for Writing and Analyzing Narratives

Term	Examples
<p><b>Plot</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– What happens in the narrative</li> <li>• Events</li> <li>• Problem</li> <li>• Resolution</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ (Page _____)</p>
<p><b>Setting(s)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Time and place</li> <li>– Atmosphere, scenery, time in history, weather</li> <li>– What it looked, sounded, and felt like</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ (Page _____)</p>
<p><b>Conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– The problem that a character faces</li> <li>– The force that a character must struggle against</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ (Page _____)</p>
<p><b>Dialogue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Exact words spoken or thought by a character</li> <li>– Reveals the character's feelings or traits</li> </ul>	<p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____ (Page _____)</p>

# A Sample Narrative

## Apollo 13: Close Call to Triumph

“Five . . . four . . . three . . . two . . . one . . . zero.” Fire and smoke billowed from the launchpad as the powerful engines erupted. The tall Saturn rocket slowly lifted off from Florida’s Kennedy Space Center. Apollo 13 and its three-person crew—James Lovell, Fred Haise, and Jack Swigert—were on their way to the moon. This launch on April 11, 1970, was the third Apollo lunar-landing mission. Apollo 11 had made the first successful manned landing less than nine months earlier, and Apollo 12 repeated the feat the previous November.

After liftoff, the crew prepared for the three-day voyage to the moon. The leggy lunar module, named *Aquarius*, linked with the cone-shaped command module which in turn was locked onto the service module. Together, the lunar module and command module looked like a spider kissing a fish. Once the spacecraft reached the moon, the lunar module was designed to separate and fly to the moon’s surface. Meanwhile, the command module, piloted by Swigert, would orbit the moon, waiting for Lovell and Haise to return in the lunar module. Throughout the mission, dozens of scientific, engineering, and mathematical geniuses were on hand at the command center in Houston, Texas, to aid and advise the Apollo 13 crew by radio communication.

All the careful preflight plans for the mission ended with a bang and shudder about 56 hours after launch. A wiring short circuit caused a tank of liquid oxygen to explode in the service module. “Houston, we’ve had a problem here,” Swigert calmly told mission control. The explosion had blasted an aluminum panel from the side of the service module. Even more troubling, gases were leaking into space, gases needed to power the command module, *Odyssey*—the only part of the ship designed to carry the crew through Earth’s atmosphere during reentry. Without power in *Odyssey*, a safe return would be impossible, and its backup battery power was now running out quickly.

Mission control made a snap decision to conserve power in the command module by shutting it down. Lovell, Haise, and Swigert moved into the lunar module. It still had power, but was made for a crew of two men, not three. Their damaged ship was still hurtling toward the moon, but now a moon landing was out of the question.

Meanwhile, everyone at mission control hustled to devise a plan to accomplish the new mission: get the three men home alive. Flight Director Gene Kranz opted for a free-return trajectory. That meant allowing the ship to travel around the moon and use the moon’s gravity to slingshot it back toward Earth. The maneuver worked, and 24 hours after the explosion the ship was on its way home.

The crew faced more crises on the return journey, requiring high-stakes problem solving. Efforts to conserve water and power left them thirsty and very cold. Technicians at mission control noticed carbon dioxide, a poisonous gas, building up in *Aquarius*. They improvised a way to modify air filters from *Odyssey* and install them in *Aquarius*. They also figured out how to power up the command module again before reentry—something that had never been tried in-flight before. The crew in the ship had to use the small engines on *Aquarius* to correct their course. Working together, mission control and the astronauts overcame each nerve-wracking challenge.

Finally, the time came to prepare for reentry and splashdown. Lovell, Haise, and Swigert returned to *Odyssey* and carefully powered up the command module. They separated from the service module, undocked from the lunar module, and strapped themselves in. *Odyssey* entered Earth’s atmosphere. All radio contact was lost as friction with the air turned the command module into a fireball while it plunged toward the Pacific Ocean. Naval ships patrolled the splashdown area. People around the world held their breath.

The overwhelming concern now was that the explosion had damaged the command module’s heat shield. If it failed, *Odyssey* and its crew would burn up. Suddenly, the radio crackled—the crew gave word they were okay. Then TV cameras spotted the command module floating down to the ocean suspended beneath three giant parachutes. The people in mission control erupted in cheers and tears.

The U.S. space program’s brush with disaster had become one of its proudest moments: a revised mission accomplished.

# Prewriting with a Story Map

events • plot • conflict

theme • tone • mood

time • place • setting • atmosphere

Title =

character(s) • dialogue



# Steps for Turning a Writing Prompt into a Narrative

<b>Step 1</b>	Read the writing prompt twice. Underline the key words or key phrases in the prompt. These are clues that will help you figure out what to write.	
<b>Example</b>	Write an <u>imaginative narrative</u> about a <u>family</u> or other group of people who find themselves <u>in a situation without any of the modern technology</u> most of us depend on. Include descriptive details to help readers see the <u>setting</u> . <u>Create a problem</u> and decide <u>how the characters will solve it</u> . Describe your <u>characters' thoughts, words, and actions</u> so that the characters are believable to your audience.	
<b>Step 2</b>	Use words from the prompt to create a quick sketch and/or quick notes about what you want to write about and to plan your sequence of events.	
<b>Example</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group of hikers sets out for a hiking trip in the wilderness</li> <li>• Inexperienced and unprepared; only plan to be hiking for one day, have enough food and water for just that day; don't bring their cell phones</li> </ul>
	<b>Middle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hikers get lost</li> <li>• Notice it's getting dark</li> <li>• Talk about using the stars to try to find their way, but no one knows much except that North Star shows the direction north</li> </ul>
	<b>Middle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spot a small, abandoned cabin as night is setting in; decide to stay there overnight</li> <li>• Find a rusty old compass in the cabin</li> </ul>
	<b>Middle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the morning, decide to use the compass and the sun to find their way back to civilization</li> <li>• Hope they won't also have to try to use the stars at night</li> </ul>
	<b>Ending</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Old compass works, confirmed by the position of the sun</li> <li>• In spite of some minor injuries, the hikers make it back to town late that night</li> </ul>