

Introduction to Expository Writing

Expository Writing

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Grade Level	6th – 9th Grade	**Time Frame**	6-7 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts	**Duration**	300 minutes

Essential Question

What is expository writing? How does expository writing expose information in a variety of ways?

Summary

In this lesson, students will explore various types of expository writing. Students will experience the expository forms of description, sequence, comparison, cause/effect, and problem/solution writing through engaging tasks and collaborative activities and create an expository writing reference sheet for themselves along the way. While this lesson is currently aligned only to 6th grade standards, it would be appropriate to teach in grades 6 through 9, adjusting standards as needed.

Snapshot

Engage

Students determine what "expository" writing looks like based on a Word Splash activity.

Explore

Students participate in a series of analysis activities designed to highlight key characteristics of each expository writing type. Students construct their own definitions of each type.

Explain

Students demonstrate their understanding of the different types of expository writing by creating anchor charts from the information in their notes and analyzing the different writing types.

Extend

Students select a type and write a brief expository essay from a writing prompt.

Evaluate

Students evaluate the effectiveness of peer essays and provide feedback for future revisions.

Standards

Oklahoma Academic Standards for English Language Arts (Grade 6)

6.2.R.2: Students will analyze details in literary and nonfiction/informational texts to distinguish genres.
6.3.R.6: Students will analyze the structures of texts (e.g., description, compare/contrast, sequential, problem/solution, cause/effect) and content by making inferences about texts and use textual evidence to support understanding.
6.3.W.2: Informative: Students will compose essays and reports about topics, incorporating evidence (e.g., specific facts, examples, details) and maintaining an organized structure.

Attachments

- Chain Notes—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.docx
- Chain Notes—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.pdf
- Chain Notes—Introduction to Expository Writing.docx
- Chain Notes—Introduction to Expository Writing.pdf
- Expository Foldable—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.docx
- Expository Foldable—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.pdf
- Expository Foldable—Introduction to Expository Writing.docx
- Expository Foldable—Introduction to Expository Writing.pdf
- Lesson Slides—Introduction to Expository Writing.pptx
- Pass the Problem—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.docx
- Pass the Problem—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.pdf
- Pass the Problem—Introduction to Expository Writing.docx
- Pass the Problem—Introduction to Expository Writing.pdf
- Venn Diagram—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.docx
- Venn Diagram—Introduction to Expository Writing - Spanish.pdf
- Venn Diagram—Introduction to Expository Writing.docx
- Venn Diagram—Introduction to Expository Writing.pdf

Materials

- Lesson Slides (attached)
- Expository Foldable handout (attached, printed front-to-back; one copy per student)
- Pass the Problem handout (attached, printed single-sided; one copy of the document per eight students so that each pair receives one of the four problem prompts)
- Chain Notes handout (attached, printed single-sided; one copy per group of four)
- Venn Diagram handouts (attached; one copy per student)
- Computer with projector
- Student devices
- Internet access
- Scissors
- Paper
- Pens and pencils
- Sticky notes
- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard markers
- Chart paper
- Markers

Engage

Teacher's Note: Preparation

Prior to starting the lesson, draw a classroom KWL Graphic Organizer on the board or on chart paper. This activity will be used in the Engage portion of the lesson.

Begin by engaging students in a Word Splash activity to activate prior knowledge and help students make predictions about the lesson. Below are 21 terms that you can use in the activity. The different expository tasks appear in **bold** font. Choose 5–7 of these terms to display to students.

- **Description**
- Features
- Characteristics
- Details
- **Sequence**
- Lists
- Numerical Order
- Chronological Order
- **Comparison**
- Explains
- Similarities
- Differences
- Venn Diagram
- **Cause and Effect**
- Relationships between 2+ Events
- Cause
- Effect
- **Problem and Solution**
- Question...Answer
- Problem
- Solution

Teacher's Note: Differentiation

This activity works best when you share 5–7 items. However, presenting the expository tasks alone might not be enough of a challenge or provide you with enough insight into your students' prior knowledge, depending on the age and level of your students. **Slide 2** provides a simpler list of just the expository writing styles, whereas **slide 3** provides a list of descriptor words for each of the types of writing styles. Decide ahead of time which list you want to use, or make your own custom list from the terms above.

Give students time to gather their thoughts about the displayed words, and encourage them to think about how the words can fit together. Once students have had a few minutes to think about the words, have them share their thoughts with an Elbow Partner and come to a consensus about the topic for today's lesson. After the pairs have had a chance to discuss their ideas, have a few share with the class.

Teacher's Note: Set The Stage To Engage

If you want to add another level of engagement or "suspense" to your lesson, try introducing one word at a time, and have students "popcorn" out their ideas. Each new word added will narrow their thinking and build the excitement as they get closer to the actual topic of the lesson.

Pass out two sticky notes to each student. Now that they have had time to discuss and come to a consensus about the topic, take a moment to get feedback from individual students about their level of understanding and their personal interest in expository writing using the KWL Graphic Organizer.

Display **slide 4**. Using the first sticky note, students will share details about what they already know. Ask them to write down a definition, in their own words, for ***expository,*** and list two details about what is included in an expository essay. Have them place this sticky note in the K section of the class KWL chart.

Identifying Common Definitions And Misconceptions

As students bring their notes to the board, take a moment to discern if there are any common definitions or misconceptions that you'll need to address as you work through the lesson. If you notice common definitions, consider pointing these out to your students.

Display **slide 5** and instruct students to use the second sticky note to write down at least two questions that they have about expository writing. In other words, what do they "want" to know. Have them place this sticky note in the W section of the class KWL chart.

Identifying Common Questions

As they're coming up, take a look to see if any students have similar wonderings, or queries about expository writing. This can help you inform grouping later in the lesson.

Let students know that they will be revisiting this chart at the end of the lesson to reflect on what they've learned.

Share the essential questions on **slide 6**. Tell students to keep these questions in mind, as they will be answering them at the end of the lesson.

Share the lesson objectives on **slide 7**.

Explore

Display **slide 8**. Pass out a copy of the **Expository Foldable** handout to each student. During this portion of the lesson, students will participate in a variety of activities to explore the different types of expository writing using an image as a prompt. Following each activity, students will reflect on their experiences, write a definition, and provide key characteristics of expository writing based on the experiences.

Have students fold their handouts vertically along the red dotted line, with the expository writing style names facing out, and then cut along the horizontal lines that separate the writing styles, making sure to stop when they get to the center fold. When they flip open one of the small tabs, they will see the space provided for them to write a definition and cue words and examples.

Expository Writing Type One: Description

The first type of expository writing we will explore is descriptive writing.

Display **slide 9**. Tell students they will use the Photo or Picture Deconstruction strategy to describe an image. The image depicts the Atomic Bomb Dome in Hiroshima, but it's essential that you don't yet reveal to students ***what it is, where is it located, or the name of the building***. Simply explain that you will be showing them an image, and this image is not complete, so they will have to infer and interpret what they notice within the different parts. The original image has been split into four quadrants, which appear on slides 10–13.

Display **slide 10**. Quadrant 1 shows the top-left portion of the photo. Ask students the following questions:

1. What are some things you notice?
2. Do you think this is a building under construction or one that is really old? What evidence do you have that might support your thinking?
3. Do you think this building is in a small town or a big city? What evidence do you have that might support your thinking?

Possible Student Observations

You can see a blue sky, street lamps that are on, and what looks like a building that may be under construction.

Display **slide 11**. Quadrant 2 shows the top-right portion of the photo. Ask students the following questions:

1. What are some things you notice?
2. Now that we have more of the image, do you still think it's a building under construction/really old? What evidence do you have that might support your thinking?
3. Now that we have more of the image, do you still think this building is in a small town/big city? What evidence do you have that might support your thinking?

Possible Student Observations

You can see a blue sky, the tops of trees, and what looks like the top of a building that is really old and falling apart. You can also see grime on the side of the building, and the glow from the street lamps.

Display **slide 12**. Quadrant 3 shows the bottom-left portion of the photo. Ask students the following questions:

1. What are some things you notice?
2. Are there people walking around?
3. Now that we have more of the image, do you still think it's a building under construction/really old? What evidence do you have that might support your thinking?
4. Now that we have more of the image, do you still think this building is in a small town/big city? What evidence do you have that might support your thinking?
5. Why do you think there are so many security measures in place (fence, bushes, cameras, etc.)?

Possible Student Observations

You can see that the sky is a deep blue, so the sun may be going down. The street lamps are on and are running along the side of a sidewalk. There is a fence that goes around the building and bushes that separate the sidewalk from the fence. There also appear to be cameras pointing at the building. In the background, you can see mountains, a building, and a bridge.

Display **slide 13**. Quadrant 4 shows the bottom-right quadrant of the photo. Ask students the following questions:

1. What are some things you notice?
2. Why do you think this building is unique?
3. Why do you think there are so many security measures in place (fence, bushes, cameras, etc.)?

Possible Student Observations

You can see that the fence is kind of high, and the bushes are kind of thick. The building looks dirty, like it's really old. It might be winter, because the trees don't have leaves on them.

Once your students have had a chance to analyze each quadrant of the image individually, display **slide 14** to show them the full image. Give them a few minutes to look at the full image and consider their thoughts and ideas from the different quadrants.

Does seeing the complete photo provide students with a clearer understanding of what happened? What do they know about this image and where this structure is located? What questions do they still have? How can they go about finding this information? As a class, compose a list of possible ways to find the information. (You'll use this list in the next part of the lesson.)

Display **slide 15**. Have students turn to the Expository Foldable handout and write a definition of descriptive writing in their own words.

Expository Writing Type Two: Sequence (Process)

The second type of expository writing we will explore is sequencing or process writing.

It's time to reveal to students that the photo they have been analyzing depicts the Atomic Bomb Dome. Students will now find more information about how it became what it is today using the strategies they listed above.

Group students up into equal teams to explore using the different strategies they defined. Display **slide 16**. and introduce the List-Group-Label strategy, which students will use to list information they find as they are reading and group that information based on date, country, or other criteria. Give students 5–10 minutes to research and take notes.

Optional Technology Integration

As students are preparing to research and explore the Atomic Bomb Dome, consider having them access the information through virtual reality tours in Google Expeditions. These tours allow them to go into the building and observe the damage up close, while also providing them with the important information they need to understand the timeline of events. Depending on students' age and experience level, you might choose to provide them with a list of tours in Google Expeditions or allow them to search on their own. Another potential option is for students to insert the information that they find relating to the Atomic Bomb Dome into an interactive timeline of events using an application such as Padlet.

Reconvene as a class to make a collaborative timeline of events that led up to the making of the Atomic Bomb Dome and label those events. On anchor chart paper or your classroom whiteboard, list the events as students share out about their individual research. Pay close attention to the cue words that they use when describing the order of the events, and use a different color or underline them so they stand out.

Display **slide 17**. Have students turn to the Expository Foldable handout and write a definition of process writing in their own words.

Expository Writing Type Three: Comparison

The third type of expository writing we will explore is comparison writing.

Pass out copies of the **Venn Diagram** graphic organizer and display **slide 18**. Ask students to compare the two images of the Atomic Bomb Dome that appear on this slide.

The top image is a photo of the original building, which was known as the Prefectural Industrial Promotion Hall. The bottom image is a photo of what the building looks like today. This was the only structure left standing following the nuclear bomb explosion over the city of Hiroshima, Japan, on August 6, 1945.

Display **slide 19**. Have students turn to the Expository Foldable handout and write a definition of comparison writing in their own words.

Expository Writing Type Four: Cause And Effect

The fourth type of expository writing we will explore is cause and effect writing.

Using the Chain Notes strategy, students will work collaboratively to answer the following questions:

- What effect did dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima have on the country of Japan?
- What immediate effects did dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima have on individuals in Japan?
- What long-term effects did dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima have on individuals in Japan?
- What effect did dropping an atomic bomb on Hiroshima have on Japanese Americans?

Display **slide 20**. Organize students into groups of four, and pass out one copy of the **Chain Notes** handout to each group. Each student should get one page of the handout, each with different question at the top.

Students will read the question, take some time to consider it, and then fill out the Response section. When students are ready, have them pass their papers to the group member to their right.

Display **slide 21**. Ask students to read the question on their new paper and the response written by their group member and then add details or evidence to support that response.

Display **slide 22**. Repeat the process of passing the papers and adding evidence until students receive their own papers back.

Display **slide 23**. Give the original authors some time to read the responses from their group members, and then ask them to write a summary of all the information. Discuss the questions as a whole class, giving students the opportunity to share out some of their answers and supporting evidence.

Display **slide 24**. Have students turn to the Expository Foldable handout and write a definition of cause and effect writing in their own words.

Expository Writing Type Five: Problem And Solution

The fifth type of expository writing we will explore is problem and solution writing.

Display **slide 25**. Organize students into pairs, and give each pair one of the four prompts from the **Pass the Problem** handout. Tell pairs they will engage in a Pass the Problem activity to explore problems surrounding peoples' differences. Give groups 3–5 minutes to begin designing a potential multi-step solution to their assigned problem and provide notes to justify their thinking.

Display **slide 26**. When time is up, pairs should pass their papers to a pair that had been working on another problem. (For example, pairs who previously had problem 1 now have problem 2, etc.) The next pair of students should read the problem and proposed solution and pick up where the previous pair left off in solving the problem. Give pairs another 3–5 minutes to work.

Display **slide 27**. Have students pass the problems one more time to new pairs. (For example, pairs who previously had problem 2, now have problem 3.) The third pair should modify and complete the work they received from their classmates, continuing to make notes and justify their reasoning.After 3–5 additional minutes of work time, ask students to share and justify their completed solutions with each other or with the class for additional feedback and reflection.

Display **slide 28**. Have students turn to the Expository Foldable handout and write a definition of problem and solution writing in their own words.

Explain

Display **slide 29**. Now that students have had an opportunity to explore and engage in a variety of expository writing types, group them into teams of 4–5 to participate in a Jigsaw activity. During this activity, each team will work together to explain one of the five expository writing types. Using their Expository Foldable handout with their notes as well as information that can be found on the Literary Devices website, each team will create an Anchor Chart that explains the definition, key characteristics, and cue words related to their writing type.

Display **slide 30**. Once students have critically read the articles and sample student passages, have them share out new information they learned. As each team is sharing out their information, the rest of the students should be adding anything new to their Expository Foldable handouts in a different color pen.

Extend

Display **slide 31**. Now that students have an understanding of each style of expository writing, have them select one style to practice in an individual writing project. Students can choose any style other than the one that they researched in the Explain portion of the lesson and should follow the prompt on the slide to compose their paragraph.

Evaluate

Display **slide 32** and have students swap papers with a peer. Introduce the Two Stars and a Wish strategy. Students will provide peer feedback through two positive statements (stars) and one hopeful statement (wish). Give students time to read their partner's paragraph. Below the paragraph, they should describe two things they like or feel positive about (the stars) and one thing they feel could be improved (the wish).

Display **slide 33** and revisit the KWL Graphic Organizer from the Engage portion of the lesson. Pass out a sticky note to each student, and then ask students to write down at least three things they learned through the course of this lesson. As they complete this sticky note, have them come to the board to attach it to the L section of the chart. As they are coming up, take a look to see if any students have written similar responses and offer feedback on their responses.

Resources

- K20 Center. (n.d.). Anchor Chart. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/58
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Chain Notes. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/52
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Elbow Partners. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/116
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Jigsaw. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/179
- K20 Center. (n.d.). KWHL Graphic Organizer. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/127
- K20 Center. (n.d.). List-Group-Label. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/55
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Padlet. Tech Tools. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/tech-tool/1077
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Pass the Problem. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/151
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