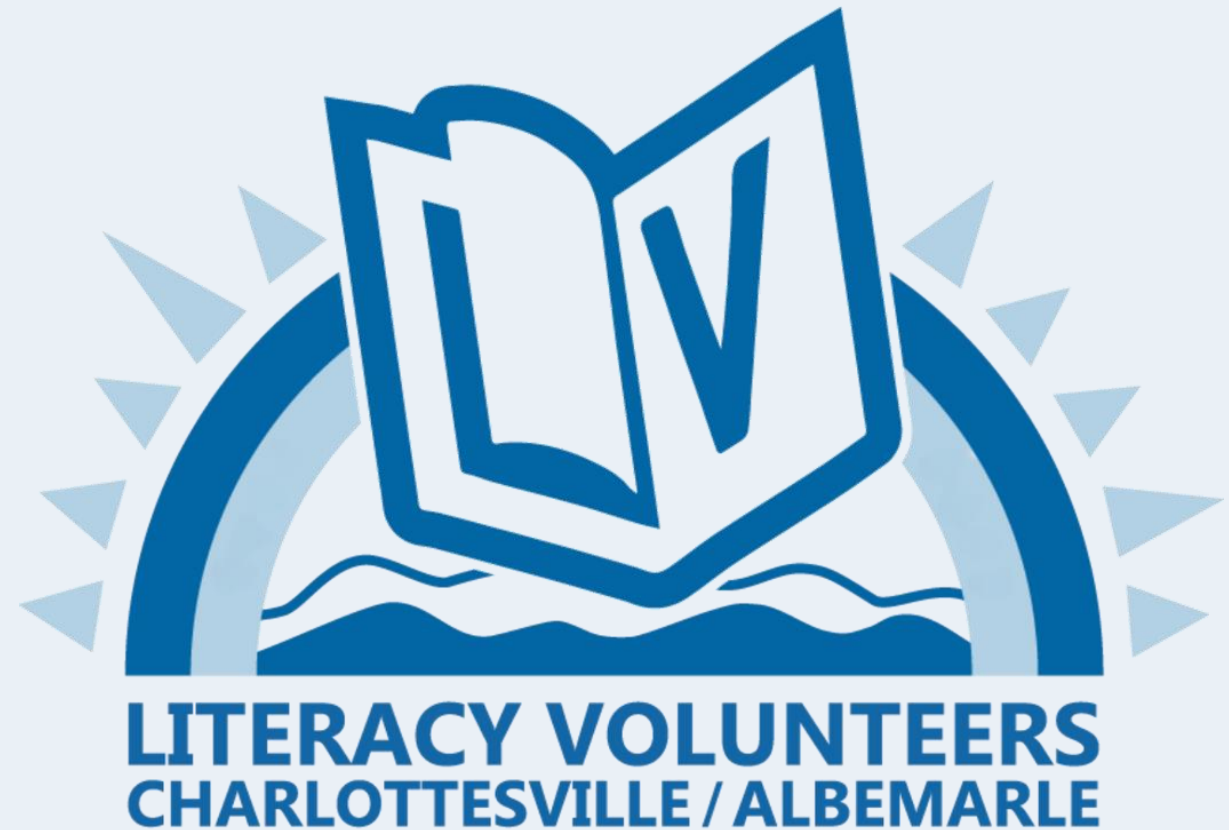


Building Writing Skills for English Language Learners

April 9, 2025



*Brought to you by Literacy Volunteers of Charlottesville/Albemarle
Changing lives, one word at a time.*



Agenda

- Reason to write
- Set the students up for success
- Activities for writing
- Graphic Organizers
- Revising and Editing



Give them a reason to write



Connect writing
assignments to
their lives

If it's seen as a
“needless
chore,” they will
treat it as such

Find high interest writing prompts



General Topics

- Favorite holidays
- Favorite foods
- Favorite places

Explanatory Topics

- How to cook your favorite meal
- How to get from work to school

Argumentative Topics

- What is the best flavor of ice cream?
- Which is better: the book or the movie?

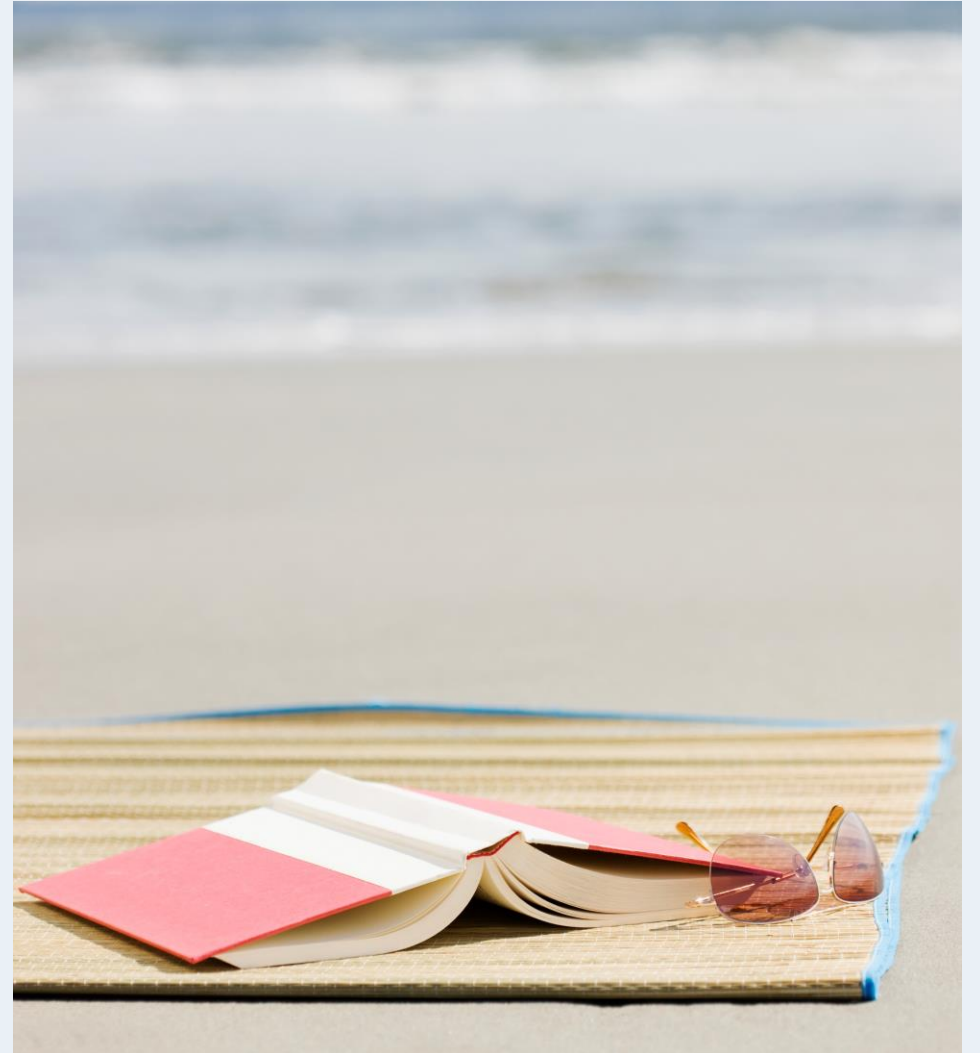
Hypothetical Topics

- What do you do if you're running late for an appointment?
- What would you do if you won the lottery?

Setting them up for success



- Review verb tenses they are likely to use:
 - Narratives in the past? Past simple, Past progressive, Past perfect
 - Opinion pieces? Look at modals like *should*, *would*, *could*
- Fiction stories?
 - Review plot, setting, characters, conflict



Build the skills



Frames

Starters

Templates

Sentence Frames



In the picture, I see _____. They are _____ soccer. One is wearing a _____ shirt and _____ shorts. The other is wearing a _____ shirt and _____ shorts. The one in the _____ shirt is _____ the ball.



Sentence starters



Autobiography starter

1. My name is _____
2. I am _____ years old.
3. I live in _____.
4. I was born in _____.
5. I've lived in the US for _____ years.
6. I am/am not married.
7. I have _____ children.
7. My favorite food is _____
because _____.
8. My favorite color is _____
because _____.
9. My season is _____
because _____.
10. My favorite holiday is _____
because _____.

Five Senses



- Bring the class individually wrapped chocolates (or something like that)
- Write the five senses on the board (Sight, Smell, Taste, Touch, Sound)
- Ask the students to give you a description of the sight. Write one of their suggestions on the board
- Have them write sentences for the other 4 senses.
- Advanced students can turn that into a paragraph or essay

Tell me about this picture



- Ask students what they see in the picture
- Write all the responses on the board
- Have the students use 4-6 of those responses to write a paragraph about the picture



Tell me about this picture



- Use pictures with a variety of emotions
 - How do the people feel?
 - What caused that to happen?



Tell me about this picture



- Choose pictures that allow for story telling
 - What happened just before this picture was taken?
 - What happens next?



Expanding Sentence



Write a sentence with FIVE words (subject verb object)

The boy threw a stick.



Expanding Sentence



Add an adjective to each noun.

The tall boy threw a large stick.



Expanding Sentence



Add an adverb to the sentence.

The tall boy quickly threw a large stick.



Expanding Sentence



Add a prepositional phrase to the sentence.

The tall boy quickly threw a large stick to his
dog.



Expanding Sentence



Add another adjective to each noun.

The tall, lanky boy quickly threw a large, oak
stick to his excited dog.



Expanding sentence



*AI image create using Gencraft

The tall, lanky boy threw a large, oak stick to his excited dog.

- *At this point, you can have the student change any words that would clarify their sentences, change subject, verbs, or objects or replace nouns with pronouns.*
- *To continue, have the student use this sentence to write a paragraph.*



Template



I. Introduction

- A. Introductory statement
- B. Thesis statement

II. Body

A. First supporting Idea

- 1. Topic sentence
- 2. Detail sentence
- 3. Detail sentence
- 4. Paragraph conclusion

B. Second supporting Idea*

- 1. Topic sentence
- 2. Detail sentence
- 3. Detail sentence
- 4. Paragraph conclusion

C. Third supporting Idea*

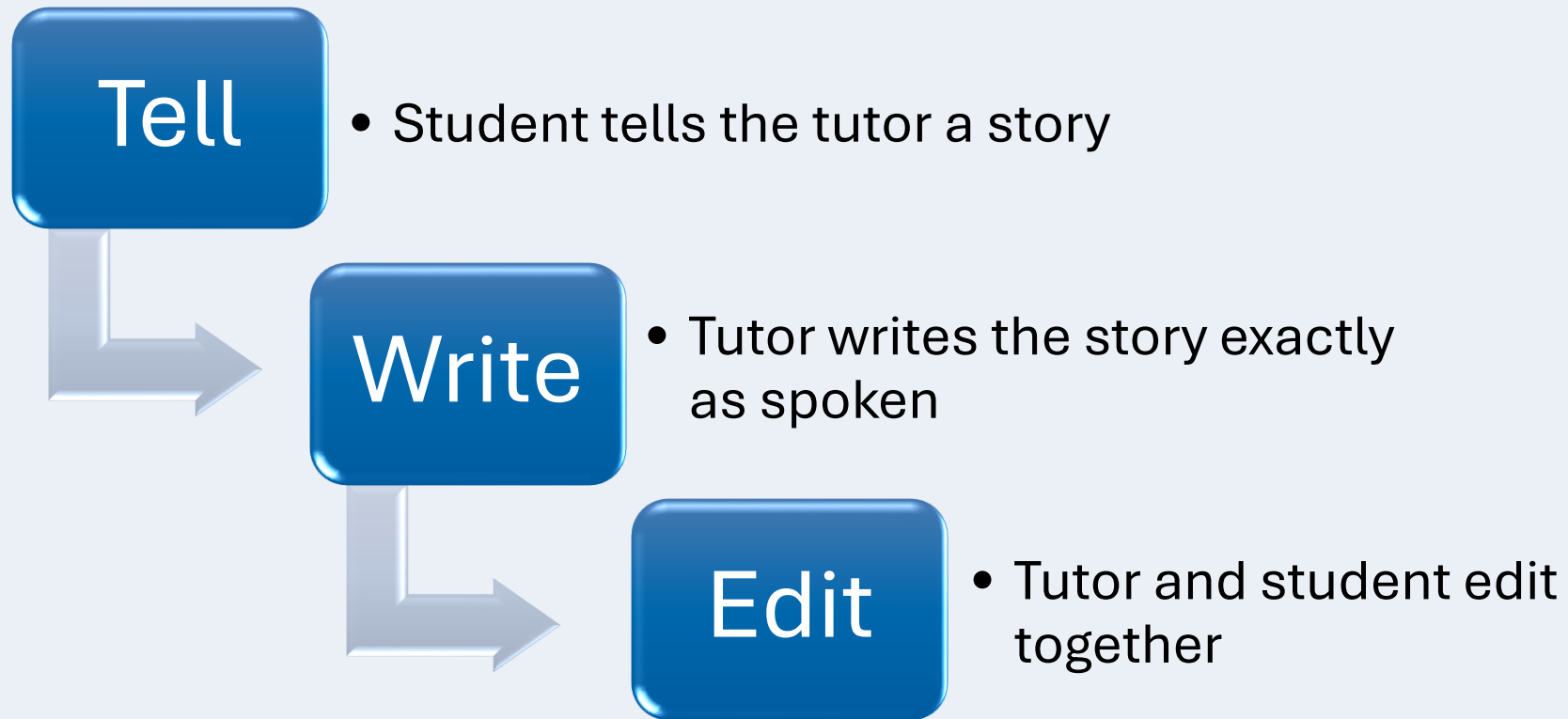
- 1. Topic sentence
- 2. Detail sentence
- 3. Detail sentence
- 4. Paragraph conclusion

III. Conclusion

- A. Closing statement
- B. Rewording thesis

*Add as needed

Experience stories



Experience picture book



Student takes
pictures of
themselves
doing a task

Student (or
teacher) takes
the pictures and
inserts them into
a Publisher
document

Student writes a
caption for each
picture

Student and
teacher edit the
caption

Print out a copy
of the book!

Experience picture book



Mix wet ingredients



Mix dry ingredients



Combine



Bake



Cool



Frost

Five Whys



- Teacher writes a statement on the board, then the students answer *why*
 - That response is followed by *why*?
 - Repeat that until there are five *whys*
 - Use those six sentences to build a story
- My cat is driving me crazy.
 - Why?
 - The minute I get home he demands all my attention.
 - Why?
 - He makes me sit down and pet him even before I take my shoes off.
 - Why?
 - He has been home alone all day.
 - Why?
 - I am at work all day, and he stays by himself. He doesn't like it.
 - Why?
 - I used to work from home all the time, and now I am back in my office.



Allows the student
to write while not
having to “create”

Retelling a story



Tutor reads a short story (folk tale, fairy tale)

Student the must write what they remember using their own words

Correct for mechanics, but don't stress of accuracy of retelling

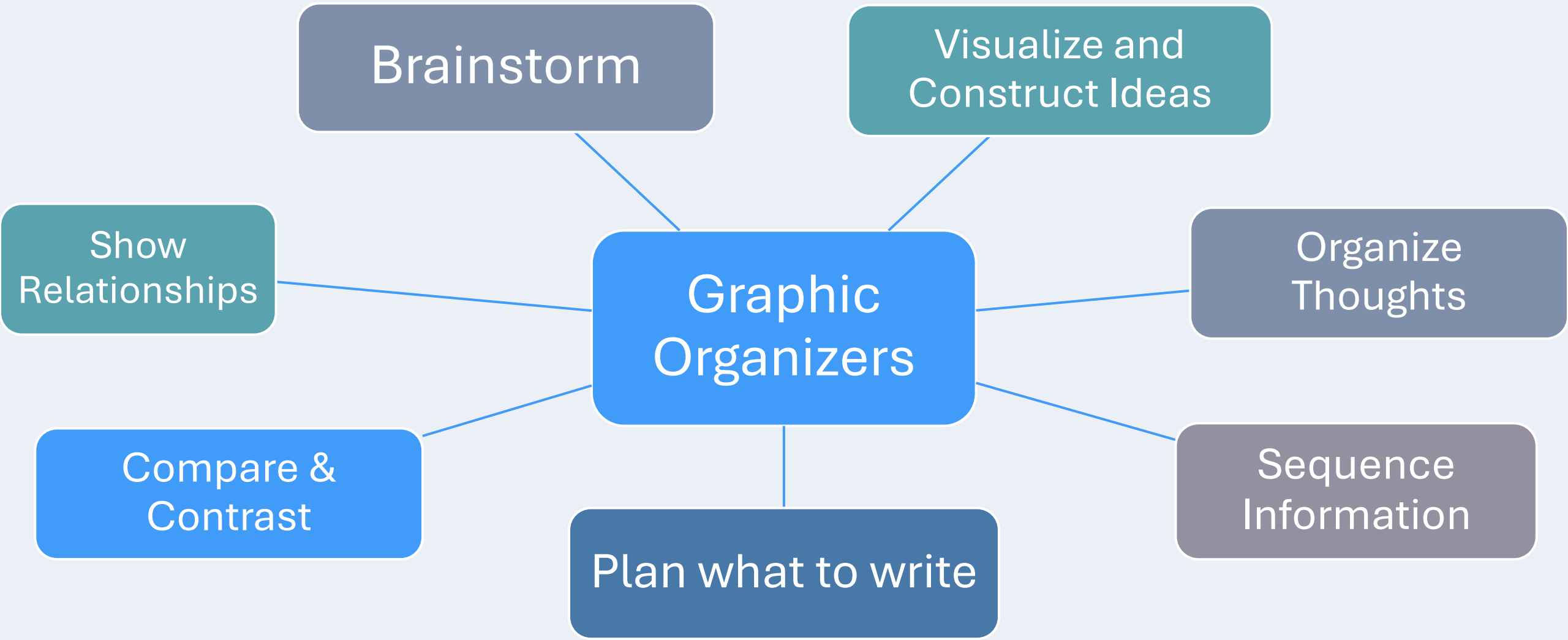
Summary writing



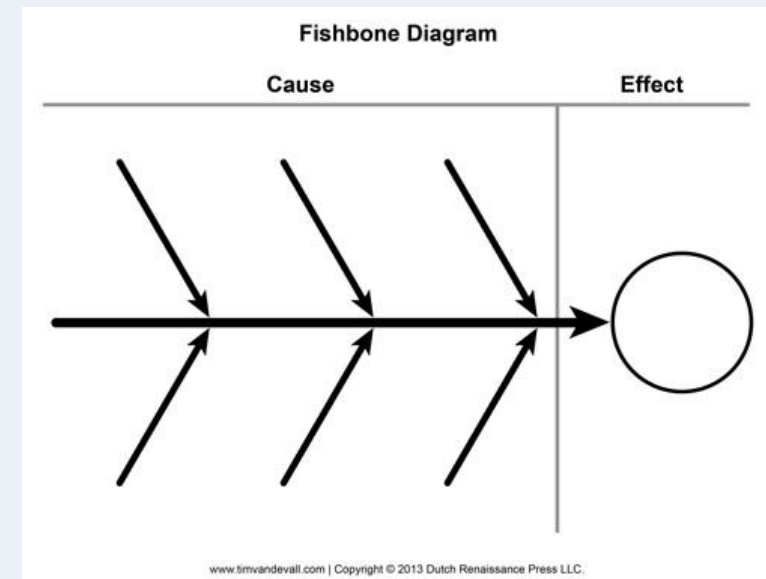
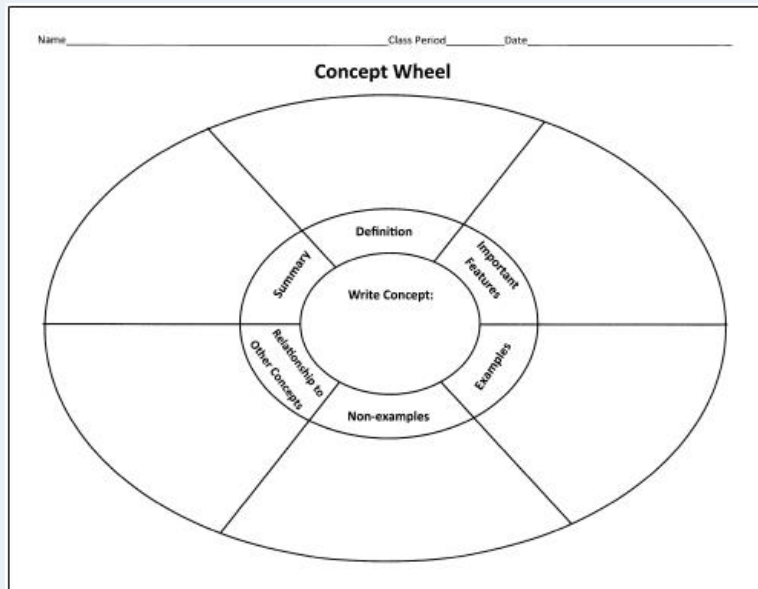
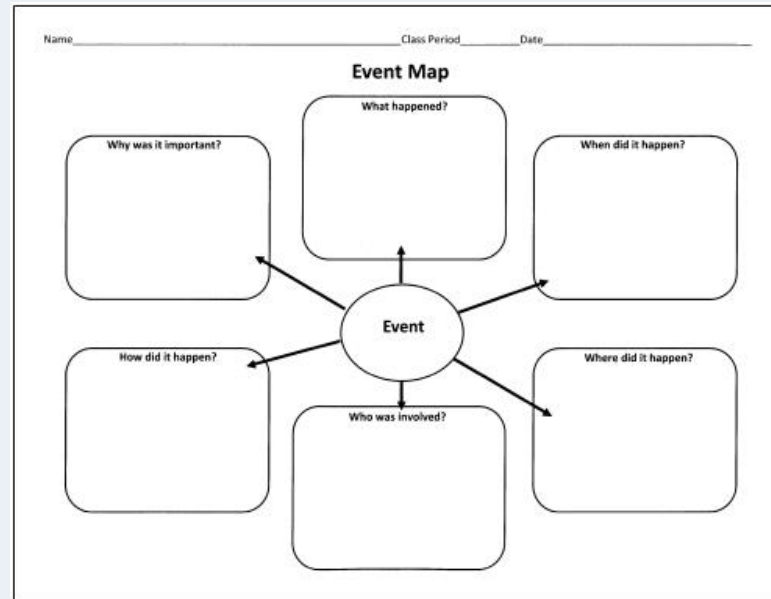
Student reads a
level-
appropriate
text, then
summarizes
what was read

- Identify the Main Idea
- Identify the Main Supporting Details
- Paraphrase the Main Idea and Key Details

Use graphic organizers



Use graphic organizers





When you've finished your first draft, you're halfway done.

Edit and revise



Does this say
what you wanted
to say?

Is this the best
way you can say
it?

Is it as technically
correct as you
can make it?



Opportunities for Writing

Get Published!



- Joy of Writing is our annual publication of learner stories for writers at every level of their writing journey.
- All submissions are accepted into the publication.
- Accepts fiction, non-fiction, and poetry
- No word limits
- **Submissions due June 1**