

Informative / Explanatory Writing

Name: _____

Date: _____

Score: ____ / 10



Quick Review

An informative piece **TEACHES** the reader. Strong Grade 4 informative writing (1) introduces the topic clearly, (2) groups related information into paragraphs, (3) uses transitions such as *another*, *for example*, *in contrast*, *also*, (4) uses domain-specific words, and (5) ends with a satisfying conclusion.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Student draft — “How a Beaver Builds a Dam”

Beavers are large rodents that change the rivers and streams where they live. To stay safe, beavers build long walls of wood and mud called dams. A dam slows the water and makes a deep pond. In the middle of the pond, beavers build a home called a lodge.

Beavers start a dam by cutting down small trees with their strong front teeth. For example, a single beaver can chew through a four-inch trunk in about fifteen minutes. They drag the branches into the water, point them downstream, and pack mud and stones between the branches to seal the gaps.

Another important job is keeping the dam strong. Beavers patrol the dam at night and patch any leaks they find. In contrast to many animals, beavers work as a family team — parents and older kits share the labor. Because of this teamwork, a healthy beaver dam can last for many years and help fish, frogs, and birds that live nearby.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Use the student draft below to answer the items.

- Which sentence is the **BEST** topic sentence for this **INFORMATIVE** piece?
 - I think watching beavers swim is one of the most amazing things you can do in the woods.
 - Beavers are large rodents that change the rivers and streams where they live.
 - Rodents are a very interesting group of mammals found all over the world.
 - One summer, my grandfather and I spotted a beaver lodge at the edge of a lake.
- Which transition phrase from the draft **ADDS** another supporting point of the **SAME** kind?
 - For example,
 - Because of this teamwork,
 - Another important job
 - In contrast to many animals,



3. Which phrase from the draft introduces a SPECIFIC EXAMPLE?
 - A. In the middle of the pond,
 - B. To stay safe,
 - C. Because of this teamwork,
 - D. For example, a single beaver can chew through a four-inch trunk in about fifteen minutes.
4. Which is a DOMAIN-SPECIFIC word from the draft (a word that belongs to the beaver topic)?
 - A. nearby
 - B. stones
 - C. lodge
 - D. minutes
5. Which sentence should be DELETED because it does not fit an INFORMATIVE piece on beaver dams?
 - A. Beavers patrol the dam at night and patch any leaks they find.
 - B. I think beavers look like a cross between a rat and a teddy bear.
 - C. Beavers drag branches into the water and pack mud between them.
 - D. A dam slows the water and makes a deep pond.
6. Which paragraph would be the BEST place to add information about WHY beavers need a deep pond?
 - A. paragraph 1, where the pond is first introduced
 - B. paragraph 2, where the writer describes cutting down trees
 - C. paragraph 3, where the writer talks about teamwork and lasting dams
 - D. the conclusion, after all the other ideas are finished
7. Which sentence would be the STRONGEST CONCLUSION?
 - A. By cutting trees, patching leaks, and working as a family, beavers turn ordinary streams into ponds that support life all around them.
 - B. I think it would be really fun to spend a day watching beavers from the riverbank.
 - C. There are many other kinds of rodents besides beavers, including porcupines, mice, and capybaras.
 - D. Beavers are pretty good builders, all things considered.
8. Which transition would BEST signal a CONTRAST in an informative piece?
 - A. another
 - B. in addition
 - C. in contrast
 - D. for example



9. Write a CLEAR topic sentence for an informative paragraph about an animal you know.

10. Now write TWO supporting sentences for your topic in item 9. Use the transition **for example** in one of them.



Answer Keys

<p>1 <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>2 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>3 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input checked="" type="radio"/> D</p> <p>4 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>5 <input type="radio"/> A <input checked="" type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p>	<p>6 <input checked="" type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>7 <input checked="" type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>8 <input type="radio"/> A <input type="radio"/> B <input checked="" type="radio"/> C <input type="radio"/> D</p> <p>9 <input type="text" value="See below"/></p> <p>10 <input type="text" value="See below"/></p>
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Explanations	
1. B	B names the SUBJECT and a FOCUS (changing rivers/streams) — perfect for informative. A is opinion (<i>amazing</i>). C is too broad (whole rodent family). D is a personal narrative opening, not informative.
2. C	<i>Another</i> signals an additional point of the same kind (another beaver job). <i>For example</i> introduces an instance, <i>Because of this</i> signals cause, and <i>In contrast</i> signals difference.
3. D	D names the example signal (<i>For example</i>) AND gives the concrete detail. A is a location phrase, B states purpose, and C signals cause/effect.
4. C	<i>Lodge</i> is the technical word for a beaver's home — domain-specific to beavers. <i>Nearby</i> , <i>stones</i> , and <i>minutes</i> are everyday words that any topic could use.
5. B	B is the writer's OPINION (<i>I think... look like...</i>) and breaks the informative tone. A, C, and D all teach facts about how dams are built or what they do.
6. A	Related information belongs near where the idea is INTRODUCED — paragraph 1 names the pond. Paragraph 2 is about tree-cutting (different subtopic); paragraph 3 is about maintenance; the conclusion is for wrap-up, not new detail.
7. A	A restates the main points (building, patching, teamwork) and ties them to a larger idea — what a conclusion does. B is opinion/personal, C drifts off-topic to other rodents, and D is vague and judgmental.
8. C	<i>In contrast</i> signals a difference between two things. <i>Another</i> and <i>in addition</i> stack similar points; <i>for example</i> introduces an instance.
9.	Answer: Examples: (1) The barn owl is a quiet hunter that has adapted to life around fields and farms. (2) The bottlenose dolphin uses sound to find food in dark water. (3) Honeybees communicate through a special dance. Accept any single sentence that (a) names the animal and (b) names a focus or feature to teach about. NOT acceptable: a vague sentence (<i>Owls are cool</i>), an opinion sentence (<i>The barn owl is the best bird</i>), or a question.
10.	Answer: Examples: (1) Barn owls have heart-shaped faces that funnel sound to their ears. For example, a barn owl can find a mouse in total darkness by sound alone. (2) Bottlenose dolphins make clicks that bounce off objects. For example, a dolphin can tell whether a fish is large or small from over 50 feet away. Accept any two related FACTS where one uses <i>for example</i> correctly to introduce an instance. NOT acceptable: two opinion sentences, or use of <i>for example</i> to add an unrelated fact.



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