Informative and Explanatory Writing

Name: _____	Date: _____	Score: _____ / 10

Quick Review

A Grade 6 informative piece TEACHES the reader. Strong informative writing (1) introduces the topic clearly, (2) ORGANIZES ideas into logical paragraphs (often by category, comparison, or cause/effect), (3) develops each idea with FACTS, DEFINITIONS, QUOTATIONS, EXAMPLES, and other concrete information, (4) uses transitions to connect ideas, (5) employs DOMAIN-SPECIFIC vocabulary, and (6) ends with a conclusion that ties the information together.

PART 1 — READ

Read the passage. Then answer the questions.

Student draft - How Bicycle Brakes Stop a Moving Wheel

Bicycle brakes use friction to convert the bike's motion into heat, slowing the wheel until it stops. Modern bikes use two main brake types - rim brakes and disc brakes - and each design solves the same problem in a slightly different way.

Rim brakes squeeze the outer edge of the wheel itself. When a rider pulls the brake lever, a thin steel cable tightens, pulling two rubber pads against the metal rim. The friction between the rubber and the rim slows the wheel. Because the braking surface is the wheel's outer edge, rim brakes are simple, light, and easy to inspect. However, they lose stopping power in wet weather, since rain on the rim acts like a lubricant between the pad and the metal.

Disc brakes, on the other hand, squeeze a separate metal disc called a rotor that is mounted near the wheel's center. The rotor turns at the same speed as the wheel, but it stays cleaner than the outer rim. When the rider pulls the lever, brake pads inside a small housing called a caliper press against both sides of the rotor. The friction slows the rotor, which slows the wheel. Disc brakes work well in rain and mud, but they are heavier and more complex to service.

In every braking system, the energy of motion does not simply disappear - it becomes heat in the pads, the rim, or the rotor. Riders may not feel this heat during a short stop, but after a long downhill brake, the braking surface can reach temperatures hot enough to burn skin. Understanding how brakes work helps cyclists choose the right system for their riding and ride more safely on every kind of road.

PART 2 — PRACTICE

Read the student draft. Answer the questions about structure, organization, evidence, and revision.

1. Which sentence is the BEST TOPIC SENTENCE for this informative piece?

   A. I love riding bikes more than almost anything else in the world.

   B. There are many parts on a bicycle, and brakes are one of them.

   C. Bicycle brakes use friction to convert the bike's motion into heat, slowing the wheel until it stops.

   D. Last summer my older sister built a bike from a kit she ordered online.

2. Which sentence from the draft is a DEFINITION (a term + what it means)?

   A. When the rider pulls the lever, brake pads inside a small housing called a caliper press against both sides of the rotor.

   B. Modern bikes use two main brake types.

   C. Friction slows the rotor, which slows the wheel.

   D. Disc brakes work well in rain and mud.

3. How does the writer ORGANIZE the body of this piece (paragraphs 2 and 3)?

   A. By time order, from morning to evening.

   B. By COMPARING and CONTRASTING two brake systems (rim vs. disc).

   C. By telling a personal story from start to finish.

   D. By listing every part of a bicycle in alphabetical order.

4. Which transition would BEST CONNECT paragraph 2 (rim brakes) to paragraph 3 (disc brakes)?

   A. By the way,

   B. In summary,

   C. Disc brakes, on the other hand,

   D. First of all,

5. The writer wants to add a CONCRETE DETAIL to paragraph 4 about heat. Which sentence is BEST?

   A. Brakes can get really hot, which is bad and uncomfortable for cyclists going down hills.

   B. After a long mountain descent, a bicycle's rotor can reach over 300 degrees Fahrenheit - hot enough to boil water.

   C. Heat is something cyclists need to be aware of and think carefully about when biking.

   D. Riding a bike is something people enjoy in many different parts of the world today.

6. Which is the BEST DOMAIN-SPECIFIC vocabulary choice for the underlined word in *The rider pulls the brake <u>thing</u>*?

   A. the brake lever

   B. the brake clicker

   C. the brake handle thing

   D. the part you pull on the brake

7. Which sentence does NOT belong in this informative piece because it is OPINION rather than fact?

A. Rim brakes lose stopping power in wet weather because rain acts like a lubricant between the pad and the metal.

B. A rotor turns at the same speed as the wheel but stays cleaner than the outer rim.

C. Disc brakes are obviously the best brakes ever invented, and only rim brakes look dumb.

D. Energy of motion becomes heat in the pads, the rim, or the rotor.

8. Which sentence would be the STRONGEST CONCLUSION for this informative piece?

A. I really, really like disc brakes because they look cool on every bike.

B. Did you know the first bicycle was patented in 1817 by Karl von Drais?

C. Whether a bike uses rim brakes or disc brakes, the same principle is at work: friction converts motion into heat, which is why every cyclist should understand both systems to ride safely.

D. Brakes are an important part of bikes, and bikes are important parts of life.

9. Write a TOPIC SENTENCE (1 sentence) for an informative piece that COMPARES two ways of doing something (two cooking methods, two study techniques, two sports rules, etc.). The sentence must name the subject AND signal that two things will be compared.

_____

_____

10. Write ONE sentence that DEFINES a domain-specific word (term + clear definition) you would use in the comparison from item 9. Use the same pattern the draft uses for *caliper*.

_____

_____

Answer Keys

1	A	B	**C**	D	6	**A**	B	C	D
2	**A**	B	C	D	7	A	B	**C**	D
3	A	**B**	C	D	8	A	B	**C**	D
4	A	B	**C**	D	9	See below			
5	A	**B**	C	D	10	See below			

Explanations

1. C	C names the SUBJECT (bicycle brakes) and the FOCUS (how friction converts motion to heat to stop the wheel) - exactly what the piece will explain. A is opinion. B is too broad. D is a narrative opening, not informative.
2. A	A introduces the term *caliper* and immediately defines it as a small housing for the brake pads - the standard definition pattern (word + brief meaning). B mentions a category but defines nothing. C describes a process. D states a feature.
3. B	Paragraphs 2 and 3 examine TWO brake types side by side, naming what each does well and where each falls short - classic compare/contrast structure. A is false (no time markers). C is false (no narrative). D is false (only brake parts are named, not all bicycle parts).
4. C	*On the other hand* is the textbook compare/contrast transition for moving from one option to its counterpart - exactly the move the writer is making. *By the way* signals an aside. *In summary* belongs at the close. *First of all* opens a list, not a contrast.
5. B	B adds a SPECIFIC, measurable, on-topic detail (300 degrees, hot enough to boil water) that supports the paragraph's point about heat. A is vague. C is a general aside. D is off-topic filler.
6. A	A uses the precise technical term (*brake lever*) - exactly right for an informative piece on cycling mechanics. B uses an invented word. C is the same vague phrase the writer is trying to replace. D is a description, not a name.
7. C	C uses judgment words (obviously the best, look dumb) and takes a side - that's opinion. A, B, and D are factual statements consistent with an informative piece.
8. C	C ties together both systems explained earlier (rim and disc) AND names the underlying principle (friction -> heat) and a real-world purpose (safer riding). A is opinion. B is an off-topic new historical fact. D is empty repetition.
9.	**Answer:** Examples: (1) Two cooking methods - boiling and steaming - both use heat to soften vegetables, but they affect taste and nutrients in different ways. (2) Soccer and basketball each settle ties differently, and understanding both rules helps young athletes follow either game more closely. (3) Reading aloud and reading silently are two common study strategies, and research shows that each works best for a particular kind of task. Accept any single sentence that (a) names a topic to be explained AND (b) signals that TWO methods/ideas/items will be compared (using language like *two, both, each, compared, while*). NOT acceptable: a single-topic sentence with no comparison, an opinion sentence, or a personal narrative opening.

10.	**Answer:** Examples: (1) Steaming is a cooking method in which food sits above boiling water in a covered pot so the rising vapor - not the water itself - cooks the food. (2) A free throw is an uncontested shot from the foul line awarded to a player after certain types of fouls. (3) Subvocalization is the silent pronouncing of words inside the reader's head while reading. Accept any sentence that (a) names a SPECIFIC term and (b) gives a clear, accurate definition. NOT acceptable: a sentence that uses the term without defining it, a sentence that gives only an example, or a sentence that uses vague filler (a thing, a kind of stuff).

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