



Yoda says ... do  
or do not, there  
is no try.

## STAAR WARS PACKET

### BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND: WHAT YOUR BLANK PAGES WILL LOOK LIKE

- Expository Pages 1-3
- Personal Narrative Pages 4-6

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HOOK-1 quote, question, anecdote

Use this space to plan your expository composition.

Thesis-1

Topic-2

Example

revisiting Thesis-5

Commentary

Trans-Topic-3

Trans-Topic-4

Example

Example

Commentary

Commentary

USE FOR rough  
draft  
(draw 26 lines)

Use this space to plan your expository composition.

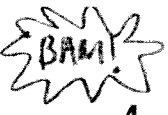
EXPOSITORY Composition

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the box. The box is positioned in the center of the page, below the title and above the footer.



Blah  
blah

Use this space to plan your narrative composition.



1st event

2nd event

3rd event

So what?

Themes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Figurative Language

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Use this space to plan your narrative composition.

Use for rough  
draft 5  
(draw 26 lines)

A large rectangular box with a thick black border, containing 25 horizontal lines for writing. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across most of the width of the box, leaving a small margin on the right side. The box is positioned in the center of the page, below the header and above the footer.





## TOPIC SENTENCES

Topic sentences are the first sentence of each body paragraph. Its job is to introduce the subject you will be discussing for the rest of that body paragraph.

<b><u>1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph</u></b>	Now write your topic sentence here:
What's it about?	

<b><u>2<sup>nd</sup> body paragraph</u></b>	Now write your topic sentence here:
What's it about?	

<b><u>3<sup>rd</sup> body paragraph</u></b>	Now write your topic sentence here:
What's it about?	

## TRANSITIONS

Transitions help your reader understand that you have finished one subject and are moving on to another.

<b>Listing</b>	<p><b>First</b> <b>Second</b> <b>Third</b></p> <p><i>Although these transitions easily tell your reader you are moving to a new topic, this is not the most original way to transition each paragraph. Refrain from using the counting method whenever possible.</i></p>	<b>Contrast</b>	<p><b>However</b> <b>Even though</b> <b>On the other hand</b> <b>Nevertheless</b></p> <p><i>These words should be used when you are trying to draw a difference from the topic you were just talking about to the topic you are now going to describe.</i></p>
<b>More examples</b>	<p><b>Another</b> <b>In addition</b> <b>Furthermore</b> <b>Also</b></p> <p><i>These transitions should be used when you are giving more examples of similar topics. Think of these words as expanding on the points you've previously made in your essay.</i></p>	<b>Cause and Effect</b>	<p><b>Therefore</b> <b>Thus</b> <b>As a result of</b> <b>Consequently</b></p> <p><i>If you are saying that the topic you are beginning is a result of the topic you just finished talking about, use these transitions words. They link the two ideas together.</i></p>

## EXAMPLES

Examples come in the shape of facts, details, and personal experiences. The examples must be appropriate and relevant to the topic. The most appropriate way to support your ideas during the expository writing would be personal experiences that validate your observations. Each body paragraph needs a strong example to convince your reader to agree with your points. Extraneous details should not be included, and the supporting examples should not have inconsistencies.

### THINK

- *Have I had anything similar happen in my life?*
- *How can what's happened to me tie in to what the prompt asked me about?*
- *How can I simplify my experience and connect it to the topic of my body paragraph?*
- *Can I form an analogy based on what my life experiences to prove a point? (Remember, an analogy compares two things and expresses the relationship between them. ex: My need for a computer is like my need for food and water.)*

<u>1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph example:</u>	<u>2<sup>nd</sup> body paragraph example:</u>	<u>3<sup>rd</sup> body paragraph example:</u>

## COMMENTARY

The sentence(s) immediately after your example explain *how* your example connects to the topic for your paragraph. Commentary provides the relevancy of the information, coherence, and brings closure to the body paragraph.

Coherence refers to the logical organization of the essay and how the ideas are tied together to flow smoothly, making the essay easy to follow for the reader. Commentary is essential to coherence because it connects the topic of your paragraph to your life experience (example).

<b>How does my 1<sup>st</sup> body paragraph example connect to what I'm talking about in my paragraph?</b>	<b>How does my 2<sup>nd</sup> body paragraph example connect to what I'm talking about in my paragraph?</b>	<b>How does my 3<sup>rd</sup> body paragraph example connect to what I'm talking about in my paragraph?</b>

## REVISITING YOUR THESIS

To conclude your expository essay, you should revisit your thesis. The final paragraph provides a sense of closure to the entire essay. You can create a nice full-circle ending if you use phrases from your thesis but put them in a different order.

<b>Copy your Thesis word for word here</b>	

Now reread your thesis above. Circle any words/phrases you would like to reuse in your closing paragraph.

Think of your thesis and revisited thesis as bookends. Bookends should be similar enough for you to notice they belong in the same set. However, bookends face opposite directions and have noticeable differences.

<b>Taking the borrowed words from your thesis, write a revisited thesis to finish your essay</b>	

Once you have revisited your thesis (and if you have room left), write a last sentence that signals your paper has come to an end. An analogy or rhetorical question would be appropriate. "And that's what I wanted to tell you about today" would not be an appropriate final sentence. Neither would "The End."

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: AN OUTLINE

Here is an outline of what the organization of your expository essay should look like.

- Title
- 1. Introductory Paragraph
  - a. Hook
  - b. Thesis
- 2. Body Paragraph 1
  - a. Topic Sentence
  - b. Example
  - c. Commentary
- 3. Body Paragraph 2
  - a. Transition, Topic Sentence
  - b. Example
  - c. Commentary
- 4. Body Paragraph 3
  - a. Transition, Topic Sentence
  - b. Example
  - c. Commentary
- 5. Closing Paragraph
  - a. Revisited Thesis
  - b. Analogy or Rhetorical Question, if space



## LEAD OPTIONS

After you've written your title on the first line, lead into your personal narrative in an interesting way. Here are a few ideas that will catch your reader's attention and start your narrative off on the right foot...

<p><b><u>Dialogue Lead:</u></b></p> <p>Start with someone speaking...make sure they say something interesting. Have your reader walk in on an important conversation.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p><b><u>Thought Shot or Heart Shot Lead:</u></b></p> <p>Start by describing what you or a character thinks or feels. Put your reader inside your head or heart.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p><b><u>Action Lead:</u></b></p> <p>Start by jumping into the action of your story. Use sensory details to describe what's happening. You can always flash back to explain what's going on.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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<p><b><u>Character or Setting Lead:</u></b></p> <p>Start by describing an important character or setting. Use vivid details in your description.</p>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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## KERNEL ESSAY

Pre-writing gives your narrative a backbone. With a structure, you won't be tempted to get off track... especially if you only have 26 lines in which to tell a memory charismatically and explain its significance.

Setting	Where were you?	1 <sup>st</sup> event	What happened first?
2 <sup>nd</sup> event	Then, what happened?	3 <sup>rd</sup> event	What happened last?
Theme	What did you learn from this event?	<p>Now, look at all 3 of your events. You have less than thirty lines to tell a story full of figurative language, personality, and hopefully some dialogue. You aren't going to have time to do all 3 of these events well.</p> <p>Pick one box that you think is crucial to your personal narrative. Circle it. This will be the event you use on the next page to "explode the moment."</p>	

## EXPLODE THE MOMENT

Use imagery to convey what is happening in your story whenever possible. Instead of telling everything that happens, make your reader feel as if they are there by setting the scene for them, by showing them what it felt to be there.

	What did you see?		What did you hear? What was said?
	What did you feel?		What did you smell?
	What did you taste?		What did you think?

## FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE/ 😊 TRICKS

After we refresh our memory of what each of these terms mean, put a star next to five of these terms. Try to incorporate those five types of figurative language into your final draft to provide interest to your narrative.

Magic 3
Hyphenated Modifier
Specific Details for Effect (show don't tell)
Humor
Repetition for Effect
Vivid Verbs
Onomatopoeia
Dialogue
Hyperbole
Metaphor
Simile
Personification

## THEMES: THE SO- WHAT

Themes, or truisms, are the extension behind the story you've told. They connect the experience you've told to a lesson every person learns in some way or another. Themes are what make your memory matter. Select five below that you will memorize. One of them will be the theme you conclude your narrative with.

- Teamwork works.
- People don't always stay loyal.
- Change is difficult, but it can be positive.
- Hard work pays off.
- Time together with loved ones can build relationships.
- Patience pays off.
- Friends come and go, but family is forever.
- Appearance can be deceiving.
- Lying often leads to great consequences.
- Good friends are hard to find.
- Mistakes can be great teachers.
- Respect is contagious.
- Actions speak louder than words.
- Even talented people need to work hard.
- Sometimes the bad in life can bring out the good in people
- People don't know how much they love someone until they are gone.
- Achievement has rewards.
- Miracles can happen.
- Time heals broken hearts.
- What is popular is not always right.
- What is right is not always popular.
- People can get comfort from many things.
- Never underestimate yourself.
- One bad thing may bring many good things.
- The consequences of our acts are far-reaching.
- Helping others has rewards.
- Peace is a very hard thing to find.
- Thoughts are powerful forces that make things happen.
- People need family and friends to survive tragedy.
- People often take the most familiar things for granted.
- Acceptance is seeing with the heart and not with the eyes.
- People are always in a group, and when there is a group, there is fighting.



**READ** the following quotation.

A famous businessman once said, "Players win games; teams win championships."

**THINK** carefully about the following statement.

Sometimes you can accomplish good things by yourself but better things with other people.

**WRITE** an essay explaining whether it is better to work by yourself or with a group.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your controlling idea
- organize and develop your explanation effectively
- choose your words carefully
- use correct spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, and sentences

Use this space to plan your expository composition.

Thesis-1

Topic-2

Revisiting Thesis-5

Example

Trans-Topic-3

Commentary

Example

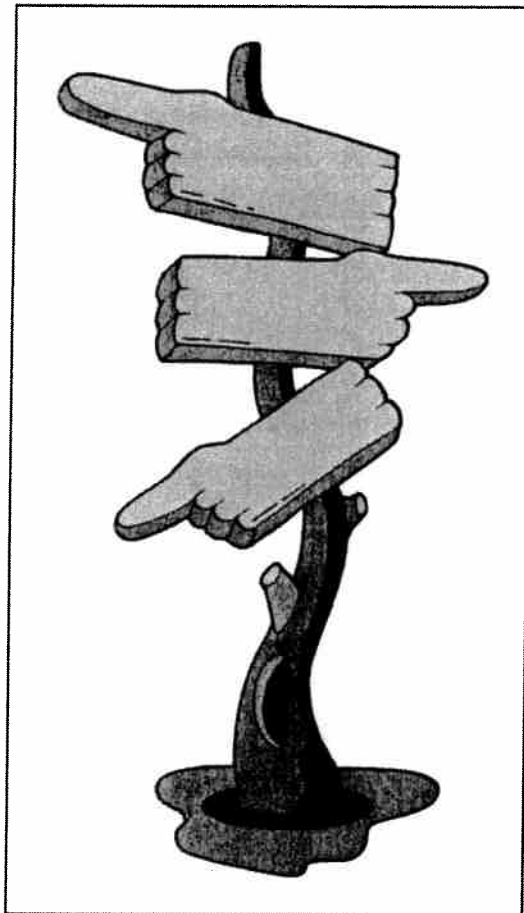
Trans-Topic-4

Commentary

Example

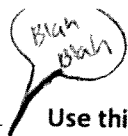
Commentary

Look at the picture below.



Sometimes it's hard to make a decision because there are so many choices.

Write a personal narrative about a time when you had to make a decision. Be sure to write in detail about the choice you made and describe what happened as a result of your decision.



Use this space to plan your narrative composition.

1st event

2nd event

3rd event

So what?

Themes

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Figurative Language

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



Use this space to plan your expository composition.

USE FOR ROUGH  
DRAFT  
(DRAW 26 LINES)

Use this space to plan your narrative composition.

Use for rough  
draft 20  
(draw 26 lines)

## EDITING CHECKLIST

Use the editing checklist to go over your final draft. Erase and correct mistakes where you find them.

- ✓ **Capitalize** – beginnings of sentences, titles, and proper nouns
- ✓ **Punctuation** – at the end of sentences, check comma rules
- ✓ **Spelling** – Circle and look up any word you are not 100% sure about.
- ✓ **Dialogue** – Put all spoken words inside “quotation marks” with correct punctuation and capitalization.
  - Put a comma **before** quotation marks when they are not at the beginning of a sentence.
  - Always capitalize the first word of a sentence in quotes.
  - If the dialogue is at the end of a sentence, put the punctuation **inside** the quotation marks.
    - He said, “We should go shopping.”
  - If the dialogue is not at the end of a sentence, put a comma, question mark, or exclamation mark **inside** the quotes and a period at the end of the sentence.
    - “We should go shopping,” he said.
    - “Did you clean your room?” my mom asked.
    - “Dad,” my little brother whined, “do I have to clean my room?”
- ✓ **Complete Sentences** – Make sure all sentences have a subject, verb, and a complete thought.
- ✓ **Fix Run-on Sentences** – two complete sentences that run together without correct punctuation
  - Join two complete sentences with a comma and a conjunction.
    - Coordinating conjunctions = FANBOYS
    - I want to go shopping, **but** I don’t have any money.
  - Join two complete sentences with a semicolon.
    - You shouldn’t eat candy; it’s bad for you.
  - Create two sentences with a period.
    - You shouldn’t eat candy. It’s bad for you.
- ✓ **Complex Sentences** – one independent and one dependent clause
  - If the baby comes **before** the momma, you need a comma.
  - You don’t need a comma if the baby comes **after** the momma.
    - Baby – dependent clause (subject & verb, but not a complete thought)
    - Momma – independent clause (complete sentence by itself)
- ✓ **Grammar & Usage** – read your sentences out loud to yourself or someone else and make sure they sound right to your ear.
  - If something sounds wrong, you might have a grammar or usage error.

**For  
And  
Nor  
But  
Or  
Yet  
So**

## FINAL TEST REMINDERS

I will be proud of you no matter what! Here are my final words of wisdom and reminders. Just do your best and take your time

### Writing Test Design

- Two-day test; time limit of 4 hours per day
- Students taking STAAR grade 7 writing may use dictionaries for the entire test (multiple-choice section and written compositions)
- One page—a maximum of 26 lines for each composition (1 line at top for title, 25 “light lines” plus the heavy “border line” at the bottom of the writing space); no “double-lining” allowed

### STAAR Writing Prompts—Scaffolding Expository

- Read: A short synopsis of some kind or a quotation
- ↓
- Think: The synopsis or quotation generalized and reworded
- ↓
- Write: A focused charge statement
- ↓
- Be Sure to: 4–5 bullets (state a central or controlling idea, organize your writing, develop your writing/explanation, choose your words carefully, a reminder to proofread for correct spelling, etc.)

### Expository Writing

- Prompts focus on issues/questions that don't require students to bring particular background knowledge or facts to the table in order to write a good essay
- Task requires students to clearly explain what they think about something
- Students may use 1<sup>st</sup> person; in fact, prompts are written to elicit an explanatory response that reflects students' own thinking about their lives and the world

### STAAR Personal Narrative

- Personal narrative prompts contain a stimulus and are scaffolded, though less so than other prompts
- Grade 7 will write a personal narrative that has a clearly defined focus and communicates the importance of or reasons for actions and/or consequences
- Personal narratives must be realistic in nature.  
No obvious “fantasy” papers.