

Lesson G. Study Skills/Prewriting/Composition: Take Notes and Write an Original Opening Paragraph

<> **G-1.** Now that you have written the body of your report, you are ready to write notes for an original Opening Paragraph. Follow these steps:

- (1) Read the body of your report aloud to yourself, and consider these options for opening your report.
 - a. Statistics: How many of your chosen **occurrence happens each year in the United States or in the world?**
 - b. Story: A story of **someone who survived an episode of your occurrence**
 - c. A quotation: What **someone has said about the topic of your report**
 - d. A newspaper report: A short, **one-paragraph newspaper account** of a time your occurrence took place (make-believe or real)
 - e. A dialogue: **Two or more people discussing what they saw** when your occurrence happened to them or near them
 - f. A Scripture: **A verse referring to weather or other natural occurrences**
 - g. A creation science **book quotation**
 - h. Other
- (2) **In your notes, plan on what you will include in your Thesis Statement.* (You may tweak your original Thesis Statement to fit in your Opening Paragraph however you see fit.)**
 - a. Remember, a Thesis Statement is a statement that **tells the “thesis” of your paper--what your entire paper is about.**
 - b. It should be a sentence or two in length and should introduce your reader to your topic.
 - c. It may be at the very beginning of your Opening Paragraph or at the end of your Opening Paragraph.
 - d. It should bridge the gap between your catchy Opening Paragraph and the body of your report.
- (3) Write enough notes for **5-8 sentences** on the lines provided, again not worrying about the order, having too much information, etc.
- (4) You may just jot down some thoughts, references, etc., for your Opening Paragraph notes, or you may create a “Sentence-by-Sentence” Outline like you did for the body of your report.

***Note: If you are used to writing Thesis Statements and Opening Paragraphs, you may experiment with putting your Thesis Statement later in your Opening Paragraph--even at the very end of it, if desired. Sometimes this helps the flow of your Opening Paragraph when you are using a story or other information in your Opening Paragraph that you want to keep all together--then follow all of this with the Thesis Statement.**

- (5) **You may plan to write your Opening Paragraph in a different “person” (first person, second person, etc.) if the content warrants it.**
 - a. For example, if you are using an opening story, you may tell it in first person (if needed).
 - b. If you are using an opening challenge, you may tell it in second person, etc.
 - c. Note that Opening and Closing Paragraphs are times during informative writing when it is acceptable to write less formally and to change persons and/or tenses as the type of Opening Paragraph you are writing determines.

Opening Paragraph Type

At your level, you should be very deliberate in the types of Opening Paragraphs and Closing Paragraphs you write. In other words, you should plan each Opening Paragraph and Closing Paragraph specifically to your report. You should not just ramble about your topic. Think critically about this report and determine how you will open it. Write the type of Opening Paragraph (song, biography, definition, statistic, informative, etc.) you will use on the line provided.

Type of Opening Paragraph: _____

Type of Opening Paragraph: _____

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

- (1) **Write your Thesis Statement at the beginning of your paragraph that tells or introduces the topic of your paragraph. (Or plan to put your Thesis Statement later, if desired.)**
- (2) **Number your notes in the order you want them, and add any information you may have forgotten.**

- (3) Using each set of notes for one sentence in the following way:
- Read a line of notes.
 - Consider what you want to say about those notes.
 - Say aloud a sentence that you want to use.
 - Write down that sentence.
 - Repeat these steps for all of your notes.
 - You may leave out some information that you do not want to include or add more information if you remember something you forgot.
 - Write this paragraph in your notebook (on every other line) or key it on the computer (double spaced) before the report you just wrote.

Lesson H. Study Skills/Prewriting/Composition: Take Notes for an Original Closing Paragraph

<> H-1. Now that you have written the body and Opening Paragraph of your report, you are ready to write a Closing Paragraph.

(1) **Your Closing Paragraph will include a Thesis Statement “Reloaded.”**

- Remember, a **Thesis Statement “Reloaded”** is a statement that “closes” your paper--**sums up what your entire paper is about.**
- It should be a sentence or two in length and should close your report.
- It may be at the very beginning of your Closing Paragraph or at the end of your Closing Paragraph.
- It should bridge the gap between your catchy Closing Paragraph and the body of your report.
- It should leave your reader with a feeling of satisfaction after reading your paper.
- It may repeat something catchy from your opening or may repeat the title of your report, if desired.
- Be sure your Thesis Statement “Reloaded” is not identical to your Thesis Statement---it should be “reloaded” with the key words still in it.

(2) Write enough notes for **4-8 sentences** on the lines provided, again not worrying about the order, having too much information, etc.

(3) You may just jot down some thoughts, references, etc., for your Closing Paragraph notes, or you may create a “Sentence-by-Sentence” Outline like you did for the body of your report.

Note: If you are used to writing Thesis Statements “Reloaded” and Closing Paragraphs, you may experiment with putting your Thesis Statement “Reloaded” later in your Closing Paragraph--even at the very end of it, if desired. Sometimes this helps the flow of your Closing Paragraph when you are writing a story or other information in your Closing Paragraph that you want to keep all together--then follow this with the Thesis Statement “Reloaded.”

- (5) **You may plan to write your Closing Paragraph in a different “person”** (first person, second person, etc.) if the content warrants it.
- a. For example, if you are using a closing story, you may tell it in first person (if needed).
 - b. If you are using a closing challenge, you may tell it in second person etc.
 - c. Note that Opening and Closing Paragraphs are times during informative writing when it is acceptable to write less formally and to change persons and/or tenses as the type of Closing Paragraph you are writing determines.

Closing Paragraph Type

At your level, you should be very deliberate in the types of Opening Paragraphs and Closing Paragraphs you write. In other words, you should plan each Opening Paragraph and Closing Paragraph specifically to your report. You should not just ramble about your topic. Think critically about this report and determine how you will close it. Write the type of Closing Paragraph (song, biography, definition, statistic, informative, etc.) you will use on the line provided.

Type of Closing Paragraph: _____

Notes for Closing Paragraph

<> H-2. Follow these steps for writing your Closing Paragraph:

- (1) Write an **opening sentence (Thesis Statement “Reloaded”)** at the beginning of your **Closing Paragraph** that tells what your report was about. (Or plan to put your Thesis Statement “Reloaded” later, if desired.)
- (2) Number your notes in the order you want them, and add any information you may have forgotten.
- (3) Using each set of notes for one sentence:
 - a. Read a line of notes.
 - b. Think about what you want to say about those notes.
 - c. Say a sentence aloud that you want to use.
 - d. Write that sentence down.
 - e. Repeat these steps for all of your notes.
 - f. You may leave out some information that you do not want to include or add more information if you remember something you forgot.
 - g. Write this paragraph in your notebook (on every other line) or key it on the computer (double spaced), after the report you just wrote.

Lesson I. Composition and Editing: Edit and Revise Using the Checklist Challenge

<> I. Use the Checklist Challenge located after this week’s lesson to edit your report.

- (1) Complete **each revision for each paragraph, as indicated**.
- (2) Insert revisions with pen or pencil into your rough draft paper or key them into the computer.
- (3) **Highlight (or code) each revision on your rough draft paper** as directed by your teacher.
- (4) **Check off (or code) each item’s check box on the Checklist Challenge** for this week.

(Be sure you still code the CC chart and your revisions if you do the CC on the electronic document rather than on the paper document.⁺)

Note: If you are not familiar with CI’s Checklist Challenge, and you feel that you need more help on it than this upper level book provides, you may desire to secure a first semester MC book for levels four through nine or the *Character Quality Language Arts Teacher’s Guide*--both of which contain detailed lessons on the How To’s of the Checklist Challenge. Also, see the Checklist Challenge Coding box provided.

Note: Notice that after several tasks of the Checklist Challenge, the items start to contain words like **"If you have already done this, highlight the word or sentence** in your paper and highlight the check box(es) as directed by your teacher." When you start to see these words, you may just locate the items in your paper and code them for your teacher rather than adding more of them. Be sure you code the items in your paper and in the task list of the CC Chart.

Lesson J. Composition: Final Copy Original Informative Research Report

- <> J-1. **Write the final copy of your report** in your notebook (on every line), or key it on the computer (double spaced).
- <> J-2. **Write or key the final copy** of your list of **Works Cited**.
- <> J-3. Create a **cover page** for your research report as modeled.
- <> J-4. **Read your final copy aloud**. Do you like the way it sounds now? Do you notice an improvement in your report since you completed the Checklist Challenge?

Checklist Challenge Coding

Your teacher may desire for you to code your CC for her so that she can grade it/check it more easily. The following steps will help you learn to code your CC for your teacher.

1. Use **colored pencil** or **colored pens** or **highlighters**.
2. **Print off your** double spaced **rough draft report or essay** (or use your handwritten rough draft).
3. **With your CC on one side and your paper on your dominant side** (right hand side for right handed students), complete the first CC task.
4. **Place a check mark in the check boxes for the items that say "read" or "look for errors,"** etc., with a pen as you complete them.
5. For items that involve inserting things or omitting something and adding something else, code in one of two ways:
 - a. **Insert the change or addition with a pen or pencil on your paper and use a highlighter to mark it in your paper** in a distinguishing way--highlight the addition with an orange highlighter, circle the change with blue highlighter, double underline the title with a pink highlighter, etc. (choosing whatever colors you desire without repeating the exact same marking). **OR**
 - b. **Insert the change or addition with a colored pencil or colored pen** (choosing whatever colors you desire without repeating the exact same marking). (In this method, you will eventually need to add the change AND circle it or underline it so that your exact same marking is not repeated. For example, you might add verbs with a blue pen but add the title with a blue pen and underline the title with that same blue pen--two different markings, one written in blue pen and one written in blue pen *and* underlined with the blue pen.)
6. **Whatever you do to the insertion on your paper should be done to the CC check boxes for that item.**
 - a. For example, if you highlight your new verbs with an orange highlighter in your paper, you will color in the check box with orange highlighter.
 - b. If you underline your title with purple highlighter in your paper, you should underline the check box with purple highlighter.
 - c. If you write your new verbs in green colored pencil in your paper, make a check mark in the check box with that same green colored pencil.
7. **If your teacher gives you permission to skip a CC task** (or you and she do not think a change will improve a paragraph), **place an NC (no change) in the check box for that paragraph**, so your teacher will not look for it.
8. If you skip a task altogether (without your teacher's permission), place an X in the task box(es), so your teacher will know not to search for the revisions. Obviously, it is always preferred that you do all of your assignments, but it would be better to indicate that you skipped something than to leave the box(es) blank.

The point is that **the coding you put into the paper copy of your composition should be identical to what you do to (or above, beneath, around, etc.) the CC check boxes for that task.** This method will allow your teacher to have your CC chart on one side and your "colorful paper" (with the CC revisions inserted with colors) on the other. She can check at a glance to find your new insertions, title, Thesis Statement, and more.

Note: Some students prefer to do the CC on their paper on the electronic document on the computer with the colored shading tool provided in word processing programs. This is fine, too, but the student should still do the same marking/coding on the CC chart as he did on the electronic document--or write beside the tasks what color each task is. For example, if the student shades the verbs he replaced in pink shading, he should write PINK beside the CC task for the verbs on the chart. Then when he prints this "colorful" version, the teacher can still check his revisions easily.

Box I

Sample Cover Page

Research Report:
“Destructive Terrors of Nature”

Prepared for
Mrs. Reish
by
Luke Liechty

Sample Research Report--Weather Phenomenon

Luke Liechty
6th Grade

For Mrs. Reish

"Destructive Terrors of Nature"

A tornado is a powerful and forceful element of God's world that can be devastating to those who experience it. My relatives discovered this as illustrated in the following conversation.

"So Rolandes, where were you when the storm hit?"

"My family and I were at Grace Bible Church. We knew there was a horrible storm but didn't comprehend how bad it was. The clock ceased movement at 8:22 p.m. when the torrent hit."

"Did you see the two tornadoes?"

"No, we didn't see them. We didn't even know there was a tornado until Rufus, my oldest brother, came flying in the drive and hastily said that our mom's buildings were lying flat on the muddy ground."

"Did you hear the tornadoes at all?"

"Actually, neither my family nor I heard them, but from what I've gathered, they sounded like an old-fashioned freight train passing by."

"Interesting, well then did you suffer any damages?"

"Yes, I lost fourteen heifers and some of my farm equipment. Some soybeans out of the granary were also destroyed."

This dialogue could have been a conversation between my grandpa, Rolandes Liechty, and one of his farming friends after thirty-seven twisters ripped their way through the Midwest on April 11, 1965. Two tornadoes were especially destructive. They wiped out numerous farms. Many businesses were also flattened. This happened just north of where I presently live in Adams County. **[All of above is Opening "Paragraph"]**

Box A-1 (continued on next page)

Since I was a little boy and heard the stories of the thirty-seven twisters, I have often wondered why and how a tornado forms. The development of a tornado begins when dark, dense clouds evolve. Secondly, spinning air at the lower part of a cloud gradually produces a narrow funnel. Then the twister extends down toward the surface. Lastly, the tornado touches the earth's surface. Pressure created by wind increases four times whenever the speed of wind doubles. For example, winds that are two hundred miles per hour in speed are four times as destructive as winds that spin at speeds of one hundred miles per hour. Bright lightning can flash constantly inside the funnel. **[PoB-A]**

When a tornado touches the ground, it raises massive clouds of fine dust and debris. Because soil and debris is now caught up in the twister, it begins to turn black in color. It is not uncommon for a tornado to quickly depart from the earth's surface for an unset amount of time then plunge down for more destruction several times. **[PoB-B]**

Each year, over two hundred twisters are sighted in the U.S.A. A tornado can spin at speeds of over 200 miles per hour and can be as huge in diameter as $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. They usually travel anywhere from 200 to 600 miles per hour. The general direction that a twister proceeds is southwest to northeast. Because of their extreme speed, size, and pell-mell direction, it makes it extremely difficult for someone who wants to dodge a fast approaching tornado. **[PoB-C]**

Although a tornado's path of destruction can sometimes be unusually wide, it is often extremely narrow, sometimes only a few feet. Wind, low pressure, and updraft are three great destructive forces of a tornado. The second force, low pressure, is usually discovered within a tornado funnel. Although it has never been closely measured, scientists estimate the pressure inside a twister is one-tenth of the normal pressure of sea level. When a tornado picks an object up, rarely will it simply move it some distance and then set it down unharmed. Twisters usually destroy any and everything that is in their route. In fact, giant funnels can pick up an object as large as an automobile. **[PoB-D]**

Tornadoes are dangerous and destructive terrors of nature, as the residents of Adams County found out over four decades ago. Thankfully, weather experts often spot an oncoming funnel in time for people to get to safety (if protective shelters are available). Unfortunately, a person finding a "hiding place" from a tornado does not guarantee the well-being of properties. The tornado is clearly a destructive natural weather phenomenon. **[Closing Paragraph]**