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Choosing a Strong Idea

Refer to pages 6 and 7 to introduce or review the writing trait.

DAY 1

Read the rule aloud. Then guide students through the activities.

- Activity A:** Say: *All writing begins with an idea. You can use a brainstorming web to help you think of ideas. The center circle tells the assignment. In the outer circles are ideas for the assignment.* Read aloud the purpose and audience statements above the web. Then read aloud the ideas on the web. Ask: *Which of these topics could you write a school newspaper article about?* Have students complete the activity, evaluating each idea on whether it fits the purpose and audience.
- Activity B:** Help students brainstorm events, activities, and changes taking place at your school. List them on the board and discuss whether they would be good topics to write about, given the purpose and audience of your school newspaper. Then have students complete the activity and share what they wrote.

**Convention:** Point out **Washington, D.C.**, and **Pee Wee's Pizza** in the web. Say: *These words are capitalized because they are proper nouns.*

DAY 2

Read the rule aloud. Say: *Some topics are just too big to write about, so you have to narrow your idea.* Then guide students through the activities.

- Activity A:** Direct students to Triangle 1 and say: *A narrowing triangle starts with a big topic on the top.* Ask: *What is the big topic?* (sports) Say: *Sports is way too big of a topic. Basketball narrows it down to a specific sport, but that's still too broad.* Continue going through the triangle, explaining that each idea in the triangle is a smaller part of the idea above. Say: *The smallest idea, the game against the Panthers, is a good, specific idea. In just one paragraph, you could say a lot about it.* Then complete Triangle 2 as a class, using ideas pertinent to your school.
- Activity B (Convention):** Remind students that team names and the names of the days of the week are proper nouns and should therefore be capitalized. Have students complete the activity.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **Week 1 • Day 1**

**Ideas** The best writing begins with a strong idea.

A. Read this brainstorming web for a school newspaper article. Think about the purpose and audience. Cross out the topics that don't fit the purpose or audience.

**Purpose:** to provide news and information about things going on at school  
**Audience:** students, teachers, and parents

B. What would you write about if you were writing an article for your school newspaper? List three ideas below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ **Answers will vary.**  
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **Week 1 • Day 2**

**Ideas** Make your ideas stronger by narrowing your focus.

A. A narrowing triangle can help you choose an idea that is specific enough to write about. Read Triangle 1 as an example. Then use Triangle 2 to think of a specific idea of your own. Complete the triangle.

Triangle 1

Triangle 2

Sample Answers:

B. Find the proper nouns in Triangle 1. Write them below.

1. Team name: **Panthers** \_\_\_\_\_  
2. Day of the week: **Friday** \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **Week 1 • Day 3**

 **Ideas** To choose a strong idea, think about your audience and purpose for writing.

A. Read the list of purposes for writing. For each audience given, choose a purpose from the list and think of a specific idea to fit that purpose.

Purposes for Writing	
to explain how to do something	to tell a funny story
to report facts or information	to describe what something is like
to express your feelings	to persuade someone to take action

1. **Audience:** a young child  
Purpose: to tell a funny story  
Idea: a funny story about a baby animal

2. **Audience:** the people of your community  
Purpose: to persuade someone to take action  
Idea: people should recycle more

3. **Audience:** your teacher and classmates  
Purpose: to report facts or information  
Idea: the history of "The Star-Spangled Banner"

4. **Audience:** a pen pal in another country  
Purpose: to express your feelings  
Idea: how frustrated your brother makes you

B. Write the names of two people who have recently read something you wrote. Be sure to capitalize their names and titles. **Sample Answers:**  
Teddy      Mayor Singh

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**DAY 3**

Read the rule aloud. Then guide students through the activities.

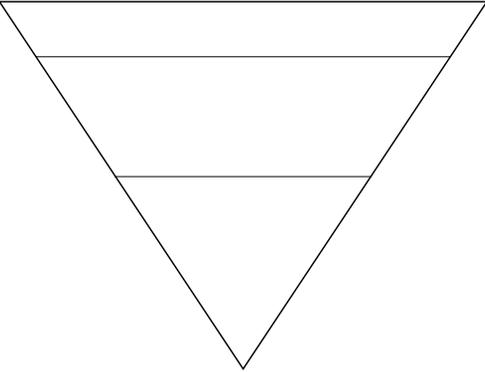
- **Activity A:** Read the list of purposes aloud. Say: *Most reasons, or purposes, for writing fall into four main categories: to inform, or explain; to persuade; to express how you feel; or to entertain.* Write those categories on the board. Then discuss which category each purpose on the list falls into. Point out that some may fall into more than one. (e.g., You can report facts in a way that is entertaining.) Next, say: *What you write about is also affected by who your reader, or audience, will be.* Read the audiences listed in items 1–4. Then model completing item 1. Say: *If I were to write for a young child, my purpose might be to entertain him or her with a funny story. Kids love stories about animals, so I'll tell a funny story about a baby animal.* Have students work in pairs to complete items 2–4.
- **Activity B (Convention):** Remind students that people's titles, such as **Mr., Ms., Dr., Aunt,** and **Uncle** should be capitalized. Have students complete the activity independently.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ **Week 1 • Day 4**

 **Ideas** Think of many ideas, but choose the strongest one. A strong idea is specific and fits your purpose and audience.

A. Look back at the ideas you wrote on Day 3. Choose one of them to develop into a stronger, more specific idea. Fill in the audience and purpose. Then use the narrowing triangle below to help you choose a strong idea.

**Audience:** Answers will vary based on choices in Day 3.  
**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_



B. Write the names of three people who could be in your audience. Remember to capitalize their names and titles.  
Answers will vary.

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**DAY 4**

Read the rule aloud. Then guide students through the activities.

- **Activity A:** Return to item 1 on Day 3 to model narrowing your idea. Write **baby animal** in the top section. In the middle section, write a specific animal, such as a porcupine. Then write a plot idea at the bottom, such as "how the baby porcupine got stuck." Have students complete the activity on their own or in small groups. Circulate to provide assistance as needed.
- **Activity B (Convention):** After students complete the activity, have them read the names they wrote aloud.

**DAY 5 Writing Prompt** 

- Use the idea you chose on Day 4 to develop into a paragraph or story. Make sure that your writing fits the purpose and audience.
- Be sure to capitalize proper nouns.

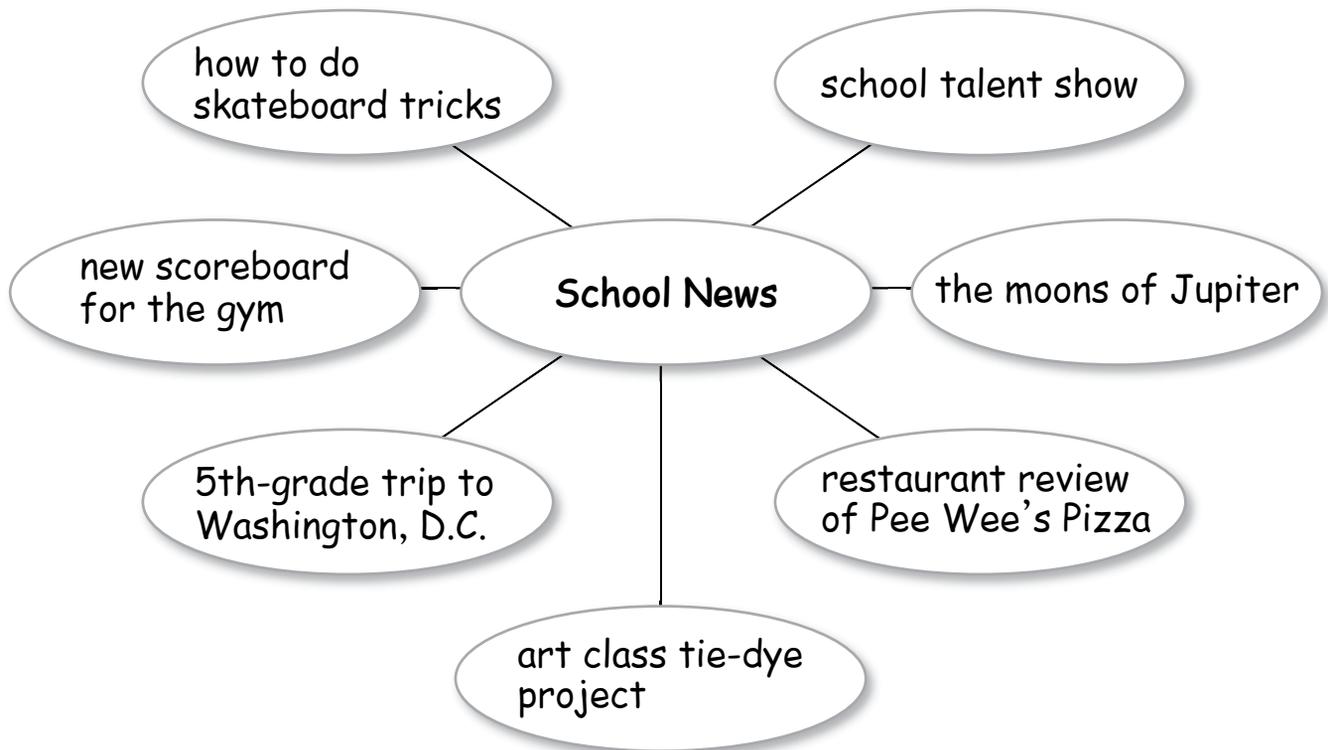


The best writing begins with a strong idea.

- A. Read this brainstorming web for a school newspaper article. Think about the purpose and audience. Cross out the topics that don't fit the purpose or audience.

**Purpose:** to provide news and information about things going on at school

**Audience:** students, teachers, and parents



- B. What would you write about if you were writing an article for your school newspaper? List three ideas below.

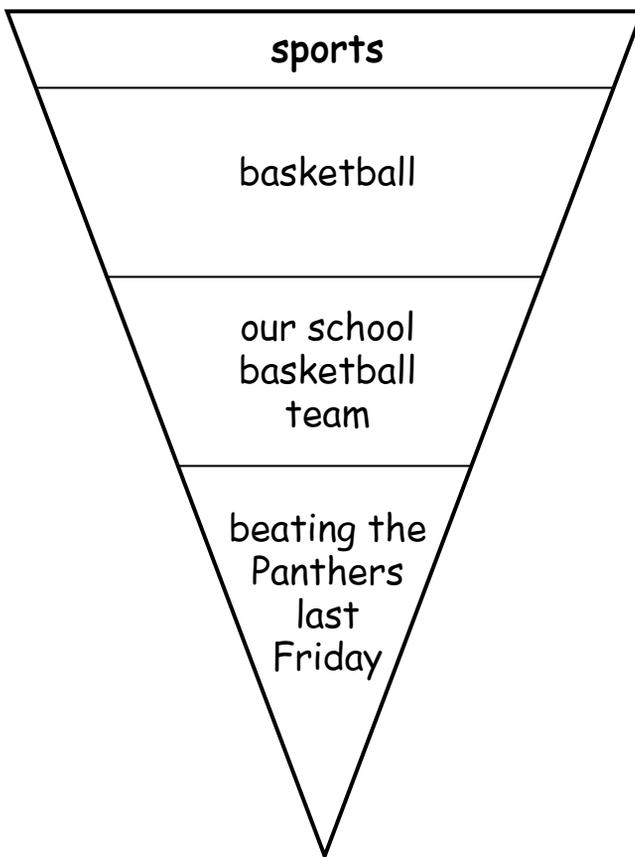
1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_



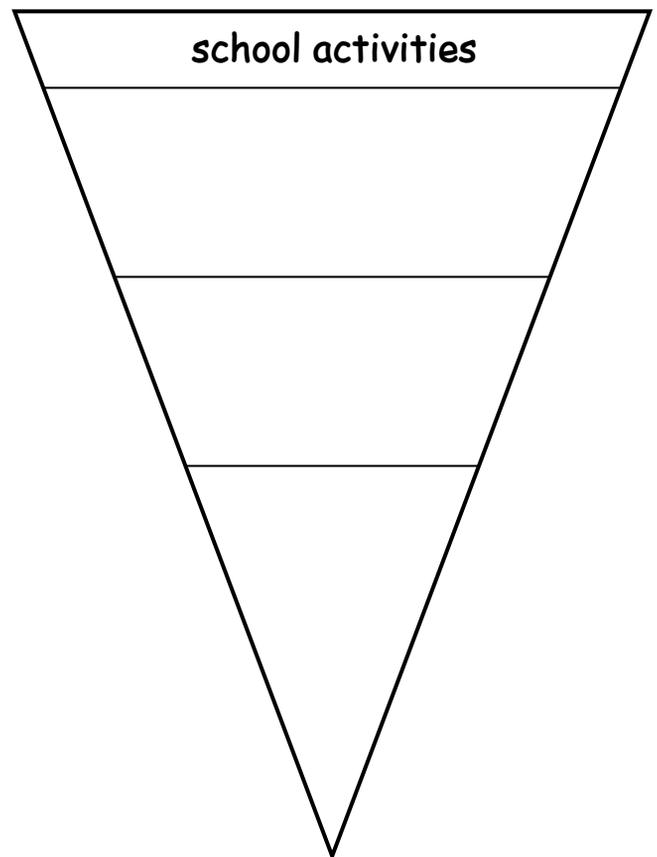
Make your ideas stronger by narrowing your focus.

- A. A narrowing triangle can help you choose an idea that is specific enough to write about. Read Triangle 1 as an example. Then use Triangle 2 to think of a specific idea of your own. Complete the triangle.

Triangle 1



Triangle 2



- B. Find the proper nouns in Triangle 1. Write them below.

1. Team name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Day of the week: \_\_\_\_\_



To choose a strong idea, think about your audience and purpose for writing.

- A. Read the list of purposes for writing. For each audience given, choose a purpose from the list and think of a specific idea to fit that purpose.

**Purposes for Writing**

to explain how to do something

to tell a funny story

to report facts or information

to describe what something is like

to express your feelings

to persuade someone to take action

1. **Audience:** a young child

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Audience:** the people of your community

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

3. **Audience:** your teacher and classmates

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

4. **Audience:** a pen pal in another country

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Idea: \_\_\_\_\_

- B. Write the names of two people who have recently read something you wrote. Be sure to capitalize their names and titles.

\_\_\_\_\_

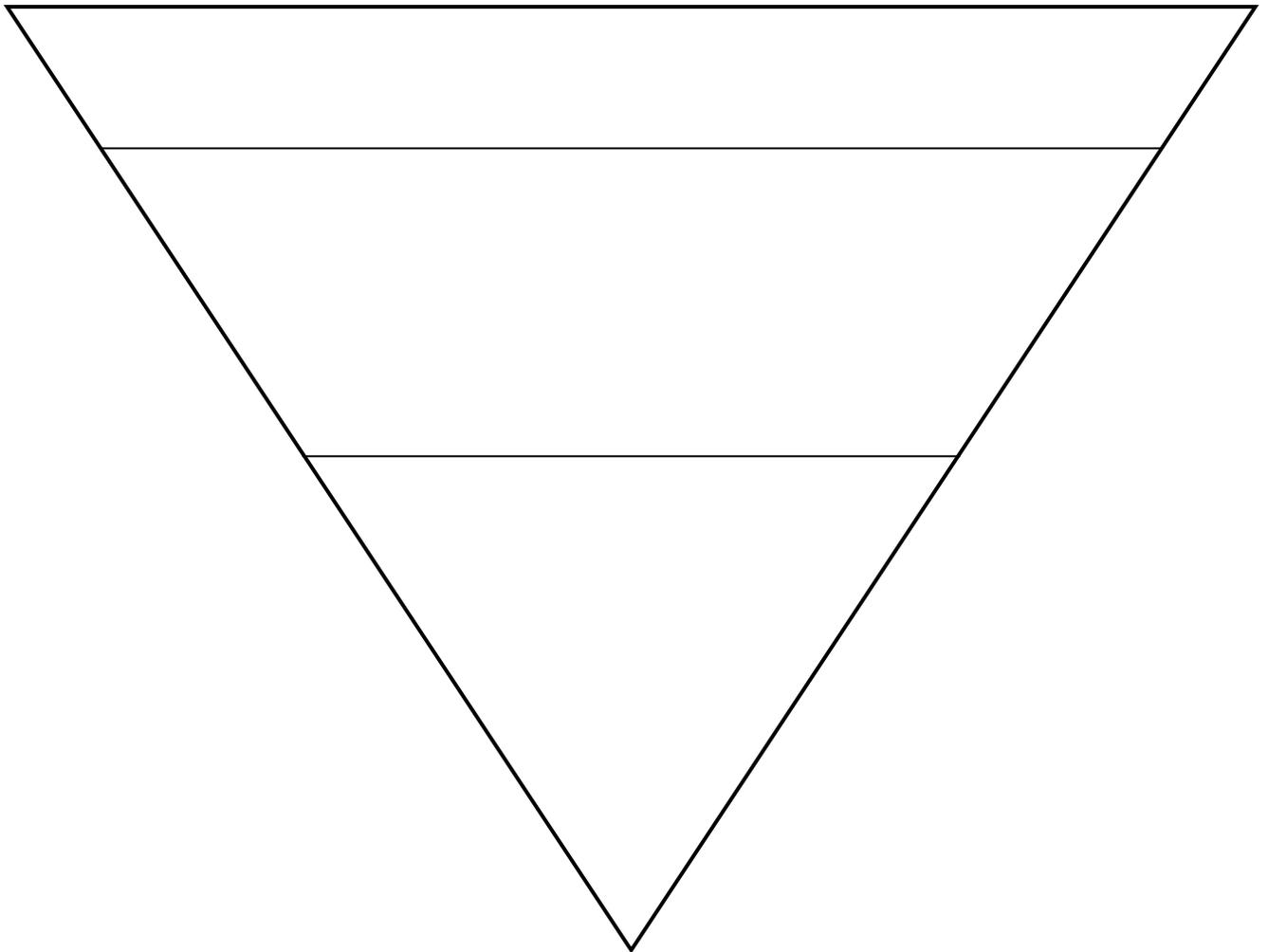


Think of many ideas, but choose the strongest one.  
A strong idea is specific and fits your purpose and audience.

- A. Look back at the ideas you wrote on Day 3. Choose one of them to develop into a stronger, more specific idea. Fill in the audience and purpose. Then use the narrowing triangle below to help you choose a strong idea.

**Audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Purpose:** \_\_\_\_\_



- B. Write the names of three people who could be in your audience. Remember to capitalize their names and titles.

\_\_\_\_\_