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

DAY 1

Read and discuss the skill statement at the top of the page. Then ask: *Which topic would you find more interesting: go-karts, or the new go-kart track opening in your town? Say: Most readers—and writers—find a specific topic more interesting than one that is too broad. Writing about a specific topic is easier, too, because it allows you to focus your ideas.* Then guide students through the activities.


- **Activity A:** Have students read the paragraphs about cyclo-cross. Say: *Both writers narrowed down their topics. Why are these paragraphs more interesting than paragraphs about all kinds of bikes or bike racing? (The details are specific.) Point out the completed triangle and say: Using a triangle like this will help you narrow down your topic so it's more specific.* Have students finish filling in the triangle next to the second paragraph to show how the topic was narrowed down even further.
- **Activity B (Convention):** Say: *Use commas to separate words, clauses, or phrases in a series joined by and or or.* Review the use of series commas and have students complete the activity.

DAY 2

Read and discuss the skill statement at the top of the page. Explain that the first sentence of a paragraph is often—but not always—the topic sentence. Say: *If a paragraph is about something specific, the topic sentence should be just as specific.* Then guide students through the activities.

- **Activity A:** Invite a volunteer to read aloud “Many Marshmallows.” Then ask: *Which sentence is the topic sentence? (the first) Does it tell what the paragraph is about? (no) What’s wrong with it? (It isn’t specific enough.) How could we fix it? (include information about why the cousins were going to the fair)* Have students complete the activity and share their answers. Ask students to explain what makes their new topic sentences better than the original.
- **Activity B:** Have students complete the activity and share their answers with a partner.
- **Activity C (Convention):** Have students complete the activity.

Name: _____ **Week 1 • Day 1**

 **Ideas** The best writing begins with a compelling topic. Make your topic as specific as possible.

A. Read these informational paragraphs. The two writers started with similar topics, but the second writer narrowed down the topic to be even more specific. Fill in the second triangle to show how the topic was narrowed down.

Cyclo-cross Racing

Cyclo-cross is a kind of bike racing that’s as much fun for the spectators as it is for the racers. Instead of simply racing on roads or trails, cyclo-cross racers ride on dirt trails, grassy fields, and gravel paths in the same race. They even have to jump over hurdles, run up steep, cross bridges or streams, and ride through mud puddles or sand pits! Most of the time, spectators can see the entire race, so they cheer loudly when the racers clear the obstacles. The noisy fans will even ring cowbells or blow horns when their favorite racer speeds by. Attending or riding in a cyclo-cross race is certainly a unique experience!

Topic

bikes
↓
bike racing
↓
cyclo-cross racing

Cyclo-cross World Championships

The first official Cyclo-cross World Championship race took place in Paris, France, in 1950. Jean Robic, a previous Tour de France champion, won the race. At the time, the sport was dominated by road racers looking to stay in shape during the winter. To win, Robic threw his bicycle onto his shoulder, ran up dirt-covered hills, and narrowly missed bare trees while zooming down the course. To date, Robic is still the only Tour de France winner to win the Cyclo-cross World Championship.


Topic

bikes
↓
bike racing
↓
cyclo-cross racing
↓
history of cyclo-cross
↓
first world championship

B. In the two paragraphs, underline the sentences that contain items in a series. Then circle each comma in the series.

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Name: _____ **Week 1 • Day 2**

 **Ideas** An effective topic sentence clearly states the main idea of the paragraph.

A. Read this first paragraph from a personal narrative. Then rewrite the underlined sentence to make the topic sentence more specific.

Many Marshmallows

My cousin and I went to the county fair. My cousin had never been to a competitive eating contest before, so I knew he was in for a real treat. The contestants had to cram as many marshmallows into their mouths as possible, say “chubba wubba,” and then swallow all of the marshmallows. Last year’s winner stuffed his mouth with 14 marshmallows!

Sample Answer:
New topic sentence: My cousin and I went to the county fair just to see who would win the famous marshmallow-eating contest.

B. The topic sentence is missing from this paragraph. Write a topic sentence that clearly states the main idea.

Steeplechase

The sport of steeplechase originated in Great Britain during the 1800s. People would run from town to town, using the tall steeples on churches as markers. Participants raced across long fields, jumped over stone walls between properties, and ran through creeks and streams without stopping. Modern steeplechase races take place on tracks with hurdles and water pits.


Sample Answer:
Topic sentence: A steeplechase race is a long footrace with many obstacles.

C. Read each sentence. Add the series commas.

1. The steeplechase is a blend of running, hurdling, and jumping.
2. Superb steeples, or athletes who run steeplechase races, must be fast, flexible, coordinated, and able to perform in all kinds of conditions.

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Name: _____ **Week 1 • Day 3**

 **Ideas** Be sure your topic and ideas suit your purpose and intended audience.

A. This editorial was intended to persuade people to change their attitudes toward fundraisers. Read the editorial. Then:

- Cross out any sentences that do not help the writer achieve her purpose.
- Use proofreading marks to add any series commas that are missing.

Give a Kid a Break

Most kids, at some point in their lives, have to go out and raise funds for a club they belong to, an organization they support, or a cause they believe in. Fundraising isn't usually an activity that kids enjoy. In fact, most of them just suffer through it. Whether they sell cookies, candy, raffle tickets, or wrapping paper, fundraising isn't fun. So, when you hear your doorbell ring and see a couple of kids with a carton of candy they're trying to sell, don't slam the door in their faces or yell at them. Instead, be kind to them, because kids who are fundraising deserve respect. ~~It's really annoying if the kids interrupt your family dinner, though. That can happen a lot in some neighborhoods.~~ Belonging to clubs is a good thing for kids. It helps them meet new people, explore shared interests, and work toward a common goal. ~~Some clubs limit membership, though, so those aren't good ones to join or support.~~ But clubs need funding. Now, there are many reasons that kids join clubs, but fundraising is not one of them. Kids don't like going door to door asking strangers for money any more than people like being asked for money. So remember: Kids aren't raising money just for themselves; they're trying to do something good for their school or community. ~~Give kids a break, unless you don't like the specific organizations or clubs.~~

B. What ideas could the writer have included to better achieve her purpose? What would her audience want to know? **Sample Answers:**
She could have given examples of worthwhile clubs and organizations, or explained what positive things clubs do with the raised money. That might have encouraged readers to donate or be more respectful the next time they have to deal with kids who are fundraising.

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DAY 3


Read and discuss the skill statement at the top of the page. Say: *Good writers think about their purpose for writing, or the ideas they want to communicate to their readers. If you don't stay focused on your purpose, your readers may not get the point you're trying to make. When you finish writing, check your work to make sure all of your ideas help you achieve your purpose for writing.* Then guide students through the activities.

- **Activity A:** Read aloud the directions and ask: *What is this writer's purpose?* (to persuade people to change their attitudes toward fundraisers) Have students read the editorial independently and cross out the sentences that don't serve the purpose. Discuss the answers as a class. Encourage students to explain why they crossed out certain sentences.

Convention: Have students insert series commas on their own. Review the answers as a class.

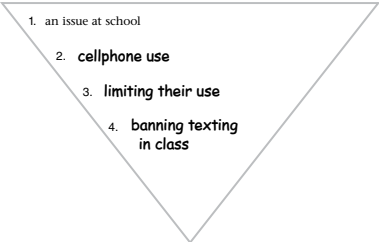
- **Activity B:** Have students complete the activity. You may wish to have them write sentences to add to the editorial.

Name: _____ **Week 1 • Day 4**

 **Ideas** Be sure your topic is specific enough and that your ideas suit your purpose and intended audience.

A. Imagine that you have been asked to write an editorial for your school newspaper. Choose a topic that is important to your audience. Use the triangle to narrow down your topic as much as possible. **Sample Answers:**

Topic



1. an issue at school

2. cellphone use

3. limiting their use

4. banning texting in class

B. Decide on your audience and purpose. Then list ideas that will help you achieve your purpose for writing. **Sample Answers:**

Audience: students, parents, teachers, other staff at school

Purpose: to persuade them not to ban texting in class

Ideas: It's important for kids to be able to communicate with their family and friends during school hours, even when they're in class. Texting does not disturb other students as much as phone calls would. If texting is banned, parents won't be able to reach their kids.

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DAY 4

Read and discuss the skill statement at the top of the page. Then guide students through the activities.

- **Activity A:** Say: *An editorial is a type of persuasive writing that expresses an opinion on a topic, without saying "I."* Editorials often appear in newspapers or magazines. Ask: *Who reads a school newspaper?* (students, teachers, parents) *What topics might those people care about?* (e.g., curfews, use of cellphones, amount of homework) Say: *After you choose a topic, consult with a partner to decide if it's specific enough.* Have students complete the activity.

- **Activity B:** Have students complete the activity independently. Remind them to make sure their ideas support their purpose for writing.

DAY 5 Writing Prompt 

- Use your ideas from Day 4 to write an editorial on the specific topic you chose. Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write.
- Be sure to insert commas in any series of items.

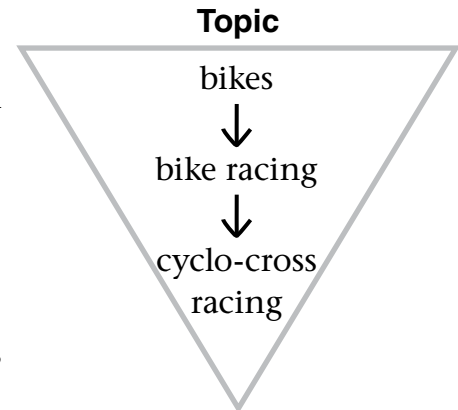


The best writing begins with a compelling topic.
Make your topic as specific as possible.

- A. Read these informational paragraphs. The two writers started with similar topics, but the second writer narrowed down the topic to be even more specific. Fill in the second triangle to show how the topic was narrowed down.

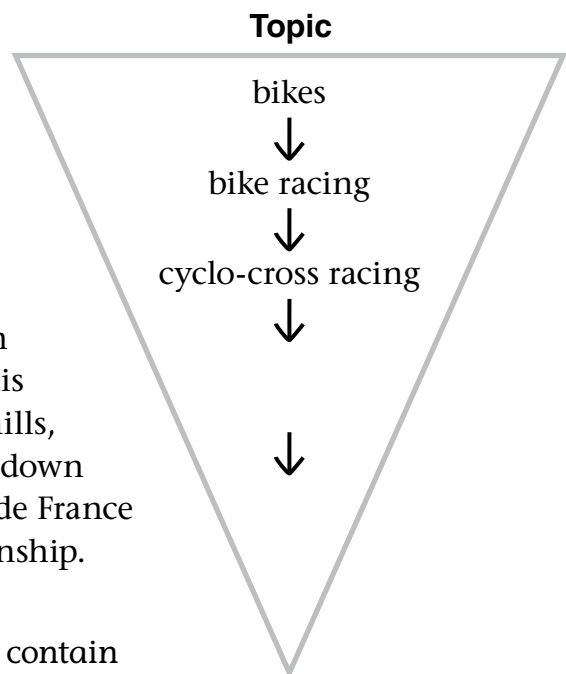
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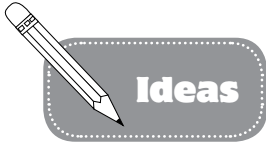


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New topic sentence: _____

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Topic sentence: _____

- C. Read each sentence. Add the series commas.

1. The steeplechase is a blend of running hurdling and jumping.
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Be sure your topic and ideas suit your purpose and intended audience.

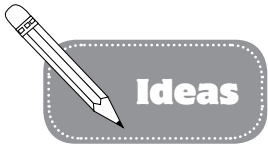
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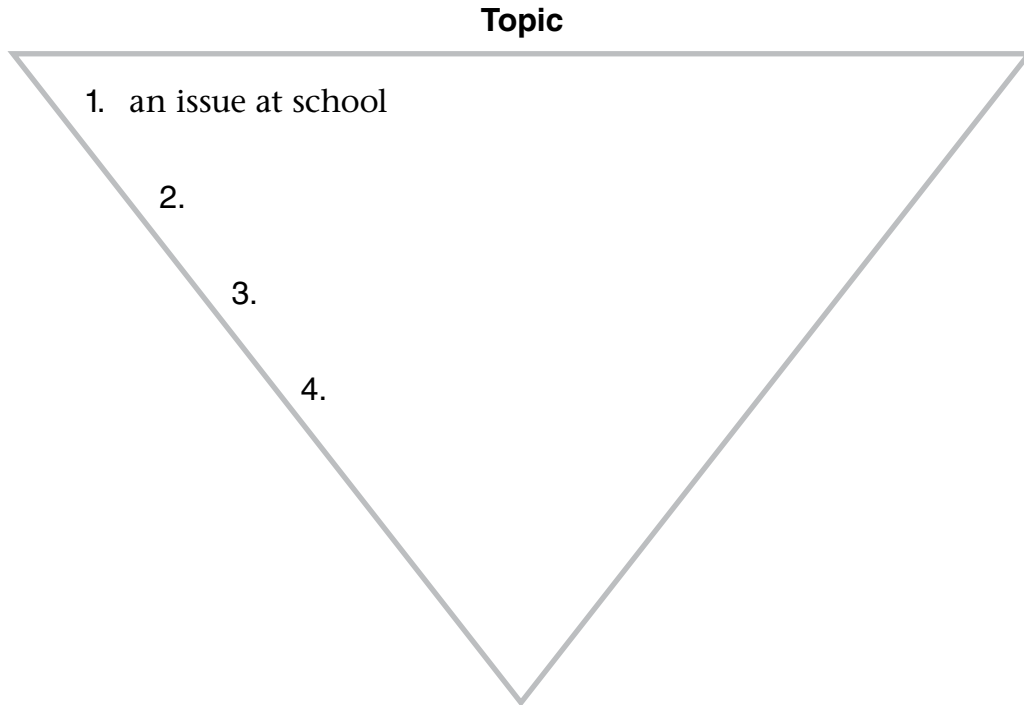
Most kids, at some point in their lives, have to go out and raise funds for a club they belong to, an organization they support or a cause they believe in. Fundraising isn't usually an activity that kids enjoy. In fact, most of them just suffer through it. Whether they sell cookies candy raffle tickets or wrapping paper, fundraising isn't fun. So, when you hear your doorbell ring and see a couple of kids with a carton of candy they're trying to sell, don't slam the door in their faces or yell at them. Instead, be kind to them, because kids who are fundraising deserve respect. It's really annoying if the kids interrupt your family dinner, though. That can happen a lot in some neighborhoods. Belonging to clubs is a good thing for kids. It helps them meet new people explore shared interests and work toward a common goal. Some clubs limit membership, though, so those aren't good ones to join or support. But clubs need funding. Now, there are many reasons that kids join clubs, but fundraising is not one of them. Kids don't like going door to door asking strangers for money any more than people like being asked for money. So remember: Kids aren't raising money just for themselves; they're trying to do something good for their school or community. Give kids a break...unless you don't like the specific organizations or clubs.

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Audience: _____

Purpose: _____

Ideas: _____
