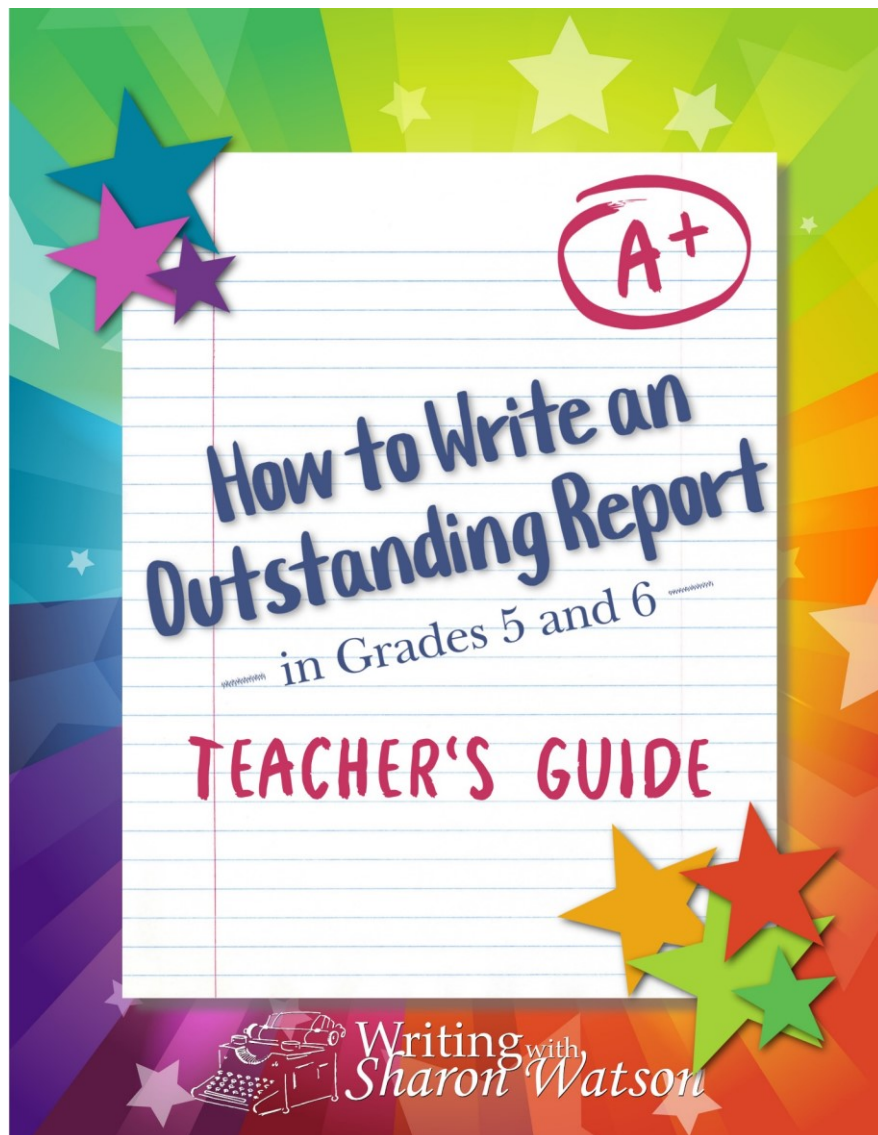


How to Write an Outstanding Report in Grades 5 and 6

Teacher's Guide

Sharon Watson



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Special thanks to Lucy M. for permission to use her shark report.



Dear Teacher,

Welcome to this practical, open-and-go course!

When your students follow the 18 lessons and finish the “Now it’s your turn” assignments, they will have an actual report in about 26 school days or five to six weeks. This is going to be an exciting and successful year!

Your teacher’s guide includes the following:

- ⇒ A suggested schedule for each lesson
- ⇒ What students are learning in any particular lesson + new terms
- ⇒ Any charts included in the students’ lesson
- ⇒ Each lesson’s “Now it’s your turn” assignment
- ⇒ An important method for helping your students write
- ⇒ A complete 474-word report written by a real student
- ⇒ A grading grid to help you grade or evaluate the report

Under each lesson’s heading in this teacher’s guide, you’ll find a section labeled “Teacher” for you. That gives you a summation of the lesson, how many days suggested to complete it, and your part in the lesson.

Under the label “Student,” you’ll find the students’ assignments.

How long should this report/research paper be? That is up to you. We recommend around 400-600 words if this is the first time your students have written one.

Thank you for taking on this important task. Your students are lucky to have you.

God bless your good work,

Sharon Watson

Suggested schedule for lessons and writing

This schedule uses approximately 26 school days or 5 – 6 weeks.

Chapter 1: Choose a Topic and Narrow It Down

Lesson 1: 1 day. Let students know the length of the report and due date.

Lesson 2: 1 day

Lesson 3: 1 day. Students check their narrowed-down topic with you and the results of their brainstorming.

Chapter 2: Keep the Facts Straight

Lesson 1: 1 day

Lesson 2: 1-3 days

Let students know how much record-keeping they need to do for their sources. Also if they need a works-cited page.

Chapter 3: Take Notes without Getting into Trouble

Lesson 1: 1 day

Lesson 2: 1 day

Lesson 3: 4 days, at least

Chapter 4: Develop a Main Idea

Lesson 1: 1 day

Lesson 2: 1 day. Students show their main ideas to you for approval.

Chapter 5: Create Meaningful Paragraphs

Lesson 1: 1 day. Students show their topic sentences to you for approval.

Lesson 2: 1-2 days

Lesson 3: 1-3 days. Students show their paragraph charts and order to you for approval.

Lesson 4: 1 day

Lesson 5: 1 day

Chapter 6: Before I Hand It In

Lesson 1: 1 day

Lesson 2: 1 day

Lesson 3: 1 day

Chapter 1: Choose a Topic and Narrow It Down

Teacher

In this chapter, students practice these two skills:

- Narrowing down a topic
- Brainstorming

Lesson 1: How do I choose my topic and narrow it down?

Teacher: 1 day

New terms: report, research paper

Have you given your students a broad subject? If so, they are learning how to narrow it down. If you have given them a narrowed-down topic like, say, the life of Madam Curie, they still have to narrow it down so they can know what types of notes to take.

Students are being instructed to identify a topic they have strong feelings for, whether positive or negative. This gives them a solid interest in the topic that can carry them through the process.

Let students know how many word or pages the report should be and when it is due.

Student

Now it's your turn. Most likely, your teacher has given you a broad subject to write about. Write the subject in the blank space below.

Now jot down at least three narrowed-down topics within that broad subject like I did with the snakes. Make sure those topics interest you. Write your list below or on another piece of paper.

For the biography of a scientist → list scientists you respect or dislike.

If you choose a country → list countries that fascinate you.

If it is about a particular animal → list categories you could write about.

If your report is on an event → list things about it that readers want to know.

Now choose one narrowed-down topic from your list that you would like to research for your paper and circle it or write it below.

Congratulations. You have taken the first step in writing your report. Do you feel comfortable with your choice? If yes, then relax. If not, don't worry. You can change it in the next lesson.

Lesson 2: How can brainstorming help me?

Teacher: 1 day

New term: Brainstorming. Students are learning how to brainstorm. It is suggested in the textbook that students brainstorm with friends. A class setting will work as well. Feel free to complete lessons 2 and 3 in one day, if you wish.

Student

Now it's your turn. If you were to write a report on the subject of sharks, what ideas would you come up with? Think of these questions when pondering categories to write about:

What topics would a book about sharks contain?

What would readers want to know about sharks?

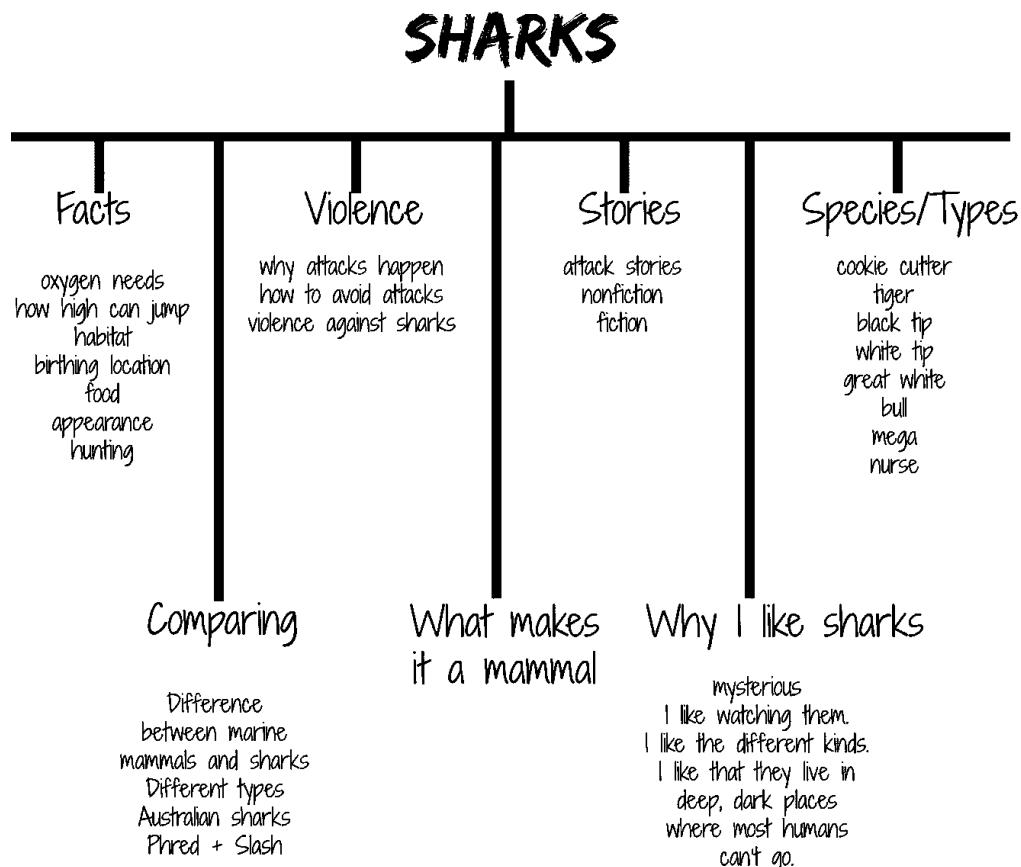
If you talked with a shark expert, what topics would she talk about?

Brainstorm your ideas in any order. Use the space below or a separate paper. Your ideas do not have to be in complete sentences. They don't even have to be good. Simply jot them down as they come to you. And, no, you will not be writing a report on sharks unless you want to.

Lesson 3: How can brainstorming charts help me?

Teacher: 1 day

New terms: solar system or cluster. Students are learning how to use a chart and a solar system/cluster to help them brainstorm. **They are also instructed to check their narrowed-down topic with you and the results of their brainstorming** before proceeding with their reports. You and your students will discuss directions they could take with their topics.



The chart on the previous page and the one below can help your students brainstorm and/or organize their ideas. Students most likely will have a definite opinion on which kind of brainstorming tool they prefer.



Student

Now it's your turn. The student brainstorming about sharks chose the narrowed-down topic of shark species to write about. From there she chose three species that interested her: black tip, tiger, and great white.

In lesson 1, you narrowed down a broad subject, too, into bite-size topics and then chose one topic for your report that you were interested in. Write that topic here:

If you are not happy with your choice, choose another one that you have strong feelings about, whether positive or negative. Then write your new topic here:

No matter which topic you choose, **check it with your teacher**. You need to get approval from him or her before you proceed with your report.

Now use one of the brainstorming methods to gather ideas for your chosen topic. When you are finished, **show your work to your teacher**. Discuss directions you could take in your topic, like the student who chose three shark species to write about.

Grading Grid for Report

Title of Report: _____

Student's Name: _____

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Is the topic interesting and has it been narrowed down and focused to a manageable size? 1-10 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Do the title and introduction interest the reader? 1-5 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is the main idea clear? Is the main idea near the end of the first paragraph? 1-10 pts | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is each point strong? Does each support the main idea? Are the ideas clearly expressed and of value? 1-20 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Does the student cite all borrowed facts, ideas, quotations, and so on? 1-10 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Does each point have a clear topic sentence? Does each paragraph adequately support its topic sentence? 1-15 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are the paragraphs arranged in an effective order? Are there transitions between the paragraphs, if needed? 1-5 pts | <input type="radio"/> |
| Does the conclusion restate or sum up the main idea in a new way and give food for thought? 1-5 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is it clear that the student organized his/her material before writing? 1-10 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Is it clear that the research was done well? 1-10 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Extra credit: Is there something noteworthy in the writing, the expression of ideas, or in the research? 1-10 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Grade for Content | <input type="radio"/> |

Comments:

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Are in-text citations correct and used where needed? Is the works-cited page correct? 1-20 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| How are the spelling, capitalization, punctuation, sentence fragments, run-ons, and so on? 1-20 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Are there separate paragraphs for the intro, each point, and conclusion? 1-20 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Was the paper handed in on time? 1-20 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Did the student follow the written instructions? 1-20 points | <input type="radio"/> |
| Grade for Grammar/Mechanics | <input type="radio"/> |