From Messy Facts to Clear Informing

Teacher		**Class**	Grade 5
Subject	ELA	**Topic**	Informative writing
Date		**Room**	
Lesson length	60 minutes	**Country**	United States

Students learn to group facts to explain a topic clearly. They sort shark facts into piles and write a short informative paragraph.

Curriculum links

- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. [1]

Learning objectives

- Students will group facts into 2-3 focused groups to plan body paragraphs.
- Students will organize informative writing with introduction, body, and conclusion.

Success criteria

- I can sort facts into 2-3 groups for body paragraphs.
- I can write an intro, grouped facts, and a conclusion.

What students already know

Ask: What does it mean to teach someone with writing? Take 3 quick answers and listen for true facts and clear order.

Key words

informative	teaching true facts about a subject so a reader learns [5]
fact	something true that can be checked or proved [11]
introduction	opening that names the subject and previews points [13]
body paragraph	middle part that groups related facts together [13]
conclusion	ending that sums up main points in new words [11]
transition	bridge word that shows how thoughts link [3]

Materials

- sticky notes
- large paper
- markers
- projector and Slides 1, 4-7, 10-12
- Video clip 1 (0:00–4:01)
- Worksheet Task F copies and pencils
- 6 pre-written fact cards about sharks for support
- notebooks

Before the lesson

- Print Worksheet Task F, one per pair
- Make 6 pre-written fact cards per support group with shark facts listed in plan
- Test Video clip 1 (0:00–4:01) on Slide 6 and load Slides 1, 4-7, 10-12
- Set out sticky notes, large paper, and markers for each pair

Lesson outline

0–7 min **Starter** 7 min · Whole class

To spark interest in organizing facts so readers can learn.

YOU DO

1. Say the hook: I can write ten true facts about sharks in one minute — but would you actually learn anything from my messy list? Let's fix it.
2. Show Slide 5 and read the messy list: Sharp teeth. Lives in water. Some grow very big.
3. Ask pairs to turn and talk for 30 seconds about what is hard to learn from the list.
4. Explain that a page of true facts in no order is just a fact dump, and informative writing must organize it so a reader actually learns something [13].

STUDENTS DO

1. Listen to the hook and look at Slide 5.
2. Turn to a partner and say what is messy about the list.
3. Vote with thumbs up if the list needs groups to be clear.

Say: I can write ten true facts about sharks in one minute — but would you actually learn anything from my messy list? Let's fix it. This list is true, but it is mixed up. Today we will sort facts into groups so a reader can follow and learn.

Ask: What makes this shark list hard to learn from? (The facts are true but in no order and not grouped.) · What should informative writing do with facts? (Group and explain them so any reader can follow and learn.)

Check understanding: Thumbs up or down: Is this a fact dump or clear writing? If many are unsure, point again to mixed order on Slide 5.

Support: Show the three facts on separate lines and point while reading aloud. **Stretch:** Ask students to suggest a group name for the three facts, like what sharks look like.

Use: Slide 5

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7–19 min **Teaching** 12 min · Whole class

To teach what informative writing does and how it differs from opinion.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 1: Write to inform and teach your reader, then play Video clip 1 (0:00–4:01) on Slide 6.
2. Show Slide 7 and model three types: informative explains or teaches, opinion argues a position, narrative tells a story [13].
3. Hand out Worksheet Task F and do the first two together, marking fact or opinion.
4. Remind the class that informative writing shares accurate facts without bias or trying to persuade [5].

STUDENTS DO

1. Watch the video and listen for inform means to teach and facts, not opinions.
2. Help sort the three shark sentences into inform, argue, or story.
3. Start Worksheet Task F by ticking fact or opinion for the first two.

Say: Inform means to teach. To inform, we use true facts, not opinions. In informative writing, you can disappear. The piece is about the topic, not about you.

Worked example: Informative: Sharks are fish that have lived in the ocean for millions of years. [13] Opinion: Sharks are the most fascinating animals in the ocean. [13] Narrative: The morning I saw my first shark, the water went strangely quiet. [13] Step 1: Ask does it teach? Step 2: Ask does it argue or tell a story? Step 3: Sort it.

Ask: Which sentence teaches you: sharks are fish or sharks are the most fascinating? (Sharks are fish that have lived in the ocean teaches you.) · How do you know a sentence is opinion? (It uses I, best, should or tries to change minds.) · What is the job of informative writing? (To teach clear facts about a topic.)

Check understanding: Use mini whiteboards for Task F items 1-2; reteach fact versus opinion if more than a few miss.

Support: Give a hint sheet with the three definitions and color-code fact versus opinion. **Stretch:** Ask students to change the opinion sentence into a teaching fact about sharks.

Use: Slides 1, 6-7; Video clip 1 (0:00–4:01); Worksheet Task F

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19–39 min **Main activity** 20 min · Pairs

To group facts into 2-3 focused piles to plan body paragraphs.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 4 and name the three parts: Name your topic and preview points, Group facts into focused paragraphs, Sum up main points clearly.
2. Model sorting with sticky notes: write one fact per note, then move notes into piles like what it is, where it lives, and what it does.
3. Give pairs sticky notes, large paper, and markers to write and sort their own facts.
4. Circulate and help pairs label each pile with a heading that could become a body paragraph.

STUDENTS DO

1. Write one fact per sticky note about sharks.
2. Sort notes into 2-3 piles on large paper.
3. Label each pile with a heading and tell which pile becomes each body paragraph.

Say: Write one fact on each sticky note. Now sort them into two or three piles. Each pile will become one body paragraph. Label each pile so a reader knows what that part will teach.

Worked example: Six facts: 1. Sharks are fish. 2. Sharks have sharp teeth. [13] 3. Sharks live in the ocean. [13] 4. Some sharks are big. [13] 5. Sharks have lived in the ocean for millions of years. [13] 6. Some grow very big. Sorted: What it is - 1, 5. Where it lives - 3. What it looks like - 2, 4, 6. Each pile becomes one focused paragraph [13].

Ask: Why put sharks live in the ocean in its own pile? (Because where it lives is one focused idea for one paragraph.) · How does sorting fix a fact dump? (It puts true facts in order so a reader can follow and learn.)

Check understanding: Pairs hold up labeled piles; check that each pile has related facts, resort together if a pile mixes ideas.

Support: Give 6 pre-written true facts on cards so students only have to sort, not recall facts. **Stretch:** Students write a one-sentence main idea for each pile to preview the paragraph.

Use: Slide 4

39–52 min **Write and link** 13 min · Pairs

To draft a clear informative paragraph using precise words and links.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 10 and teach precise words fit your topic exactly and link ideas with also, however, as a result [3][11].
2. Show Slide 11 and compare openings, pointing out that surprising examples hook faster than announcing what the paper will describe [11].
3. Model a 4-sentence shark paragraph that uses a pile, a definition, and a transition.
4. Ask pairs to write 3-4 sentences from one pile using one precise word and one bridge word.

STUDENTS DO

1. Choose one labeled pile and draft 3-4 informative sentences in notebooks.
2. Add one precise word and one transition like also or however.
3. Read the draft and check it teaches facts without I, best, or should.

Say: Use facts, definitions, and examples to teach. Pick exact words for your topic. Link ideas with also, however, or as a result. Do not apologize like I cannot be certain and do not announce like In this paper I will [4]. End by summing up.

Worked example: Sharks are fish that have lived in the ocean for millions of years. [13] They have sharp teeth for grabbing food. Also, some grow very big. In short, sharks are ocean fish built to live and hunt in water.

Ask: Which opening teaches better and why? (The knives, beads, cows opening because it hooks with surprising facts.) · Which bridge word fits: Sharks have sharp teeth ___ some grow very big? (Also, because it adds a related fact.)

Check understanding: Pairs read one sentence aloud; listen for precise topic words and correct bridge, model again if vague like It is big.

Support: Give a word bank of precise nouns and verbs and a frame: Sharks are ___. They ___. Also, ___.
Stretch: Students add a definition or example after the precise word to explain it further.

Use: Slides 10-11

52–60 min **Plenary** 8 min · Whole class

To check that students can name the job and parts of informative writing.

YOU DO

1. Show Slide 12 and run the quick quiz on the job and parts of informative writing.
2. Ask pairs to state their best pile heading and one fact it taught.
3. Restate success criteria and link piles to body paragraphs and conclusion that restates the main idea in new words [11].

STUDENTS DO

1. Answer the quiz questions with thumbs or whiteboards.
2. Share one pile heading and one clear fact with the class.

Say: Today we fixed the fact dump by sorting. Tell me your pile heading and one fact it teaches. Remember, a good conclusion sums up the main point in new words.

Ask: What is the job of informative writing? (To teach clear facts about a topic.) · What are the three parts that work? (Intro that previews, body with grouped facts, conclusion that sums up.)

Check understanding: Exit tickets 1-3; if pile headings are vague, practice labeling once more as a class.

Support: Let students answer by pointing to Slide 4 Start, Middle, Finish cards. **Stretch:** Ask students to suggest a stronger final sentence that sums up in new words.

Use: Slide 12

Common mistakes

Mistake	How to spot it	How to fix it
Writing a fact dump of true facts in no order	Draft jumps from teeth to home to size with no groups	Sort notes into 2-3 piles like what it is and where it lives, then write one pile at a time [13]
Mixing opinion into informative writing	Draft uses best, favorite, should, or I think	Cross out opinion words and replace with a checkable fact or definition [5][11]
Weak opening that only announces the topic	Starts with Money is important. I will tell you about it	Start with a surprising fact or question, such as knives, beads, cows all used as money [11]

Support

- Give 6 pre-written true facts on cards so students only have to sort, not recall facts.
- Provide sentence frames and a word bank of precise nouns and verbs.
- Limit checklists to three yes-or-no boxes and model one example together first.

Stretch

- Students write a one-sentence main idea for each pile to preview the paragraph.
- Students combine three facts using two different bridge words without repeating.
- Students rewrite a weak hook with a question or surprising fact.

For the LSE or teaching assistant

Stay with the support pairs during sorting and writing; help move sticky notes into piles and prompt precise word choice.

Check for understanding

Question	Answer

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What is the job of informative writing?	To teach clear facts about a topic.
You have facts about teeth, home, and size. How many body paragraphs and why?	Three, one focused group per paragraph.
Which is informative: Sharks live in the ocean or Sharks are the best animal?	Sharks live in the ocean.

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