informative writing
Tell Your Story

Ohio Aspire
Learn more. Earn more.

Essential Questions:	How can we enhance our skills to communicate logically, clearly, and concisely in order to effectively convey our story to others?
Outcomes	Participants will be able to: • Recognize the impact of specific words on clarity and understanding. • Identify and use precise, vivid, active word choice to enhance meaning. • Create an (informational) travelogue that uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain about a destination in Ohio. • Share the travelogue with the class as an oral presentation.
Standards Benchmarks identified in RED are priority benchmarks.	**R.3.8.** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a topic or subject area. (RI.5.4) **W.3.2.** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension. b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic. c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because). d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented. (W.4.2)

W.4.3. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W/WHST.6-8.4)

W.3.6. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic. (W.5.7)

W.3.7. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources. (W.5.8)

S.2.4. Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. (SL.3.4)

S.3.6. Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes. (SL.5.5)

TEACHERS: this content was designed for ABE/ASE students. Instructional scaffolding used in this lesson can be beneficial for multilingual students.

Because adult classrooms are multi-level, teachers will want to differentiate this HyperDoc by accommodating the different ways that students learn by using scaffolding strategies and appropriate leveled materials. Teachers will want to vary the instructional activities based on their student's needed skills.

For more information about collaborating and sharing on Google Drive, check out videos 36-45: Google Junior Training series - YouTube.

STUDENTS: Before you begin this lesson

- Go to File > Make a copy
- Change the name to: <your name> Informative Writing
- Begin working in your document
- When completing an activity, make a copy of the document and save with your name and the title of the activity

Be sure to read carefully. The green text is a prompt for reflection or activity.

ENGAGE

Do you know someone who talks or writes like Grandpa Simpson? Is it hard to understand the story that they are trying to tell and the information that they are trying to convey?

Does your communication look more like the first picture or the second?

The point I'm trying to make

The way I explain it

Why do you think it is important to be precise when you are sharing information?

The goal of informative writing is to educate the reader. When you write to inform, it is important to keep in mind that your purpose is to explain and to illuminate. Here are some tips for writing in an Informative style.
- Choose a topic and narrow your focus
- Create a thesis statement or main idea
- Only include information that directly relates to your topic or provides necessary background context
- Consider what your reader knows about your topic and decide what you need to explain
- Include facts and concrete details. Connect these back to your main idea with clear statements
- Don't add your own opinion or make anything up

Click on the video below to see why it is important to write clearly when you are trying to convey information:

You know what? I'm hungry.   YouTube.com/JoshDarnit

(6:44 min)

The kids in the video were frustrated. *How did this video make you feel?*
Answer in the box below:

Now it's your turn! Let's practice how we hear and interpret directions - a kind of informative writing - as we complete the activity, Communication Origami.

1. **Pair up with a partner and find a piece of origami paper for each of you from your teacher.**
2. **Choose which origami shape you would like to fold. Make a copy of your step-by-step instructions.**
   How to Fold an Origami Drinking Cup
   How to Make an Easy Origami Bird
3. **Give your partner the instructions on how to fold the paper into the origami shape of your choice. No peeking or talking! You can repeat if asked, but only use the exact words in the instructions. No coaching!**
4. **Once the instructions have been given, compare the final picture to your actual origami shape. Is your shape a little different than the final shape?**
5. **Now, reverse roles.**

Debrief the activity. Why does each shape look different even though you were given the instructions? What does this mean? Would the results have been better if you were allowed to peek or ask questions? **Write your answers in the box below:**

Communicating clearly is not easy, we all interpret the information we get differently. That's why it's very important to ask questions and confirm understanding to ensure the communicated message is not distorted.

EXPLORE

Think back to the video of Grandpa Simpson in the Engage section. He was trying to tell a story, but his communication was not clear. If Grandpa stayed on track and used precise language, would his story be more understandable and engaging? ABSOLUTELY!

In this lesson, you will be expected to create a "tell your story" travel project using informative writing. Let's explore specific skills that will help you communicate clearly and effectively so that you don't frustrate your audience!

Learn about the terms from the Ohio Aspire Writing Standard, then complete activities to test your knowledge. **Click on the image below to watch:** *Using Precise Language* **(16:20 min)**

Complete the [Precise Language Worksheet](#) with a partner. Then, share your worksheet with your teacher.

Write two sentences using precise language from your worksheet in the box below:

1.

2.

Let's practice precise writing using *The Storymatic* writing tool!

Click on the image below to read the *Beginnings VI* submission *Old Man's Cave* written by Aspire student Michele Devore. After you have completed the reading, make a copy of the document and then highlight examples of precise words. Share your choices with your teacher and classmates. A few have been highlighted as examples.

How do you think that Michele gathered the information to write her piece? Do you think that she researched Old Man's Cave before she traveled or is it possible that she wanted to know more after her visit and share it with others? Was her writing clear and understandable? Would the piece be more interesting if Michele included other details about her trip (*Did she travel with family? What was her reaction when she first experienced the cave?*)?

Write your answers in the box below:

Aspire teacher Linda McBride also told her story through the documentation of her trip to Old Man's Cave. Linda traveled from Mason in southwest Ohio to Old Man's Cave, located in the southeast region of the state. Linda used factual information and included details about her travel experience.

Click on the image below to view Linda's travel slideshow:
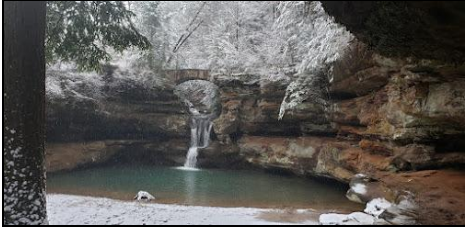
Print this informative article on [A Brief History of Hocking Hills State Park](#). As you read, highlight domain-specific words.

Find 4 domain-specific words and provide a definition for each term.

1. **plateau - In geography, a broad level elevated area in a flat land.**
2.
3.
4.
5.

When you've identified 4 domain-specific words from the article, check the [ANSWER KEY](#).

EXPLAIN

We just read about Michele's travels to Old Man's Cave, and viewed Linda's slideshow about the area. Did their pieces tempt you to find places to visit in Ohio? Wouldn't it be fun to learn more about those places and then actually take a trip to a new destination?

Our next assignment will be to complete a [travelogue](#) about a place in Ohio that you would like to visit. A travelogue contains vivid and factual descriptions of the place you want to visit, including personal experiences and also helpful factual details. Above all, a travelogue must tell a story about the place you want to visit! You will want to entertain, entice, and inform anyone who might be interested in visiting this destination.

Let's find out more about how to write our travelogue by reading [8 Tips For Writing an Excellent Travelogue](#) **and** [How to Write a Travelogue?](#)

What are the common tips for writing an excellent travelogue found in these two articles? Write your answers in the box below:

You will be using the [Research Your Travel Destination Graphic Organizer](#) to collect your research as you explore resources and find out the important details about your destination. **How does the graphic organizer compare to the tips you shared above?**

APPLY

Here's an example of another kind of travelogue, a scrapbook. A scrapbook is a great way to tell your story. A scrapbook allows you to not only give precise information about your destination, but gives you the opportunity to journal details about your experience.

Our next step will be to locate a region in Ohio that we want to plan our travelogue around. **Begin your research, using the** [Research Your Travel Destination Graphic Organizer](#). **Make a paper copy or work in Google Docs - just make sure to save a copy for yourself.**

Click the official Ohio logo below to start your research at Ohio.org!

To get started on the Ohio site, go to **Explore Ohio** and choose **Regions**. Which region do you want to explore?

Source: Regions in Ohio
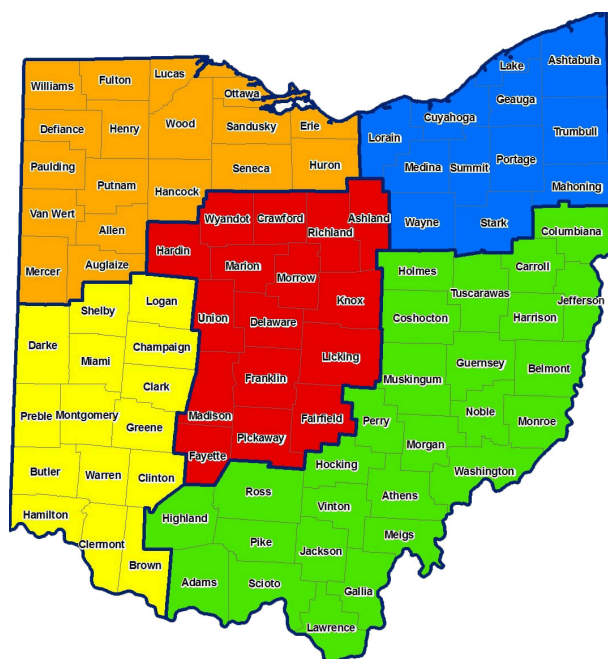
Central
Northeast
Northwest
Southeast
Southwest

Check out the map to find your location.

Also find an Ohio map, online or paper copy, to locate the cities involved in your research. Watch for those domain-specific vocabulary words. Explore the Ohio site to find locations of interest around history, architecture, science - anything you want to know or learn more about. This will help you tell your story.

Regional Example: If you live in southwest Ohio, a selection of resources have been collected in the Locations in Ohio chart. As a class, collect locations that might be interesting to visit and create your own classroom assignment chart, using the Planning Your Travelogue Destination Template. Begin your research by choosing which destination you want to learn more about.

Once you have completed your research and found all the information from the graphic organizer, then you can begin to develop your travelogue. **Choose one of these presentation formats to share with your classmates:**

1. Write an Essay or Blog
2. Create a PowerPoint Presentation
3. Design a Poster Presentation
4. Produce a Video
5. Develop a Brochure as a Promotion

Rubrics or checklists describe the criteria that will be used to evaluate our travelogues. This will help us communicate clearly the expectations for the final project as well as give us guidelines as we are creating our presentation. We will be using the Travelogue Checklist as we research, build, revise and present our travelogue to the class. **Check in with your teacher and ask for feedback; as you are working, ask yourself these questions.**

Have I…
☐ Included attractive formatting and well-organized information?
☐ Developed my topic (destination) using a variety of specific, relevant details, facts, and examples?
☐ Conveyed information and ideas about the destination clearly?
☐ Used a wide variety of interesting words - creating a vivid mental picture with clear, precise, vivid descriptions?
☐ Included a good mix of text and graphics that compliment the text?
☐ Provided a list of sources using the MLA format?
☐ Checked that spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct throughout the project?

Overall - ask yourself the question: *Does my travelogue effectively communicate my story to my classmates?*

Now you have all the tools you'll need to complete your travelogue: Research Your Travel Destination Graphic Organizer, Ohio the Heart of It All, and the Travelogue Checklist.

Research your destination and complete your travelogue. Your teacher will give you class time to work on your presentation, but you can also work at home to meet the project completion date set by your teacher. Submit your travelogue to your teacher.

SHARE

The last criteria from the Travelogue Checklist focuses on your Oral Presentation. **Take some time to practice your presentation so that you *deliver an interesting, well-rehearsed presentation that holds your audience's attention.***

When you are ready, share your presentation with the class! Enjoy hearing about the places in Ohio that everyone has shared. Would you like to visit them?

Pair up and give one positive piece of feedback and one piece of advice to your partner about their presentation, based on what you've learned after working with the information and tools you've used during this lesson.

REFLECT

Linda McBride, a teacher from Warren County Aspire, taught this lesson with her class. These are the presentations that the students shared after completing their research.
Click on the links below to view each presentation:

- *Brumback Library* video in VanWert by Shakhrizoda Akhmatjonova
- *John Dillinger* poster in Bluffton by Shakhrizoda Akhmatjonova
- *Portsmouth Flood Wall* YouTube and PDF in Portsmouth by Najwa Oqbah
- *Temple of Tolerance* PDF in Wapakoneta by Nidia Brindis
- *Armstrong Air & Space Museum* PDF in Wapakoneta by Gerardo Viveros
- *Wright Brothers Graveyard* YouTube in Dayton by Francisco Gasia Alfonzo

After viewing the presentations, reflect on the following questions and then write a paragraph reflecting those thoughts:

1. Do you think the students visited their chosen locations with friends or family members?
2. Would you like to know why they chose their locations?
3. Do you think that the students could have told more of "their story" through their informative writing? How?

EXTEND

Click on the image below to read published submissions from Ohio Aspire students:

BEGINNINGS XXVI

A PUBLICATION OF ADULT STUDENT WRITING

Ohio Literacy Resource Center

These authors gave information about their destination, as well as a few details that helped us connect with their travel story.

You can turn your travelogue into a piece of writing to submit to *Beginnings*!

Print out a copy of the [Travel Details GO.pdf](#) and use this document to jot down interesting details about your trip to your chosen location. Use the details that you documented and the information about your destination to write your own travel story!

Ask your teacher to look over your work, and find out if there are any revisions that you need to make. Once your piece is completed, your instructor can submit your writing for consideration at www.ohioaspire.org by going to their personal PD page.

Want more practice with precise language?

Watch: Using Precise Language in Informational Texts
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UCf46pw9IzM (4:20 min)

Play: Vague vs Precise Class Game
https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1YAxlvVd6rcZCor1xCQdgYBT5CYQw2-nz