

Communicate!





Skim the newspaper to find three examples of ways people communicate.

NCTE (National Council of Teachers of English) standard on this page: Students read a wide range of print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States.

Credits:

This Hot Topics Hot Serials section was: Written by Debby Carroll Edited by Ken Bookman Designed by: Gilbert & Associates Copyright 2006 Hot Topics Hot Serials Inc.

Response Landis

When you read literature, like a novel or story, one terrific way to think about what you've read is to write in a journal. In a journal, you write personal reflections about what you read. You answer questions like these:

What is the author trying to say to the reader? What lesson could be learned from reading this?

You may also meet with a literature response group to talk about what you read. If you do that, it is a good idea to write in your journal before and after you meet.



To practice using journal and literature response groups, try this. Your class will choose a newspaper article that looks interesting. The class will read the story silently. Then each student in the class will write in a response journal reflecting on the article everyone read.

Then, small groups will meet to talk about the article. There are rules for this type of meeting that will help keep things running smoothly. Those rules are:

- ❖ Speak quietly loud enough to be heard in the group, but not so loud that other groups are disturbed.
- Show respect for every speaker. That means that you listen carefully and don't say anything until the speaker is finished
- ❖ Don't judge what people say. You can agree or disagree with what anyone says, but you should not give opinions about whether what they say is good or bad. Avoid saying things like, "That's stupid" or "That makes no sense."

- **❖ Stay on topic.** Keep your comments about the article and try not to wander off into other topics. (But, hey, if interesting stuff comes up, make a mental note and talk about it later.)
- ❖ Give everyone a chance. Some people are a bit shy and may need to be asked to participate. Don't force anyone, but make sure that everyone's thoughts are welcome.
- ❖ Pick a group manager, just to make sure everyone obeys the rules. That person can politely remind the group members of the rules or get the teacher, as needed.

NCTE standards on this page:

Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics). Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).



Mine Words Like

One way you become a better reader and writer is by learning new ways of looking at and listening to words. The better you are with words, the more you'll get out of your reading and your writing.

Miners are people who dig deep into the earth to find precious material, such as coal or gold. They use what they find to make other wonderful and valuable items. You too, can be a miner by collecting precious words to use again in a new way in your writing.

Imagine that the newspaper is the Earth and that you are going to sift through its words,

choosing just the right ones to use. With those words, you'll write a

"Found Poem." This is a terrific way for you to "recast" words that you meet in the newspa-

per and to use them in another type of text - a poem. Doing this helps you be a more creative reader and writer.

A found poem is created by taking words or phrases from a text and arranging them into a poem. You could also use words from a favorite book or story (and you should try that too), but in this case, you're going to use the newspaper.

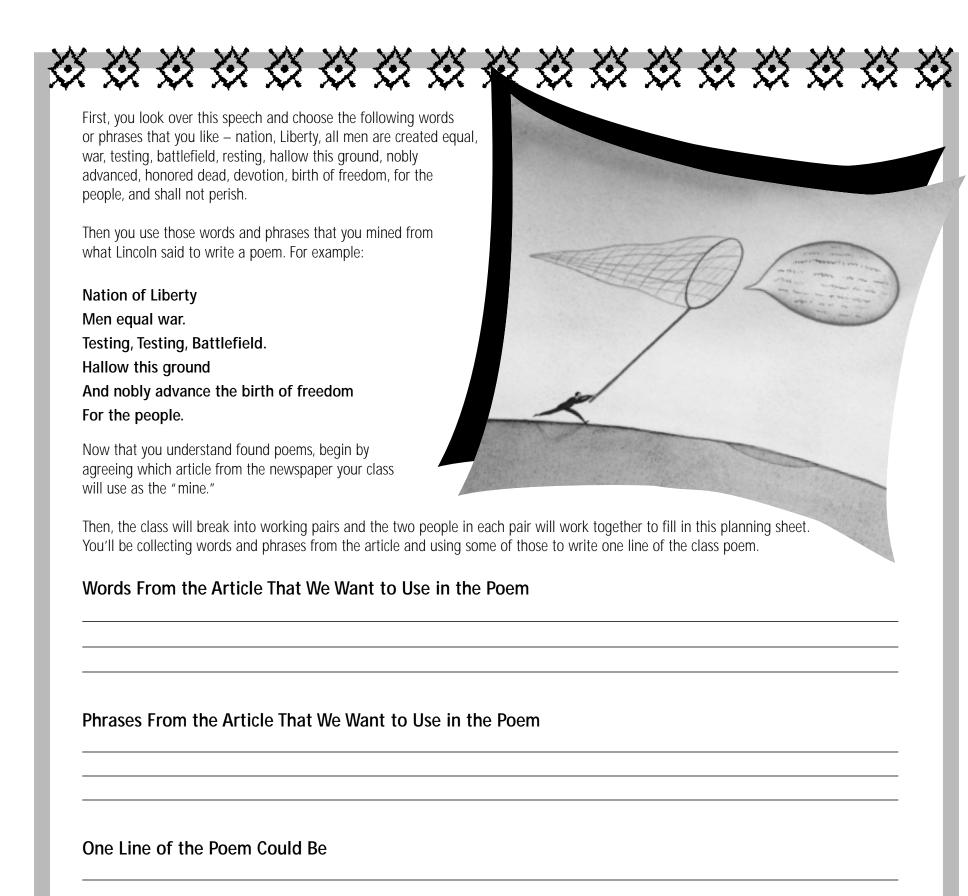
Start by doing this with your whole class so that the entire group works together to write one poem. Then, after you understand it, you can write a found poem of your own.

Here's how it works. Let's say you are going to write a found poem based on the Gettysburg Address, a speech by Abraham Lincoln:

Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation, so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate - we cannot consecrate we cannot hallow - this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion - that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the Earth."



After the class has had a chance to work in pairs to write a line of a poem, your teacher will invite you all to read aloud what you've written. The people who wrote lines using words from the beginning of the article will go first. Those lines will be written on the board so that the class can choose the first line or lines of the class poem. Continue this way so that people who've chosen words or phrases from the middle of the article go next, and so on until the entire class poem is finished. Take turns reading the poem aloud.

NCTE standards on this page:

Students read a wide range of print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and non-fiction, classic and contemporary works. Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.





SLAMMIN'

A poetry slam is a fun event where poets perform their work and get judged by an audience. It's kind of an "American Idol" of poetry. If you are working on poems in your class, you may want to hold a slam of your own. If you do, you'll need to set up some rules on how the audience members in your class are allowed to show their reactions. Think about using finger-snapping, or clapping, or tapping feet to show how much you like a poem. Keep in mind that the idea is not to hurt the feelings of your classmates, but rather to react to poems in a fun way. For example, you might clap lightly if you like a poem a little, tap your feet if you like it more, and snap your fingers if you're completely crazy about it. But, slam or no slam, enjoy writing poems. They're a great way to express yourself in few words.



You used the newspaper to write a found poem. Now here are two other ways to use the newspaper to write poetry.

1. Acrostics. Using your name in a poem is a great way to add a personal touch to your work. To write an acrostic with your name, put the letters of your first name in a vertical line down the left side of a page. Then, search the newspaper to choose one word that tells something about you that begins with each letter of your name. When you write each word next to its beginning letter, you create an acrostic poem.

2. Headline poems. Create a headline poem using words you cut out from the newspaper. Use at least 25 words in your poem. You'll need to create complete sentences that make sense and use correct punctuation. You'll want to do this activity by collecting headline words for several days or even weeks. When you finish cutting out a word, put it in an envelope and write the word on the outside of your envelope. This will let you keep track of all the words you have collected. Cut out more than 25 words in case some of your words don't work in the poem. Don't paste any words on your paper until you have laid them all out and are happy with the final product. Make sure you write your name on the back of the paper. After all, it's your work and you'll want everyone to know!

NCTE Standards:

Students have the opportunity to write in many genres, using words that are important to them while learning and reinforcing initial letter sounds. Sharing finished work gives value to the communication part of the writing process.





Pictures Stories, An old saying goes: "A picture Together thoughts from your

An old saying goes: "A picture is worth a thousand words." Although you might not have 1,000 words in your mind when you look at a photo, you probably do think about what you see.

Try this with your class.

Check out a newspaper photo and examine it for a few minutes. Jot down any features or details you notice. Then, checking your notes as needed, brainstorm a list of the possible events that surround this picture. Brainstorming means taking turns calling out the first words that come to your mind so that your teacher can put them on the board. Brainstorming is a fabulous way to get quick

mind onto paper. After the thoughts are up on the board, categorize them into words that tell about the characters, the setting, or the action in the story of that picture.

Then, write a story about the picture that you all viewed. You may write about the character's feelings and thoughts, tell the story that leads up to the picture, or narrate the events that follow. Don't just describe the picture, but invent an original story about the event in the picture.

Drop Everything and Read...

The Newspaper!

Does your school have "DEAR" time? That stands for Drop Everything and Read. It's a time when students, and maybe even teachers and staff, read something just for fun. They read silently, usually choosing whatever they want to read. It's a great way to enjoy the pleasure of reading without having to think about answering questions or being tested. What a luxury!

If your school has DEAR time, consider reading the newspaper for that period. The newspaper offers you a great variety of types of stories. From hard news to the comics, it's all there waiting for your discovery. DEAR time doesn't have to be about reading books, although they're great too. DEAR time is about enjoying the printed word, wherever that word appears.



You can create a great story by choosing five photos from the newspaper and writing a story that ties them together. Give it a try and see how creative your writing can be.

NCTE standard on this page:

Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.







Do you like to get mail?
Which do you prefer – snail mail, where letters come to you from the
post office, or e-mail, where letters come to you from the Internet?

What are some of the reasons people have for writing letters?

What type of letter would you write to someone who had given you a gift? Describe the things you might say.

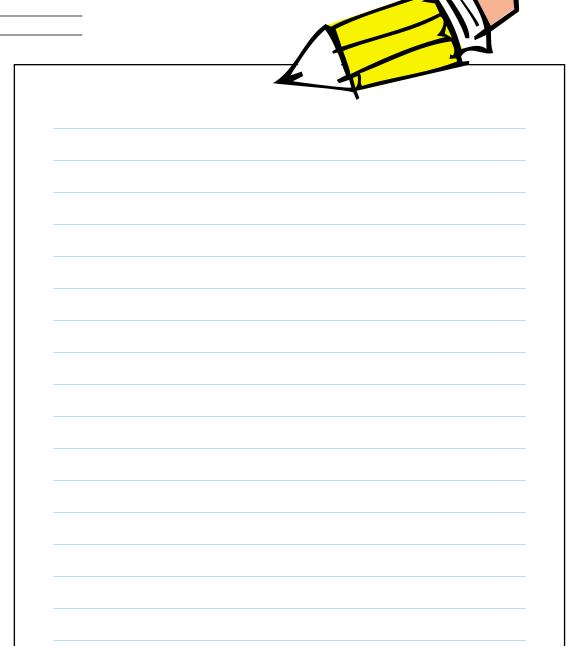
What kind of letter would you write to a friend whose toy you borrowed and lost?

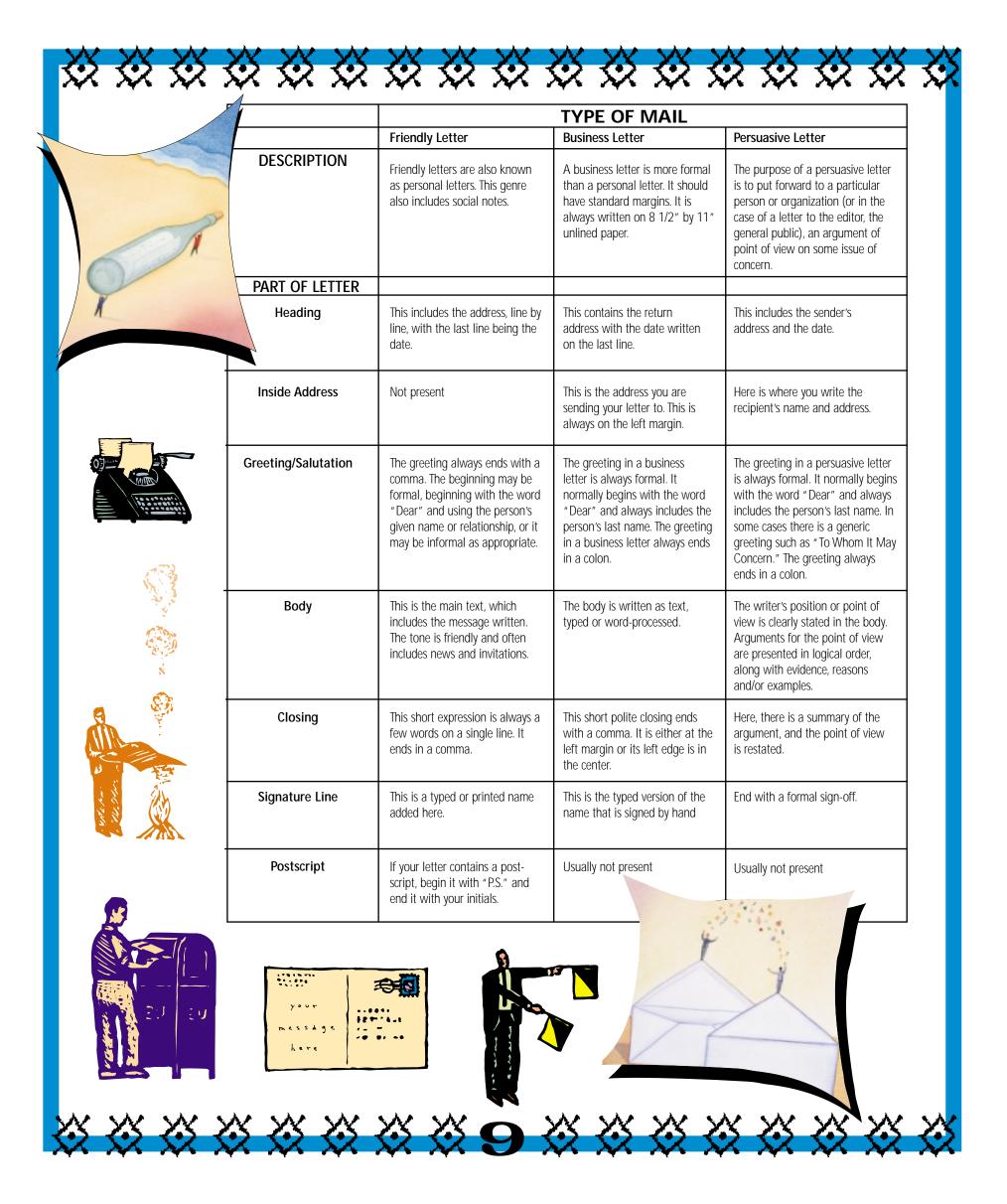
How would you start a letter you'd write to someone if you were having a party?

There are lots of different kinds of letters. You can check on the chart on the next page to see what they are. A great book about different kinds of letters is *The Jolly Postman*. In it, a mail carrier delivers letters to different characters from fairy tales and well-known stories. Goldilocks writes an apology to the bears. The wolf in Red Riding Hood's grandmother's house gets an eviction notice kicking him out of the house. You can borrow this book from the library and enjoy the letters too.

And you can write a letter of your own, to practice this fun form of writing and communicating.

Choose someone from the newspaper. Then choose a type of letter from the chart on page 9. In the space provided here, write a detailed letter to that person. You can use some of the vocabulary you got from the article in the newspaper where you found that person.







E-Mail, IM, Chat Text Messages:

Often, when people write electronically, whether for e-mail, instant messaging, text messages, or chat rooms, they are in a hurry and also want to save space. Because of that, they use lots of abbreviations and write a sort of shorthand special language. It's almost like a code.

Here is a list of some of the most popular abbreviations and their meanings:





TOY — thinking of you

FYI — for your information

B4 — before

KIT— keep in touch

TNX— thanks

GBH— great big hug

BCNU— be seein' you

PLS— please

R&R— rest and relaxation

4ever—forever

ASAP — as soon as possible

OIC — oh I see

ILY — I love you

BC— because

LOL— laughing out loud

CU — see you

SFSG — so far so good

NOYB — none of your business

ABT— about

JK— just kidding

IOW — in other words

KWIM — know what I mean

BTW— by the way

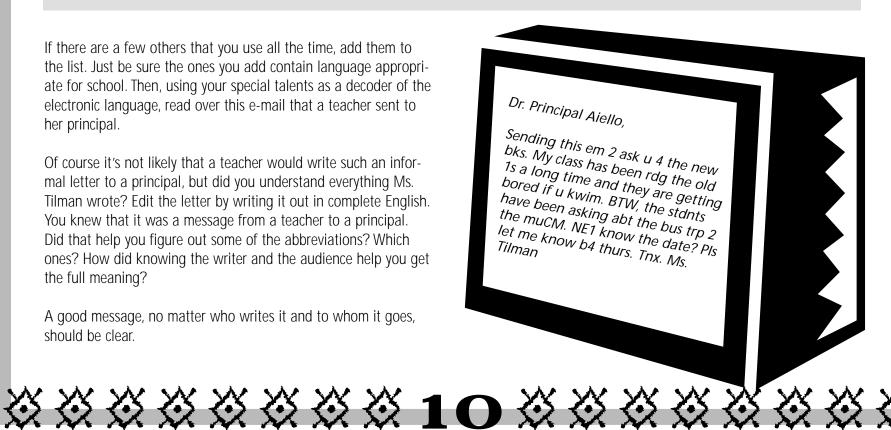
POV— point of view

NE1 — anyone

If there are a few others that you use all the time, add them to the list. Just be sure the ones you add contain language appropriate for school. Then, using your special talents as a decoder of the electronic language, read over this e-mail that a teacher sent to her principal.

Of course it's not likely that a teacher would write such an informal letter to a principal, but did you understand everything Ms. Tilman wrote? Edit the letter by writing it out in complete English. You knew that it was a message from a teacher to a principal. Did that help you figure out some of the abbreviations? Which ones? How did knowing the writer and the audience help you get the full meaning?

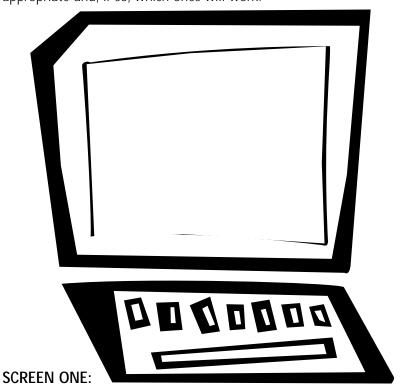
A good message, no matter who writes it and to whom it goes, should be clear.



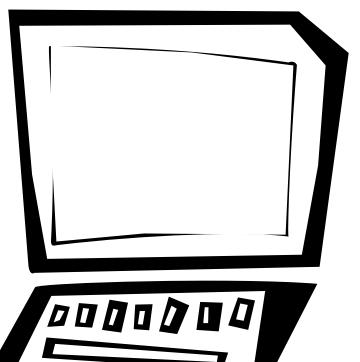


Abbreviations are terrific time and space savers, but too many can confuse a reader. When you write, you'll want to match the message to the reader, but you still want to get your message across. The language you would use when writing to a college asking for information, for example, is different from the language you would use to e-mail a classmate to ask for homework help. It's also different from an e-mail you might send to an old friend.

You can practice using different types of language by writing a couple of e-mails. Feel free to use lots of abbreviations, but think about the audience that will be reading the e-mail and the reason why you are writing. Decide each time whether Internet abbreviations are appropriate and, if so, which ones will work.



Choose an ad from the newspaper's Help Wanted ads. Write an e-mail to the employer, asking for more information and an application.



Imagine that you are a friend of a character in one of the newspaper's comic strips. Write a quick note to make weekend plans.

SCREEN TWO:

Web Resource

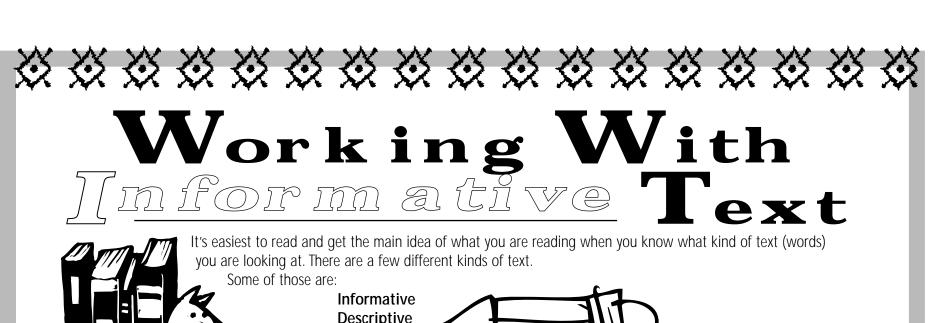
http://www.net-comber.com/acronyms.html

The above site contains a list of expanded abbreviations. Remember: Always be sure that the abbreviations are good to use in school.

NCTE Standards

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.





Descriptive Persuasive

Instructive



The type of text it is depends on the kind of message it is delivering. Can you figure out what each type is? If not, check your dictionary. Then, see whether you can find an example of each type in the newspaper. You may not be able to find all four, but you should be able to find at least two or three of them.

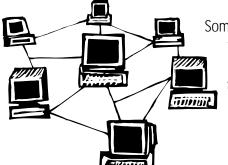
Informative text gives the reader lots of information, like in a reference

book or Website. It can be tricky to absorb it all, but there are some strategies you can use to help yourself get the most out of

Choose a piece of informative text from the newspaper. Then try these tips:

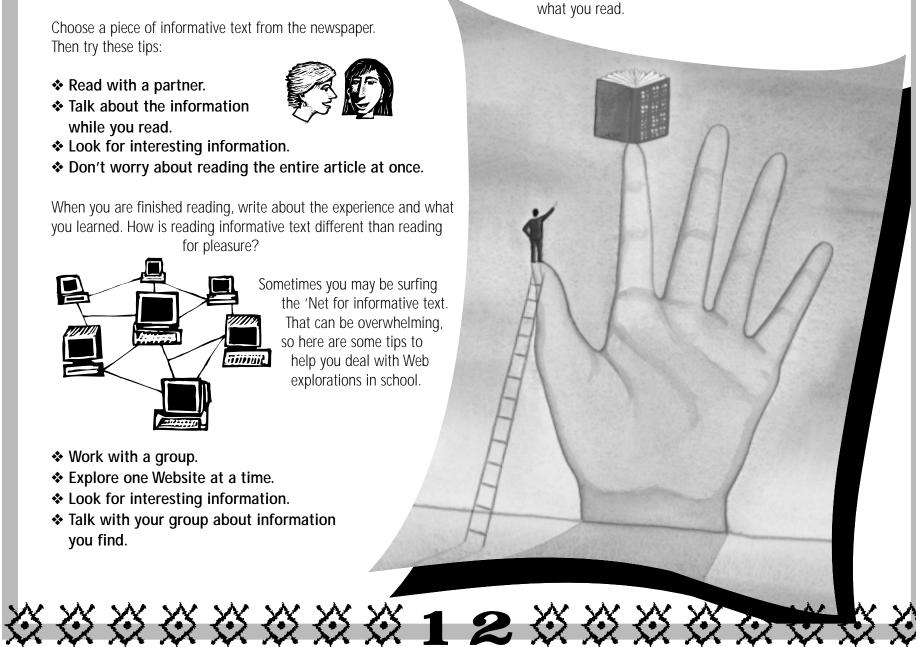
- Read with a partner.
- Talk about the information while you read.
- Look for interesting information.
- Don't worry about reading the entire article at once.

When you are finished reading, write about the experience and what you learned. How is reading informative text different than reading for pleasure?



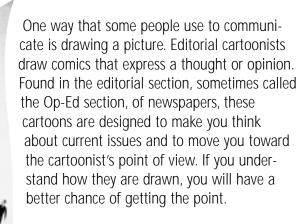
Sometimes you may be surfing the 'Net for informative text. That can be overwhelming, so here are some tips to help you deal with Web explorations in school.

- Work with a group.
- Explore one Website at a time.
- Look for interesting information.
- **❖** Talk with your group about information you find.





Drawing Pictures to Create WORDS



The work of cartoonist Herbert L. Block, known to the world as Herblock, is considered among the finest cartoons.

Look at this Herblock cartoon. Follow these steps to help you get his message.

Step 1: Check the Symbols

Cartoons use simple objects to stand for ideas. In the case of this cartoon, the symbols are simple – school buildings, a flag, and light and dark color tones.

Step 2: Look for exaggerations. Cartoonists may overdo physical characteristics of people or things to make a point. Note the way the suburban school is light and sits high on a hill by itself. Compare that to the way the inner-city school is crowded among other buildings and is very dark. What do those exaggerations mean? What was Herblock saying about his thoughts on the differences between suburban and city schools?



Step 3: Read the Labels

Sometimes cartoonists will actually label things to show exactly what they mean. The suburban school here is labeled "Suburban Heights Public School," while the other one is labeled "Inner-City Public School." Why do you think he used the word "Heights" in naming the suburban school? Why do you think he wrote the caption, "One Nation ... Indivisible" while showing the clear divide between the two schools?

Step 4: Look for Comparisons

Cartoonists will often compare things to show the message. In this case, what is Herblock comparing? How does he compare them? Does this comparison make his message clear?

Step 5: Look for Humor

A cartoonist might use irony or humor to make the point. Is there humor in this cartoon? What about the use of the world "Heights"? Is that meant to be ironic or humorous?

View the cartoon carefully and see whether you can tell what Herblock thought of the differences between schools in the city and schools in the suburbs. Which do you think he thought was the better school system?

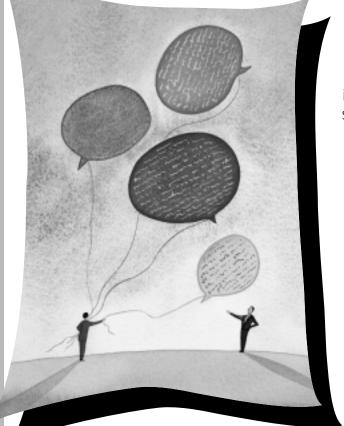
Find an example of an editorial cartoon in your newspaper, and briefly analyze it by following these steps and writing about what you see in the cartoon. Then, share and discuss the cartoon with a group of two or three classmates.

NCTE Standard on this page:

Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.







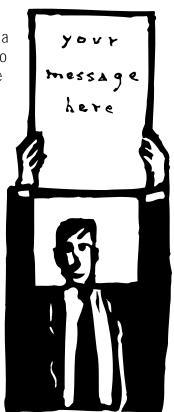
Good writers know just how to use words so that readers get a clear picture in their minds when they read. People who want to sell you things, like cars, know just how important words can be in helping you imagine things. That's why the names of cars are so important to their sales.

In the 1960s, way before you were born, cars had names like Thunderbird, Charger, Barracuda, and Mustang. Some of those car names still exist today, so they must have been good names, right? What do those names make you think about the cars of that time? What was the message the carmakers were trying to send with those names?

Moving on to the 1970s, people began to worry about using so much gas in such big and fast cars. Some car names then were Pinto, Gremlin, Rabbit, Duster, and Pacer. What do those names make you think of the cars?

Check out the car ads in the newspaper today.

What do some of the names make you think of the cars?



Imagine that it is your job to name a new line of cars. Which of these animal names would you choose? Write a reason why you would or would not choose each one.

Seal	
Grizzly	
Snail	
Shark	
Tyrannosaurus	

Imagine that these are the names of new cars today. Write a description of what each car might look like and whether it is probably a family car, or a fast sports car, or an SUV, or something else.

Нірро	
Cheetah	
Tortoise	



Check the newspaper's ads for cars. Talk about the names of cars today and why you think they were chosen.



When most people think about communicating with others, they think about talking. It's obviously the easiest way to tell someone what's on your mind.

Or is it?

It turns out that public speaking is the No. 1 fear of lots of people. Their hands sweat, their knees may shake, they get butterflies in their stomach while their mouths get dry and their minds go blank. Wow, that's some fear. Sounds more like a strange sickness doesn't it? Well, if it's like a sickness, that means it also has a cure.

If you have this fear ... fear not! There's help for you. Start by knowing that this feeling is normal. You're nervous. People are watching you. They're judging you. They might even be grading you. Who wouldn't be nervous with that going on? But nerves can be good. You can use the energy generated by your nerves to keep your speech lively and exciting. Nerves make sure that you won't bore your audience.

Just focus on that audience and not on yourself. Look around the room and notice what people are wearing or how they are sitting. Think about anything other than what's going on inside of yourself. If you are well prepared, with your thoughts either written out or in note form to remind you of what you want to say, you can feel comfortable presenting.

Think about how great this chance is. You have an opportunity to say what you think and everyone has to listen to you! How often do you get that spotlight?

You can do a couple of things to make sure you are a fun speaker to listen to:

❖ Look at people eye to eye. That's called making eye contact, and it means that you make your eyes meet theirs, one person at a time.

- ❖ Change the sound of your voice. Keep changing the tone, high and low, and the loudness and softness of your voice.
- Change the speed. Sometimes speak a little quicker and sometimes a little slower. Changing your voice speed keeps peoples' attention.
- Admit mistakes. If you make one and misspeak, you can actually say so. The other kids will see that you are just a person, same as they are.
- ❖ Move around a little bit. You can take a few steps one way, stop a bit, and then take a few steps another way.

Okay, are you ready to speak in public? Try this. Turn to the comic strips in the newspaper. Take turns with your classmates standing up and reading them aloud like little plays with each person reading the word bubbles of a character aloud. Ham it up. This is your time to be center stage!

While you're looking at the comic strips, try this fun activity. Choose one character and make a business card for him or her. Use this card to help you.

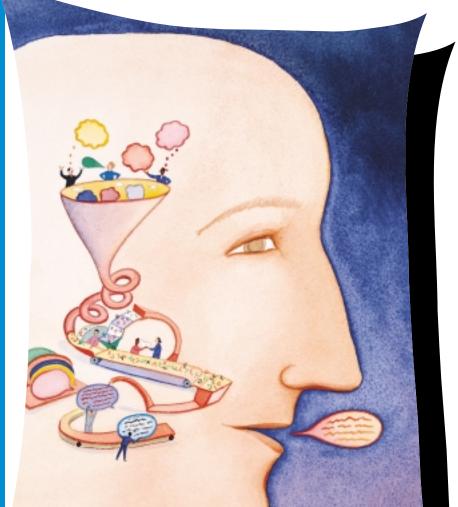
Character's Name
A short description
Address
E-mail
Cell phone number

Or, try this soapbox activity. Take a few minutes to read a news story that interests you. Jot some notes in the margins with your thoughts about what you read. Then take turns standing up and telling the class what you think about the story you read.

NCTE Standard on this page:

Students adjust their use of spoken, written, and visual language (e.g., conventions, style, vocabulary) to communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and for different purposes.





Lots of the activities in this special section involved writing. When you write, it's a good idea to edit or check over what you wrote to make sure it is all right.

Here is a list of things you should do when you edit:

- Read your work aloud to a friend to see where to stop for periods, question marks, and exclamation marks.
- Use capitals at the beginning of each sentence.
- Circle words that may be misspelled and check them in a dictionary.
- ❖ Make sure you have an interesting beginning sentence.
- ❖ Try to say things in different and surprising ways to keep the reader interested.
- ♣ Have evidence in your writing to show that you are thinking about your audience.
- ❖ Put the information in an order that makes sense.
- End each paragraph with a summary statement.

Web Resources for Writing and Relating

Check out this site where you can make a brochure to tell people about your hometown. It's lots of writing fun.

www.MYBROCHUREMAKER.COM

Grammar help can be found at:

http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/

Check out the poetry-writing help at:

http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/poetry/and

http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~leslieob/pizzaz.html

Teen writers may like: www.teenlit.com

Narrative writing help is at:

http://www.orangeusd.k12.ca.us/yorba/narrative_writing1.htm and

http://www.rscc.cc.tn.us/owl&writingcenter/OWL/Narration.html

