

Grades 6-8, Prompt for Informative / Explanatory Writing Common Core Standard W.CCR.2

Great historical events often have deep effects upon the people who live through them. Depending on the person and the situation, those effects can be very different – or not.

The Great Depression of the 1930s, in the United States, was one of these events. Lasting for nearly ten years, the Great Depression closed thousands of banks, put millions of people out of work, and seared itself into the memory of those who lived through it.

The President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, responded by creating new government programs to help Americans, known as the New Deal.

You are going to read three texts about the Great Depression: a memoir called *Digging In* by Robert Hastings, a poem, “Debts” by Karen Hesse, and a short text about the programs of the New Deal of President Roosevelt. As you read and re-read these texts, think about what the texts show you about how the Great Depression seems to have affected the individual people who lived through it.

Finally, using these texts, you will write an essay, explaining your thinking.

For the essay, your Focusing Question is:

According to these texts, what effect did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it? Be sure to use evidence from the texts to support and develop your thinking.

Remember, a good informative essay:

- *Has a clear introduction*
- *States a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully*
- *Uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence*
- *Concludes effectively*
- *Uses precise language*
- *Shows control over conventions*

You will have three class periods to complete this reading/thinking/writing task. The essay will have a single draft, and you may want to take some time to plan your writing before you begin work. When you have finished, be sure to proofread.

Informative / Explanatory Writing
Common Core Standard W.CCR.2
6-8

Teacher Directions

- The texts provide the information needed to address the prompt, and students should independently read the texts carefully before writing. Encourage students to refer back to the text while writing and to take notes, and to mark up the text as much as is helpful to them.

- Students should be given three sessions for the prompt. Allow approximately 45 minutes for each, but the prompt should not be strictly timed. Students should be given as much time as needed to plan, write, and proofread.

- The writing must be done without help, but students may have access to personal dictionaries, or any other resources to support spelling and mechanics that they are accustomed to using while writing.
 - Be sure students have paper to take notes or do whatever pre-planning they might choose to do.
 - If students are writing by hand, provide lined paper from your classroom for writing. If they are using a word processor, make sure they save their work so it can be accessed the next day.

- This will be first draft writing, but encourage students to proofread and correct any errors they find.

Digging In

By Robert J. Hastings

The closing of Old West Side Mine meant the end of anything resembling a steady job for the next eight years. From 1930 on, it was a day's work here and a day's work there, a coal order from the welfare office, a few days on WPA, a garden in the back yard, and a few chickens and eggs.

We weathered the storm because of Dad's willingness to take any job and Mom's ability to stretch every available dollar. It was not so much a matter of finding a job as of filling in with odd jobs wherever and whenever you could, and most of the "jobs" were those you made for yourself.

My diary shows that Dad sold iron cords door to door, "worked a day in the hay," bought a horse to break gardens, rented an extra lot for a garden on the shares, picked peaches, raised sweet potato slips, traded an occasional dozen of eggs at the grocery, hung wallpaper, "painted Don Albright's house for \$5," picked up a day or two's work at the strip mines, guarded the fence at the county fairgrounds, cut hair for boys in the neighborhood, sold coal orders, and when he had to and could, worked intermittently on WPA.

With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible. We stopped the evening paper, turned off the city water and cleaned out our well, sold our four-door Model T touring car with the snap-on side curtains and isinglass, stopped ice and milk delivery, and disconnected our gas range for all but the three hot summer months. There was no telephone to disconnect, as we didn't have one to start with!

We did keep up regular payments on two Metropolitan Life Insurance policies. Page after page of old receipt books show entries of 10 cents per week on one policy and 69 cents a month on another. As long as we could, we made house payments to the Marion Building and Loan, but a day came when we had to let those go, too.

Fortunately, we were able to save our house from foreclosure. When so many borrowers defaulted, the Marion Building and Loan went bankrupt. Creditors were allowed to pay just about any amount to satisfy the receivers. But that was the catch – who had "just about any amount" to pay? A house behind ours sold for \$25. Many good houses in Marion sold for \$5 to \$100 and were torn down and moved to nearby towns. We settled with the loan company for \$125, or ten cents on the dollar for our \$1250 mortgage. I'll never forget the day Dad cleared it all up, making two or three trips to town to bring papers home for Mom to sign. He was able to borrow the \$125 from his aunt, Dialtha James, who as the widow of a Spanish-American war veteran had a small pension.

Looking back, I find it amazing what we did without. A partial list would include toothpaste (we used soda), toilet paper (we used the catalog), newspaper or magazine subscriptions, soft drinks, potato chips and snacks, bakery goods except bread and an occasional dozen of doughnuts, paper clips, rubber bands and restaurant meals. We had no water bill, sewer bill, telephone bill, no car expenses – gasoline, tires, batteries, licenses, insurance, repairs – no laundry service, no dry cleaning (we pressed woolens up with a hot iron and wet cloth), no bank service charge (no bank account), no sales or income tax. We sent no greeting cards except maybe half a dozen at Christmas...

Typical of the simple economies Mom practiced was keeping the electric bill to \$1 a month and the gas bill to \$1 a month in June, July, and August....Since our only appliance was an electric iron, the chief use of electricity was for lighting. With only a single bulb suspended by a cord from the ceiling of each room, there weren't many lights to burn...On winter evenings, Mom would turn on the kitchen light while she cooked supper. If I had lessons I brought them to the kitchen table or sprawled on the floor between the kitchen and dining room.

After supper we "turned off the light in the kitchen" and moved to the dining-sitting room, where another light was switched on. If we wanted to read on winter afternoons, we sat as near a window as possible, with the curtains pinned back, to save the lights until it was nearly dark...

Dad had some old-fashioned shoe lasts, and he would buy stick-'em-on soles at the dime store to patch our shoes in winter. With simple barber tools he cut my hair and that of other kids in the neighborhood, for maybe ten cents a head. In cold, wet weather, when he worked outdoors on WPA, he often cut strips of cardboard to stuff in the soles of his shoes and keep his feet warm.

We took care of what we had. Every cotton cloth was used over as a dish cloth, wash cloth, dust cloth, shoe-shining cloth, window-washing cloth, to scrub and wax floors, make bandages, make quilt pieces, make kite tails, or to tie boxes and papers together. The cotton bags from flour, salt, and cracked chicken feed were washed, bleached, and cut into dish cloths and towels. Some neighbors made curtains or even dresses from feed sacks. Every paper bag was saved for lunches or cut and used for wrapping paper. String was wound into balls for later use.

Each August Mom would find someone who was a year ahead of me in school, and buy his used books. One exception was a spelling book used in all eight grades. Since it was to be used for eight years, we decided it would be a wise investment to buy a new one when I started first grade. In the seventh grade, I dropped that speller in the snow. I thought Mom was unfair when she sent me all the way back to school, retracing my steps to look for the book...

Before the Depression, we hung a four-cornered black-and-white cardboard sign in the front window each morning. The figures in the corners told the iceman how many pounds to bring – 25, 50, 75, or 100. But ice was one of the casualties of the Depression, although we managed a small piece two or three times a week for iced tea. About eleven in the morning I would pull a little wagon, filled with a gunny sack and assorted old quilts and tarpaulins, down to the neighborhood ice house to buy a “nickel’s worth of ice,” which was half of a 25-pound chunk. By wrapping it carefully and storing it in a cool, damp spot under the house, we could stretch that piece of ice for two or three days. In rainy, cool weather, maybe four days! It was our glistening prize, and any left over from tea was emptied back into a pitcher of ice water, or used for lemonade that afternoon. So as not to waste any, we chipped only what was needed, with much of the same care used by a diamond cutter.

Whatever was free was our recreation. This may have included playing records on our wind-up victrola or listening to the radio. You might watch a parachute jump at the airport or a free ball game at the city park, with perhaps a free band concert afterwards...the band concerts survived only the first two years of the Depression...

We liked music, and one of my earliest memories is of Dad singing to me:

Two arms that hold me tight,
Two lips that kiss goodnight;
To me he’ll always be,
That little boy of mine.

No one can ever know,
Just what his coming has meant:
He’s something heaven has sent,
That little boy of mine.

At one point in the Depression, the cupboard was literally bare of money. We weren’t hungry, but we were penniless. Then Dad went back in the pantry and came out with a jar in which he had saved a few nickels and dimes for such an emergency.

Later, Mom said to me, “I’ve learned that whatever happens, your Daddy always has a little dab of money put back somewhere...”

Excerpted from “Digging In”, 1986. Found in *Dark Days*, Perfection Learning, 2006
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Debts

By Karen Hesse

Daddy is thinking
of taking a loan from Mr. Roosevelt and his men,
to get some new wheat planted
where the winter crop has spindled out and died.
Mr. Roosevelt promises
Daddy won't have to pay a dime
till the crop comes in.

Daddy says,
"I can turn the fields over,
start again.
It's sure to rain soon.
Wheat's sure to grow."

Ma says, "What if it doesn't?"

Daddy takes off his hat,
roughs up his hair,
puts the hat back on.
"Course it'll rain," he says.

Ma says, "Bay,
it hasn't rained enough to grow wheat in
three years."

Daddy looks like a fight brewing.

He takes that red face of his out to the barn,
To keep from feuding with my pregnant ma.

I ask Ma

how, after all this time,

Daddy still believes in rain.

“Well, it rains enough,” Ma says,

“now and again,

to keep a person hoping.

But even if it didn’t

your daddy would have to believe.

It’s coming on spring,

and he’s a farmer.”

March 1934

The New Deal

In 1932 [Franklin Delano Roosevelt](#) was elected overwhelmingly on a campaign promising a New Deal for the American people. Roosevelt worked quickly upon his election to deliver the New Deal, an unprecedented number of reforms addressing the catastrophic effects of the Great Depression. Unlike his predecessor, [Herbert Hoover](#), who felt that the public should support the government and not the other way around, Roosevelt felt it was the federal government's duty to help the American people weather these bad times.

Together with his "brain trust," a group of university scholars and liberal theorists, Roosevelt sought the best course of action for the struggling nation. A desperate Congress gave him carte blanche and rubber-stamped his proposals in order to expedite the reforms. During the first 100 days of his presidency, a never-ending stream of bills was passed, to relieve poverty, reduce unemployment, and speed economic recovery.

His first act as president was to declare a four-day bank holiday, during which time Congress drafted the Emergency Banking Bill of 1933, which stabilized the banking system and restored the public's faith in the banking industry by putting the federal government behind it. Three months later, he signed the Glass-Steagall Act which created the FDIC, federally insuring deposits

The [Civil Conservation Corps](#) was one of the New Deal's most successful programs. It addressed the pressing problem of unemployment by sending 3 million single men from age 17 to 23 to the nation's forests to work. Living in camps in the forests, the men dug ditches, built reservoirs and planted trees. The men, all volunteers, were paid \$30 a month, with two thirds being sent home. The [Works Progress Administration](#), Roosevelt's major work relief program, would employ more than 8.5 million people to build bridges, roads, public buildings, parks and airports.

The National Industrial Recovery Act (NIRA) and the National Recovery Administration (NRA) were designed to address unemployment by regulating the number of hours worked per week and banning child labor. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA), created in 1933, gave \$3 billion to states for work relief programs. The Agricultural Adjustment Act subsidized farmers for reducing crops and provided loans for farmers facing bankruptcy. The Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC) helped people save their homes from foreclosure.

While they did not end the Depression, the New Deal's experimental programs helped the American people immeasurably by taking care of their basic needs and giving them the dignity of work and hope.

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File Name: I8P Dignity and Hope

Informative / Explanatory

Grade 8

On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Dignity and Hope

The Great Depression. This notorious event put Americas hope to the test. Leaving Americans economically and metally drained. The Great Depression devistated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal" who knows what horride ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression.

"With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible." This excerpt from the story "Digging in" by Robert J. Hastings shows the situation that each and every American faced. In the story, it is said that the family substituted toothpaste and toilet paper, for soda and catalog pages. Even common nessecities had to be sacrificed during The Great Depression.

Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed. In the poem "Debts" by Karen Hesse, the father of the family is facing a serious drought but still believes in rain. When reality sets in that rain is not likely to come, he is filled with rage and leaves to *** to the farm to avoid feuding with his pregnant wife. This man was a farmer, and had to rely on the most unreliable thing for a source of income, mother nature. This man, and every other Americans spirits were tested during The Great Depression, and the

Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow: The writer gives a bit of context and indicates the main ideas that will be developed

Organizes ideas and information using categories: The writer organizes text-by-text within an overall cause-effect structure

Uses appropriate, varied transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts

Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts and concrete details

Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary in well-chosen evidence from the poem to explain the topic

Analyzes evidence

number of those who still had hope was diminishing. With America facing an economic doom, Americans turned to one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end The Great Depression Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three-million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelt's work relief program put 8.5 million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end The Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts and concrete details

Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary

Establishes and maintains a formal style

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people, and left some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America was able to get through The Great Depression with dignity and hope.

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the information presented

In this on-demand assignment, students were asked to explain the effects of the Great Depression on people who lived through it. This writer gives a bit of context about the Great Depression in the introduction and then states his main points (the Great Depression devastated people who lived through it; Roosevelt's intervention was critical), which serve to preview what follows.

The writer organizes ideas, concepts, and information clearly by category, building his essay text-by-text and using textual evidence to support the main points. He uses appropriate, varied, and strong transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas. For example, he writes, "*Along with their wallets, Americans spirits were also crushed.*" Within each chunk of the essay, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and explain the effects, which he has identified from the texts he has read. While he does not give a great deal of evidence, what he does include is precise and well-chosen, with some analysis ("*When reality sets in...*") This makes the writer's thinking easy to follow.

The essay has an appropriately formal style. The conclusion follows from and supports the information presented.

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 8

Revised and Edited for Student Use

Dignity and Hope

The Great Depression. This notorious event put America's hope to the test, leaving Americans economically and mentally drained. The Great Depression devastated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal", who knows what horrid ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression?

"With no dependable income, we cut back on everything possible." This excerpt from the story "Digging In" by Robert J. Hastings shows the situation that each and every American faced. In the story, it is said that the family substituted toothpaste and toilet paper for soda and catalog pages. Even common necessities had to be sacrificed during the Great Depression.

Along with their wallets, Americans' spirits were also crushed. In the poem "Debts" by Karen Hesse, the father of the family faces a serious drought but still believes in rain. When reality sets in that rain is not likely to come, he is filled with rage and leaves to *** to the farm to avoid feuding with his pregnant wife. This man was a farmer and had to rely on the most unreliable thing for a source of income, Mother Nature. This man and every other American's spirits were tested during the Great

Depression, and the number of those who still had hope was constantly diminishing. With America facing economic doom, Americans turned to one man - Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end the Great Depression, Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelt's work relief program put eight and a half million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end the Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people and left some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America was able to get through the Great Depression with dignity and hope.

File Name: I8P Dignity and Hope

Informative / Explanatory

Grade 8

On-Demand Writing, Uniform Prompt

Dignity and Hope

The Great Depression. This notorious event put Americas hope to the test. Leaving Americans economically and metally drained. The Great Depression devistated America and will never be forgotten. If not for Franklin Delano Roosevelt and his beneficial "New Deal" who knows what horride ruins would remain as a result of The Great Depression.

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This man, and every other Americans spirits were tested during The Great Depression, and the number of those who still had hope was diminishing. With America facing an economic doom, Americans turned to one man, Franklin Delano Roosevelt. With the promise of a New Deal to help end The Great Depression Roosevelt won the election by a landslide. He created jobs for three-million single men between seventeen and twenty-three years of age. Roosevelts work relief program put 8.5 million Americans to work building roads, bridges, airports and more. Although Roosevelt did not end The Great Depression, he provided Americans with work and hope.

The Great Depression left Americans mentally as well as economically depleted. This event tested the will of the American people, and left some citizens without any hope. With the help of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, America was able to get through The Great Depression with dignity and hope.

File Name: I8R Frosty and Friends

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 8

Range of Writing

Frosty and Friends

I need to find out how much Frosty will weigh after 12 days, and how many days it will take until he completely melts away.

How I Derived My Answer

First, I divided 38 by 1.3 to find out how many days it would take for him to completely melt away. I noticed that the answer was 29 days. I also observed that there was a remainder of .3, so it would take the 30th day for him to melt.

Introduces the topic /focus clearly, previewing what is to follow: The writer succinctly lays out the mathematics problem to be addressed, although the introduction assumes that the reader understands the premise

Organizes ideas, information, and concepts into broader categories, using headings and graphics to aid comprehension

1)

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Frosty – 38 lbs | |
| Loses 1.3 lbs. / day | |
| 1.3 | 3.8 |
| - | 26 |
| <hr/> | |
| | 12 |
| - | 6.5 |
| <hr/> | |
| | 5.5 |
| - | 5.2 |
| <hr/> | |
| | .3 |
| | 29 |

| |
|---|
| $Y = 38 - (1.3x)$ |
| Y = weight after certain number of days |
| X = number of days |
| 38 = initial weight |
| 1.3 = pounds lost / day |

Uses tables and charts to aid comprehension

After 29 days, Frosty will have .3 pounds of snow left. Thus, he will completely melt on the 30th day.

Establishes and maintains a formal style

2)

| | | |
|-----|------|---------|
| 1.3 | 38 | |
| - | 1.3 | 10 |
| | 25 | |
| - | 2.6 | 2 |
| | 22.4 | 12 days |

Frosty will weigh 22.4 lbs. after 12 days.

$$= 35.7 \text{ after 17 days} \quad 22.1$$

$$+ \quad 13.6$$

$$35.7$$

I divided 38 by 1.3 to find the number of days it would take for him to melt completely. Then I used my equation to calculate is weight after 12 days.

After I divided, I made a new equation for the third question: $Y = 28 - (1.3X) - 0.8$. I knew that if I did this then I would be able to figure out the third question. Finally, I figured out that if the children added 0.8 pounds of snow to him everyday, he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

My Solution

Knowing that he will lose 1.3 pounds per day, it will take 30 days before Frosty completely melts away. Using the equation I made, Frosty would weigh 22.4 pounds after 12 days. Finally, if the schoolyard children pack 0.8 pounds onto him everyday, then he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

3)

To accommodate with the children's helping Frosty, the new equation will be: $Y = 38 - (1.3X) + 0.8$

The 0.8 stands for the weight of snow the children add to Frosty.

$$1.3 * 17 = 22.1$$

$$+ (0.8 * 17) = 13.6$$

Frosty

Uses precise and domain-specific language and vocabulary to explain and develop topic

Develops the topic with relevant, well-chosen, accurate facts, definitions, and mathematical reasoning.

Uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts

Provides a concluding section that follows from the information and explanation given

In this informative/explanatory text from an eighth-grade mathematics class, the writer begins by setting out the mathematical problem of how much Frosty will weigh after twelve days and how long it will take him to melt away completely. While this introduction would be clear enough to those already familiar with this assignment (such as the teacher), other readers might have some questions, such as who built Frosty in the first place or how much he initially weighed.

The writer organizes the explanation by category (problem, approach, solution) and includes subheadings and graphics to aid comprehension. He uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to accurately describe the problem and explain his reasoning. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone of the explanation is objective and the style formal—both appropriate for describing mathematical thinking. The conclusion follows from and supports the main point of the piece.

File Name: I8R Frosty and Friends

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 8

Range of Writing

Frosty and Friends

I need to find out how much Frosty will weigh after 12 days, and how many days it will take until he completely melts away.

How I Derived My Answer

First, I divided 38 by 1.3 to find out how many days it would take for him to completely melt away. I noticed that the answer was 29 days. I also observed that there was a remainder of .3, so it would take the 30th day for him to melt.

1)

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| Frosty – 38 lbs | |
| Loses 1.3 lbs. / day | |
| 1.3 | 3.8 |
| - | 26 |
| <hr/> | |
| | 12 |
| - | 6.5 |
| <hr/> | |
| | 5.5 |
| - | 5.2 |
| <hr/> | |
| | .3 |
| | 29 |

| |
|---|
| $Y = 38 - (1.3x)$ |
| Y = weight after certain number of days |
| X = number of days |
| 38 = initial weight |
| 1.3 = pounds lost / day |

After 29 days, Frosty will have .3 pounds of snow left. Thus, he will completely melt on the 30th day.

2)

| | | |
|-----|------|---------|
| 1.3 | 38 | |
| - | 1.3 | 10 |
| | 25 | |
| - | 2.6 | 2 |
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$$= 35.7 \text{ after 17 days} \quad 22.1$$

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I divided 38 by 1.3 to find the number of days it would take for him to melt completely. Then I used my equation to calculate his weight after 12 days.

After I divided, I made a new equation for the third question: $Y = 28 - (1.3X) - 0.8$. I knew that if I did this then I would be able to figure out the third question. Finally, I figured out that if the children added 0.8 pounds of snow to him everyday, he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

My Solution

Knowing that he will lose 1.3 pounds per day, it will take 30 days before Frosty completely melts away. Using the equation I made, Frosty would weigh 22.4 pounds after 12 days. Finally, if the schoolyard children pack 0.8 pounds onto him everyday, then he would weigh 35.7 pounds after 17 days.

3)

To accommodate with the children's helping Frosty, the new equation will be: $Y = 38 - (1.3X) + 0.8$

The 0.8 stands for the weight of snow the children add to Frosty.

$$1.3 * 17 = 22.1$$

$$+ (0.8 * 17) = 13.6$$

Frosty

File Name: I8R How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 8

Range of Writing

How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell

Have you ever looked at your own cells? No, of course not. You're a mortal and you don't have the power or technology to do that. Maybe some day in the future we shall grant humans the power of microscopic vision. Who knows? That's up to Zeus. Cells are amazing things. Each one is individually different. When I first looked at my own cells I thought, "WOW *there is nothing like this in the whole world.*" I was wrong. Recently, I came to the realization that my own dear Mount Olympus is very much like a cell itself. There are many components in a cells that can also, in a way, be found on Mount Olympus. The structure of a cell and the components within are very like Mount Olympus. What? You don't believe me? Well fine! Come on. I'll show you. Oh, and by the way my name is Eos and I'm the Greek goddess of dawn. I'm responsible for the rising of the sun. Be careful and follow me. Don't let anyone else see you. Mortals aren't allowed up her. Let's go.

In an animal cell, the cell membrane controls what enters and leaves the cell. There are small pores that allow things of different sizes through. Up her, on Olympus what keeps the mortals from entering. or leaving (if they are to be kept here) is an instilled fear of us. Mortals dare not enter unless told to by one of the gods or goddesses. They dare not leave either.

Now, all of you stand still. No, it's okay. This is just a powder that will make you invisible. Nobody move or make a sound. Got it? If you do, it will be your life wasted. I just have to check to make sure that neither Zeus or Hera are in their throne room...Okay, we can go in. Just go silently and quickly! This is Zeus and Hera's throne room, which is very similar to the nucleus of a cell. In a cell, the nucleus is the control center of activity on a

Introduces the topic clearly, previewing what is to follow: The writer orients the reader to the narrative setting through which information and ideas will be conveyed, introduces a narrator (the goddess Eos), and establishes the essay's explanatory focus on a comparison between the structure of cells and Mount Olympus.

Organizes ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories: The writer uses a narrative structure (a tour through Mount Olympus) as the frame for conveying specific comparisons between the structure of cells and Mount Olympus

Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary within accurate evidence to develop topic

cellular level It's from here that Zeus and Hera control the happenings of immortals and mortals alike. It's like the control center for the world.

Holy Zeus! Someone's coming in. It's Zeus himself! Quick into here. No noise, no movement, no nothing! Those of you who can peer through the window, do so. You'll be able to see the head god himself! Zeus and his wife, Hera, control the gods, goddesses, and mortals. They are like the chromosomes in a cell. In a cell, the chromosomes determine what kind of cell it will be and how it acts. That is what Zeus and Hera do in the world.

In a cell, the ribosomes turn amino acids into proteins. On Mount Olympus we make many things like laws, rules, and the weather. However, the most material thing that we make are lightning bolts. Of course, only Zeus can actually make them. Although others can use them if they have his permission. See how Zeus only uses his left hand for tasks? That is because his right hand is used to make lightening. Like the ribosomes, his hand takes raw materials (the abundant plasma and energy up here) and creates a whole new product (lightning.) His hand is like the ribosomes in a cell.

Good, Zeus is leaving. This closet is starting to get stuffy. We should go quickly out into the hall. Now take a right, then a left into here. This is the courtyard. Immortals don't have to eat, but we do it for the pleasure of it. Also, eating helps keep us healthy and happy. The fountains flow with sweet juices and wines. The trees have the best fruits possible. That table over there is always supplied with the most delectable food imaginable. Those chests that are spread around are filled with gold and jewels for our taking. Wearing these helps enhance our godly image. This courtyard represents the vacuoles in a cell. In the vacuoles, large amounts of what the cell needs are stored. Here large amounts of what immortals thrive on is stored.

Don't be alarmed. Those are our mortal slaves. They won't tell on us because I have ordered them not to. In an animal cell, mitochondria store

Uses appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts. Here, the writer is using a chronological narrative structure in addition to the cell structures to aid comprehension.

Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary to explain topic

Continues to analyze comparison between cell structure / function and Mount Olympus (develops topic, makes meaning clear)

Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary to explain topic

energy and release it when necessary. They power the cell. Here on Mount Olympus, we could not get by with out thee slaves. They perform almost every task that can even slight be considered laborious. The energy they get from food is stored in their bodies and released in order to do tasks.

In a cell, the ER, or endoplasmic reticulum, help to move substances around the cell. The halls and paths we've been following are very similar to the ER, they are like the roads that contain all movement.

Quick, into this room here. That was Hermes the messenger god. Now that I think of it, he is very much like the golgi bodies in a cell. The golgi bodies package and ship substances from place to place in a cell. Hermes, similarly wraps items up in goat skin and takes them from one person, immortal, or Titan to another.

Now, let's go back to the entrance. You should go. Soon every god, goddess, demi-god, and demi-goddess will be coming. There is a big meeting tonight. So they were all summoned here. By now, I'm sure you can see how Mount Olympus is structured like a cell Just follow that path down there until you get home. Wait, the day is almost over and it'll get dark. Each of you swallow some of this powder. There, this enables you to fly, which is much faster than walking. If you promise not to tell anyone about this and you can go. You swear? Okay, good bye

Uses precise and domain-specific vocabulary within evidence to develop topic

Provides a concluding section that follows from and supports the explanation presented: The writer restates the main point but also provides a sense of closure to the narrative frame

For this piece of blended writing (informational and narrative) from an eighth-grade science class, students were asked to address the question: "How is a cell like a familiar building or city?" This writer responds by comparing cell structure to the structure of Mount Olympus and writes from the perspective of one of the gods. She begins by orienting the reader to the narrative conceit, providing some context about cells and Mount Olympus, and then stating her main point (Mount Olympus is structured like a cell), thereby previewing what follows in the essay.

The writer organizes the essay clearly by using both a narrative story line (for both reader interest and analogical purposes) and a compare/contrast informative/explanatory structure. She uses appropriate transitions to clarify relationships among ideas and concepts. Within each chunk, the writer uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to name and accurately explain elements of the comparison. This makes the writer's thinking and understanding easy to follow.

The tone is conversational and the style relatively informal, both appropriate for this type of blended writing. The conclusion follows from and supports the main point, as well as providing a sense of closure for the narrative.

File Name: I8R How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell

Informative/Explanatory

Grade 8

Range of Writing

How Mount Olympus is Like a Cell

Have you ever looked at your own cells? No, of course not. You're a mortal and you don't have the power or technology to do that. Maybe some day in the future we shall grant humans the power of microscopic vision. Who knows? That's up to Zeus. Cells are amazing things. Each one is individually different. When I first looked at my own cells I thought, "*WOW there is nothing like this in the whole world.*" I was wrong. Recently, I came to the realization that my own dear Mount Olympus is very much like a cell itself. There are many components in a cells that can also, in a way, be found on Mount Olympus. The structure of a cell and the components within are very like Mount Olympus. What? You don't believe me? Well fine! Come on. I'll show you. Oh, and by the way my name is Eos and I'm the Greek goddess of dawn. I'm responsible for the rising of the sun. Be careful and follow me. Don't let anyone else see you. Mortals aren't allowed up her. Let's go.

In an animal cell, the cell membrane controls what enters and leaves the cell. There are small pores that allow things of different sizes through. Up her, on Olympus what keeps the mortals from entering. or leaving (if they are to be kept here) is an instilled fear of us. Mortals dare not enter unless told to by one of the gods or goddesses. They dare not leave either.

Now, all of you stand still. No, it's okay. This is just a powder that will make you invisible. Nobody move or make a sound. Got it? If you do, it will be your life wasted. I just have to check to make sure that neither Zeus or Hera are in their throne room...Okay, we can go in. Just go silently and quickly! This is Zeus and Hera's throne room, which is very similar to the nucleus of a cell. In a cell, the nucleus is the control center of activity on a cellular level. It's from here that Zeus and Hera control the happenings of immortals and mortals alike. It's like the control center for the world.

Holy Zeus! Someone's coming in. It's Zeus himself! Quick into here. No noise, no movement, no nothing! Those of you who can peer through the window, do so. You'll be able to

see the head god himself! Zeus and his wife, Hera, control the gods, goddesses, and mortals. They are like the chromosomes in a cell. In a cell, the chromosomes determine what kind of cell it will be and how it acts. That is what Zeus and Hera do in the world.

In a cell, the ribosomes turn amino acids into proteins. On Mount Olympus we make many things like laws, rules, and the weather. However, the most material thing that we make are lightning bolts. Of course, only Zeus can actually make them. Although others can use them if they have his permission. See how Zeus only uses his left hand for tasks? That is because his right hand is used to make lightning. Like the ribosomes, his hand takes raw materials (the abundant plasma and energy up here) and creates a whole new product (lightning.) His hand is like a the ribosomes in a cell.

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