

# Introductory Paragraph Informational Mentor Text Samples

Compiled by M. Conrad



# Use Mentor Texts to Teach the Components of Informative Writing

*Checklist Item: Introduce a topic*

## Mentor Text Routine

(Reading with an Author's Eye)

*A mentor text is a written piece used as an example of quality writing. Using mentor texts is an excellent strategy to get kids thinking about their reading as well as improving their writing. Mentor texts give students a sense of what a genre looks and feels like and how other authors successfully write in that genre or style.*

*The mentor text routine is a routine where teacher and students analyze a text and make a map of that text. Together they look at the mentor text and analyze not just what is said, but how something is said. They then replicate that model in their own writing.*

- Read = what does it say
- Analyze = how is it said
- Emulate = what did that writer do that I can do

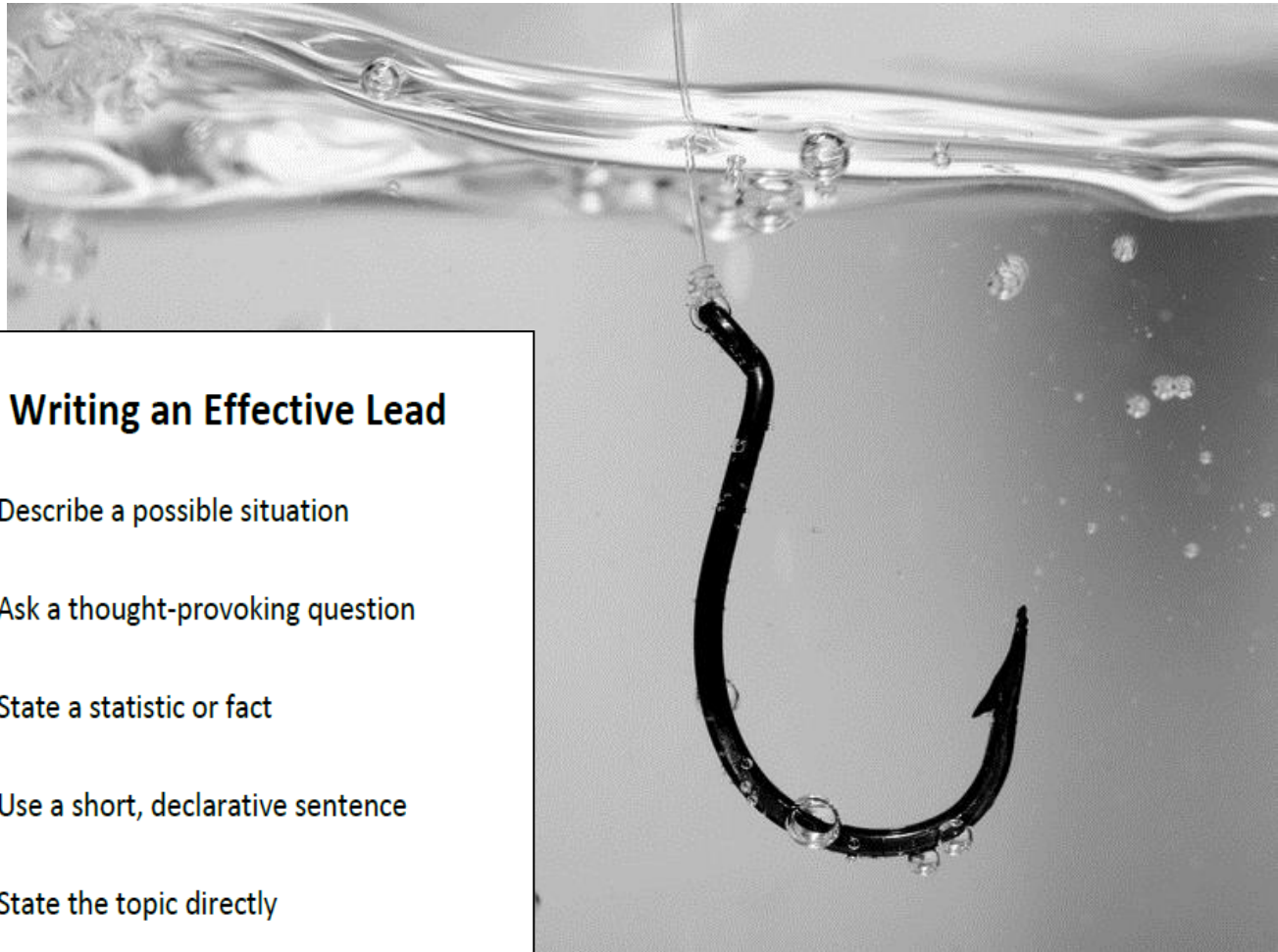
### Steps for using a mentor text:

1. Display the mentor text for all to see (document camera, computer projection, etc.).
2. Read the text.
3. Discuss the general ideas of the text.
4. Go back and analyze the text by rereading specific sections and noting what the author did.
  - o Identify the main topic addressed by the author in each section.
  - o Identify the literary devices the author used in each section. (repetition, alliteration, imagery, etc.)
5. Create a written "map" of the text by making notes directly on the text or on sticky notes.
6. Teacher models the process for students and writes a similar piece, using the "map" as a model.
7. Students write a similar piece using the "map" as a model.

DSD Mentor Text Instructional Routine,  
based on a presentation by Kelly Gallagher at IRA 2012, adapted by M. Conrad

# Use Mentor Texts to Teach the Components of Informative Writing

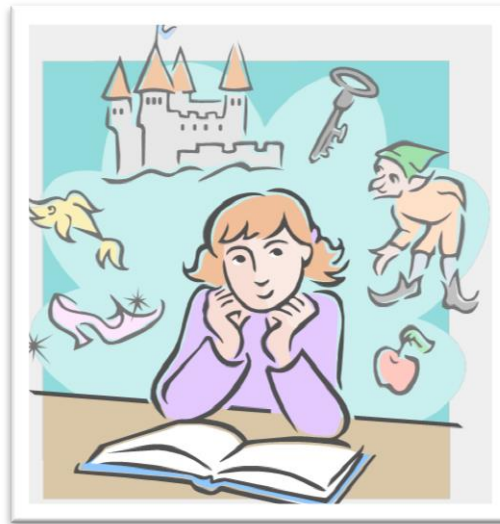
*Checklist Item: Introduce a topic*



## Writing an Effective Lead

- Describe a possible situation
- Ask a thought-provoking question
- State a statistic or fact
- Use a short, declarative sentence
- State the topic directly

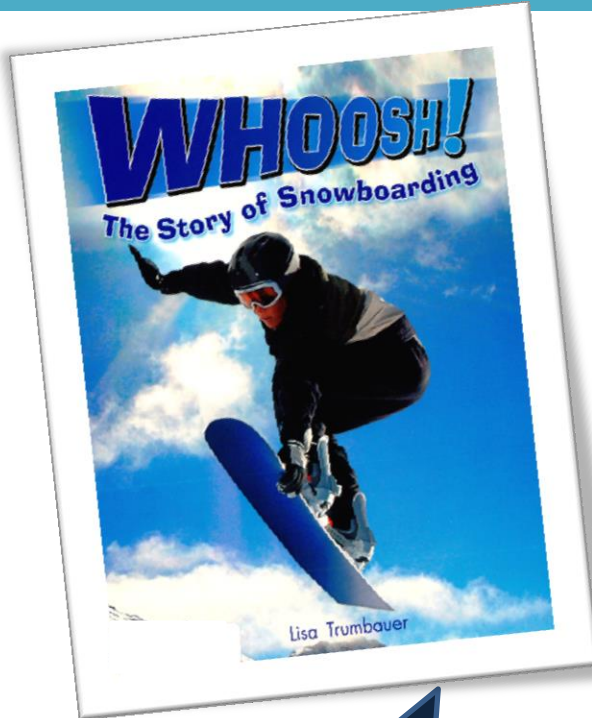
# Describe a possible situation.



# Whoosh! The Story of Snowboarding

by Lisa Trumbauer

Identify the technique.



Describe a possible situation.

## What Is Snowboarding?

Imagine you're surfing over a wave, then, *whoosh!* You're flying through the air, twisting through a skateboarding trick before landing on a snowy path below. You wouldn't be surfing or skateboarding. You'd be snowboarding!

Writing

# Whoosh! The Story of Snowboarding

by Lisa Trumbauer

Create a map.

## What Is Snowboarding?

Imagine you're surfing over a wave, then, *whoosh!* You're flying through the air, twisting through a skateboarding trick before landing on a snowy path below. You wouldn't be surfing or skateboarding. You'd be snowboarding!

Create a MAP of the introduction.

Imagine \_\_\_\_\_

or

Imagine \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_.

You wouldn't be \_\_\_\_\_.

You'd be \_\_\_\_\_!

# Whoosh! The Story of Snowboarding

by Lisa Trumbauer

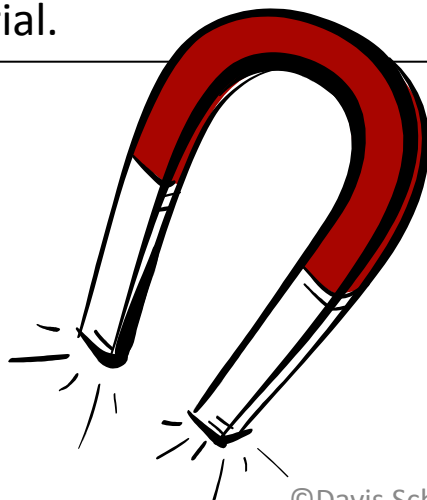
**Use the map to guide your writing.**

Example: Use this map to strengthen an introduction to a topic.

## ***Before the mentor text:***

### Magnets

Welcome to the world of magnetism! This amazing *magnetic force* is the push or pull of a magnet on other magnetic material.



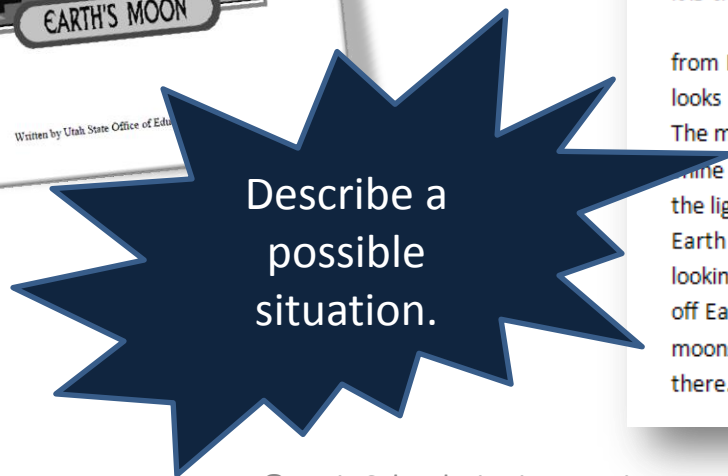
## ***After using the mentor text:***

### Magnets

*Imagine you are at your favorite amusement park, sitting in your favorite roller coaster. All of a sudden the roller coaster takes off, accelerating rapidly as it moves up the track. You aren't experiencing some magical force. You are experiencing magnets at work! Welcome to the world of magnetism! This amazing magnetic force is the push or pull of a magnet on other magnetic material.*

# Dance of Earth and Moon USOE Text

## Identify the technique.



## Dance of Earth and Moon

Source: Utah State Office of Education

Think of a time when you were camping or boating or just out at night looking at the sky. Suddenly, you see a very bright, round object rise in the sky from behind a mountain. This round object not only lights up the night sky, but it makes things seem brighter around you. This object is brighter than the stars but not as bright as the sun. What is it? Of course, it is the *moon*.



**Moon in the night sky**

When viewed from Earth, the moon looks like it is glowing. The moon doesn't make its own light. So, what makes it shine in the sky? As the sun's light shines on the moon, the light bounces off the moon's surface to our eyes. Earth does the same thing. If you were on the moon looking at Earth, you would see the sun's light bounce off Earth. In fact, light bounces off all the planets and moons in our solar system. That's how we know they are there.

# *Dance of Earth and Moon* USOE Text

Create a map.

Use the map to guide your writing.

## Dance of Earth and Moon

Source: Utah State Office of Education

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Create a MAP of the introduction.

*Think of a time when* \_\_\_\_\_

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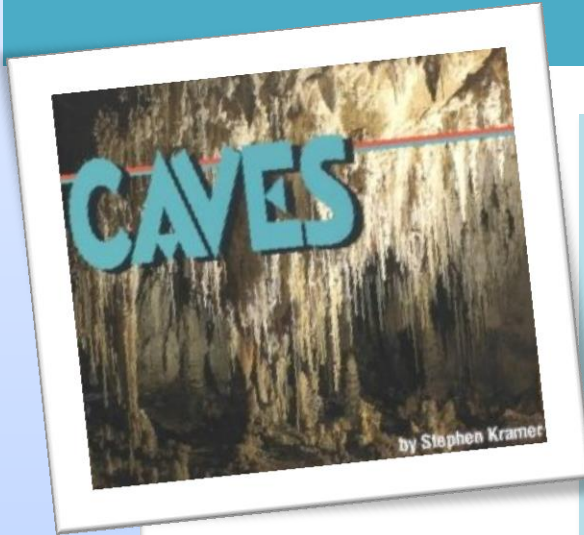
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# Caves by Stephen Kramer

Identify the technique.



Far below the earth's surface, water drips from the roof of a cave. The drops fall through darkness into a large stone room no one has ever seen. No bird has ever sung here. The scent of wildflowers has never hung in the air. For thousands of years, the tomblike silence has been broken only by the sound of falling water.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

Describe a possible situation – starting with what *isn't* there.

# Caves by Stephen Kramer

by Lisa Trumbauer

**Create a map.**

Far below the earth's surface, water drips from the roof of a cave. The drops fall through darkness into a large stone room no one has ever seen. No bird has ever sung here. The scent of wildflowers has never hung in the air. For thousands of years, the tomblike silence has been broken only by the sound of falling water.

Drip.

Drip.

Drip.

**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*Describe where the object/topic is located and what the object is (i.e. far below ... cave).*

*Describe what isn't there.*

- *Describe what no one has seen.*
- *Describe what no one has heard.*
- *Describe what no one has smelled.*

*Describe what the object has been doing.*

# *Caves* by Stephen Kramer

## Use the map to guide your writing.

Example: Use this map to strengthen an introduction to a topic.

***Before the mentor text:***

Moon

The moon moves in the sky.

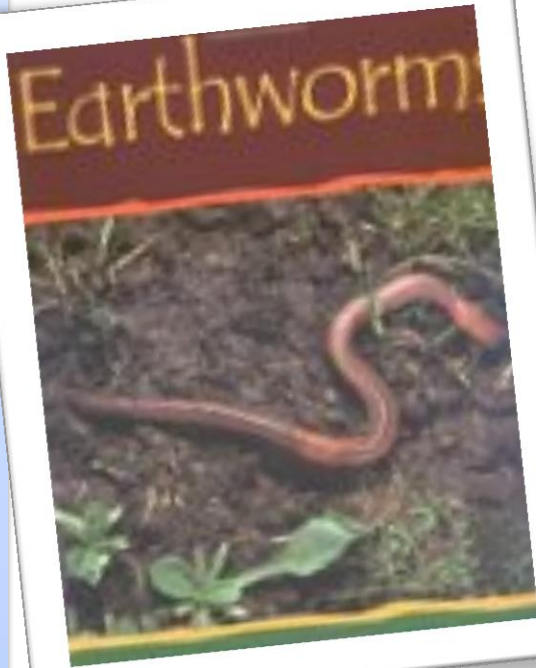
***After using the mentor text:***

Moon

*Far beyond the earth, a rocky sphere orbits in the sky. No life has ever lived on this sphere. No eagle has ever screeched. No air nor tree exist, so no scent of pine can ever linger here. This sphere, also known as earth's moon, moves in the sky, spinning through darkness.*

# *Earthworms* by Claire Llewellyn

**Identify the technique.**



Dig up any patch of earth in a garden or park. Look closely and you will probably see a wriggly worm.

Worms that live in the soil are called earthworms. There are several kinds of earthworms.

Describe a possible situation.

# *Earthworms* by Claire Llewellyn

**Create a map.**

**Use the map to guide your writing.**

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Worms that live in the soil are called earthworms. There are several kinds of earthworms.

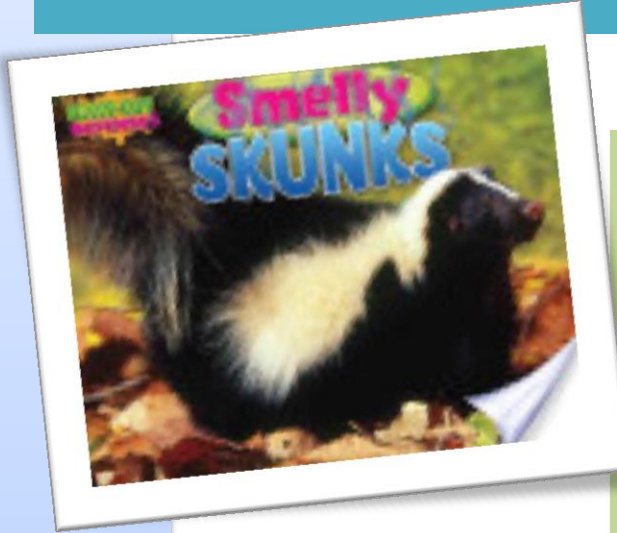
**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*Describe an area where your topic is located ...*

*Look closely and you will probably see \_\_\_\_\_.*

# *Smelly Skunks* by Catherine Nichols

## Identify the technique.



### *A Smelly Weapon*

It's dinnertime and a group of hungry foxes has spotted a tasty treat – a skunk.

The skunk is too slow to outrun its **enemies**.

So it raises its bushy tail and sprays a stinky oil.

Phew! A horrible smell fills the air.

The oil stings in the foxes' eyes.

They can't run away fast enough!

Describe a possible situation.

# *Smelly Skunks* by Catherine Nichols

**Create a map.**

**Use the map to guide your writing.**

## ***A Smelly Weapon***

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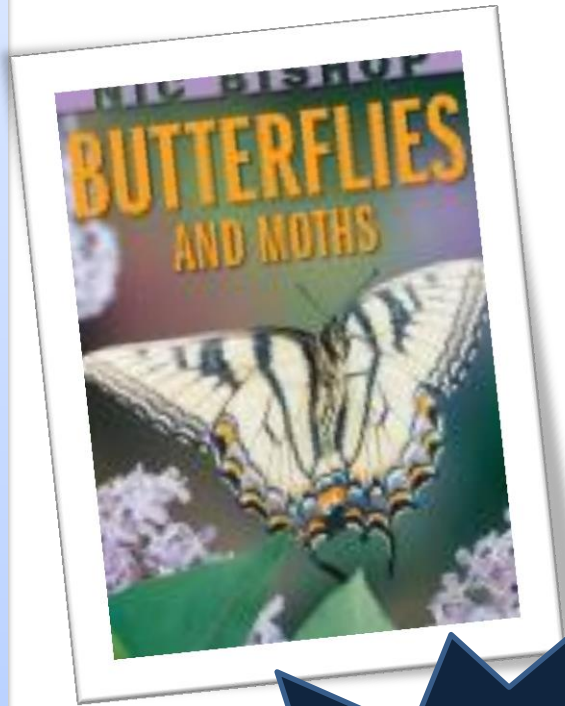
They can't run away fast enough!

**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*Describe a situation which is typical for your topic or where your topic would be interacting with others ...*

# *Butterflies and Moths* by Nic Bishop

## Identify the technique.



**There is no mistaking a butterfly.**

Its colorful wings skip in the air like petals blown by the wind. Blues, reds, and yellows dance in the sunlight. Some shimmer like tinsel.

A creature so beautiful should belong in a fairy tale. But butterflies are not real. They dance through the woods and glide over fields. You can see them in parks and backyards. And they always catch your attention.

Describe a possible situation – description.

# *Butterflies and Moths* by Nic Bishop

## Create a map.

**There is no mistaking a butterfly.**

Its colorful wings skip in the air like petals blown by the wind. Blues, reds, and yellows dance in the sunlight. Some shimmer like tinsel.

A creature so beautiful should belong in a fairy tale. But butterflies are not real. They dance through the woods and glide over fields. You can see them in parks and backyards. And they always catch your attention.

**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*There is no mistaking*  
\_\_\_\_\_.

*(Give description.)*

A \_\_\_\_\_ so \_\_\_\_\_ should  
belong \_\_\_\_\_.

But \_\_\_\_\_.

And \_\_\_\_\_.

# *Butterflies and Moths* by Nic Bishop

Use the map to guide your writing.

Example: Use this map to strengthen an introduction to a topic.

## ***Before the mentor text:***

The Earth  
The earth is always moving in the sky.

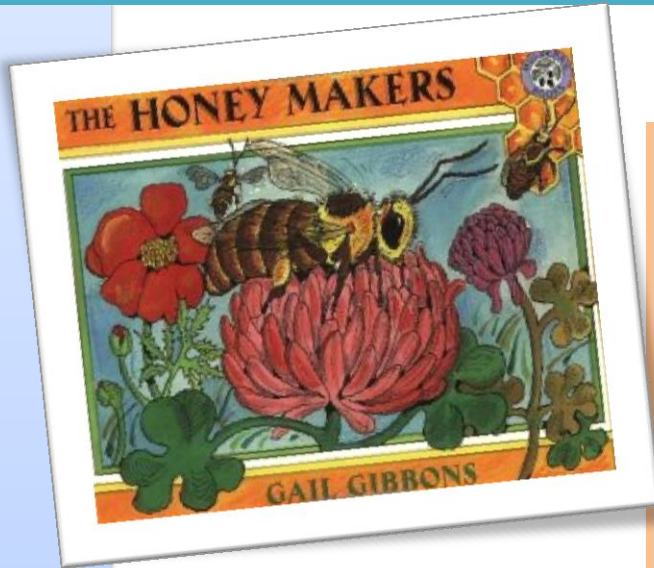
## ***After using the mentor text:***

### *The Earth*

*There is no mistaking the earth. Its rocky mountains, green valleys, and blue oceans move through space like a spinning rainbow of color. A celestial object so beautiful should belong in a fairy tale. But we know the earth is real, and it is always moving in the sky.*

# *The Honey Makers* by Gail Gibbons

## Identify the technique.



It is springtime. Two beekeepers have placed a beehive on a hill.

Activity begins around the hive. The honeybees and the beekeepers are

...

the Honey Makers.

Describe a possible situation.

# *The Honey Makers* by Gail Gibbons

Create a map.

Use the map to guide your writing.

It is springtime. Two  
beekeepers have placed  
a beehive on a hill.

Activity begins around  
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**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

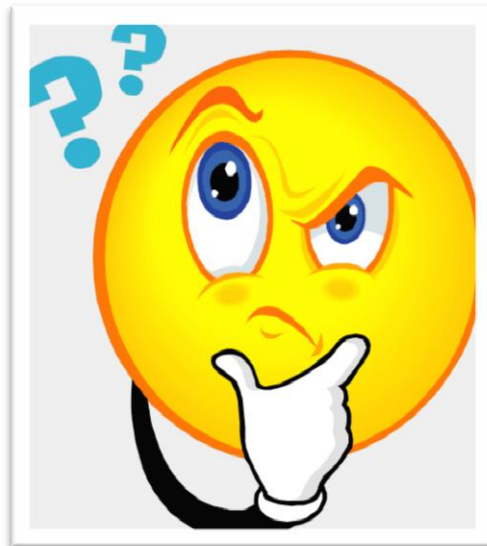
*(Use when two topics are working  
together or have something in  
common ...)*

*Introduce 1<sup>st</sup> topic ...*

*Introduce 2<sup>nd</sup> topic ...*

*The \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_ are  
the \_\_\_\_\_.*

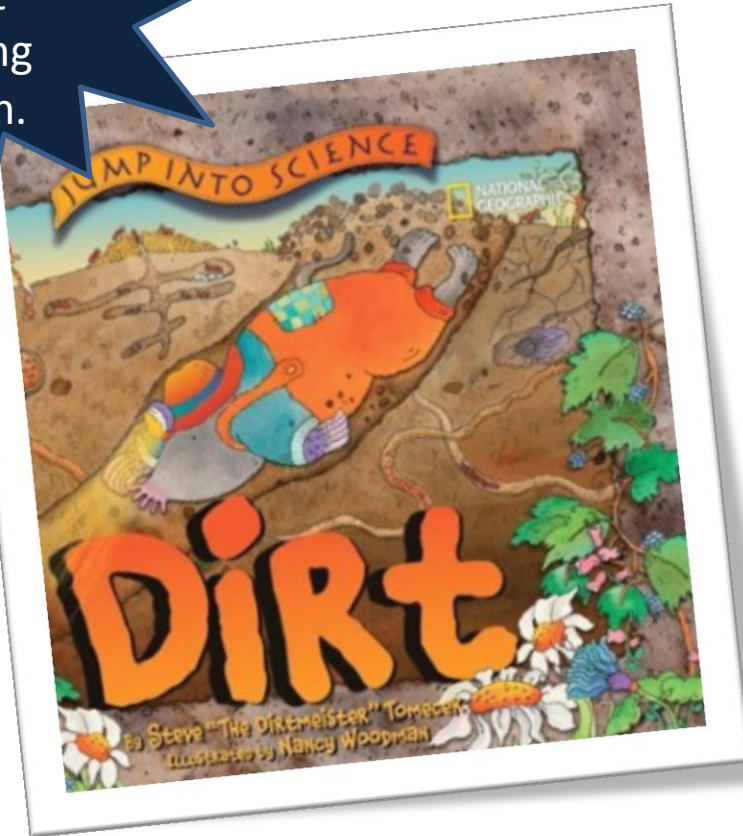
Ask a thought-provoking  
question.



# Dirt by Steve Tomecek

Identify the technique.

Technique:  
Ask a  
thought-  
provoking  
question.



*Have you ever dug in the dirt?  
Have you ever made mud pies?  
Have you ever helped plant a  
garden?  
You've probably noticed that not  
all dirt looks the same.*

*Some dirt is dark in color. Some is  
light. Some dirt is really sticky.  
Some is soft and fluffy. Dirt in all  
its different forms is important to  
our world. Let's dig into the story  
of dirt and find out what it's all  
about.*

# *Dirt* by Steve Tomecek

Create a map.

*Have you ever dug in the dirt?  
Have you ever made mud pies?  
Have you ever helped plant a garden?  
You've probably noticed that not all dirt looks the same.*

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**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*Have you ever*  
\_\_\_\_\_?

*Have you ever*  
\_\_\_\_\_?

*Have you ever*  
\_\_\_\_\_?

*You've probably noticed* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_.  
(with details leading to the topic sentence)

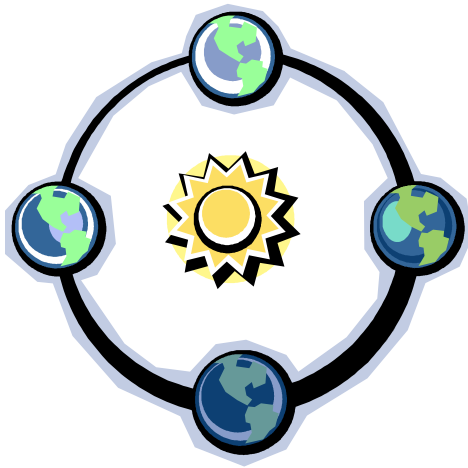
# Dirt by Steve Tomecek

Use the map to guide your writing.

Example: Use this map to strengthen an introduction to a topic.

## ***Before the mentor text:***

The earth is always moving in the sky.



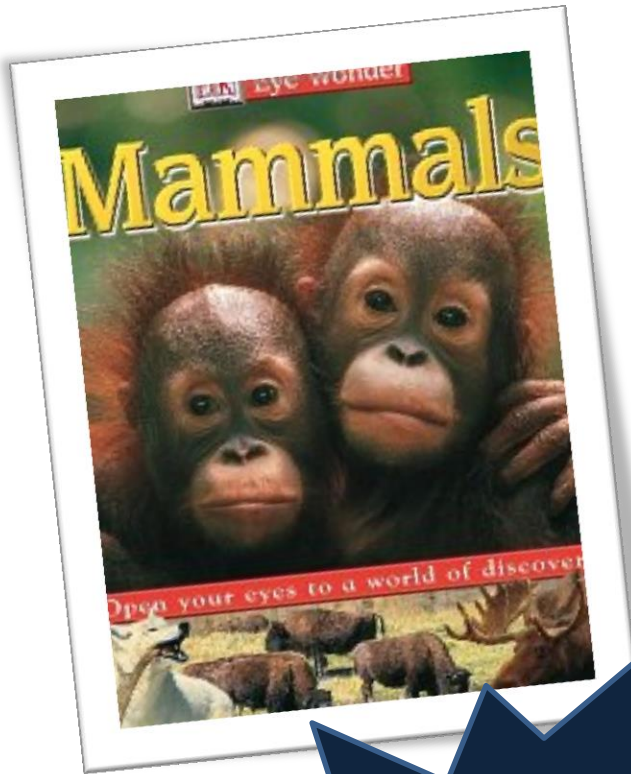
## ***After using the mentor text:***

*Have you ever played on a sunny day?  
Have you ever slept through a moonless night?  
Have you ever crunched leaves on a crisp, fall afternoon?  
Have you ever splashed in mud puddles on a rainy, spring morning?*

*Of course you have! You've probably noticed that some times of the year the days seem longer and other times of the year the days are short. You may also have noticed that some times of the year are warmer or cooler than others. How is all this possible? It is because the earth is always moving in the sky.*

# *Eye Wonder: Mammals* by DK Publishing

Identify the technique.



*You might wonder if tiny mice, huge whales, and humans have anything in common. They do – they are all mammals! All mammals have hair or fur, are warm-blooded and have a constant body temperature, and feed their young on milk.*

Ask a  
thought-  
provoking  
question.

# *Eye Wonder: Mammals* by DK Publishing

Create a map.

Use the map to guide your writing.

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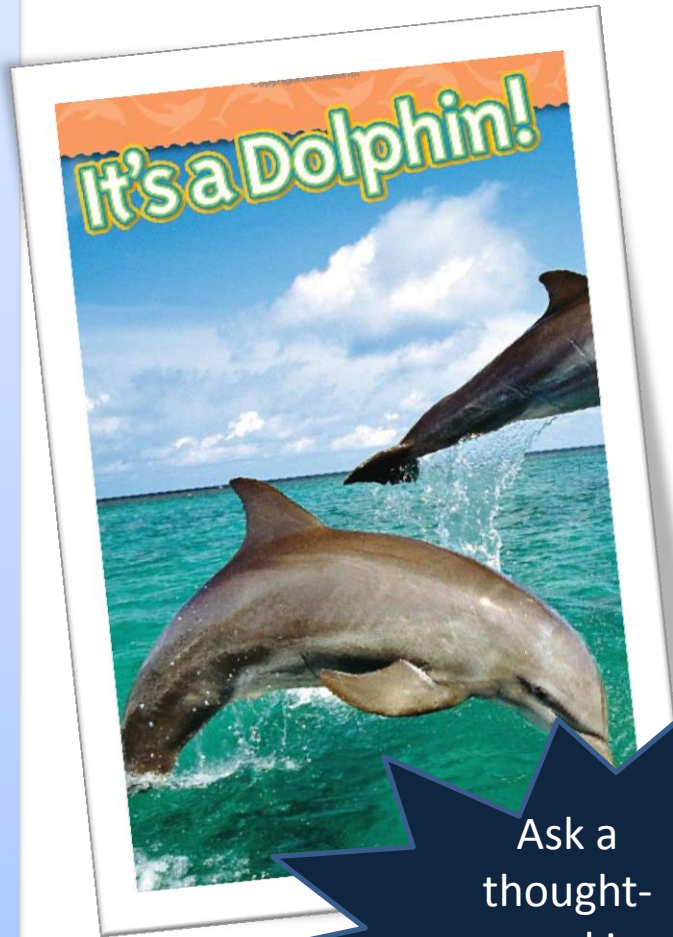
**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*You might wonder if \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ have anything in common.*

*They do! They \_\_\_\_\_.*

# *It's a Dolphin!* by Melissa Stewart

Identify the technique.



*What swims in the water,  
but isn't a fish?*

*What whistles and chirps,  
but isn't a bird?*

*What loves to jump, but  
isn't a frog?*

*It's a **DOLPHIN!***

Ask a  
thought-  
provoking  
question.

# *It's a Dolphin!* by Melissa Stewart

Create a map.

Use the map to guide your writing.

*What swims in the water,  
but isn't a fish?*

*What whistles and chirps,  
but isn't a bird?*

*What loves to jump, but  
isn't a frog?*

*It's a **DOLPHIN!***

**Create a MAP of the  
introduction.**

*What \_\_\_\_\_, but isn't a  
\_\_\_\_\_?*

*What \_\_\_\_\_, but isn't a  
\_\_\_\_\_?*

*What \_\_\_\_\_, but isn't a  
\_\_\_\_\_?*

*It's a \_\_\_\_\_!*

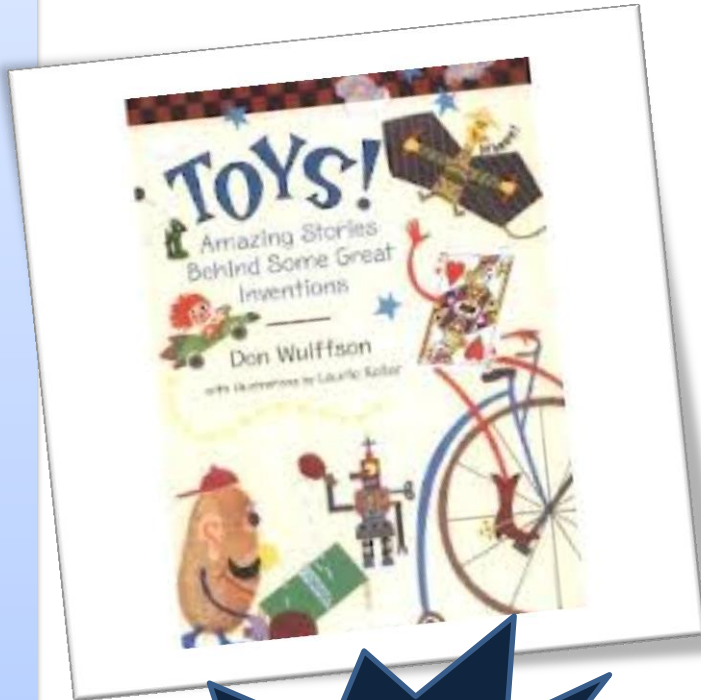
# Use a short declarative sentence.



# *Toys! Amazing Stories Behind Some Great Inventions*

by Don Wulffson

**Identify the technique.**



## *The Slinky*

*It was a mistake. A goof-up.  
An invention that didn't  
work. A flop; that's what  
the Slinky was, at least in  
the beginning.*

Use a short,  
declarative  
sentence.

Writing

# *Toys! Amazing Stories Behind Some Great Inventions*

by Don Wulffson

**Create a map. Use the map to guide your writing.**

## *The Slinky*

*It was a mistake. A goof-up.  
An invention that didn't  
work. A flop; that's what  
the Slinky was, at least in  
the beginning.*

**Create a MAP of the introduction.**

*It was a \_\_\_\_\_.*

*A \_\_\_\_\_. A \_\_\_\_\_.*