

STEP UP TO WRITING...

THE BEST OPTION FOR MEETING OR EXCEEDING THE COMMON CORE STATE LITERACY STANDARDS AND/OR DISTRICT AND STATE STANDARDS!

A number of schools and individuals have contacted me about the new Common Core State Literacy Standards. I have followed the creation of the Standards and support the goals of this initiative. My hope, as I read the first drafts, was that communities across the states would find in the final product some guidance, with specific examples, to help them build school plans to ensure that all students have equal access to the same content, knowledge, skills, and high academic expectations.

The final, 2010, document does provide that guidance.

The Common Core State Standards, like many state standards, make general statements:

- “Establish and maintain a formal style...”
- “Produce clear and coherent writing...”
- “Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency...to support comprehension.”
- “Actively engage in group reading activities...”
- “Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding...”

The following pages show how *Step Up to Writing* strategies, methods, and tools can be used to move forward from the general statements to specific work completed in K-12 classrooms.

Maureen Auman, author of *Step Up to Writing*

NOTE: Complete copies of the Common Core State Literacy Standards can be found on the following websites:

www.corestandards.org

www.achieve.org

STEP UP TO WRITING

+ THE COMMON CORE STATE LITERACY STANDARDS

= STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SUCCESS

The standards...

... insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language be a shared responsibility within the school (4).*

The standards

- define college and career readiness
- lay out a vision of what it means to be a literate person in the twenty-first century (3)

Step Up to Writing

Effective, multisensory writing strategies

Improves:

- writing
- reading
- listening
- speaking

The standards...

...set requirements not only for English language arts (ELA) but also for literacy in history/social studies, science, and technical subjects (3).

Each standard

...need not be separate focus for instruction and assessment. Often several standards can be addressed by a single rich task (5).

Step Up to Writing strategies and tools have been used by content-area teachers for over two decades, including teachers who serve

- at-risk students
- core curriculum students
- English language learners
- gifted & talented students
- honors & advanced learners
- special education students

* Source: Common Core State Standards Initiative. "Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects." 3 March 2011. <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf>

STEP UP TO WRITING...

**THE BEST OPTION FOR MEETING OR EXCEEDING
THE COMMON CORE STATE LITERACY STANDARDS
AND/OR DISTRICT AND STATE STANDARDS!**

KINDERGARTEN – 12TH GRADE

<i>WHAT?</i>	<i>HOW?</i>
STANDARDS PRESENT GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE.	STEP UP TO WRITING PROVIDES DETAILS FOR MEETING AND/OR EXCEEDING THESE STANDARDS.
1. <i>English Language Arts, Grade 1</i> : “Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types” (11).*	<i>See example 1</i>
2. <i>English Language Arts, Grade 4</i> : “Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons” (28).	<i>See example 2</i>
3. <i>English Language Arts, Grade 7</i> : “Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text” (36).	<i>See example 3</i>
4. <i>English Language Arts, Grades 9-10</i> : “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning” (40).	<i>See example 4</i>
5. <i>Science and Technical Subjects, Grades 6-8</i> : “Analyze the author’s purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure or discussing an experiment in a text” (62).	<i>See example 5</i>
6. <i>History/Social Studies, Grades 9-10</i> : “Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing” (64).	<i>See example 6</i>
7. <i>History/Social Studies, Grades 6-8</i> : “Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented” (65).	<i>See example 7</i>
8. <i>Technical Subjects, Grades 11-12</i> : “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (66).	<i>See example 8</i>

* Source: Common Core State Standards Initiative. “Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.” 3 March 2011. <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/CCSSI_ELA%20Standards.pdf>

EXAMPLE 1


English Language Arts, Grade 1: “Explain major differences between books that tell stories and books that give information, drawing on a wide reading of a range of text types” (11).

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- recognize common types of texts (e.g. information, story/narrative, poem, skit, fairytale, etc.)
- identify similarities and differences between information/expository texts and story/narrative texts
- describe text structures and text organization
- summarize and/or retell key details and facts in an information/expository text
- summarize and/or retell key details and story elements (e.g. character, setting) in a story/narrative
- draw on a wide range of reading and text types
- compare and contrast various samples of two kinds of writing
- write and share their own information/expository paragraphs and stories/narratives, including personal narratives and personal essays
- build a common language for discussing two kinds of writing

Two Kinds of Writing

<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">INFORMATION</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe Explain Give directions List Compare Summarize 	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;">  </div> <div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px;"> <p>Both kinds have ...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization that is clear. • Content that is interesting. • Style that fits the assignment. • Writing that is neat and correct. </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;"> <input type="button" value="Print Form"/> </div>	<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;">STORY</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biography Children’s story Fairy tale Folk tale Tall tale Legend
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© 2008 Scott, Foresman Educational Services. Interactive Paragraphs
Skill 10: Writing - Compare
Tool 4-1c

Step Up to Writing Primary Tool for Comparing Two Kinds of Writing

EXAMPLE 2

English Language Arts, Grade 4: “Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons” (28).

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- recognize, identify, and revise fragments and run-ons
- recognize and write complete sentences
- describe parts of a sentence, types of sentences, and kinds of sentences
- identify and discuss parts of speech
- demonstrate command of standard English conventions, including capitalization, usage, punctuation, and spelling
- draw on a wide range of example sentences and fragments
- write, edit, and share their own sentences written for a variety of purposes and audiences

Examples:

- topic sentences
- compare or contrast expository text
- analyzing graphs in math and science
- using figurative language
- use Quick Check assessment Tools with accompanying “samples for Student Writers” to help set goals for reaching proficient and advanced levels in sentence writing
- build a common language for discussing and evaluating sentences
- practice sentence writing consistently

Capitalization Usage Punctuation Spelling	
Sentences	1. Capitalize the first word in a sentence. <i>Next month we all get to go to the amusement park.</i>
Names	2. Capitalize proper names. <i>Mr. Nelson made plans for us to visit the White House in Washington D.C., where President Jones and his wife, Jane, live.</i>
Calendar Items	3. Capitalize days of the week and months of the year. <i>On Monday and Tuesday we made plans for our December field trip.</i>
Titles	4. Capitalize all words in a title except articles, short prepositions, and short conjunctions. <i>Before our trip to Washington, D.C., we read three articles: "Eating and Seeing," "Traveling in Our Nation's Capital," and "Don't Miss This."</i>
Family Members	5. Capitalize all words like mom, dad, and grandfather only when they are used as a person's name. <i>Camping with my mom, dad, uncle, and cousins is fun.</i> <i>"Please Dad, can I help set up the tent?"</i>
Languages	6. Capitalize (as nouns or as adjectives) people and languages of other countries; capitalize races, nationalities, and religions. <i>At the museum we saw an exhibit of paintings by French artists.</i> <i>In class we learned how the Chinese developed their written language.</i>
Seasons	7. Do not Capitalize summer, fall, spring, or winter unless they are a part of a title or name an event. <i>In the spring the sixth-grade class traveled to Washington, D.C.</i> <i>The Winter Science Competition will be held on Saturday, January 22nd.</i>

Step Up to Writing Intermediate Level Tool for C.U.P.S. Editing

EXAMPLE 3

English Language Arts, Grade 7: “Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text” (36).

STEP UP TO WRITING

Four-Step Summary Paragraph

Step 1 Write a topic sentence using the three-part topic sentence method (the burrito fold).

Identify the Item.	Select a Verb.	Finish Your Thought.
<i>The Reader's Digest</i> article "Adventures of a Country Doctor"	explains	how Dr. Richard Paris provides medical help to people in remote areas of Idaho.

Step 2 Copy the sentence to look like a real sentence. Edit to fix spelling and capitalization errors.


The Reader's Digest article "Adventures of a Country Doctor" explains how Dr. Richard Paris provides medical help to people in remote areas of Idaho.

Step 3 Create a fact outline. Make a short outline or list of the facts you will include in the summary.

- Hailery, Idaho
- variety of patients
- patients of all ages
- improving health care
- medical students
- future plans

Step 4 Use your fact outline to write the summary paragraph.

Summary



"Adventures of a Country Doctor"

The Reader's Digest article "Adventures of a Country Doctor" explains how Dr. Richard Paris provides medical help to people in remote areas of Idaho. Dr. Paris lives in Hailery, Idaho, and works there with other doctors, including his wife. On a regular basis, however, he flies his Cessna 210 airplane to reach people who live on farms and ranches in Custer County, far away from any cities. Dr. Paris is the only doctor in all of Custer County, which is as big as the state of Connecticut. Dr. Paris takes care of the old and the young. He helps with many kinds of problems. He works to improve the health care for people in his area by giving them good care and making sure his clinics have the modern technology they need. Each year, medical students come to spend time with him, so they can learn how to help families who live in rural areas. Dr. Paris and his wife hope someday to go to other parts of the world to give medical care to those who do not have doctors.

Step Up to Writing Secondary Level Tools for Summarizing a Text

EXAMPLE 3

English Language Arts, Grade 7: “Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text” (36).

Planning for Expository Writing Informal Outline	
Title = _____	
Topic = _____	
☆	— • •
☆	— • • •
☆	— • • •
Conclusion = _____	

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- identify a theme or central idea in a text (fiction and nonfiction)
- practice a variety of topic sentence strategies that focus on theme and/or central idea
- create informal outlines with topic sentences and supporting details
- share topic sentences, information outlines, and supporting details in group discussions about theme
- recognize common types of texts
- describe text structures and text organization
- summarize and/or retell key details, facts, and main ideas important to an author’s central theme or idea in an information/expository text
- summarize and/or retell key details and story elements (e.g. theme, character, setting, plot, etc.) in a story/narrative
- draw on a wide range of reading and text types
- compare and contrast various samples of writing
- write and share their own analyses and/or evaluations of theme and/or central ideas in a text including writing a literature analysis, a summary-response, an argument, and more
- build a common language for discussing themes and central ideas in a text
- participate in peer review activities to improve their writing
- understand and use practical and effective assessment tools

Step Up to Writing Secondary Tool for analyzing and writing about central themes or ideas in a text

EXAMPLE 4

English Language Arts, Grades 9-10: “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning” (40).

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- trace an author’s claim throughout a text using informal outlines, marking the text, answering teacher-created questions using the “Great Short Answer” strategy
- describe the textual structure of an argument and its organization
- evaluate the quality and appropriateness of an argument’s evidence, proof, and reasoning as it applies to the author’s audience, purpose, and claim
- recognize and explain irrelevant evidence and logical fallacies
- summarize and/or retell the claim, key details and facts, and supporting evidence in an argument
- draw on a wide range of reading and text types using a variety of note taking strategies
- compare and contrast various samples of argument writing forms, including the essay, an editorial, an advertisement, and more
- write, revise, edit, and share their own arguments (written and oral)
- build a common language for discussing and evaluating arguments
- participate in peer review activities to improve their writing
- understand and use practical and effective assessment tools

Writing a Response to Literature

For A Summer’s Reading

The short story “A Summer’s Reading” by Bernard Malamud shows that for people to make major changes in their behavior; they must have more than one motivation to be successful. George Stoyonovich, the main character in the story, takes on the challenge to read 100 books only after he is motivated through several small but significant events.

At the beginning of the story, George, a twenty-year-old high school dropout, is trying to figure out how to fill in all the hours of each day during the summer. He does not have a job and is not interested in going to night school. He is, however, smart and can read. George is eventually motivated to read 100 books partly because he is bored but also because he notices that his sister reads “whatever fell into her hands.” George’s second motivation comes from his dream of having “a good job...a private house with a porch on a street with trees...some dough in his pocket to buy things with, and a girl to go with, [and] people to like and respect him.”

One evening while George is out walking he meets an elderly neighbor. Indirectly, the neighbor also motivates George, since George has always respected this man, partially because he always sees him reading and because all of the neighbors respect the man for his vast knowledge. George is uncomfortable and embarrassed when he realizes that his friend knows that George is wasting his talents. To make himself look good and feel better George lies and tells the man that he is reading 100 books. His friend is impressed and spreads the story around the neighborhood.

Later when George is out in the neighborhood he sees that people treat him differently because they believe he is reading 100 books. At home his sister and father, who hear about the 100 books, also treat him with a new kind of respect. His sister even gives him a bit of her paycheck to encourage him. No one but George knows that the 100 books are really a lie. Instead of reading he listens to the radio. George likes the feelings that come with the respect that everyone gives him and even begins to think that he could read all 100 books.

But by the time his family and his friend realize that the 100 books don’t really exist, George is frustrated with himself and how his life is going. When the old man sees George again he shows his disappointment and says, “George, don’t do what I did.” At home, his sister stops sharing her money. His friend’s and his sister’s disappointments give George two more reasons to take reading seriously.

By the end of the story it is fall. George is at the neighborhood library. He is trembling but he is reading the first of 100 books. The change in George’s life did not come easily. A series of small events over a period of time motivated George.

Not long ago my dad quit smoking. He was motivated by his health, his job, my mom’s nagging, and the ads he saw on television—and probably his own dream to stop smoking. Like George, he couldn’t stop his bad habit all at once. It took a push from a number of people and a number of important events. My dad and George are like most people who don’t change all at once; they changed slowly over a period of time.

Position/
Opinion

Personal
Connection

Proof/
Example

Proof/
Example

Proof/
Example

Proof/
Example

Insight

Step Up to Writing Secondary Tool for analyzing and evaluating arguments, claims, reasons/facts, and evidence.

EXAMPLE 5

Science and Technical Subjects, Grades 6-8: “Analyze the author’s purpose in providing an explanation, describing a procedure or discussing an experiment in a text” (62).

Explaining a Process

Example 1:

Skiing on One Ski

Although water skiing on one ski might look difficult, it can be easy to learn if you follow my instructions. First, lie on your back, bend your knees, and be still. This will help you relax and become balanced. Next, push your back foot down. Do this so you will not go over your ski and land flat on your face. Third, tell the driver when you are ready. This helps so you will not be startled and you will feel more in control. Fourth, when the boat starts going, stand up, and let the boat pull you up. Last, bend your knees and lean back; this will help you go over big waves, prevent you from falling, and allow you to slice through the waves. When you feel balanced, slip your back foot into the foothold. Obviously, water skiing on one ski is a challenge, but it’s not impossible, especially if you listen to my advice.

Example 2:

Soap: A Gift for Yourself or Others

Making soap for yourself or as a gift is creative and great fun. The process is simple. Start by visiting your local craft store and purchasing the necessary materials. Your list of essential items includes blocks of clear or colored glycerin soap, powdered color or pigment, essential oils (e.g. lavender or rose), soap molds, and a small pan and spoon that will be used exclusively for melting the blocks of soap and mixing the pigment and fragrance. Another useful tool to have is an eyedropper so that fragrance can be used sparingly, a drop or two at a time. Next, set up all your tools and ingredients on your kitchen table. To make the soap, unwrap the bars of glycerin soap and cut them up with a knife into small squares for melting. Place them in your pan. As you do this, it is important to be aware of how much heat you use. You want to melt the soap without overheating it. The process does not take long, and there is no need to hurry it. After that, you add very small amounts of pigment or dry color. Then add essential oil fragrance; a few drops will do. Finally, pour the heated, colored, and fragranced liquid into the soap molds and let cool for about 20-30 minutes. You now have soap to present as gifts for friends, family, and especially for yourself.

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- trace an author’s explanation of a process or procedure through a text or speech
- describe the textual structure and organization the author uses to describe a process or procedure
- draw on a wide range of reading and text types from a variety of content areas including technical subjects, science, math, and more
- compare and contrast various samples of technical writing for describing processes, how-to’s, and procedures
- write, revise, edit, and share their own process/how-to texts (written and oral) for a variety of audiences
- learn, practice, and apply appropriate topic sentences, transitions, and elaboration for writing about a process or procedure
- build a common language for discussing and evaluating writing
- participate in peer review activities to improve their writing
- understand and use practical and effective assessment tools

Step Up to Writing Secondary Level Tool for writing about a process or describing a procedure

EXAMPLE 6

History/Social Studies, Grades 9-10: “Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing” (64).

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- read and write formal essays and reports for a variety of audiences and purposes, within content-area studies
- describe the textual structure and organization of various essay forms and genres
- evaluate the quality and appropriateness of an text’s evidence, proof, and reasoning as it applies to the author’s audience, purpose, and message
- summarize and/or retell the thesis statement, key details and facts, and supporting evidence in an essay/report
- compare and contrast various samples of writing forms, including the essay, book report, speech, and more
- write, revise, edit, and share their own information/expository essays (written and oral)
- establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone in writing
- attend to appropriate conventions of standard English including formatting, documentation, spelling, punctuation, and more
- build a common language for discussing and evaluating essays
- participate in peer review activities to improve their writing
- understand and use practical and effective assessment tools

Documenting Reports and Essays

Bullying: A Serious Problem

The confession of a girl who became a bully described in the September 2004 issue of *Scope* shows how serious and damaging this problem can become:

“This girl was the victim of a group of bullies before she became a bully herself. She explained that ‘thirteen girls ganged up on me at our lunch table, accusing me of saying things I had never said. Soon I had no friends. I sat alone at lunch. I skipped classes so I didn’t have to face those girls.’” (Simmons 2004).

Dr. Kenneth Shore, author of “Understanding School Bullying,” believes that schools can take positive steps to eliminate bullying. Shore claims that “15 to 20 percent of all students are victimized by bullies at some point in their school career,” but he also insists that “schools can cut bullying by as much as 50 percent with a comprehensive school-wide prevention program” (2005).

The first step must...

Next, the school community must...

The most important part of the program...

Finally, schools will...

Works Cited

- Simmons, R. “Confessions of a Teenage Bully.” *Scholastic Scope* 6 (September 2004): 16–18.
- Shore, K. “Understanding School Bullying.” (2005) *Education World*, http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/shore/shore063.shtml, accessed August 16, 2006.

Step Up to Writing Secondary Level Tool for writing formal essays and reports

EXAMPLE 7

History/Social Studies, Grades 6-8: “Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented” (65).

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- evaluate authors’ conclusions in information/expository text
- understand the difference between *conclusions* in expository/information text and *endings* in stories/narratives
- understand that *introductions and conclusions* are expected in writing called personal essays, personal narratives, and/or personal experience writing
- write conclusion with a purpose appropriate to the writing task and audience
- read and write a variety of types of conclusions
- read and write formal essays and reports for a variety of audiences and purposes, within content-area studies
- evaluate the quality and appropriateness of a text’s evidence, proof, and reasoning as it applies to the author’s audience, purpose, and message
- summarize and/or retell the thesis statement, key details and facts, and supporting evidence in an essay/report
- compare and contrast various samples of writing forms, including arguments, essays, science reports, and more
- write, revise, edit, and share their own information/expository essays (written and oral)
- build a common language for discussing and evaluating conclusions
- participate in peer review activities to improve their writing
- understand and use practical and effective assessment tools

Conclusions Have a Purpose

(Examples for Paragraphs, Reports, or Essays)

Summarize

Paragraph: Putting a man on the moon, working for disarmament, and surviving the Cuban Missile Crisis were three important challenges for President Kennedy.

Report: President Kennedy obviously enjoyed celebrations with friends and dignitaries in the White House. He played with his family on the White House lawn. He greeted guests in the Oval Office. Most of the time, however, he tackled serious issues like the space program, disarmament, and the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Encourage

Paragraph: Parents who make the time to read and discuss books with their children give a gift that lasts a lifetime.

Essay: Finding time to read with their children is not always easy for parents who juggle many responsibilities. However, parents who are determined to make the time will be rewarded over and over again. Young children who enter school with a basic understanding of the alphabet, an appreciation for books, and knowledge of the parts of a book are more likely to be successful.

Convince

Paragraph: Joining the soccer team was definitely a good idea. If you give it a try, I am sure you’ll love it as much as I do.

Essay: It was hard for me to learn to play soccer. I did not feel confident and I was afraid everyone would make fun of me. When I wanted to quit, my coach encouraged me to hang in there. I am glad I did.

Challenge

Paragraph: Ask one of your relatives about the history of your family; it may not mean much to you today, but someday you’ll be glad you asked.

Essay: Family histories are sometimes easy to find. A grandparent or an elderly aunt may be the key to some of your family’s history. At other times, searching for information can be time consuming. Either way, once you know a bit more about how your ancestors lived, how they played, and the challenges they faced, you’ll be glad that you started the search.

Step Up to Writing Secondary Level Tool for writing Conclusions

EXAMPLE 8

Technical Subjects, Grades 11-12: “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience” (66).

STEP UP TO WRITING

With *Step Up to Writing* tools, methods, and activities, students will...

- read and write formal essays and reports for a variety of audiences and purposes, within content-area studies including math, science, and technical subjects
- produce clear, coherent, and complete writing
- describe the textual structure and organization of various forms and genres used in the content areas
- draw on a wide range of reading and text types
- compare and contrast various samples of writing forms, including explaining a process, writing about graphs, describing a science experiment,, and more
- write, revise, edit, and share their own content- or discipline-specific texts
- establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the writing task, audience, and purpose
- attend to appropriate conventions of standard English including formatting, spelling, punctuation, and more
- build a common language for discussing and evaluating essays
- participate in peer review activities to improve their writing
- understand and use practical and effective assessment tools

Using the IVF Strategy to Analyze Graphs

Use the process that you use to write summaries to analyze and interpret graphs. Your verb choices and the purpose of the paragraph will be different. The fact outline will contain complete sentences, not sentence fragments.

Example: How have magazine sales changed?

School Magazine Sales

School Year	Number of Sales
1999	1450
2000	1350
2001	1550
2002	1550
2003	1650
2004	1450
2005	1750

First, create a topic sentence by using three columns.

I	V	F
(Identify the Item)	(Select a Verb)	(Finish Your Thought)
<i>The School Magazine Sales chart</i>	<small>(shows, presents, gives, explains, illustrates, identifies, shares)</small> <i>shows</i>	<i>the growth and decline in annual magazine sales at our local high school from 1999 to 2005.</i>

(continued)

Step Up to Writing Secondary Tool for Technical Writing genres and form