Organize Ideas for an Informational Report

1. Focus

Explain Organizing Ideas for an Informational Report

Say: After researching our topic for an informational report, the next step is organizing the information that we found so that we are ready to write. We can use planning charts to help us organize our ideas. Let me show you how I organize my ideas on a planning chart using my research on the causes of the American Revolution.

Model Organizing Ideas

Display an Informational Report Planning chart like the one below on chart paper or using the interactive whiteboard resources. Add information to the chart as you think aloud about organizing your research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Topic: American Revolution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific Focus: Causes of the Revolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Research Question: What were the causes of the American Revolution?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Findings</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. taxation without representation</td>
<td>a. had to pay taxes to Britain but weren’t able to have representatives in the government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. paid taxes but didn’t have the rights of English people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>c. taxes were harsh—Americans had to help pay the cost of Great Britain’s war with the French</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. economy not allowed to flourish</td>
<td>a. couldn’t print own money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. had to support economy overseas rather than own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Americans were very independent people</td>
<td>a. wanted to do things their way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>b. lived a long way from Britain and didn’t feel part of the British empire</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion:

1. What type of conclusion will I choose?

   - Summarize
   - Restate important information
   - Call to Action
   - Make an observation

2. What will my conclusion say? Summarize the main points: Americans were independent, they lived a long way away from Britain, didn’t feel part of the British empire, the taxes were harsh and Americans couldn’t see the point.

Sample Informational Report Planning Chart (BLM 5)

About “General Topic,” “Specific Focus,” and “General Research Question.”

Say: When I narrowed my topics for writing, I decided on the topic of the American Revolution. My specific focus was the causes of this war. I decided on the research question “What were the causes of the American Revolution?” to guide my research. I’ll record this information on the planning chart.
About “Research Findings.”  Say: My research told me that a major cause was the fact that Americans resented having to pay taxes when they were not given a say in the government. “Taxation without representation” was the battle cry for Americans. I will write this information on the planning chart. I also found out that Americans were very independent people, so not being able to develop their own country and economy made them angry. Because they lived so far from Britain, they didn’t feel part of that country. I’ll write these details on the planning chart. Using this chart helps me organize all the information I found.

About “Conclusion.”  Say: Because I’ll write about several causes and the details behind them, I think the best way to conclude my report is to write a summary that reinforces the major causes. Using this report planning chart has helped me put all the facts and details together in an organized way. Now I can write a report that will be easy for my readers to follow.

2. Rehearse

**Practice Organizing Your Ideas**

Invite students to use the Informational Report Planning chart to organize their ideas for a report. Students will not have time to complete their organization during the mini-lesson, but they can continue during independent writing time.

If your class includes English learners or other students who need support, use “Strategies to Support ELs.”

**Share Ideas**

Bring students together and invite volunteers to share the ideas they organized on the chart. Discuss how organizing their research to plan their writing helps them write a better report.

3. Independent Writing and Conferring

**Say:** We just learned that we can use a chart to organize our ideas for an informational report. This gives us an opportunity to review our research findings and think about how they support the main ideas we want to make in our report.

Make BLM 5 available to students who are ready to organize their research for their informational reports. During conferences, reinforce students’ use of this and other strategies using the prompts on your conferring flip chart.

4. Share

Bring the class together. Invite volunteers to report on their progress in organizing their ideas. Encourage them to comment on the importance of using information from their research to organize their reports.

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**Strategies to Support ELs**

**Beginning**

Invite beginning ELs to draw a picture of the topic for their informational report. Encourage them to discuss their topic in any way they can, using words and/or gestures. Write important vocabulary on self-stick notes and model using the words in sentences.

**Intermediate and Advanced**

Encourage ELs to use the following sentence frames to help them talk about their informational report:

- *My topic is ______.*
- *The focus of my report is ______.*
- *My research questions are ______.*
- *One important finding on my topic is ______.*

**All Levels**

If you have ELs whose first language is Spanish, share this English/Spanish cognate: *organize ideas/organizar las ideas.*