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Choose a Good Topic

Refer to pages 6 and 7 to introduce or review the writing trait.

DAY 1

Read the rule aloud. Then say: *A writer should always start with a clear topic. A topic that is clear is easier to write about. Write the following two topics on the board: a trip and going to Texas. Then say: I plan to write a paragraph about a trip I'm taking to Texas. My grandpa lives there. I will get to help him on the ranch. Point to the two topics and ask: Which of these topics is more clear? ("Going to Texas" because it gives a clearer idea of where you are going.) Then guide students through the activities.*

- **Activity A:** Make sure students understand what is depicted in each picture. Then ask: *Which of the two topics under each picture is more clear? Which best describes the picture?*
- **Activity B:** Ask: *What is your favorite zoo animal? What would be a good, clear topic to write about the animal? Have students share their topics to check for clarity.*

Convention: Say: *We capitalize the names of pets just like we capitalize our own names. Then guide students to find the pet's name on the page and circle the capital letter.*

DAY 2

Read the rule aloud. Then ask: *Which topic would help me write a better story—going to the fair, or when my brother and I were stuck at the top of a Ferris wheel? Which one is more clear? Which one sounds more interesting? (the second one) Why is it better? (e.g., tells more, sounds exciting) Then guide students through the activities.*

- **Activity A:** Say: *These writers started with good topics. Can you guess what they are? Read the first story aloud. Ask: What do you think was the topic? If students say "a dog," guide them to understand that this story is about one dog that can do something special. A better topic is "Cha-Cha, the dancing dog."*
- **Activity B (Convention):** Say: *The names on this page are missing something. What is it? (capital letters) Guide students to use proofreading marks to indicate the letters that should be capitalized.*

Name: _____ **Week 1 • Day 1**

Ideas A good topic is clear.

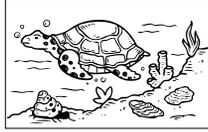
A. Choose the best topic. Underline the topic that gives a clear idea of each picture.



animal homes
animals that live in trees



a dog with a special job
a nice dog



ocean animals
ocean animals with shells



Tabby and her kittens
pet cats

B. Choose a zoo animal. Write a clear topic about it.

Sample Answers:

Animal: elephant

Topic: elephants use their trunks like hands

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Name: _____ **Week 1 • Day 2**

Ideas A good topic is interesting.

A. Read the stories. Then write the topic of each one.



My name is gha-gha. I am mason's pet dog. I am smart and cute. I meet him at the door. Then I do a dance!

Topic: _____

Cha-Cha, the dancing dog



My name is star. I am a pony. claire and I ride in horse shows. We win ribbons.

Sample Answers:

Topic: _____

Star, the prize pony



I am a bunny. I like to chase dogs. I run around the house. My name is puff.

Topic: _____

Puff, the funny bunny

B. Reread the stories. Fix the words that should be capitalized.

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Name: _____ Week 1 • Day 3

 **Ideas** Choose a specific topic.

Read each topic. Write two ways to make the topic more interesting. Circle the one you like best.

Topic: fun at school 

1. Sample Answer: singing silly
2. songs in music class

Topic: uncommon pets 

1. Sample Answer: my friend has
2. to feed her snake live mice

Topic: eating dinner 

1. Sample Answer: my dad's
2. famous veggie lasagna

Topic: bears 

1. Sample Answer: my mom saw a
2. bear while hiking

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DAY 3

Read the rule aloud. Ask: *Do you remember what makes a good topic? (It is clear and interesting.) A good topic should also be specific. Give examples. (e.g., show and tell; the time Mary's pet rat escaped and ran around the room) Ask: Which one is more specific? (the second) Say: The second one is more specific because it tells what happened during a certain show and tell.* Then guide students through the activity.

- Point out the first topic. Ask: *Is "fun at school" very interesting? What topics are more specific that would tell more about fun at school? (e.g., class wins Field Day; doing an experiment) List students' suggestions on the board. Have students copy ideas from the board or write their own, circling their favorite.*

Convention: Remind students to capitalize the names of people and pets.

DAY 4

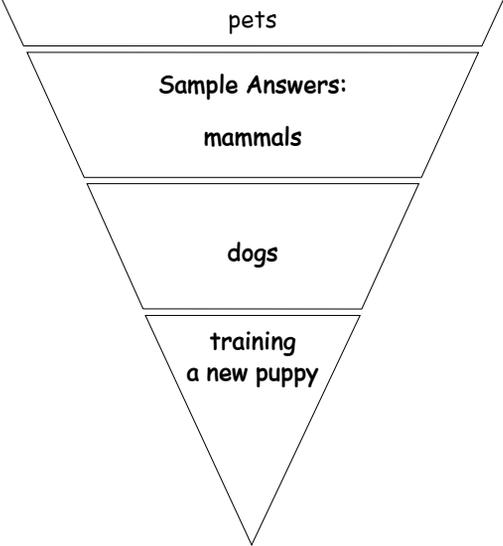
Read the rule aloud. Then say: *We've learned that a good topic is clear, interesting, and specific. However, sometimes we start with topics that are too big. One way to get a clear idea is to narrow down a topic.* Then guide students through the activity.

- Model narrowing the topic by reproducing and completing the triangle on the board. Say: *The topic pets is too big! There are too many things to write about. However, I can narrow it down to "pets I had when I was young." Then I can narrow it down more to "my dog, Fido," and again to "Fido won the pet talent contest."* Point out that you capitalized Fido.
- As students complete the activity, circulate to check their topics. For students who have never had a pet, point out that their topic could be about a friend's pet or a pet they would like to have. You may wish to have students work in pairs to help each other brainstorm ideas.

Name: _____ Week 1 • Day 4

 **Ideas** Choose a narrow topic.

Complete the triangle. Narrow your ideas.



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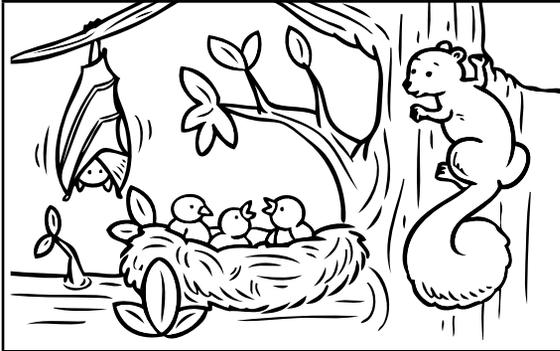
DAY 5 Writing Prompt 

- Write about a pet. Use the topic you chose on Day 4.
- Be sure to capitalize the names of people and pets.

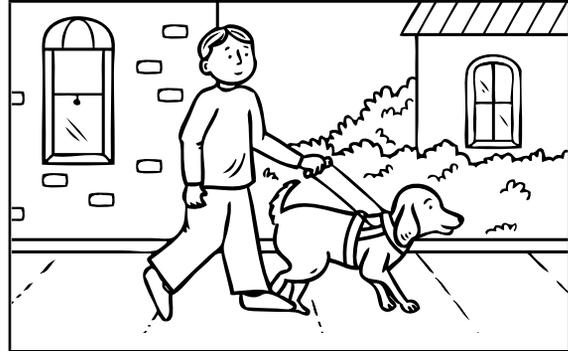


A good topic is clear.

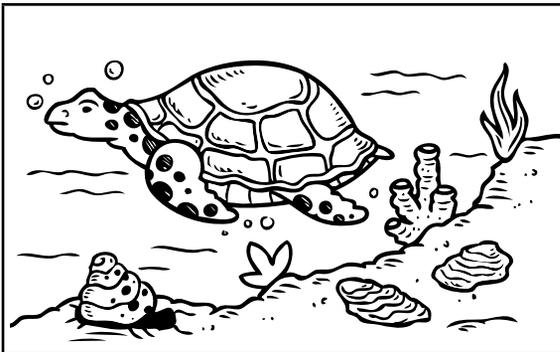
A. Choose the best topic. Underline the topic that gives a clear idea of each picture.



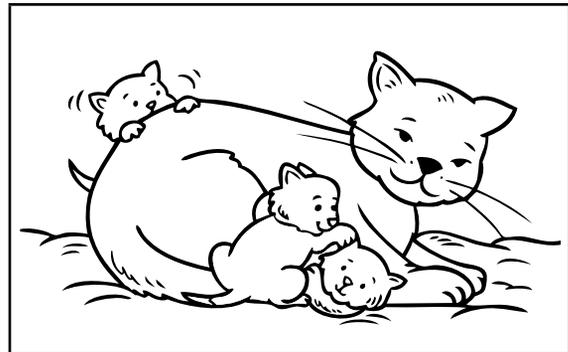
animal homes
animals that live in trees



a dog with a special job
a nice dog



ocean animals
ocean animals with shells



Tabby and her kittens
pet cats

B. Choose a zoo animal. Write a clear topic about it.

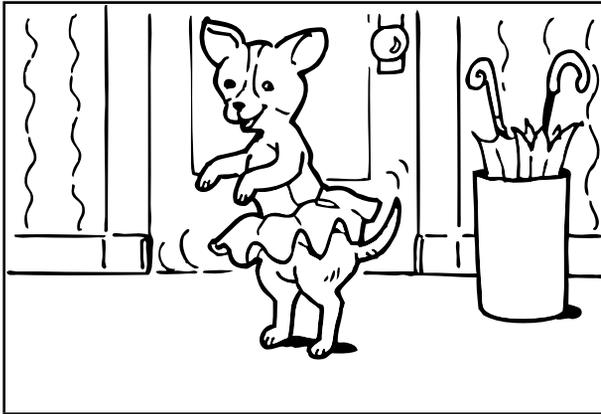
Animal: _____

Topic: _____



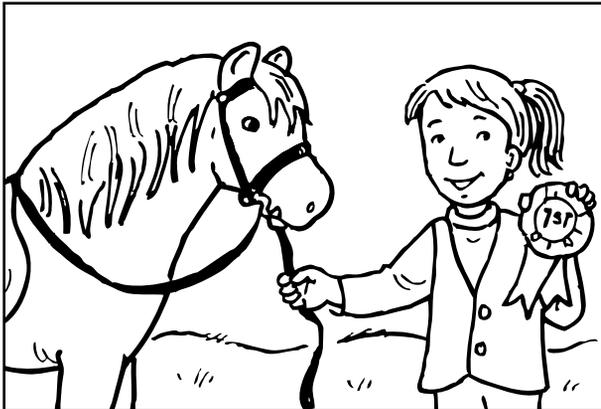
A good topic is interesting.

A. Read the stories. Then write the topic of each one.



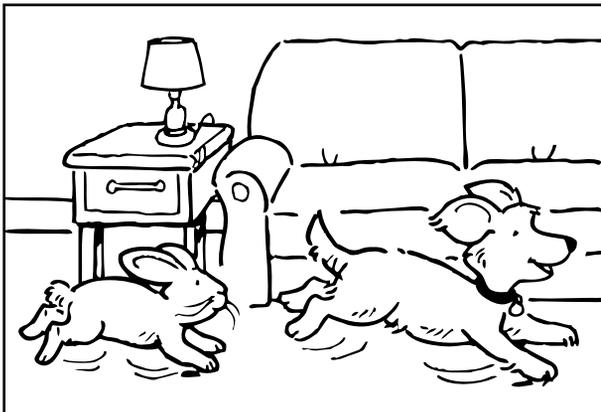
My name is cha-cha. I am mason's pet dog. I am smart and cute. I meet him at the door. Then I do a dance!

Topic:



My name is star. I am a pony. claire and I ride in horse shows. We win ribbons.

Topic:



I am a bunny. I like to chase dogs. I run around the house. My name is puff.

Topic:

B. Reread the stories. Fix the words that should be capitalized.



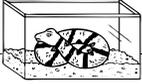
Choose a specific topic.

Read each topic. Write two ways to make the topic more interesting. Circle the one you like best.

Topic: fun at school 

1. _____

2. _____

Topic: uncommon pets 

1. _____

2. _____

Topic: eating dinner 

1. _____

2. _____

Topic: bears 

1. _____

2. _____



Choose a narrow topic.

Complete the triangle. Narrow your ideas.

