

GENERATE A WRITING SAMPLE

Below are made-up specs for a hypothetical education market series. This is written to simulate a potential assignment and to help you generate a writing sample for submission. Read the specs carefully, choose ONE title in the series, then write chapter one for that title (including the special features in the chapter – see below); there is no need to write the full manuscript. Potential editors only want a sample that illustrates your ability.

Series Description: Extreme weather occurs around the globe. It impacts both the environment and the people living there. This series will explore some of the many different types of extreme weather on the planet. It is not intended to sensationalize the events, but to objectively present the different weather phenomena and the effects.

Series titles include

- Hurricanes
- Tornadoes
- Tsunamis
- Earthquakes
- Volcanoes
- Blizzards
- Drought

Audience:

Books should be written in an engaging, informative, narrative tone at an interest level grades 3-6, ATOS reading level grade 4.0 – 4.9 (you can use the analyzer online – do a Google search for ATOS analyzer for books).

Word Count:

The complete manuscript will be 3,000-3,500 words. This includes the main text and special features within each chapter but does not include back matter. Each book should have 5-7 chapters.

Writing Style:

The writing style should be straight forward. Tone should be narrative and engaging while also authoritative. Use quotes to help bring the subject to life yet be careful not to overuse them. Text must be written in third person (no use of I, we, us, or you).

Chapters:

Chapter one should start with a short, captivating, high-interest story to grab the reader's attention about the subject. The remainder of the chapter should include a brief introduction of the subject and lay the foundation for what's to follow in the book.

Chapters 2-10 will each examine a different aspect of the extreme weather event. These chapters will explore the causes of such extreme events; where the weather occurs; the frequency of the events; the challenges the weather creates; how people deal with these events; and how the events affect people and the natural environment both immediately and long-term.

Special Features:

- Sidebars – one per chapter, 25-50 words. The material should supplement the main text without repeating it or getting too far off-topic and shouldn't include any information needed to understand the topic (assume that the reader will not read the sidebar and include any critical information in the main text).
- Cool Facts – one or two per chapter. Facts not mentioned in the main text but add to a reader's engagement in the subject; one to two short sentences.
- Quotes – one per chapter. One to two sentences that enhance the reader's overall understanding of the topic; not repeated from the main text

Back Matter:

- Glossary – 12-15 terms from the main text. Do not copy definitions from the dictionary, but instead put them in your own words.
- For More Information – a list of 3-5 nonfiction books on the topic for readers in grades 4-6; books should have a copyright of 2012 or newer. Also include 3-5 age appropriate web sites that offer additional information for curious readers.
- About the Author – include a statement 35-50 words about yourself.

Researching Your Topic:

Topic should be well researched using a variety of reputable sources. Use primary sources, scholarly articles, and adult-level books. Other children's books cannot be used as sources. For each topic, use multiple sources to ensure objective and balanced coverage of the subject.

Text must be footnoted so that facts can be verified. Use MLA style notes. Follow the MLA style for the bibliography as well. Purdue's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is an excellent source for MLA style formatting.

NOTE: Don't like the idea of writing about extreme weather? Two thoughts on this...1) You may get an opportunity for an assignment about a topic that doesn't thrill you; will you take it anyway? 2) Here are some other topic suggestions you can use to make up your own potential series, and then pick one book in that potential series to write about (or, of course, make up your own series!):

- Pets (each book in the series is about a different type of pet, their characteristics, and their care.)
- Ecosystems (each book in the series is about a different ecosystem)
- Communities (each book in the series is about a different type of community around the world)
- South America (each book in the series is about a different country in South America)
- Turning points in US history (each book in the series focuses on one event)