

ACTIVITY: "Grammar Gets Funny" • SKILL: Commonly Confused Words

# There, Their, and They're

The words **there**, **their**, and **they're** are often confused and misused. Here's what you need to know:

Use **there** to refer to a place or to the existence of something.

**Examples:**

*Ayumi found her dropped book over **there**, behind the oak tree.*

*Ted promised that **there** will be free ice cream at the Scoop Shop's grand opening.*

Use **their** to indicate that something belongs to certain people, animals, or things.

**Examples:**

*The Kroebers brought **their** new baby home today.*

*The dogs fought over **their** tennis balls for the whole car ride.*

Use **they're** as a contraction of "they are."

**Examples:**

*Ben and Gabriel say **they're** trying out for the baseball team.*

*I love hanging out with Kim and Carli. **They're** so funny!*

**Directions:** Circle the correct boldface word in each sentence below.

1. The Kavanaghs have lived in Madrid for three years, but **there/their/they're** moving back to Seattle next month.
2. Megan already left for the party. Priscilla is meeting her **there/their/they're** after dinner.
3. Aja carried the twins' birthday cake, and I carried **there/their/they're** presents.
4. Feyi said **there/their/they're** are four kittens sleeping in a box under the porch.
5. The Barrett boys explained that **there/their/they're** parrot flew away when they opened the window.
6. Leo prefers Brazilian green peaches because **there/their/they're** smaller and milder than American peaches.

**Directions:** Write the correct choice of **there**, **their**, or **they're** on each blank in the paragraph below.

Yesterday, my little sisters challenged me to a game of Scrabble. Usually, I avoid playing games with them because \_\_\_\_\_ terrible cheaters. But \_\_\_\_\_ pleading wore me down, and it was raining, so I agreed. We set up the board on the dining room table, removing Princess, the cat that likes to sleep \_\_\_\_\_. Then we picked our tiles. \_\_\_\_\_ are only two blank tiles, and I got them both! Things were looking good. The girls obviously didn't like \_\_\_\_\_ tiles: They kept trying to sneak \_\_\_\_\_ hands into the tile bag for new ones. \_\_\_\_\_ is not much else to say about the game, except that it went on and on and on. When it finally ended, I was more than ready to get out of \_\_\_\_\_. The score? Lisa: 311. Janet: 296. Me: 64. Ugh. My sisters, of course, had a great time. \_\_\_\_\_ already begging me to play again.

NONFICTION: "The World's Deadliest Creature" • SKILL: Reading Comprehension

# "The World's Deadliest Creature" Quiz

**Directions:** Read the nonfiction article "The World's Deadliest Creature" in this issue of *Scope*. Then answer the multiple-choice questions below.

1. Which word *best* describes the first section?

- (A) suspenseful
- (B) tragic
- (C) flashback
- (D) informative

2. Look at the map on page 7. What city is closest to the mouth of the Calliope River?

- (A) Cairns
- (B) Canberra
- (C) Gladstone
- (D) Australia

3. What is the main purpose of the sidebar "How Box Jellyfish Venom Affects the Body"?

- (A) to inform you of what happens to the human body after being stung by a box jellyfish
- (B) to help you avoid being stung by a box jellyfish
- (C) to explain why box jellyfish pose a greater danger to children than to adults
- (D) to give you an overview of other deadly creatures in Australia

4. Box jellyfish are especially dangerous to swimmers because

- (A) their transparency makes them practically invisible.
- (B) they are attracted to humans.
- (C) they have 24 eyes.
- (D) they usually attack in large groups.

5. Dr. Seymour can *best* be described as

- (A) detrimental.
- (B) determined.
- (C) detached.
- (D) detested.

6. One mystery that remains unsolved about box jellyfish is

- (A) what they do at night.
- (B) why their poison is so deadly.
- (C) how many eyes they have.
- (D) what their predators and prey are.

7. Which of the following *best* describes the sidebar "Instant Death Machines"?

- (A) an imaginative description of three fictional creatures
- (B) an evaluation of three animals to determine which one is the deadliest
- (C) a detailed guide to protecting yourself in the event of an animal attack
- (D) a lighthearted factual chart about other dangerous creatures around the world

8. Page 8 says that the black mamba injects lethal amounts of neuro- and cardiotoxins. The root *neuro* means "pertaining to the nervous system." The root *cardio* means "pertaining to the heart." A *toxin* is a poison. What is a *neurotoxin*?

- (A) a poison that affects the nerves
- (B) a poison that affects the heart
- (C) a poison that affects the stomach
- (D) a poison that kills rodents

**Directions:** Answer the questions below on the back of this page or on another piece of paper.

9. Explain the series of events that saved Rachael's life. Which people and actions were most crucial to her survival?

10. Choose one creature from the sidebar "Instant Death Machines" and compare it with the box jellyfish. Which is more deadly? Use details from the article and sidebar to support your answer.

# Critical-Thinking Questions

## "The World's Deadliest Creature"

1. What makes box jellyfish so dangerous?
2. How did Rachael come to be stung by a box jellyfish? What saved her life?
3. How does Dr. Seymour study box jellyfish?
4. Some animals can be dangerous to humans. In what ways might humans be dangerous to those animals?
5. What is the tone of the sidebar "Instant Death Machines"? How does its tone compare with the tone of the main article?

# Vocabulary:

## "The World's Deadliest Creature"

- 1. crustacean (cruh-STAY-shun)** *noun*; any of a class of marine animals that have an exoskeleton (a hard, protective covering on the outside of the body), such as a crab, lobster, or shrimp  
*example:* The Lees have to be careful at seafood restaurants because Tina is allergic to crustaceans.
- 2. dire (DYR)** *adjective*; terrible or urgent; desperate  
*example:* I know Dad asked us not to bother him for a ride, but the circumstances are dire. We missed the bus, it's insanely cold outside, and we have a math test in half an hour!
- 3. douse (DOWSS)** *verb*; to plunge into or cover with water or another liquid; drench  
*example:* Clarissa accidentally dropped a burning birthday candle in the trash can. Fortunately, I was able to douse the flame with my glass of milk.
- 4. estuary (ESS-chew-air-ee)** *noun*; the area where a river joins the sea  
*example:* An estuary has a mix of fresh water from the river and salt water from the sea.
- 5. harpoon (har-POON)** *noun*; a barbed spear; often used to refer to a long spear attached to a rope, used for hunting large fish or whales  
*example:* The fisherman stood on the deck holding a harpoon, watching for swordfish.
- 6. impervious (im-PUR-vee-us)** *adjective*; not allowing passage or damage; not able to be affected  
*example:* The last time it rained, I had cold, wet feet all day. This time, I wore galoshes that are impervious to rain.
- 7. lurk (LURK)** *verb*; to lie hidden or move carefully to avoid being seen, especially for an evil purpose  
*example:* The lion lurks in the tall grasses, waiting for antelope to run past.
- 8. nematocyst (NEM-uh-tuh-sist)** *noun*; one of the stinging parts in some marine animals  
*example:* "When handling a sea nettle," the guide explained, "hold it by the head and be careful to avoid the nematocysts."
- 9. skulk (SKULK)** *verb*; to move in a stealthy manner or to lie hidden  
*example:* I skulked in the hall outside my brother's bedroom door, hoping to hear his conversation.
- 10. transparent (trans-PAR-unt)** *adjective*; clear; able to be seen through, like glass  
*example:* Wendy looked longingly through the transparent lid of the case at the bracelet inside.

# Vocabulary Practice:

## "The World's Deadliest Creature"

**Directions:** Complete the sentences using the vocabulary words listed in the Word Bank.

WORD BANK				
crustacean	dire	douse	estuary	harpoon
impervious	lurking	nematocysts	skulk	transparent

1. You have to wash your windows. Windows are supposed to be \_\_\_\_\_, remember?
2. With no home and a murderous stepmother, Snow White is in a(n) \_\_\_\_\_ situation.
3. The class filed onto the bus for the field trip to the river mouth to study \_\_\_\_\_ plants.
4. My favorite \_\_\_\_\_ is Sebastian, the crab from *The Little Mermaid*.
5. Haile shook out his hiking boots in case there were any spiders \_\_\_\_\_ in them.
6. Jellyfish use the toxins in their \_\_\_\_\_ to immobilize their prey.
7. To make the best banana split, begin with two bananas, a scoop of vanilla, and a scoop of chocolate. Then \_\_\_\_\_ the whole thing in hot fudge and caramel sauce.
8. Todd gets upset when the coach says the team didn't play well enough, but Alfredo never minds. It seems he is \_\_\_\_\_ to criticism.

**Directions:** In each row of words, circle the word that does not belong.

- |    |           |            |            |            |
|----|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| 1. | hatchet   | harpoon    | arrow      | target     |
| 2. | lurk      | trumpet    | prowl      | skulk      |
| 3. | terrible  | desperate  | euphoric   | dire       |
| 4. | dolphin   | fish       | crustacean | goat       |
| 5. | celebrate | slosh      | douse      | drench     |
| 6. | immune    | impervious | improbable | impassable |

NONFICTION: "The World's Deadliest Creature" • SKILL: Reading Comprehension, page 1 of 2

# Read, Think, Explain

## Identifying Nonfiction Elements

Exploring the facts and ideas in a nonfiction article will help you understand it better. Use this worksheet to help you understand "The World's Deadliest Creature" in the December 12, 2011, issue of *Scope*.

### A. BEFORE READING

1. Read the title, or headline, of the article. Write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

Now look at the photographs and read the captions. What do you predict the story will be about? Circle one of the choices below and explain.

**A person** If so, who? \_\_\_\_\_

**An event** If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

**Something else** If so, what? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Look at the photograph on pages 4-5. What does it show? What can you infer from the title and the photo?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Circle the word below that most closely describes the genre of the article.

essay      nonfiction      autobiography      historical fiction

### B. DURING READING

Read the subtitle, or heading, of each section. Then complete the following.

4. The **first section** is the introduction. It is mainly about (summarize): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

5. The **second section** is called \_\_\_\_\_. It is mainly about (summarize): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

6. The **third section** is called \_\_\_\_\_. It is mainly about (summarize): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

7. The **fourth section** is called \_\_\_\_\_. It is mainly about (summarize): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

8. The **fifth section** is called \_\_\_\_\_. It is mainly about (summarize): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ .

### C. AFTER READING

9. Write down three facts from the article that you didn't know before you read it.

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10. What is the MAIN purpose of the article? (circle one)

to inform readers about  
a lethal animal that  
scientists are studying

to convince readers  
not to swim in  
Australian rivers

to instruct readers how to  
deal with jellyfish stings

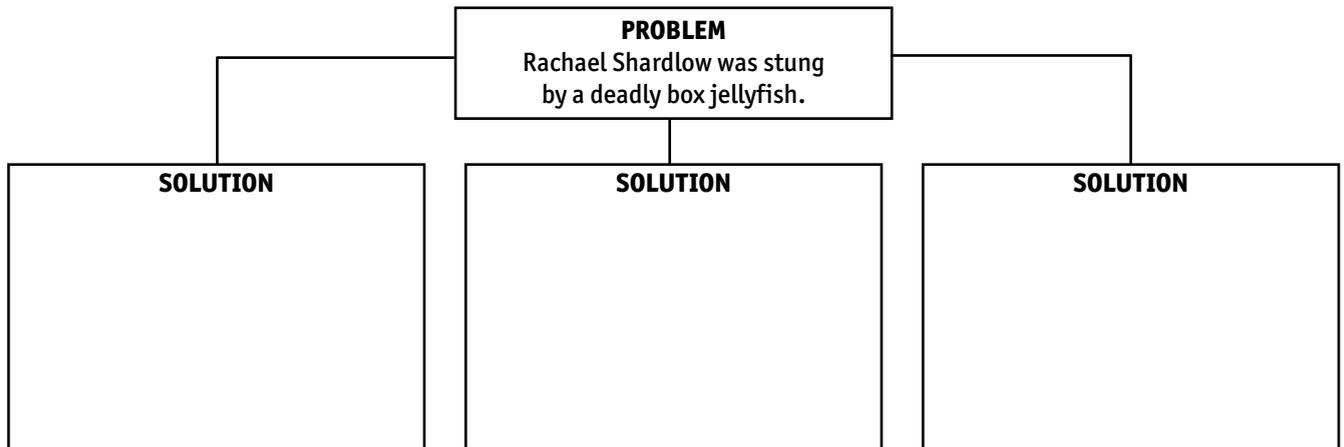
11. Summarize the type of information presented in "Instant Death Machines." \_\_\_\_\_

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### D. TEXT STRUCTURE

12. **Problem and Solution:** Write three solutions to the problem stated below.



### E. MAKING CONNECTIONS

13. Here's how this article relates to (fill in at least two):

Something else I read: \_\_\_\_\_

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Something else I know about: \_\_\_\_\_

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Something in my own life: \_\_\_\_\_

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NONFICTION: "The World's Deadliest Creature" • SKILL: Analyzing Theme, page 1 of 2

# Humans vs. Nature

**Directions:** Use the article "The World's Deadliest Creature" to answer the questions below.

## THE SMALL PICTURE: RACHAEL SHARDLOW vs. A BOX JELLYFISH

1. Briefly describe the conflict. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What happened to Rachael as a result of the conflict? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What else happened as a result of the conflict? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE BIGGER PICTURE: SWIMMERS vs. BOX JELLYFISH

1. Briefly describe the conflict. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What is being done to resolve the conflict? \_\_\_\_\_

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## THE REALLY BIG PICTURE: HUMANS vs. DANGEROUS ANIMALS

1. Briefly describe the conflict. Use examples of dangerous animals from the article "The World's Deadliest Creature" and from the sidebar "Instant Death Machines." \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What can be done to resolve the conflict? \_\_\_\_\_

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PLAY: *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems* • SKILL: Reading Comprehension

# Langston Hughes Quiz

**Directions:** Read the Langston Hughes play in this issue of *Scope*. Then answer the multiple-choice questions below.

**1. Why did Langston Hughes move to Harlem?**

- (A) His dream was to attend Columbia University.
- (B) He thought he could get rich as a writer there.
- (C) His mother was in Harlem.
- (D) He was excited by Harlem’s creative renaissance.

**2. Choose the sentence that *best* expresses the meaning of the following lines:**

“Bring me all of your dreams, you dreamer . . .  
That I may wrap them in a blue cloud-cloth—  
Away from the too-rough fingers of the world.”

- (A) I will protect you while you sleep.
- (B) I will wrap your dreams in a blue cloth.
- (C) I will keep your dreams safe from the harshness of the world.
- (D) I turn your rough dreams into happy dreams.

**3. Which literary device is used in the lines below?**

“What happens to a dream deferred?  
Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun?”

- (A) hyperbole
- (B) simile
- (C) metaphor
- (D) personification

**4. Jim Crow laws \_\_\_\_\_.**

- (A) kept black children out of school
- (B) discriminated against African-Americans
- (C) promoted civil rights for African-Americans
- (D) prevented African-Americans from competing in all sports

**5. “A Dream Deferred” is the title of Scene 4.**

**What does *deferred* mean?**

- (A) put off until later
- (B) taken away forever
- (C) happened suddenly
- (D) given to somebody else

**6. What is the main conflict in Scene 5?**

- (A) Langston wants to go to Germany, but his father wants him to go to college in America.
- (B) Langston is afraid of his father because his father is cruel to his workers.
- (C) Langston wants to be a writer, but his father wants him to be an engineer.
- (D) Langston fights with his father about math.

**7. Which of the following details from the play does NOT support the idea that Langston’s poetry reflects his life experiences?**

- (A) Langston resented that black children could not attend the Children’s Day party.
- (B) In high school, Langston won first prize in the high jump competition.
- (C) Langston was often lonely growing up.
- (D) Langston stood in his room dreaming of what it would be like to be a poet living in Harlem.

**8. Which words *best* describe Langston Hughes?**

- (A) fearful and imaginative
- (B) passionate and angry
- (C) cunning and lucky
- (D) artistic and persevering

**Directions:** Answer the questions below on the back of this page or on another piece of paper.

**9.** How does the time period in which Langston Hughes lived influence his experiences? Give three examples from the play.

**10.** Three of the poetry excerpts in the play include the word *dream*. What does it feel like to hope that your dreams will someday come true? Write your own poem describing that hope.

# Critical-Thinking Questions

## *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems*

1. Why is Langston lonely as a child? What impact does his grandmother have on him?
2. Why does Langston want to move to Harlem? How could this help him escape his loneliness?
3. What is the turning point in Langston's career? What risk does he take to reach that point?
4. What are two ideas about dreams Langston expresses in his poetry?
5. What is the effect of having some or all of the lines of poetry that appear at the beginning of each scene repeat at the end of the scene?

# Vocabulary:

## *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems*

- 1. affluent (AF-loo-uhnt)** *adjective*; having plenty of money and the things money can buy; rich  
*example:* In Teresa's affluent school district, all students receive tablet computers to use in class.
- 2. castoff (KAST-awf)** *noun*; a thing that has been thrown away or rejected  
*example:* I'm happy to wear my sister's castoffs. She has great taste and takes good care of her clothes!
- 3. discrimination (dih-skrim-uh-NEY-shuhn)** *noun*; prejudice or unjust behavior toward others based on differences in age, race, gender, etc.  
*example:* The company was found guilty of discrimination against women. Female employees receive less money than male employees for the same work.
- 4. feverishly (FEE-ver-ish-lee)** *adverb*; excitedly or restlessly  
*example:* Gary and Ashley worked feverishly to get everything ready for their dad's surprise party.
- 5. fleeting (FLEE-ting)** *adjective*; passing swiftly; not lasting  
*example:* My sadness was fleeting; talking about our upcoming vacation cheered me right up!
- 6. Jim Crow laws (jim CROH lawz)** *noun*; state and local laws discriminating against African-Americans that were enforced in many U.S. states from the late 1870s to the mid-1960s.  
*example:* Jim Crow laws forced African-Americans to attend separate schools and use different hospitals and parks.
- 7. prolific (proh-LIF-ik)** *adjective*; producing in large quantities or with great frequency; productive  
*example:* Anthony is a prolific writer. He wrote five short stories last week!
- 8. renaissance (rehn-uh-SAHNSS)** *noun*; a period of great activity, especially in culture, art, or learning  
*example:* Mrs. Alvarez, the new principal, has helped bring about a renaissance in our school. Everyone is full of energy and excitement, and we're all working really hard and accomplishing a lot!
- 9. segregate (SEG-rih-gayt)** *verb*; to separate or isolate from the main group; especially to separate by race  
*example:* The Supreme Court ruled that it is illegal to segregate people with disabilities by forcing them to live in institutions.
- 10. shabby (SHAB-ee)** *adjective*; **1.** run-down, ragged, or worn; **2.** not fair or generous  
*example 1:* My foot went right through one of the steps of the shabby house on the corner.  
*example 2:* I lied to Beth about the party. My mom said that was a shabby way to treat a friend.

PLAY: *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems* • SKILL: Vocabulary Acquisition, page 2 of 2

# Vocabulary Practice:

## *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems*

**Directions:** In the space provided before each of the following word pairs, write **S** if the words are synonyms and **A** if the words are antonyms.

1. \_\_\_\_ feverishly, frantically
2. \_\_\_\_ discrimination, fairness
3. \_\_\_\_ segregate, join
4. \_\_\_\_ neglected, shabby
5. \_\_\_\_ needy, affluent

**Directions:** Circle the boldface word that correctly completes each sentence below.

6. Thomas Edison is known as the most **prolific/shabby** inventor in American history.
7. Our time on this Caribbean cruise is **affluent/fleeting**. Let's make the most of it!
8. "I shudder to remember when we had a **renaissance/Jim Crow laws** in this country," said Kelly's grandmother.
9. Jenna has lots of nice clothes, but her favorite sweater is a **castoff/renaissance** that used to belong to her mom.
10. My grandma said my jeans are **fleeting/shabby**—but they are brand new!

**Directions:** Choose two of the vocabulary words listed on page 1 of this activity. Write an example sentence for each one.

11. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

12. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

PLAY: *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems* • SKILL: Craft and Structure, page 1 of 3

# The Poetry Connection

**Directions:** Answer the questions below to help you find connections between the poetry and the events in scenes from the play *Langston Hughes: A Biography in Poems*.

## Prologue and Scene 1

1. Read the lines of poetry at the beginning of Scene 1. What does “by and by” mean?

- Ⓐ never; not under any condition       Ⓑ eventually; in the future

2. In these lines of poetry, the speaker is talking about

- Ⓐ feeling lonely one time.       Ⓑ feeling lonely over and over again.

Explain why you chose your answer. Use details from the poem to support your statements. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Paraphrase, or write in your own words, the main idea that the speaker expresses in these lines of poetry.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Summarize the events in the prologue and Scene 1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How does the poetry at the beginning and end of Scene 1 affect your understanding of, or reaction to, the rest of the scene? How does what happens in the scene affect the way you understand or feel about the poetry?

Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Scene 2

1. Read the lines of poetry at the beginning of Scene 2. What tells you that this poem is about the experience of African-Americans? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. The speaker says that a “fenced-off narrow space” is “assigned” to him. What do you picture when you read the words “fenced-off narrow space”? How would it feel to have to stay in a space like that? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. What examples of discrimination appear in this scene? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. How do the events in this scene affect your understanding of the poetry? How does the poetry affect your understanding of or reaction to the scene? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Your Choice

Choose another scene from the play. Write it here: \_\_\_\_\_

### **For your scene:**

1. Paraphrase the main idea of the poetry. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Summarize what happens in the scene. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Explain the relationship between the poetry and the scene. \_\_\_\_\_

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THEN & NOW: "The Greatest Invention of All Time" • SKILL: Compare and Contrast

# Paired Text Quiz

**Directions:** Read "The Greatest Invention of All Time" in this issue of *Scope*. Then answer the questions below.

**1. What benefit do both the flush toilet and the Peepoo provide?**

- Ⓐ They both are necessary but expensive ways of disposing of human waste.
- Ⓑ They both help prevent human waste from polluting the water supply.
- Ⓒ They both use crystals to change human waste into fertilizer for crops.
- Ⓓ They both have completely stopped the spread of cholera in the places they are used.

**2. Why did Anders Wilhelmson invent the Peepoo?**

- Ⓐ to give people a way to make more fertilizer
- Ⓑ to put the toilet industry out of business
- Ⓒ to help people who don't have access to toilets
- Ⓓ to make a lot of money in Asia and Africa

**3. What is the biggest reason that human waste left out in the open leads to disease?**

- Ⓐ It contaminates the water.
- Ⓑ It taints the food.
- Ⓒ It makes the streets filthy.
- Ⓓ It clogs the sewers.

**4. Which of the following applies to "The Miracle Flush" but does NOT apply to "A Toilet for the Developing World"?**

- Ⓐ The writer uses the first-person point of view, referring to herself as "I."
- Ⓑ The writer uses the second-person point of view, addressing the reader as "you."
- Ⓒ Historical evidence is used to help prove a point.
- Ⓓ The article ends on a note of uncertainty.

**5. What is a major difference between the flush toilet and the Peepoo?**

- Ⓐ A flush toilet is easy to use; the Peepoo is not.
- Ⓑ The Peepoo is portable; the flush toilet is not.
- Ⓒ The flush toilet immediately made things better in the 1850s; the Peepoo has yet to prove itself.
- Ⓓ The Peepoo is used only by children; the flush toilet is used by people of all ages.

**6. What was the public's reaction to the first flush toilet in London as compared with the locals' reaction to the Peepoo in Kenya?**

- Ⓐ bored vs. horrified
- Ⓑ suspicious vs. overjoyed
- Ⓒ curious vs. outraged
- Ⓓ amazed vs. hesitant

**7. The author most likely wrote these articles to**

- Ⓐ educate readers about the importance of human-waste disposal.
- Ⓑ convince readers that Peepoos are better than flush toilets.
- Ⓒ explain why flush toilets were invented.
- Ⓓ amuse readers by grossing them out.

**8. Together, the two articles make it clear that**

- Ⓐ finding a safe way to dispose of human waste is a problem that may never be solved.
- Ⓑ in some parts of the world, finding a safe way to dispose of human waste is not important.
- Ⓒ human-waste disposal used to be a problem but isn't anymore.
- Ⓓ some parts of the world have had a safe way to dispose of human waste for more than 100 years, but other parts of the world still don't have a safe way to dispose of human waste.

THEN & NOW: "The Greatest Invention of All Time" • SKILL: Compare and Contrast

# Two Toilets

**Directions:** Use details from the articles about early flush toilets and Peepoo bags to complete the chart below. In each row, fill in the second and third columns. Then decide whether the information in the two columns is similar or different (or both) and put a check mark in the appropriate column or columns.

	the flush toilet	the Peepoo	Similar	Different
How it improves public health				
Where and when it was introduced				
How it works				
How people learned about it				
How the public has responded to it				
_____ (Write your own.)				

On a separate sheet of paper, use what you entered in the chart to help you write a brief essay. Be sure to use at least two details from EACH article to support your opinion. Answer the following questions:

**Why is the way we dispose of waste so important? What successes and failures have there been?  
Is the problem of human-waste disposal solved?**

DEBATE: "Should 4-Year-Olds Be Beauty Queens?" • SKILL: Persuasive Essay, page 1 of 5

# Write a Persuasive Essay

**Directions:** Read "Should 4-Year-Olds Be Beauty Queens?" on pages 20-21 of the December 12, 2011, issue of *Scope*. Fill in the chart on page 21. Then follow the steps below to write an essay explaining your opinion of child beauty pageants.

## STEP 1: DECIDE WHAT YOU THINK

Should little kids compete in beauty pageants? Consider what you read in the article, as well as your own experiences. **Check the box next to the point of view you will support in your essay. Or write your own opinion in the space provided.**

Yes! Aren't those kids cute?

No! It's totally disturbing.

\_\_\_\_\_

## STEP 2: FIND YOUR SUPPORT

Which of the items that you wrote in the "Yes" and "No" columns on page 21 support your opinion? What are other points that support your opinion? List three to five support items here:

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## STEP 3: ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

If you think child pageants are harmless fun, summarize the reasons of some people who oppose the contests. If you believe pageants send the wrong message to young girls, summarize the reasons cited by people who believe pageants benefit children.

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**STEP 4: CRAFT YOUR THESIS**

The thesis is where you tell readers what the essay is going to be about. The thesis should be a clear, strong statement of the opinion you stated in Step 1. The rest of your essay should support your thesis.

**Your thesis:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 5: WRITE YOUR HOOK**

The very beginning of your essay is called the hook because it "hooks" your readers' attention. The hook should relate to the topic of your essay, but it can take many forms. It can be an anecdote (a very short story), a fact, a quote, or a rhetorical question (a question to which you don't expect an answer). Here are three ideas for hooks that could work for this topic. **Choose one of the ideas below, or use your own idea and write a hook on the lines provided (1-3 sentences).**

- 1. ANECDOTE:** If you or someone you know has been in a pageant, tell a story about it. Or describe something you've seen on an episode of *Toddlers & Tiaras*.
- 2. SURPRISING FACT:** Find a fact that will raise your readers' eyebrows. Several surprising facts are included in the article. You can also do some research to find a surprising fact that is not included in the article.
- 3. RHETORICAL QUESTION:** Ask your readers if they would let their little sister compete in a pageant.

**Your hook:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 6: SUMMARIZE THE ISSUE**

Let readers know a little about the issue you will be writing about. This is not your point of view; it's just a very brief summary of the issue—in this case, the controversy over beauty pageants for little girls.

**Your summary of the issue:** \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

**STEP 7: START WRITING**

Now that you have the key ingredients for your essay, you are ready to start writing. On the next page, you'll find guidelines for how to organize your ingredients, as well as hints about what else you'll need to add.

**Directions:** Follow the guidelines below to write a strong essay on whether or not young children should be allowed to compete in beauty pageants. You will use what you wrote on the first two pages of this activity.

### INTRODUCTION

Open with your hook from Step 5.



Write a transition sentence that relates your hook to the question of whether or not child beauty pageants are a good idea. (See *Scope's* handout "Great Transitions" for some ways to link your ideas.)



Write your summary of the issue from Step 6.



Finish with your thesis from Step 4.

### BODY PARAGRAPH(S)

Here's where you write your supporting points from Step 2. For each one, write 1-3 sentences that provide additional details. You can put all of your supporting points and detail sentences together in one paragraph, or you can break them into three paragraphs.

It depends on how much you want to write about each point. Order your supporting points from weakest to strongest. Readers tend to remember best the details that are presented last.

### ACKNOWLEDGE THE OTHER SIDE

Now it's time to recognize the other side of the argument. Use what you wrote in Step 3. Then explain why you think the opposing point of view is wrong.

### CONCLUSION

Use 2-3 sentences to remind your readers of your main points.



Finish with a strong final sentence. Looking for an idea? Try referring to your hook, finding a quote, or inspiring your readers.

### READ AND REVISE

Use *Scope's* "Persuasive-Essay Checklist" to evaluate and edit what you have written. Make any necessary changes and write a second draft.

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# Great Transitions

Transitions are like bridges between your ideas—they help your readers move from one idea to the next. Here are some transition words and phrases you may wish to use in your essay. Keep in mind that they can be used at the beginning of a sentence or within a sentence.

## If you are adding information or showing similarity between ideas:

- additionally
- besides
- so too
- first of all/secondly/thirdly
- in addition
- also
- likewise
- to begin with
- as well as
- another
- furthermore
- finally

## If you are showing that one idea is different from another:

- however
- even though
- in contrast
- on the one hand/on the other hand
- yet
- despite
- still
- some people say/other people say
- but
- although
- in spite of
- regardless

## If you are showing that something is an example of what you just stated:

- for example
- to illustrate
- this can be seen
- for instance
- namely
- specifically

## If you want to show cause and effect:

- as a result
- consequently
- so
- it follows that
- therefore
- eventually

## If you want to add emphasis:

- in fact
- of course
- truly
- even
- indeed

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# Persuasive-Essay Checklist

**Directions:** Use this guide to check your own essay, or exchange papers with a classmate and use the list to check each other's essays. In the margins of the essay you are checking, make notes about anything that needs to be revised.

## Introduction

- ✓ Does the first sentence grab readers' attention?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph provide a general overview of the essay's topic?
- ✓ Does the first paragraph include a thesis statement that strongly and clearly states your point of view? Does the thesis clue readers in as to what the essay is going to be about?

## Body Paragraphs

- ✓ Do they contain a total of at least three points that support the thesis?
- ✓ Do they provide details to further explain each of the three supporting points?
- ✓ Are the supporting details presented in order from weakest to strongest?
- ✓ Do you acknowledge an opposing point of view and then explain why you think it isn't strong enough to change your point of view?

## Conclusion

- ✓ Does the last paragraph remind readers of the main points of the essay, without going into *too* much detail and repeating everything readers just read?
- ✓ Is the conclusion free of new information (such as another supporting point)?
- ✓ Does the last sentence leave readers with a strong final impression?

## General

- ✓ Does one idea flow smoothly into the next?
- ✓ Do the sentence structures and lengths vary?
- ✓ Does every sentence relate to the thesis?
- ✓ Does everything make sense?
- ✓ Is the essay convincing?
- ✓ Are the grammar, punctuation, and spelling correct?

# Conquer Verb-Tense Consistency

A verb's *tense* indicates when the action that it describes takes place—in the past (I ran), in the present (I run), or in the future (I will run).

The verb tense you use should remain *consistent*, or the same, unless you have a good reason to change it. The verb tense should remain consistent throughout sentences, throughout paragraphs, and throughout the entire body of whatever you are writing—again, unless you have a good reason to change it. For example:

**Incorrect:** When my mom **goes** to the store, she **bought** a treat for everyone.  
(*Goes* is in the present tense, and *bought* is in the past tense—and you don't have a good reason to change the tense you are using.)

**Correct Option 1:** When my mom **goes** to the store, she **buys** a treat for everyone.  
(Both verbs are in the present tense.)

**Correct Option 2:** When my mom **went** to the store, she **bought** a treat for everyone.  
(Both verbs are in the past tense.)

So what IS a good reason to change the verb tense you are using? When you are describing events that happen at different times. For example:

**Correct:** Lindsey **plays** field hockey now, but last year she **was** on the soccer team.  
(You are describing something that is happening now, and you are also describing something that happened in the past.)

**Correct:** We **took** first place in the state competition; next week we **will compete** in the national competition. (You are describing something that happened in the past, and you are also describing something that will happen in the future.)

**Directions:** In each group of sentences or paragraphs below, place a ✓ in front of the sentence or paragraph that correctly uses verb tenses.

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1. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ I picked up the cell phone quickly and dial the number.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ I pick up the cell phone quickly and dialed the number.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ I picked up the cell phone quickly and dialed the number.
2. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ Suddenly, the lights flickered and an uninvited guest enters the room.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ Suddenly, the lights flicker and an uninvited guest enters the room.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ Suddenly, the lights flicker and an uninvited guest entered the room.
3. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ When I was comfortable, I began my homework.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ When I was comfortable, I begin my homework.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ When I am comfortable, I began my homework.
4. **a** \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen is going to save his money so that he will be able to buy a drum set.  
**b** \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen is going to save his money so that he was able to buy a drum set.  
**c** \_\_\_\_\_ Stephen saves his money so that he was able to buy a drum set.



THE LAZY EDITOR: "Bermuda Triangle Mystery" • SKILL: Ambiguous Pronouns

# Perplexing Pronouns

Consider this sentence:

**When my mom takes my little sister to the playground, she is really happy.**

Who is happy? You can't tell, because it's not clear whom the pronoun *she* refers to. Because of this, the sentence is ambiguous, or open to more than one meaning. Here is one way to make the sentence clear:

**My little sister is really happy when my mom takes her to the playground.**

**Directions:** Place a check (✓) next to the CLEAR sentence in each group. We did the first one for you.

1. a \_\_\_\_\_ The Richardsons brought delicious turkey burgers to the picnic. I just love them!  
b  I just love the delicious turkey burgers that the Richardsons brought to the picnic.
2. a \_\_\_\_\_ "I'm getting a new bicycle for Christmas," Lily told Ruby.  
b \_\_\_\_\_ Lily told Ruby that she was getting a new bicycle for Christmas.
3. a \_\_\_\_\_ The Davis twins told their parents that they were wrong about the location of the soccer game.  
b \_\_\_\_\_ The Davis twins were wrong about the location of the soccer game, so they told their parents.
4. a \_\_\_\_\_ Justin received the math prize as well as the photography award, but he was very modest about it.  
b \_\_\_\_\_ Justin received the math prize as well as the photography award, but he was very modest about his achievements.
5. a \_\_\_\_\_ I dropped my notebook as I was taking it out of my backpack.  
b \_\_\_\_\_ As I was taking my notebook out of my backpack, I dropped it.

**Directions:** Revise the following sentences so that their meanings are clear. We did the first one for you.

6. When Richard saw Joel in the driver's seat, he let out a shout of surprise.

When Richard saw Joel in the driver's seat, Joel let out a shout of surprise.

7. Mai gave her niece a huge candy bar that she kept taking bites of.

8. While Sergei and his dog were waiting for the mail carrier, he started barking loudly.

9. The McDermotts visited the Dabneys after they got back from their vacation.

THE LAZY EDITOR: "Bermuda Triangle Mystery" • SKILL: Redundancy

# The Worksheet on Redundancy Worksheet

To keep your writing clear and effective, it is important to avoid *redundancy*, or unnecessary repetition. (Just check out the title of this worksheet!) For example:

**Incorrect:** In my opinion, I think the Cardinals are the best team.

**Correct Option 1:** In my opinion, the Cardinals are the best team.

**Correct Option 2:** I think the Cardinals are the best team.

In the first sentence, *In my opinion* and *I think* mean the same thing. It is not necessary to use both.

**Directions:** Rewrite the following sentences so that they are no longer redundant.

1. Shayur's alarm was set for 7 a.m. in the morning.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. The burglar returned back to the scene of the crime.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. At the end of the concert, the crowd rose to their feet and gave the musicians a standing ovation.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. We all need to cooperate together, or we will never make any progress.

\_\_\_\_\_

5. For most people, riding in a hot-air balloon is a unique, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The troops advanced forward toward the village.

\_\_\_\_\_

7. Have you ever at any time spilled cranberry juice on a white carpet?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Many famous celebrities attended the Grammy Awards.

\_\_\_\_\_

9. Mrs. O'Connor asked Tanya to circulate the sign-up sheet around to all of the students in the classroom.

\_\_\_\_\_

THE LAZY EDITOR: "Bermuda Triangle Mystery" • SKILL: Eliminating texting shorthand from formal writing

# no txtng slng in yer hmwk!!!

Texting abbreviations and texting slang have their place: in text messages. In texts, it's fine if, for example, you use the letter *r* to replace the word *are*, the letter *b* to replace *be*, or the numeral *2* to replace *to* (or *two* or *too*). But when you are writing something more formal—like an assignment for school—you must spell out words. You must also use proper punctuation and capitalization. If you're a frequent texter, keep a close eye on yourself—it's easy to accidentally let texting abbreviations and slang slip into your writing.

**Directions:** Some texting slang slipped into the writing sample below. Find and correct it.

## Finding Phoebe

It wuz a Wednesday evening in early December. A cold wind whipped dwn the street as my mom and i hurried hom. i couldn't wait to gt inside and curl up under a blanket with a ns hot mug of cocoa.

A few doors down from our apartment, a high-pitched sound stopped me in my tracks.

"Meow! Meow! Meow!"

Where was it coming from? i looked around, baffled. then the sound came again

"Meow! Meow! Meow!"

This time i found her: a tiny blk & wht kitten huddled in a dark corner of a stairwell. i knelt down, and she came running over to me. She rubbed her little head against my hand and started purring like crzy. i noticed that she wuz shivering. without thinking, i picked her up and wrapped her in my scarf

"Come on, Jessica, let's go home," said my mom.

i started 2 protest. "But—"

"That kitten is cold," my mom said, smiling. "We need 2 get her inside. Come on."

That was the night Phoebe joined our family.

# Let's Agree, Shall We?

A verb should agree with its subject. In other words:

**If the subject is singular, use a singular verb, and if the subject is plural, use a plural verb:**

Jason *sings* beautifully.

The lion cubs *were* waiting for their mother.

Sometimes, it can be a bit tricky to figure out if the subject is singular or plural. Here are some tips:

**When the subject is composed of two or more nouns or pronouns connected by *and*, use a plural verb:**

Alex and Emma *run* fast.

**Use a singular verb with sums of money or periods of time:**

Ten dollars *is* a good price for that ticket.

Three hours *is* a long time to wait.

**When two or more singular nouns or pronouns are connected by *or* or *nor*, use a singular verb:**

Grandma or Grandpa *is* going to pick me up tonight.

**Collective nouns are nouns that describe a group, such as *team*, *committee*, *class*, and *family*. When all the members of the group are doing the same thing, use a singular verb:**

Our class *raises* the most money every year.

**The words *each*, *each one*, *either*, *neither*, *everyone*, *everybody*, *anybody*, *anyone*, *nobody*, *somebody*, *someone*, and *no one* are singular and require a singular verb:**

Everyone *is* looking forward to Saturday.

**When the members of the group are acting as individuals, use a plural verb:**

The committee *disagrees* on the issue of school uniforms.

**Directions:** In each sentence below, underline the subject and circle the correct verb from the pair of verbs in parentheses. We did the first one for you.

1. The president and his adviser (is/are) meeting in the Oval Office.
2. Ina (isn't/aren't) coming with us to the park because her grandparents are visiting.
3. My parents (has/have) already bought 10 raffle tickets.
4. What classes (do/does) Jess have after lunch?
5. A school of bright-colored fish (was/were) swimming past us while we were snorkeling.

6. One of Emma's little brothers (has/have) seen every Harry Potter movie 10 times.
7. A few of Sajit's cousins (was/were) at the reunion.
8. Everybody (hope/hopes) the Cougars will win on Saturday.
9. The freckles on Annie's face (seem/seems) to have multiplied.
10. My brother's swim coach (want/wants) him to practice before school every morning.
11. I'm not sure if Brett or Sam (is/are) going to play the lead role on Saturday.
12. Twenty minutes (is/are) about the standard amount of time to wait for a delivery.

**Directions:** In each sentence below, circle the subject that agrees with the verb. We did the first one for you.

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13. My (nose/nose and throat) is itchy.
14. (One/Many) of Althea's friends plays drums in the marching band.
15. The (kitten/kittens) like to play in the laundry basket.
16. (She/They) has \$20 to spend at the bookstore.
17. Jeremy's (family/brother and sister) is really nice.
18. When the bell rings, (the class/the students) leap up from their seats.
19. (Nobody/Two of my friends) likes scary movies.
20. (Rufus/Rufus and Frannie) meow at me every time I walk by.

# You Write It

## Turning an Interview Into an Article

**Directions:** Follow the steps below to turn our interview with Erin Hannon into an article.

**1** The headline "This Teen Could Save Your Life" tells you the main idea of the interview—and what the main idea of your article should be. **Write the main idea, in your own words, as a complete sentence.**

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**2** Rewrite each question-and-answer pair as one paragraph. Your paragraphs should be written from the third-person point of view (using *he*, *she*, or *they* to refer to people—never *I* or *we*). You should paraphrase, or rewrite in your own words, what Erin says. We did the first paragraph for you. (The first paragraph should include important information from the photo caption as well.)

**Paragraph 1:** *When someone calls 911, 17-year-old Erin Hannon of Darien, Connecticut, rushes to the scene. She works at Post 53, the only ambulance service in the country run by teenagers.*

**Paragraph 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paragraph 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paragraph 4:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paragraph 5:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Paragraph 6:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**3** Choose two or three sentences from what Erin said in the interview to use as direct quotes in your article. A direct quote is a report of another person's exact words.

**Direct Quote 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Direct Quote 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Direct Quote 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*Note that when you include direct quotes in your article, you must put them in quotation marks and you must make clear who is saying them. Here are three examples of how to do that:*

1. Erin says, "I wanted a head start on a career in medicine."
2. "But leaving school isn't as cool as it sounds," says Erin. "You still have to make up the work!"
3. "It was the first time I fully realized the seriousness of what we do," recalls Erin.

**4** Pick out the information in the interview that you find the most interesting. You might choose, for example, the section on how people react to teenage EMTs, or the rollover accident that Erin describes.

**The information I find most interesting is:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**5** Now it's time to put it all together. Write your article on a separate sheet of paper, following the guidelines below.

**Opening Paragraph:**

- Use your first sentence to hook your reader's attention. You can do this by stating something that is surprising, interesting, or moving. *Hint:* What did you write in Step 4?
- Be sure to let readers know what the article is going to be about. In other words, state the main idea of the article.

**Body Paragraphs:**

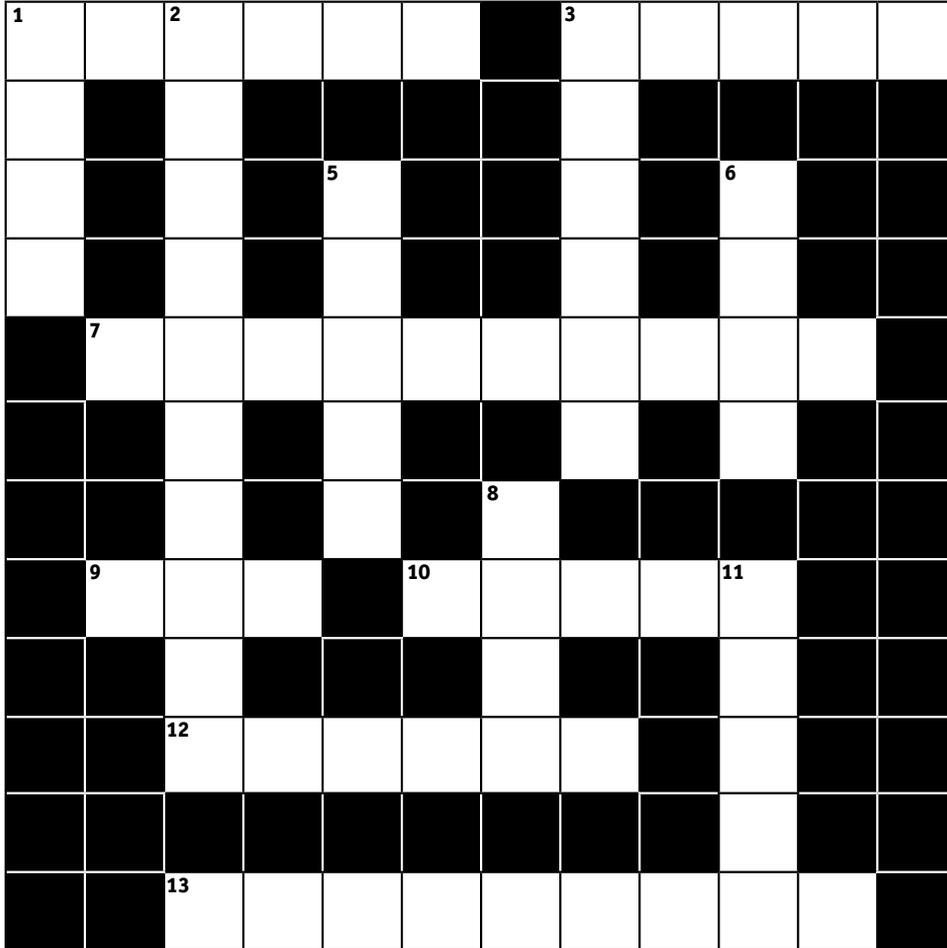
- Your paragraphs should flow smoothly from one to the next. You may need to write transition sentences at the beginnings of some paragraphs.
- Don't forget to include the direct quotes that you chose in Step 3.

**Conclusion:**

- Wrap it all up. End your article with a strong sentence that will give your readers something to think about. One option is to end with a quote. Another is to refer to your hook from the opening paragraph.

# Scope Crossword Puzzle

See how much you remember from the December 12, 2011, issue of *Scope*.



**ACROSS**

- 1. To see a box jellyfish in the water, you must look for its \_\_\_\_.
- 3. During the 1920s, many African-Americans moved to Harlem to pursue writing, theater, \_\_\_\_, and art.
- 7. \_\_\_\_ storms are one explanation for disappearances in the

Bermuda Triangle.  
*HINT: It's a synonym for sudden.*

- 9. Erin Hannon is an unusual EMT because of her \_\_\_\_.
- 10. Do child beauty pageants place too much emphasis on \_\_\_\_?
- 12. Flush toilets did not improve public health until \_\_\_\_ were built.
- 13. to separate by race

**DOWN**

- 1. In general, the verb tense should stay the \_\_\_\_ throughout an article.
- 2. *Toddlers and Tiaras* examines the \_\_\_\_ and disadvantages of child beauty pageants.
- 3. Box jellyfish are a \_\_\_\_ to swimmers in northern Australia.

- 5. A poisonous substance produced by a living organism.
- 6. Langston Hughes lived in Cleveland as a \_\_\_\_.
- 8. Some say the Bermuda Triangle is a \_\_\_\_ to another dimension.
- 11. a scheduled period of work (see "This Teen Could Save Your Life" for help)