

Lesson Skill: Synthesizing to support a thesis —“big picture” emphasis

Strand Writing, Research

SOL 9.6, 9.8

10.6, 10.8

11.6, 11.8

12.6, 12.8

Materials

- Narrowing the Topic Graphic Organizer
- Web Source Evaluation Organizer
- Thesis Flow Chart
- Computer/Internet access for all students

Lesson

1. Review definition of thesis and authentic purpose.
 - Thesis -- states the objective of a paper in a single statement identifying the topic, support, and position.
 - Authentic purpose - the reason the topic is important to you, the writer.
2. Students choose a topic to investigate further. Discuss the two types of knowledge: self and world. Using this information, students choose a topic that they believe would be narrow enough to research.
3. Using the Narrowing the Topic graphic organizer, students take the chosen topic and narrow it even further, until it is a topic that is workable.
4. Using computer resources (databases, Internet, keyword searches), students begin gathering information. They analyze and evaluate each source using the Web Source Evaluation Organizer. Students need to synthesize the information in order to organize it for further use.
5. Discuss the differences between primary and secondary sources. Have students identify and organize their sources into these two categories.
6. Using the Thesis Flow Chart, students synthesize the information they have collected and organize.
7. Remind students that this is a working or preliminary thesis and is subject to change as they compose their research document.
8. Have students move into pairs. In their pairs, students evaluate the synthesis of information with their partner. Students assist one another in identifying possible research questions which will need to be answered during the process of writing the final research product. Students collaborate with one another, through discussion, the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed topic and support.

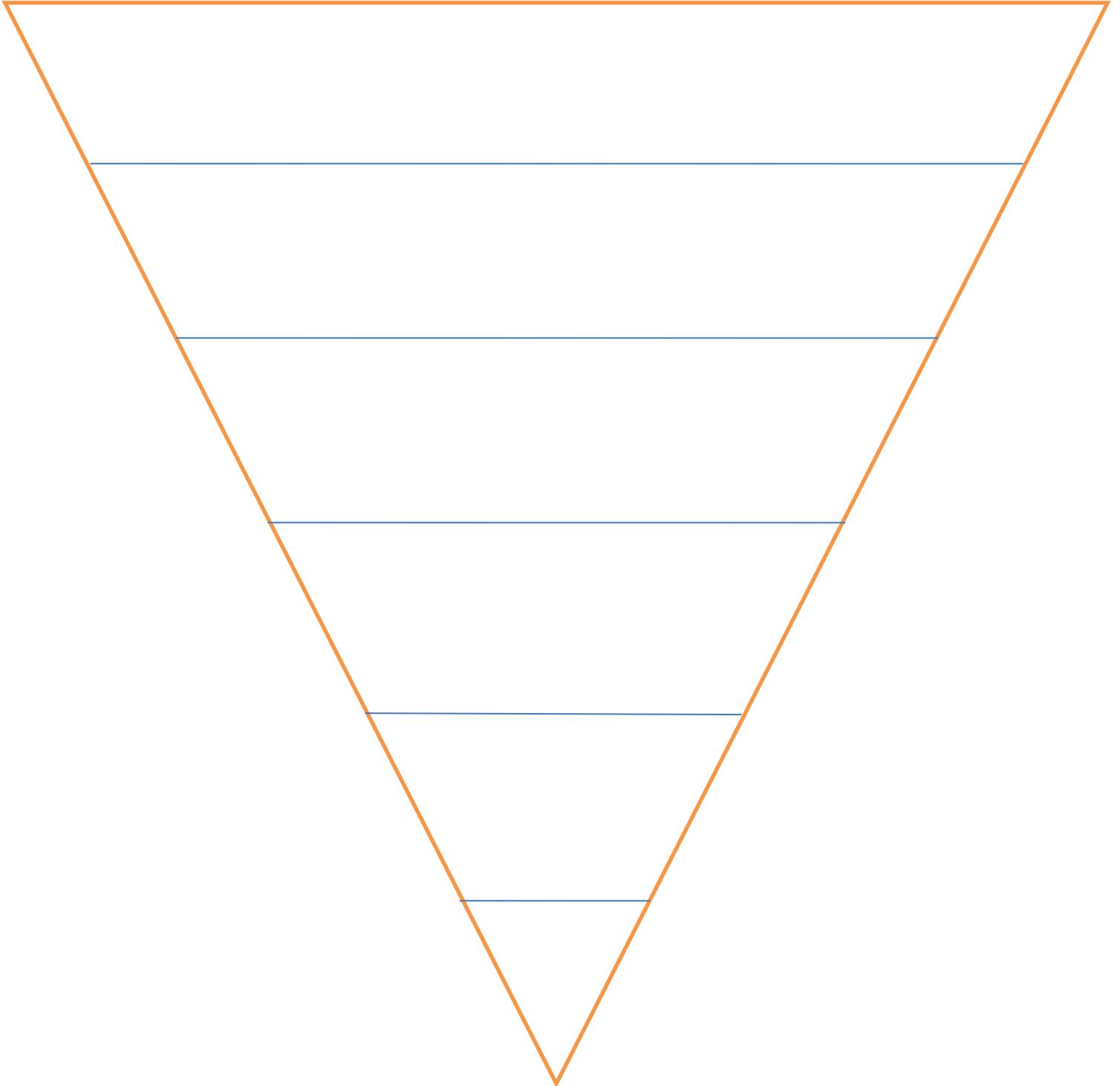
9. Students share their observations with the class or in a larger cooperative group, recording additional evaluative information for further use.
10. When all groups have presented their preliminary findings, discuss the overall process of writing a working thesis. Review the importance of defining and utilizing: thesis, authentic purpose, self-knowledge, and world knowledge, supporting details, primary sources, secondary sources, reliability of sources, and evaluation.

Strategies for Differentiation

- Modeling of Narrowing the Topic
- Vocabulary — word wall
- Text to Speech for Web sites
- Editing guide — checklist
- Dictation tool

Narrowing the Topic

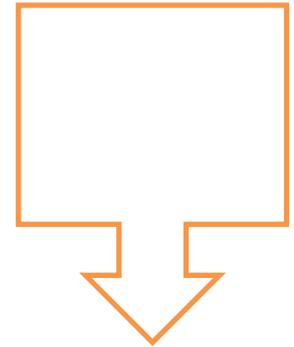
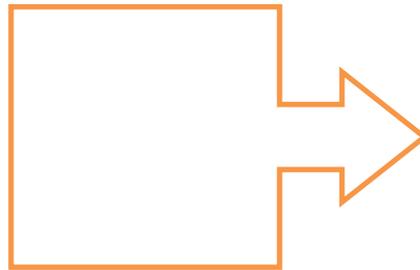
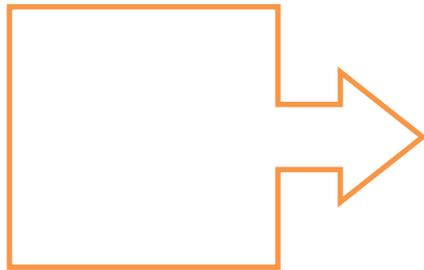
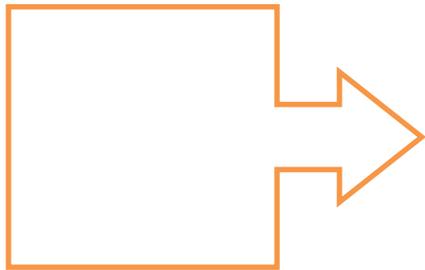
Directions: Choose your topic for research. Using a computer and Internet search engine, narrow your topic. Each level should be more specific resulting in fewer "hits" and thus bringing your topic to a manageable level.



Research Main Topic



Supporting Details



Position



Web Source Evaluation Organizer

Web Source: _____

Date Accessed: _____

Location of Access: _____

Authority

Who is the author/editor? _____

What qualifications do they have to be an expert? _____

Can I verify the credibility of the author? Where? How? _____

Accuracy

Are the facts accurate? _____

Is there an editor, blog, discussion board, or peer review process?

Are there links to known authorities? What are they? _____

Is the information primary or secondary? _____

Objectivity

Does the author show bias? If so, how? _____

Is there an affiliation with an educational institution? _____

Who sponsors the site? _____

Is it a government site (.gov)? _____

Timeliness

When was the site last updated? _____

Was its inaugural post in the last year? _____