Oakland Unified School District ♦ Process Writing Assessment

6th Grade Expository Writing: A Smart "Tech Tool"

Introduction

Every day it seems new tech tools appear. A tech tool is an electronic device, product, or gadget that makes life easier or more enjoyable. Some examples of tech tools are cell phones, computers and I-Pods. Many people have a hard time keeping up with all that's new. Young people, however, seem to be "tuned in" to new tech tools and devices. In this activity, you'll identify, explain, and describe a tech tool that is smart and useful.

After working through some preliminary activities, you will write an expository essay about a tech tool. **Expository writing explains and describes**. In this kind of writing, it is important to establish a controlling idea (thesis) and support it with details and evidence. As you write, it is also important to keep in mind that your readers may not know the tool you are describing, so you should provide background information and use appropriate language to help them understand your ideas.

Getting Started

Think about the title of this year's writing prompt: *A Smart "Tech Tool."* Work with a classmate to make a list of three technology tools you recommend. Name them, describe them, and/or draw them in the space below.

Three Smart "Tech Tools"		
1.	2.	3.

★Put a star beside the one tech tool you can write the most (and the best) about.

Vocabulary

Your writing will be more interesting (and your reading more informed) if you review some common technology vocabulary. Read through the list of Group A words, then find synonyms for them in the Group B words. A synonym is a word that means the same or almost the same thing. Find a synonym for each line.

Group A

1. gadget _____ _____ _____

2. handheld _____

3. remote _____

4. signal _____

Group B

portable *far away* *device* *tool* *machine* *message*

Reading a Professional Writer's Essay

Now turn the page, and read about what one professional magazine writer considers to be a smart tech tool. In *I Couldn't Live Without My RCD,* you'll read about an indispensable tool for just about everyone. While you read, "code" in the margin of the article by writing:

1 = where the professional writer explains what the product is
2 = where the professional writer describes how the product works
3 = where the professional writer relates a personal experience with the product
4 = why/how the product is so important

I Couldn't Live Without My RCD

When I think of all the technological gadgets I know about and use, a cell phone, a laptop, a flash drive, an iPod, and several more small machines I couldn't live without, I think of the tool I use the most. It's not very flashy or expensive. In fact, it usually isn't even purchased by itself, but most often comes with another "bigger" and "better" machine. Yet everyone I know uses one, depends on it and gets cranky when it gets misplaced. The Remote Control Device (RCD) has got to be the best tech tool of our time.

RCDs are handheld panels of buttons that allow people to control other machines wirelessly. You can open and close a garage door, start and stop a microwave oven, play music or turn it off, lock and unlock car doors, open the trunk, and set an alarm by pressing the right button. Of course, you can use an RCD to turn on and off the TV, increase and decrease the volume and change the channel.

My RCD is like a best friend: it helps keep me constantly entertained and lets me make best use of my time. I can easily watch the programs I like and zap commercials or shows that are boring. Also, I can turn down the volume when I suddenly get a phone call or want to do my homework. Best of all, I can do all of this without moving from the same corner of my couch.

The first time I realized how great RCDs are was when I got a remote control car on my 8th birthday. I couldn't believe I could control everything my car did from 10 feet away. I spent hours learning how to "drive" my car. I got really good at it. I could make the car speed, stop suddenly at the end of the path, turn in circles, avoid people walking, and lead me around the lake. People would stop and watch me "walk my toy car." I kept running out of batteries because I played with it so much. I finally gave it to my little sister, who couldn't control it as well as I could, and she drove it into a big dog who stepped on it and smashed the front end.

Now I'm too old to play with a remote control car, but I use an RCD every day. I can't imagine what it would be like to have to get off the couch to change the TV channel, get out of the car to open the garage door, or play with a toy car on my hands and knees. RCDs have changed our lives. I can't wait to see what we'll be able to do with RCDs when my kid turns eight!

Thinking, Talking and Planning

Work with a partner to fill in the graphic organizer to show what strategies this professional writer used.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">What is the tech tool the author describes
and why does the author think it is important?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">What is it used for? How is it used?</td><td>What does it look like?</td></tr>
<tr><td>What can you compare it to?
What is it like?</td><td>How does it make life easier/more convenient for you or others?</td><td>What is the author’s personal experience with the product? What happened, changed or improved when he first used it?</td></tr>
</table>

On Your Own

Now, think about the tech tool you have selected to write about. You will use ideas from **a few, not all,** of the boxes to develop your paragraphs in your essay. After you complete the graphic organizer, mark the boxes you plan to use in your essay.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">What is the tech tool you will write about
and why do you think it is important?</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">What is it used for? How is it used?</td><td>What does it look like?</td></tr>
<tr><td>What can you compare it to?
What is it like?</td><td>How does it make life easier/more convenient for you or others?</td><td>What is your personal experience with the product? What happened, changed or
improved when you first used it?</td></tr>
</table>

Organizing Your Ideas

Use the graphic organizer below to organize your ideas before you write.

Introduction
(Controlling idea/thesis)

_____
_____
_____

Main Idea #1_____

Supporting details:

Main Idea #2_____

Supporting details:

Main Idea #3_____

Supporting details:

Conclusion
(Creatively restate main ideas)

_____
_____
_____

Writing

A Smart "Tech Tool"

Teachers are curious about what 6th graders consider to be smart tech tools. Teachers will learn from your writing and make decisions about these tech tools based on what you write.

Write an essay about a technological tool that you consider smart and useful. Select something that has a positive impact on people's lives. Explain and describe the tech tool you selected. You may use the notes you took earlier to help you write your essay.

Writing Reminders:

As you write, keep the following points in mind since you won't have time to rewrite.

___ Begin in an interesting way that leads to the thesis or controlling idea of your essay.

___ Use language and vocabulary that is precise and lively.

___ Support your controlling idea (thesis) by including specific information through explanation, experiences and opinions, examples and/or description.

___ Organize the main sections of your essay into paragraphs so that the reader can follow your ideas.

___ End with a confident conclusion that restates your main point.

After You Write (Editing)

After you write, take time to review the items below. You may make changes right on your paper.

___ Give the essay a title. (You can choose your title before or after you write the essay.)

___ Check your punctuation. Use capital letters, commas, periods, and quotations appropriately.

___ Check your spelling.