

# **NARRATIVE WRITING MINI-PERFORMANCE TASK**

## **Roller Coasters**

**GREAT FOR SBAC TEST PREP!**

# INFORMATIONAL SOURCE #1

LEVEL A = 261 WORDS

## SOURCE #1A: The Science of the Scream

Have you ever wondered why you don't fall out of a roller coaster when it goes upside down? It isn't just the seatbelt holding you in—it's physics! Unlike a car or a bus, a roller coaster doesn't have an engine to pull it around the track. Instead, it relies on energy and gravity to do the work.

### Potential and Kinetic Energy

The ride usually begins with a long, clanking climb up the first hill. A motorized chain pulls the heavy train higher and higher. As the coaster rises, it builds up potential energy, which is "stored" energy. The higher the hill, the more potential energy the coaster has.

Once the train reaches the very top and tips over the edge, that stored energy is released. It turns into kinetic energy, which is the energy of motion. Gravity pulls the train down the track at high speeds. The coaster will continue to trade potential energy for kinetic energy as it goes up and down smaller hills throughout the ride.

### G-Forces and Inertia

When a coaster zooms through a loop or a sharp turn, you might feel like you are being pressed into your seat or lifted out of it. These sensations are called G-forces. When the coaster goes through a loop, inertia wants your body to keep moving in a straight line. However,

LEVEL B = 411 WORDS

## SOURCE #1B: The Science of the Scream

Have you ever wondered why you don't fall out of a roller coaster when it goes upside down? It isn't just the seatbelt holding you in—it's physics! Unlike a car, a bus, or a train that travels on a track, a roller coaster doesn't have an engine to pull it along. It doesn't have a gas pedal or a battery, either. Instead, it relies on energy and gravity to do all the work.

### Potential and Kinetic Energy

The ride usually begins with a long, clanking climb up the first big hill. A motorized chain under the track hooks onto the cars and pulls the heavy train higher and higher toward the clouds. As the coaster rises, it builds up potential energy. You can think of this as "stored" energy that is waiting to be used. The higher the hill, the more potential energy the coaster has.

Once the train reaches the very top and tips over the edge, that stored energy is released all at once. It turns into kinetic energy, which is the energy of motion. Gravity—the same force that pulls a ball back to the ground when you throw it—grabs the train and pulls it down the track at high speeds. The coaster will continue to trade potential energy for kinetic energy as it goes up and down smaller hills throughout the rest of the ride.

### G-Forces and Inertia

When a coaster zooms through a loop or a sharp turn, you might feel like you are being pressed into your seat or lifted out of it. These sensations are caused by G-forces. When the coaster goes through a loop, a law of science called inertia wants your body to keep moving in a straight line. However, the curved track pushes against the coaster, and the coaster pushes against you, keeping you on a circular path. This is why you feel "heavy" at the bottom of a drop and "weightless" at the top of a loop!

LEVEL C = 471 WORDS

## SOURCE #1C: The Science of the Scream

Have you ever wondered why you don't fall out of a roller coaster when it goes upside down? It isn't just the seatbelt or the shoulder harness holding you in—it's physics! Unlike a car, a bus, or a train that travels on a track, a roller coaster doesn't have an engine to pull it along. It doesn't have a gas pedal, a steering wheel, or a battery, either. Instead, it relies on a clever combination of energy, gravity, and circular motion to do all the work.

### Potential and Kinetic Energy

The adventure usually begins with a long, clanking climb up the first "lift hill." A heavy motorized chain under the track hooks onto the bottom of the cars and pulls the train higher and higher toward the clouds. As the coaster rises, it builds up potential energy. You can think of this as "stored" energy that is waiting to be used. The higher and steeper the hill, the more potential energy the coaster has.

Once the train reaches the very top and tips over the peak, that stored energy is released all at once. It instantly turns into kinetic energy, which is the energy of motion. Gravity—the same natural force that pulls a ball back to the ground when you throw it—grabs the train and pulls it down the track at breathtaking speeds. The coaster will continue to trade potential energy for kinetic energy as it goes up and down smaller hills throughout the rest of the ride. Each time you go up a hill, you gain potential energy; each time you dive down, it turns back into kinetic energy.

### G-Forces and Inertia

When a coaster zooms through a loop or a sharp turn, you might feel like you are being pressed into your seat or lifted out of it. These sensations are caused by G-forces. When the coaster goes through a loop, a law of science called inertia wants your body to keep moving in a straight line. However, the curved track pushes against the coaster, and the coaster pushes against you, forcing you into a circle. This is also called centripetal force. This is why you feel "heavy" at the bottom of a drop and "weightless" at the top of a loop!

DIFFERENTIATED LENGTHS BUT SAME BASIC INFO IN ALL 3 TEXTS!

# 3 NARRATIVE WRITING PROMPTS

## The First Hill

**The Prompt:** You are a nervous rider sitting in the very front car of a brand-new, cord-breaking roller coaster. Write a story about the experience of the very first climb and the big drop. Use facts from the text about potential and kinetic energy to describe what is happening.

**Remember, a narrative story should include . . .**

**Opening:** Establish the setting and introduce the narrator.

**Transitions:** Use transitions words to show the passage of time.

**Source Details:** Use specific facts from the informational text.

**Conclusion:** A natural ending that wraps up the day's events or the character's feelings.

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Story Title

Name

## The Roller Coaster Designer

**The Prompt:** You are a lead engineer testing a new ride you just built. During the test run, you notice the train isn't making it all the way through the loop! Write a story about how you use your knowledge of physics to fix the track.

**Remember, a narrative story should include . . .**

**An Opening:** Establish the setting and introduce the narrator.

**Transitions:** Use transitions words to show the passage of time.

**Source Details:** Use specific facts from the informational text.

**A Conclusion:** A natural ending that wraps up the day's events or the character's feelings.

| Story Title | Author | Year | Genre | Summary |
|-------------|--------|------|-------|---------|
| ...         | ...    | ...  | ...   | ...     |

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

## A Day at "Physics Park"

**The Prompt:** You and your friends are spending the day at an amusement park. Your goal is to find the ride with the most "G-forces." Write a story about your experience, describing the different sensations you feel on the rides using terms like inertia, momentum, and gravity.

**Remember, a narrative story should include . . .**

**An Opening:** Establish the setting and introduce the narrator.

**Transitions:** Use transitions words to show the passage of time.

**Source Details:** Use specific facts from the informational text.

**A Conclusion:** A natural ending that wraps up the day's events or the character's feelings.

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Story Title

Name

**PERFECT FOR SBAC TEST PREP!**

# EXTEND LEARNING WITH BONUS CONTENT!

## 2 OPTIONAL SOURCES

### SOURCE #3: The Future of the Thrill

While the physics of gravity and inertia remain the same, the way engineers build roller coasters is changing rapidly. Today, designers use advanced technology and a deep understanding of the human brain to create rides that feel faster and scarier than ever before. These "next-generation" coasters are pushing the limits of what a machine can do.

#### Beyond the Chain Lift

For over a hundred years, almost every coaster used a long chain to pull a train slowly up the first hill. This is called a "lift hill," which builds up potential energy.

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### SOURCE #2: The History of the Thrill

While modern roller coasters use advanced computers and high-tech magnets, the history of these "scream machines" began long ago in a very different way. The story of the roller coaster is one of human curiosity and the desire to go faster and higher than ever before.

#### From Ice to Iron

The earliest ancestors of the roller coaster were built in Russia during the 1700s. These were not made of metal or wood, but of solid ice! People would climb tall wooden towers and slide down steep ramps covered in ice on small sleds. They were called "Russian Mountains," and they were incredibly fast and dangerous.

Later, in the 1800s, an old coal mining railroad in Pennsylvania was turned into a tourist attraction. This "gravity railroad" used the natural slope of the mountains to pull cars down the track. There was no engine, so it relied entirely on gravity to move. This was the first time people realized that they could use the earth's natural pull to create a thrilling ride.

#### The Rise of the Wooden Coaster

By the early 1900s, amusement parks began popping up all over the world. These early coasters were made almost entirely of wood. They were noisy, shaky, and exciting. In those days, there were no automatic brakes to stop the train at the end of the ride. Instead, a person called a "brakeman" would ride on the back of the train and pull a giant hand lever to slow the coaster down as it entered the station. It was a very difficult and important job!

#### Modern Steel Wonders

In the 1950s, engineers began using steel instead of wood to build tracks. Steel is

## INFO WRITING PROMPT

### Bonus Informational Prompt: The Physics of Fun: How Roller Coasters Work

**The Prompt:** Explain how energy and gravity work together to make a roller coaster move without an engine. Use details from "The Science of the Scream" in your explanation.

#### In your article, be sure to:

- Maintain a clear focus.
- Organize your essay with paragraphs that group related ideas. One paragraph summarizes the information.
- Use direct facts, details, and examples.
- Use specific words from the text.

Article Title

### Bonus Opinion Prompt: What Makes the Best Coaster?

**The Prompt:** Some people think roller coasters should be made as tall as possible, while others think the best coasters focus on sharp turns and loops. Which type of coaster do you think provides the best experience? Use evidence from the text to support your choice.

#### In your essay, be sure to:

- State a strong, clear opinion in your introduction.
- Support your opinion with logical reasons based on the provided sources.
- Connect your reasons to the text evidence.
- Use precise language and transitions

## OPINION WRITING PROMPT

# SOURCE #1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

1. According to the text, what is the main difference between a roller coaster and a car?
- A. Roller coasters are much faster than cars.

B. Cars have engines to move them, while coasters use gravity.

C. Roller coasters only move in straight lines.

D. Cars do not use any energy to move.
2. Which statement best describes the relationship between potential and kinetic energy?
- A. Potential energy is the energy stored in an object, while kinetic energy is the energy of motion.

B. A coaster has the most potential energy when it is sitting at the top of a hill, and the most kinetic energy when it is at the bottom of a hill.

C. Potential energy builds up as a coaster goes up a hill, and then turns into kinetic energy as it goes down the hill.

D. Kinetic energy is only used when a coaster goes through a loop.

3. Explain how inertia affects a rider when a roller coaster goes through a sharp turn. Use details from the text to support your answer.

Student Response Area:

## CHOOSE SOURCE DETAILS

| Word Bank | Facts I Need to Use |
|-----------|---------------------|
|           |                     |

## PLAN YOUR STORY

| Beginning |
|-----------|
|           |
| Middle    |
|           |
| End       |
|           |

INCLUDES 3 COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS FOR SOURCE #1

USE THE PLANNING GUIDE TO "STEAL" IMPORTANT WORDS AND FACTS FROM THE TEXT, THEN PLAN OUT THE STORY

# ORGANIZATION & PURPOSE

## HOW WELL DID I TELL MY STORY AND KEEP IT MOVING?

| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                                                    | ★★★<br>Strong                                                          | ★★<br>Getting There                                                      | ★<br>Beginning                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| My story has a clear beginning, middle, and end.                                                  | I have a beginning, middle, and end, but some parts feel a bit rushed. | My story jumps around a lot, or it is missing a clear ending.            | My story is very short and hard to follow.                                 |
| My introduction grabs the reader's attention and introduces my character and setting.             | My introduction tells who is in the story and where they are.          | I start the story, but I don't really explain the setting or characters. | I started writing without introducing the characters or the "problem."     |
| I use transition words (Like: suddenly, later that day, meanwhile) to connect my ideas perfectly. | I use some transition words to help the story flow.                    | I use "and then" too many times or skip over parts of the journey.       | There are no transitions; the story feels like a list of things happening. |

### I THINK MY WRITING WOULD EARN:

Something I did well on and am proud of is:  

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Something I need to work on improving is:  

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| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                                                    | ★★★<br>Strong                                                          | ★★★<br>Getting There                                                     | ★<br>Beginning                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| My story has a clear beginning, middle, and end.                                                  | I have a beginning, middle, and end, but some parts feel a bit rushed. | My story jumps around a lot, or it is missing a clear ending.            | My story is very short and hard to follow.                                 |
| My introduction grabs the reader's attention and introduces my character and setting.             | My introduction tells who is in the story and where they are.          | I start the story, but I don't really explain the setting or characters. | I started writing without introducing the characters or the "problem."     |
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[illegible][illegible]

| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                             | ★★★<br>Strong                                                 | ★★★<br>Getting There                                                         | ★<br>Beginning                                                 |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| I packed my story with facts and keywords from the source text.            | I used several facts from the source text.                    | I only used one or two facts, or I got some of the facts wrong.              | I didn't use any facts from the reading passage.               |
| I used sensory details (sight, sound, feeling) to describe the setting.    | I used some descriptions to show the reader the setting.      | I told the reader what was happening instead of "showing" them with details. | My writing is "plain" and doesn't have descriptive words.      |
| I included dialogue (characters talking) that helps move the plot forward. | I have characters talking, but it might not be very exciting. | I have very little dialogue, or the characters aren't saying much.           | No characters talk in my story.                                |
| I put the information in my own words.                                     | Most of the story is in my own words.                         | I copied big chunks of the reading passage exactly as they were written.     | I just copied the whole passage and didn't write my own story. |

[illegible][illegible]

| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                       | ★★★<br>Strong                                                                      | ★★★<br>Getting There                                              | ★<br>Beginning                                                           |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| I have almost zero mistakes in spelling, punctuation, or grammar.    | I have a few small mistakes, but they don't stop the reader from understanding me. | I have many mistakes that make it a little hard to read my story. | There are so many mistakes that it is very hard to understand the story. |
| I used quotation marks (" ") correctly every time a character spoke. | I used quotation marks, but I might have missed one or two.                        | I forgot to use quotation marks for most of the dialogue.         | I don't know how to use quotation marks.                                 |
| I used paragraphs to separate different parts of my story.           | I used some paragraphs.                                                            | I have one giant "wall of text" with no indents or breaks.        | My writing is not organized into sentences or paragraphs.                |

[illegible][illegible]

# INCLUDES NARRATIVE WRITING EXEMPLARS USE TO SHOW WHERE/HOW TO INCORPORATE SOURCE FACTS

## Exemplar Narrative: A Day at Physics Park

"That's it! That's the one we have to ride!" my friend Sam yelled, pointing a shaking finger toward a giant purple coaster called The Phantom. We had been at the park since the gates opened, and our mission was to find the ride with the most G-forces in the whole place. We were determined to feel the power of physics for ourselves.

We hopped into the middle seats, pulled down our safety harnesses, and checked them twice. The Phantom didn't start with a slow crawl; it began with a massive climb that seemed to go on forever. At the first sharp turn at the top, I felt my body being shoved hard to the side of the car. I knew that was inertia at work. My body was moving in a straight line, but the heavy metal track was forcing it to turn. It felt like an invisible giant was pushing me toward the edge of the seat!

Next came the double loops. As we hit the bottom of the first loop, it felt incredibly heavy, like an elephant was sitting right on my lap. "Feel those G-forces!" I shouted to Sam, though my voice was strained because of the pressure. Then, a second later, as we reached the very top of the loop and hung upside down, the feeling changed completely. I felt almost weightless, as if I were floating in space, though we were upside down and looking at the grass below. We didn't fall out because the coaster pushed against us to keep us on our path.

The entire ride was a constant trade-off of energy. We went down a steep drop, gaining a burst of kinetic energy, and then up the next hill to gain potential energy for the next move. Every time we went down, we got faster, and every time we went up, we slowed down to store more energy. By the time the ride flew into the final loop and stopped, my hair was a complete mess and my legs felt like jelly. We climbed out of the car and high-fived. We had found the most powerful and exciting physics lesson in the entire park.

## Exemplar Narrative: The Roller Coaster Designer

"Clear the track! All staff move to the safety zone!" I shouted into my radio, my voice echoing through the empty amusement park. As the lead engineer for the brand-new "Thunderbolt" coaster, it was my job to make sure the physics were perfect before the park opened to the public next week. We were testing the most exciting section of the ride—a 90-degree loop that stood as tall as a house.

I stood on the observation deck and watched the empty test train go down the first big drop. It was moving fast and was full of kinetic energy, but as it started to climb the side of the loop, something went wrong. The train began to slow down as it reached the top of the circle, which was bad because the safety wheels held it tight, but it didn't have enough energy to finish the circle smoothly. It crawled over the top and limped to the other side.

I pulled out my blueprints and frowned, looking at the numbers. "That's a problem," I told my team of builders. "We don't have enough potential energy at the start. If we want the train to have enough momentum to get through that loop without slowing down, we have to make the first drop much taller."

We spent the next week working hard to raise the first hill by 10 feet. By the day of the next test run, the train climbed even higher than before, storing up a huge amount of potential energy. When it finally reached the edge, gravity pulled it down with much more force than before. This time, the kinetic energy was so strong that the train stopped

## SCORE WITH THE RUBRICS

## Exemplar Narrative: The First Hill

The metal bar clicked into place over my lap with a loud thud, feeling like a heavy gate locking me into a cage. My heart hammered against my ribs like a trapped bird as the ride operator gave a quick thumbs-up. Slowly, the train lurched forward with a metallic groan. Clank. Clank. Clank. The motorized chain under the track hooked onto our car, and we began the long, slow journey up the massive lift hill.

As we climbed higher and higher toward the fluffy white clouds, I tried to distract myself by remembering what my teacher said about potential energy. Because a roller coaster doesn't have an engine to pull it through the turns, it has to store up energy at the very beginning. With every inch we moved toward the sky, we were building up more and more of that "stored" energy. I looked over the side of the car and gasped. The people on the ground now looked like tiny ants, and the giant Ferris wheel across the park looked like a small toy. My stomach did a nervous somersault. We were so high up that the potential energy must have been massive by now.

# 3 ADDITIONAL EXEMPLARS BASED ON ALL 3 SOURCES

## Exemplar Narrative Based on All 3 Sources: The First Hill

I should not have chosen the front seat.

As I sat in the very first car of the brand-new roller coaster, my hands gripped the safety bar. The train lurched forward, and then we began the slow climb up the first hill.

Clank... clank... clank...

The chain pulled us higher and higher. I remembered what the sign said—this climb was building potential energy, which is stored energy. The higher we went, the more energy the coaster was saving for the drop.

Still, knowing the science didn't make it any less scary.

As we climbed, I could see the entire park below me. The tracks twisted into loops and sharp turns. Some parts looked like we would come dangerously close to the beams—those “near-miss” designs meant to trick your brain into thinking you might crash.

Finally, we reached the top.

For one silent second, everything stopped.

Then we tipped over the edge.

Suddenly, all that potential energy turned into kinetic energy. Gravity pulled us down faster and faster. My stomach dropped, and I felt like I was flying out of my seat.

The wind roared in my ears as we raced toward the ground. At the bottom of the hill, I felt heavy, pressed deep into my seat by the powerful G-forces.

Then, just as quickly, we climbed again—slower this time, because we had used up some of that stored energy.

As the ride continued, I laughed out loud.

The fear was still there—but now it felt like excitement.

When we finally rolled back into the station, I climbed out with shaky legs and a huge smile.

Next time, I thought, I might even ride it again.

## Exemplar Narrative Based on All 3 Sources: The Roller Coaster Designer

I had spent months designing this roller coaster.

Using computer simulations and virtual reality, I had tested every curve, every drop, and every loop. The track was made of smooth steel, carefully shaped to create the perfect ride.

Today was the first real test.

At first, everything went perfectly. The train climbed the lift hill, building up potential energy just as planned. Then it raced down the first drop, converting that energy into motion.

But then something went wrong.

As the train entered the loop, it slowed down. Instead of completing the circle, it barely made it halfway before rolling backward.

I frowned. “Not enough kinetic energy,” I said.

Later, I studied the design more carefully. I realized the problem: the first hill wasn't tall enough. Without enough height, the train couldn't build enough potential energy to pass through the loop.

Next, I considered another option. Modern coasters don't always rely on lift hills. Some use powerful magnetic launches, called LSM systems, to boost the train forward at high speeds.

The next morning, we made adjustments. We increased the height of the first hill and added a short magnetic launch before the loop.

When we tested the ride again, the difference was clear.

This time, the train sped down the track, entered the loop, and raced all the way through. At the top of the loop, I imagined riders feeling almost weightless as inertia tried to pull them straight while the track curved around them.

Finally, the train returned safely to the station.

I smiled.

Designing a roller coaster isn't just about thrills—it's about understanding energy, motion, and how to keep riders safe.

Understanding energy is the key to a successful roller coaster design.

## Exemplar Narrative Based on All 3 Sources: A Day at Physics Park

“Let's find the ride with the biggest G-forces!” my friend Maya shouted as we ran into Physics Park.

Right away, we spotted a massive steel roller coaster with loops and sharp turns. We decided to try that one first.

As soon as the ride began, we climbed the lift hill. I could hear the chain pulling us up, building potential energy. At the top, we dropped suddenly, and gravity pulled us down at incredible speed.

At the bottom, I felt like I weighed a hundred pounds more. “That's the G-forces!” I yelled.

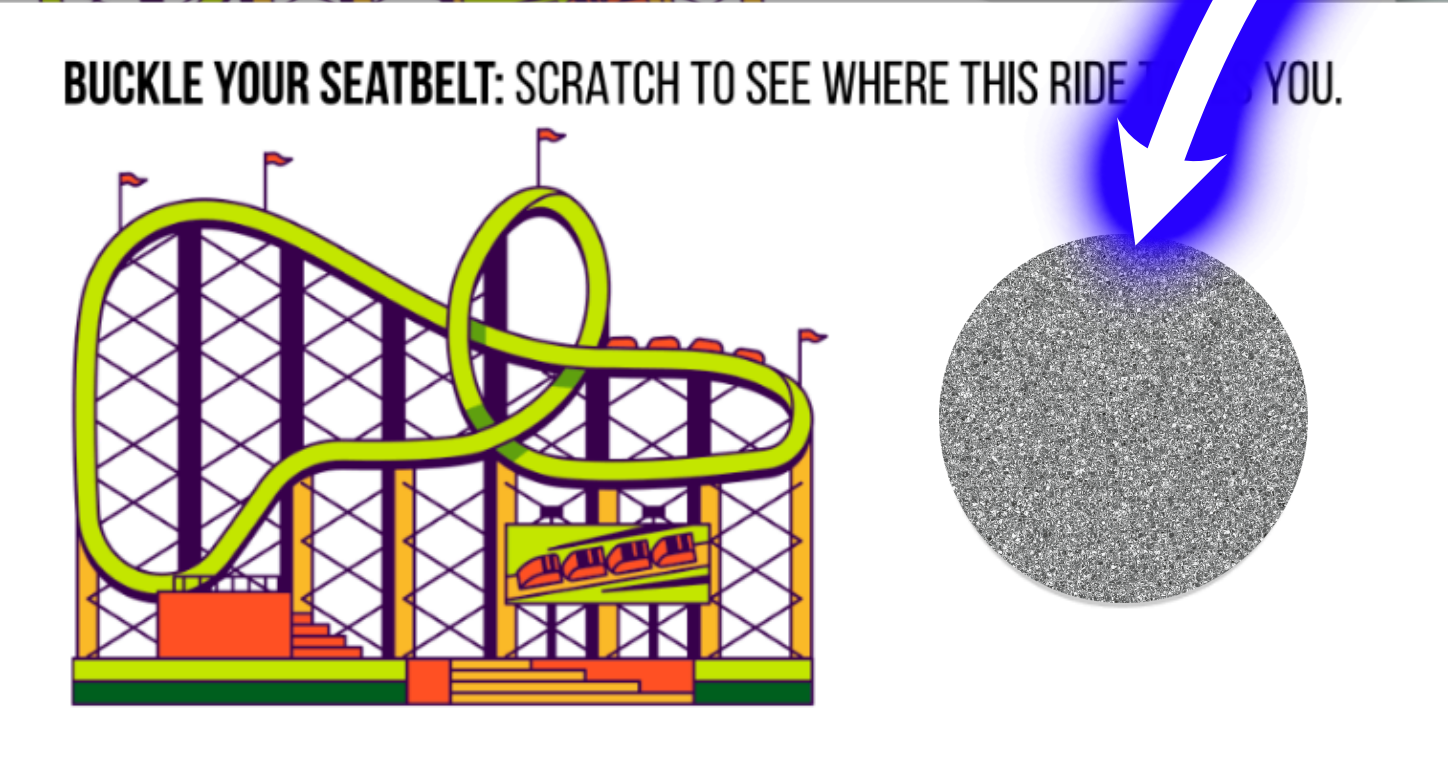
Later, we rode a different coaster that launched us forward using magnets instead of a chain. In just a few seconds, we went from zero to super fast. The burst of kinetic energy made my head press back into the seat.

Next, we tried an older wooden coaster. It was loud, shaky, and felt completely different from the smooth steel rides. I imagined what it must have been like when brakemen had to slow the train by hand!

In the afternoon, we found a ride filled with tight turns and loops. As we went around each turn, I felt the car leaning into the curve. It was like a giant hand guiding us through the twists and turns.

# USE SCRATCH OFF CARDS FOR ADDED FUN!

- On Monday, read Source 1 (A, B, or C), Source 2, and Source 3 and take notes.
- On Tuesday, read the informational writing prompt. Plan out your writing piece.
- On Wednesday, read the opinion writing prompt. Plan out your writing piece.
- On Thursday, read one of the narrative writing prompts. Plan out your writing piece.
- On Friday, give each student a random Writing Mission Scratch Off Card, with or without the scratch off sticker concealing the writing type. Students will use their writing plan to then write the writing piece for that specific prompt.



**STICKERS NOT INCLUDED**

# INCLUDES DIGITAL CONTENT

## SOURCE #1C: The Science of the Scream

Have you ever wondered why you don't fall out of a roller coaster when it goes upside down? It isn't just the seatbelt or the shoulder harness holding you in—it's physics! Unlike a car, a bus, or a train that travels on a track, a roller coaster doesn't have an engine to pull it along. It doesn't have a gas pedal, a steering wheel, or a battery, either. Instead, it relies on a clever combination of energy, gravity, and circular motion to do all the work.

### Potential and Kinetic Energy

The adventure usually begins with a long, clanking climb up the first "lift hill." A heavy motorized chain under the track hooks onto the bottom of the cars and pulls the train higher and higher toward the clouds. As the coaster rises, it builds up potential energy. You can think of this as "stored" energy that is waiting to be used. The higher and steeper the hill, the more potential energy the coaster has.

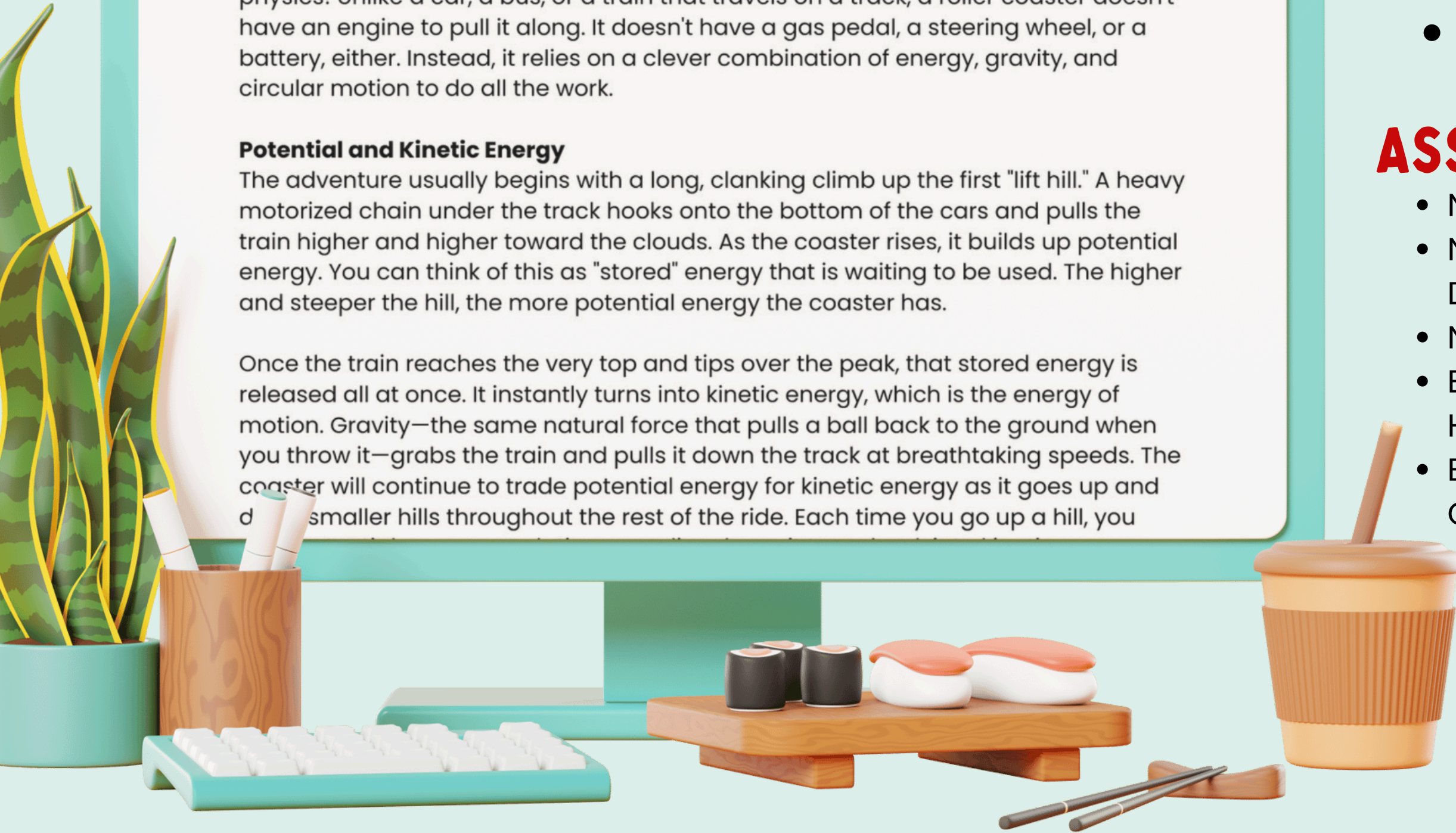
Once the train reaches the very top and tips over the peak, that stored energy is released all at once. It instantly turns into kinetic energy, which is the energy of motion. Gravity—the same natural force that pulls a ball back to the ground when you throw it—grabs the train and pulls it down the track at breathtaking speeds. The coaster will continue to trade potential energy for kinetic energy as it goes up and down smaller hills throughout the rest of the ride. Each time you go up a hill, you

## MODEL WITH GOOGLE SLIDES

- Sources
- Story Planning Guide
- Text Dependent Questions
- Writing Exemplars

## ASSIGN WRITING PROMPT DOCS

- Narrative Writing Prompt: The First Hill
- Narrative Writing Prompt: The Roller Coaster Designer
- Narrative Writing Prompt: A Day at "Physics Park"
- Bonus Informational Prompt: The Physics of Fun: How Roller Coasters Work
- Bonus Opinion Prompt: What Makes the Best Coaster?





iTeach and iWrite ?  
Betsy Newmeyer

# NARRATIVE WRITING MINI-PERFORMANCE TASK OUTER SPACE

## ORGANIZATION & PURPOSE

### HOW WELL DID I TELL MY STORY AND KEEP IT MOVING?

| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                                                    | ★★★★<br>Strong                                                         | ★★★★<br>Getting There                                         | ★★★★<br>Beginning                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| My story has a clear beginning, middle, and end.                                                  | I have a beginning, middle, and end, but some parts feel a bit rushed. | My story jumps around a lot, so it is missing a clear ending. | My story is very short and hard to follow. |
| My introduction grabs the reader's attention and introduces my character and setting.             | My introduction tells who is in the story and where they are.          | I still don't write.                                          |                                            |
| I use transition words (like suddenly, later, that day, meanwhile) to connect my ideas perfectly. | I use some transition words to help the story flow.                    | I use more.                                                   |                                            |

### The Wrong Turn

**The Prompt:** Imagine you are the pilot of a small delivery spaceship. You were supposed to deliver a package to Earth, but your navigation computer broke, and you accidentally ended up near a Gas Giant instead. Write a story about your attempts to figure out where you are. Use details from the text to describe the planet you see and how it is different from the rocky planets.

**Remember, a narrative story should include . . .**

**An Opening:** Establish the setting and introduce the narrator.

**Transitions:** Use transition words to show the passage of time.

**Concrete Details:** Use concrete facts from the text to show the narrator's emotional state.

the day's events or the character's

### SOURCE #1C: The Grand Tour of Our Solar System

The solar system is a vast and busy neighborhood in space. At the center is the sun, a massive star that acts like a giant magnet. It holds eight very different planets in their paths using a powerful force called gravity. These eight planets are split into two main groups: the inner planets and the outer planets. To get from one group to the other, a traveler must cross the Asteroid Belt. This is a giant, circular "highway" filled with millions of rocky chunks. Some are as small as pebbles, while others are as big as mountains. These rocks are leftovers from when the solar system first formed billions of years ago.

The four inner planets—Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars—are often known as the "rocky" planets. These worlds are smaller than the others and have hard, solid surfaces that a person could actually stand on. Mercury is the closest to the sun and looks a lot like our moon. It is a scorched, cratered rock that is boiling hot during the day, however, because it has no blanket of air to hold in heat, it becomes freezing cold at night. Venus is the hottest planet of all. It has a thick, yellow atmosphere made of clouds that trap heat like a giant greenhouse. The air pressure there is so strong it would feel like being deep under the ocean. Mars, the "Red Planet," is a cold, dusty desert covered in rusty soil. It is home to Olympus Mons, the largest volcano in the solar system, which is three times taller than Mount Everest. It also has deep canyons that would take days to fly across.

Once a spaceship passes the rocky debris of the Asteroid Belt, it reaches the four outer planets: Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. These are the "gas giants." They are much larger than the rocky planets, but they have a big secret: they do not have a solid ground to walk on. If you tried to land a ship, you would just sink into seas of colorful gas and liquid. Jupiter is the "king" of the planets. It is so large that other planets in the solar system could fit inside it at once. It is, in fact, a spinning, swirling hurricane-like storm that is twice as wide as Earth on blowing for hundreds of years.

### I THINK MY WRITING WOULD BE

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# SBAC TEST PREP

# NARRATIVE WRITING MINI-PERFORMANCE TASK

## THE GOLD RUSH

## ORGANIZATION & PURPOSE

### HOW WELL DID I TELL MY STORY AND KEEP IT MOVING?

| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                                                   | ★★★★<br>Strong                                                         | ★★★<br>Getting There                                          | ★<br>Beginning                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| My story has a clear beginning, middle, and end.                                                 | I have a beginning, middle, and end, but some parts feel a bit rushed. | My story jumps around a lot, or it is missing a clear ending. | My story is very short and hard to follow. |
| My introduction grabs the reader's attention and introduces my character and setting.            | My introduction tells who is in the story and where they are.          |                                                               |                                            |
| I use transition words (like suddenly, later that day, meanwhile) to connect my ideas perfectly. | I use some transition words to help the story flow.                    |                                                               |                                            |

### The "Eureka" Moment

**The Prompt:** Write a story from the point of view of a miner living in a tent city. Your character has been working hard with a metal pan all day. Write about a day when you finally see something "shiny" in the water. Use details about the setting and the "Life in the Diggings" section.

**Remember, a narrative story should include...**

**An Opening:** Establish the setting and introduce the narrator.

**Transitions:** Use transition words to show the passage of time.

**Source Details:** Use specific facts from the informational text.

\_\_\_\_\_ up on the day's events or the character's

### I THINK MY WRITING WOULD

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### SOURCE #1C: The Golden Fever of 1848

In January 1848, a man named James W. W. Marshall was building a sawmill near the American River in California. As he looked into the shallow, rushing water, he saw something glittering on the riverbed. It was gold! Marshall tried to keep the discovery a secret, but the news spread like wildfire. Soon, thousands of people from all over the world—called Forty-Niners—rushed to California, caught up in "gold fever."

**The Hard Road to California**

Reaching the gold fields was a massive challenge. Many families traveled in covered wagons, facing a 2,000-mile journey across dusty plains and the steep, snowy Sierra Nevada mountains. Others chose to travel by sea, spending months on crowded, rocking ships that sailed around the tip of South America. These travelers faced many dangers, including fierce storms and lack of fresh food. By the time they finally saw the California coast, many people had used up their life savings just to pay for the trip.

**Life in the Diggings**

Once they arrived, the reality of mining was back-breaking work. Miners spent from sunrise to sunset standing in icy mountain streams. To find the gold, they used metal pans to scoop up heavy "pay dirt" from the bottom of the river. They would swirl the water around in a circle, carefully letting the light sand wash over the edge while hoping the heavy gold flakes would stay at the bottom. This was known as "panning."

Most miners lived in messy "boomtowns" that popped up overnight. The were usually just rows of canvas tents and rough wooden shacks built on muddy riverbanks. Because there were no farms nearby, everything had to be brought in by wagon, making supplies incredibly expensive. In a boomtown, eggs could cost \$1 and a simple pair of sturdy boots might cost \$30! This

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Betsy Newmeyer

# NARRATIVE WRITING MINI-PERFORMANCE TASK

## AMERICAN REVOLUTION SPIES

## ORGANIZATION & PURPOSE

### HOW WELL DID I TELL MY STORY AND KEEP IT MOVING?

| ★★★★<br>Expert                                                                                   | ★★★★<br>Strong                                                         | ★★★<br>Getting There                                          | ★<br>Beginning                             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| My story has a clear beginning, middle, and end.                                                 | I have a beginning, middle, and end, but some parts feel a bit rushed. | My story jumps around a lot, or it is missing a clear ending. | My story is very short and hard to follow. |
| My introduction grabs the reader's attention and introduces my character and setting.            | My introduction tells who is in the story and where they are.          |                                                               |                                            |
| I use transition words (like suddenly, later that day, meanwhile) to connect my ideas perfectly. | I use some transition words to help the story flow.                    |                                                               |                                            |

### The Invisible Message

**The Prompt:** You are a courier like Austin Roe. You have a letter in your pocket that looks like a simple note about buying supplies, but it actually contains secret invisible ink. You are stopped at a British checkpoint! Write a story about the encounter and how you ensure the message reaches General Washington.

**Remember, a narrative story should include . . .**

**An Opening:** Establish the setting and introduce the narrator.

**Transitions:** Use transition words to show the passage of time.

**Source Details:** Use specific facts from the informational text.

\_\_\_\_\_ up the day's events or the character's \_\_\_\_\_

name \_\_\_\_\_

### SOURCE #1C: The Spies Behind the Lines

When the American Revolution began in 1775, the Continental Army faced a massive challenge. The British Army was the most powerful in the world, with more soldiers, better training, and seemingly endless supplies. To win against such a giant, George Washington knew he could not simply out-fight them in open battle; he had to out-smart them. He needed a secret way to learn their plans before they happened, which led to the creation of America's first organized spy networks. These ordinary citizens—farmers, shopkeepers, and tailors—risqué everything to gather "intelligence," or secret information, about the enemy.

**The Culper Spy Ring**

The most famous and successful group was the Culper Spy Ring, which operated right under the noses of the British in New York City. At the time, New York was the headquarters for the British Army, making it a goldmine for secrets but a very dangerous place for a patriot. To keep their work secret, the members used code names and a complex system of numbers instead of real names. In their secret ledger, George Washington was known as "Agent 711."

These spies were incredibly creative in how they communicated. One brave member, Anna Strong, lived on a farm near the water on Long Island. It was believed she used her everyday laundry to send silent signals across the bay. If she hung a black petticoat on her clothesline, it meant a messenger was ready to take information to Washington. She would also hang a specific number of handkerchiefs to tell the messenger which hidden code to meet in. One like Austin Roe, acted as couriers. He would ride his horse for over fifty miles passing through British checkpoints with secret documents hidden in his pockets or the soles of his boots.

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