

# Survival Guide

## *Informational Writing with a Twist*

### Grades 3-5

Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Assignment Summary and Rationale**

Informational writing is a form of nonfiction that provides factual information about a particular subject and usually answers the question *why* or *how*. For this assignment, you will not just be writing a basic “how to” guide for a simple process. Rather, you will be considering the most important aspects of a topic, event, or experience and composing a survival guide for others who may be interested in following in your footsteps. Contrary to other “how to” assignments you may have done in the past, this composition will include thoughtful *tips* (as opposed to steps) that reflect your knowledge and expertise. The title of your piece will be “How to Survive \_\_\_\_\_.”

**Note to teachers:** Depending on the grade level and content area, you may choose to assign a survival guide connected to a current topic of study, or you may wish to give students the option to choose from a personal area of interest or expertise. There are a vast number of topics that work for this assignment, and you may be amazed at what students come up with on their own. However, if you or your students need inspiration, you might begin with an idea from the list below.

#### **Areas of Personal Expertise**

*An afternoon at the beach*  
*A hot day in Disney World*  
*Summer camp or an overnight camping trip*  
*A sleepover party*  
*Being stuck at home*  
*Sharing a room with your sibling*  
*Your first day with a new pet*  
*Third grade*  
*Being on a soccer team*  
*Cheerleading practice*  
*School lunches*  
*Being the new kid*  
*A long car ride*  
*Riding the school bus*  
*Recess*

#### **Content-Related Topics**

*Math class*  
*Ellis Island*  
*Writing a works cited page*  
*The Boston Tea Party*  
*Mrs. D.’s science lab*  
*Music class with Mr. Carter*  
*Mrs. B.’s quizzes*  
*Reading Wonder*  
*Writing a persuasive essay*  
*The Underground Railroad*  
*State testing*  
*Long division*  
*Playing the trumpet*  
*The Battle of Gettysburg*  
*Ms. G.’s research paper*

<b>Writer's Purpose</b>	You are writing to answer the question <i>how</i> in order to educate others on the given topic.
<b>Writer's Role</b>	You are writing as an expert on the selected topic, event, or experience.

<b>Audience</b>	You are writing for your peers or other people who may want to follow in your footsteps and learn from your experience or knowledge.
<b>Form</b>	You will create a numbered or bulleted set of survival tips, written in complete sentences with explanations and reasoning for each tip.
<b>Focus Correction Areas</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-6 tips in logical order/command + reasoning</li> <li>• 5 or more specific words (or 5 or more content vocabulary), underlined</li> <li>• Complete sentences, bulleted or numbered</li> </ul>
<b>Procedure</b>	<p>To help you create your survival guide, we will do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Type One Writing (choose one of the following): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ We will all be writing a survival guide for our current content, “How to Survive ____.” In one minute, list as many vocabulary words as you can think of (at least 6) that relate to the topic selected.</li> <li>○ You will choose a personal area of expertise for your survival guide. In two minutes, make a list of topics that you could consider yourself an expert on. You may use the list provided for inspiration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We will look at examples of survival guides (or I will model writing one) and make note of the format and content. We will view examples of writing that demonstrate each Focus Correction Area (FCA).</li> <li>• Using a T chart: On the left side, briefly map out each tip that you will include in your guide. On the right, note the reasons for each tip. After you have finished, compare your list with a partner and look for areas that need more detail or clarification.</li> <li>• Draft your survival guide, beginning with a title that clearly identifies the topic, i.e., “How to Survive ____.”</li> <li>• As a class, we will complete the <a href="#">Three Step Editing process</a>, using volunteer papers and/or examples I have collected in past years.</li> <li>• You will show me that you have followed each of the FCAs (e.g., Number your tips in the margin if they are not already numbered. Label the command (C) and reason(s) (R) for each. Underline your specific or content vocabulary.)</li> <li>• Finally, you will read your writing out loud in a one-foot voice, and make any changes you think will improve it.</li> <li>• Submit your revised survival guide so I can provide feedback on each FCA.</li> </ul>