

TIDE Writing Strategy

Type of Writing Supported:
Informational

Grade Level: **Grades 3-8**
Elementary to Middle School

Stage of Writing Supported:
Planning and Drafting

PURPOSE:

What does this strategy help students do?

TIDE is a planning and writing strategy that helps students organize informative/expository paragraphs.

Why is this strategy effective?

- Write clear, effective expository paragraphs.
- Learn key parts of strong paragraph writing.
- Build writing confidence and independence.
- See paragraph construction as simple, repeatable steps.

T

Topic Sentence

What is the main idea of this paragraph?

I

Important Evidence

What is one important reason or fact that supports my topic?

D

Detailed Explanation

How can I explain or give an example of this reason?

E

Ending Sentence

How can I wrap up or restate the main idea?

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

How to Introduce:

- Explain TIDE: Topic, Important evidence, Detail, Ending.
- Show a labeled example paragraph.
- Model writing with a think-aloud.

Scaffolding:

- Prep: anchor chart, organizer, starters, prompt.
- Use color-coding for each TIDE part.
- Start with familiar topics.
- Offer sentence starters.

Practice Ideas:

- Class writes a paragraph together.
- Pairs complete organizer + paragraph.
- Students write independently from organizer

DO'S

- ✓ Think aloud while writing
- ✓ Show the TIDE organizer as you go
- ✓ Explain why each sentence matters
- ✓ Have students explain evidence in their own words
- ✓ Check student work after each section

DON'TS

- ✗ Don't assume students know what "evidence" means
- ✗ Don't skip modeling the "D" step
- ✗ Don't treat TIDE like a fill-in-the-blank formula
- ✗ Don't grade first drafts too harshly
- ✗ Don't expect students to transfer TIDE without help

✓ Model each step with a think-aloud

- Students learn how writers make decisions by hearing your thought process.

✓ Display the TIDE organizer while writing

- Visuals help students stay focused and connect each part of the paragraph

✓ Teach the purpose of each sentence

- Students need to understand why each part matters, not just follow the format.

✓ Encourage original explanations of evidence

- The “D” step should show student thinking, not just a restatement of facts.

✓ Check in after each section during practice

- Early feedback helps prevent confusion and keeps students on track.

✓ Offer Choices to Boost Engagement

- Let students choose writing topics or approaches to increase ownership and motivation.

✗ Don't Assume Students Know What Evidence Is

- Many students confuse evidence with opinion or summary. Take time to teach what qualifies as valid support.

✗ Don't Skip Modeling the "D" Step

- The Detailed Explanation is often the hardest and most overlooked part. It needs explicit modeling and extra practice.

✗ Don't Treat TIDE Like a Fill-in-the-Blank Formula

- While structure helps, writing should be flexible and purposeful—not robotic or overly rigid.

✗ Don't Grade First Attempts Too Harshly

- Early drafts should focus on growth and understanding. Prioritize feedback over perfection.

✗ Don't Expect Students to Transfer TIDE Automatically

- Make clear, intentional connections to other writing types like arguments, literature responses, and science explanations.

✗ Don't Force Strong Writers to Use TIDE Rigidly

- Allow advanced writers to adapt the structure. Emphasize organized thinking and well-supported reasoning instead.

TIDE Strategy: Tips for Implementation

When to Use the Strategy.

- TIDE is designed to support struggling or beginning writers in creating a simple informational paragraph.
- If some of your students can already write a complete informational paragraph while others cannot, consider teaching TIDE in a small-group setting to support your struggling writers while stronger writers enhance their skills independently or with a partner.
- The strategy can be helpful when preparing for state assessments, but be sure to check your state's assessment information to determine if this strategy will adequately prepare your students. It may be a good starting point after which you can extend their learning to meet the requirements in your state.
- TIDE can be used in English language arts classes, but it is also useful in other content areas. If you teach science, social studies, or an elective, you might consider using it in your class to help students structure their writing, allowing you to focus more on the content.

Before You Introduce the Strategy.

- Practice applying the strategy yourself to write a few sample paragraphs. This will help you confidently share it with your students and will give you applicable samples that fit your content and your students' interests.
- Prep materials: Have a TIDE anchor chart ready, plus a graphic organizer (paper or digital), sentence starters, and a writing prompt. Optional: color-coded highlighters or pens for each TIDE part.

TIDE Strategy: Tips for Implementation

How To Introduce the Strategy

Category	Day	Activity	Key Actions
Introduce	Day 1	Introduce the TIDE Strategy	Display anchor chart, explain each part (T-I-D-E), label a sample paragraph.
	Day 2	Model with Think-Aloud	Write a paragraph aloud using a familiar topic, explain each sentence, and read the full example.
Scaffolding	Prep	Prepare Materials	Anchor chart, graphic organizer, sentence starters, writing prompt, optional color-coding tools.
		Write Sample Paragraphs	Create examples tailored to your content and students' interests.
		Use Across Subjects	Apply TIDE in ELA, science, social studies, and electives to support structured writing.
		Support Struggling Writers	Use small-group instructions for students who need more support.
Practice	Day 3	Guided Practice	Complete a TIDE organizer as a class, co-write a paragraph, discuss transitions and connections.
	Day 4	Partner Practice	Students work in pairs on a shared topic using a TIDE organizer and sentence starters.
	Day 5	Independent Practice	Students choose a topic, complete a TIDE organizer, and write their own paragraph.

TIDE Strategy: Tips for Implementation

Scaffolding for Different Learners

- Use color-coded templates: e.g., blue for Topic, green for Evidence, yellow for Detail, pink for Ending.
- Offer sentence starters for each step.
- Allow students to talk through ideas before writing (oral rehearsal).
- Provide a digital version of the organizer for students who prefer typing.
- Use speech-to-text tools or let students dictate if needed.
- Consider whether all your students need a graphic organizer. If so, use one while you think aloud and plan your essay. If not, model writing without one and with one. Then, discuss the options with students. You could hand out graphic organizers and plain notebook paper strategically to support struggling writers while helping stronger writers organize paragraphs as they write them

Ideas for Group or Independent Practice

- Have students label each sentence in a sample or peer paragraph as T, I, D, or E to analyze structure.
- Use peer review: students give feedback after labeling a partner's paragraph.
- Challenge students to add a second piece of evidence and explanation once they master the basic format.
- Introduce expanded formats like TIDIDE or TIDIDIDE to stretch stronger writers.
- TIDIDE = Topic, Important Evidence, Detail, Important Evidence, Detail, Ending.
- TIDIDIDE = Topic, Important Evidence, Detail, Important Evidence, Detail, Important Evidence, Detail, Ending.
- Use expanded formats in independent writing or as enrichment tasks.
- Encourage students to choose topics that allow for deeper explanation and multiple examples.
- Provide sentence starters to support transitions between multiple evidence/detail sections.
- Use small-group instruction to support struggling writers while others work on expanded formats.

TIDE Strategy: Adaptations

- For struggling writers:
 - Pre-highlight evidence in a text
 - Students can focus on explanation rather than locating evidence.
- Use sticky notes for each TIDE part
 - Students write each part on a different sticky and arrange them in paragraph order before copying to a full draft.
- Pair writing with drawing
 - Let students draw an idea before writing about it (especially helpful for descriptive or personal topics).

Publication Details

Contributors

Writing Classroom Development Team

What is the Writing Classroom?

The Writing Classroom was developed to help educators apply effective, evidence-based writing interventions. Originating at the University of Kansas with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs, this initiative supports instructional strategies for all students, especially those who struggle with writing.

What is AI SCORE?

AI-SCORE enhances writing competency for students with learning disabilities by:

- Integrating evidence-based instructional strategies
- Providing immediate AI-generated feedback
- Personalizing the writing process to improve outcomes

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Learn More

 WritingClassroom.org

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Disclaimer: The contents of this publication were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education #H327F20008. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Anita Vermeer.