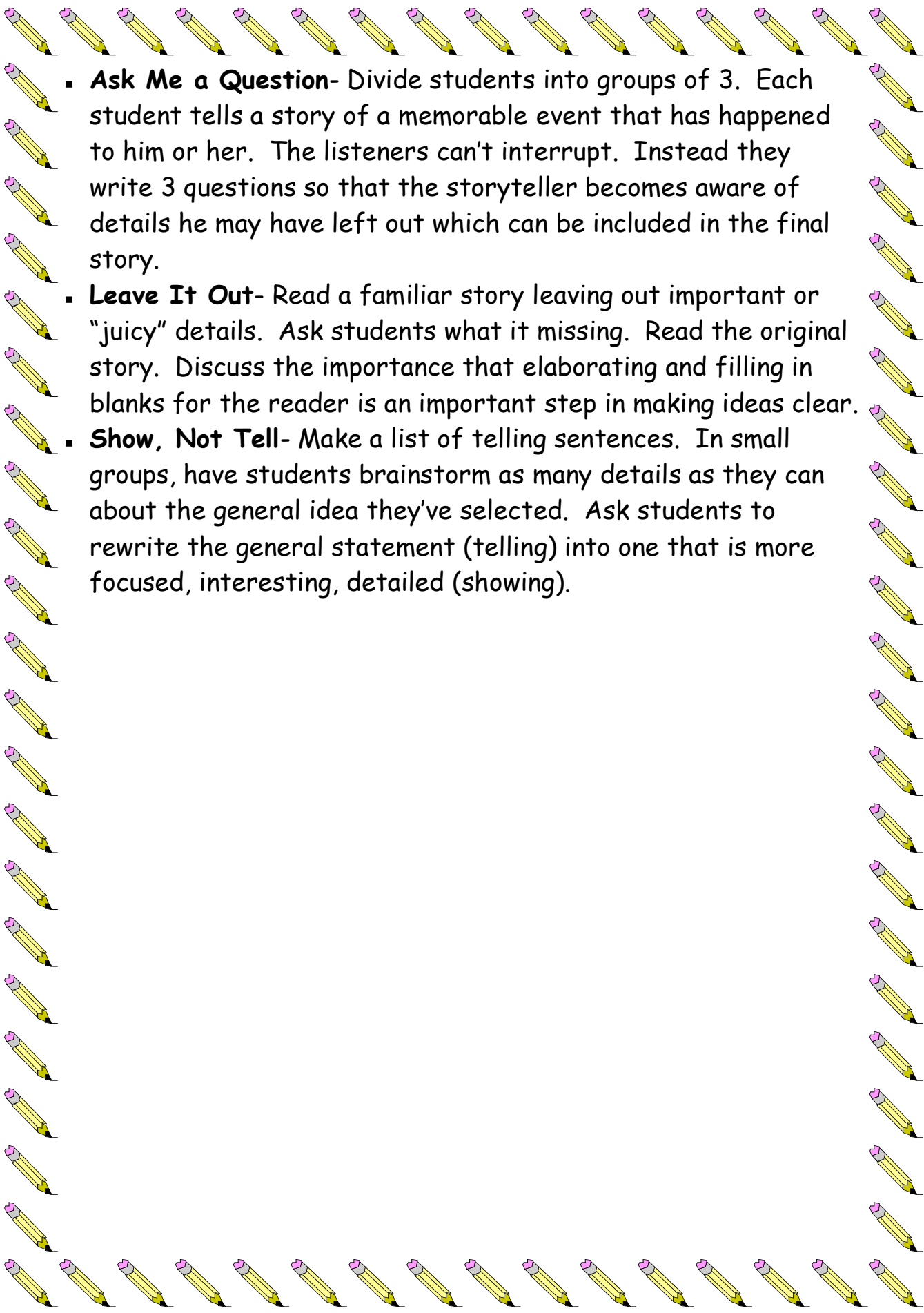


6 Traits Lesson Ideas for Ideas

- **Free Writing** - Ask students to write what's on their minds or what they're feeling right now or what they've been thinking about lately.
- **Flashback**- Look through journal entries or family photos, personal mementos that stimulate memories.
- **Favorite places**- Think about a place they love to go and make a class list of favorite places.
- **I Remember Poem** -Create this poem as a list of possible personal narrative stories.
- **Call It Out**- Pick a category such as "animals". Call out questions & encourage students to chime in with different answers. Go from general questions to narrow ones, developing narrow topics. Record topics on chart and let students do a quick write on one of them.
- **String-Along**- Bring some string or any item to class. Divide students into groups and ask them to generate as many ideas as they can about the possible use of the item. Create a class list, dividing ideas into categories. Write a short focused paper about the uses of item being discussed.
- **It Happened to Me**- Tell a story that that has happened to you to your students, embellishing for dramatic effect. When finished, let them ask you questions. Ask if it would make an interesting idea for a story. Next, create a poor chronological outline of what happened- a hodgepodge of major & minor details. Then have students give you advise for making it less bland by deciding which details to keep, delete, and elaborate. Finally, read the entire story to them.

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- **Ask Me a Question-** Divide students into groups of 3. Each student tells a story of a memorable event that has happened to him or her. The listeners can't interrupt. Instead they write 3 questions so that the storyteller becomes aware of details he may have left out which can be included in the final story.
 - **Leave It Out-** Read a familiar story leaving out important or "juicy" details. Ask students what it missing. Read the original story. Discuss the importance that elaborating and filling in blanks for the reader is an important step in making ideas clear.
 - **Show, Not Tell-** Make a list of telling sentences. In small groups, have students brainstorm as many details as they can about the general idea they've selected. Ask students to rewrite the general statement (telling) into one that is more focused, interesting, detailed (showing).



Snapshot

One of the main problems students face in writing good stories is that they fail to add interesting details. This lesson will help students to think about details and add them in important sections of their stories.

According to Barry Lane, writers are like cinematographers with wide angle lenses and zoom lenses. They observe life in fine, minute detail, pull out to make sweeping generalizations, and then zoom back in to make those generalizations come alive with detail. This technique is called a "snapshot".

1. Read the story, Redwoods to your class. Ask students what they liked about the story and what they didn't like.
2. Ask students if or how the story created a vivid picture in their minds.
3. Next, read Mouse Alert and discuss the same as above.
4. Compare the differences between the two stories.
5. Draw students' attention to the limited details the author included in the story, Redwoods. The reader could not "feel" what the author experienced because the events were listed instead of being described with details. This can be explained as "Telling versus "showing".
6. Next, discuss that in order to write an interesting story, the writer needs to focus on one particular event rather than giving broad, uninteresting facts. They also must use **precise Word Choice** in order to "paint a picture" for the reader.

The Redwoods

Last year, we went on a vacation and we had a wonderful time.

The weather was sunny and warm and there were lots to do, so we were never bored.

My parents visited friends and took pictures for their friends back home. My brother and I swam and also hiked in the woods.

When we got tired of that, we just ate and had a wonderful time.

It was exciting and fun to be together as a family and to do things I will remember for a long time. I hope we will go back again next year for more fun and an even better time than we had this year.

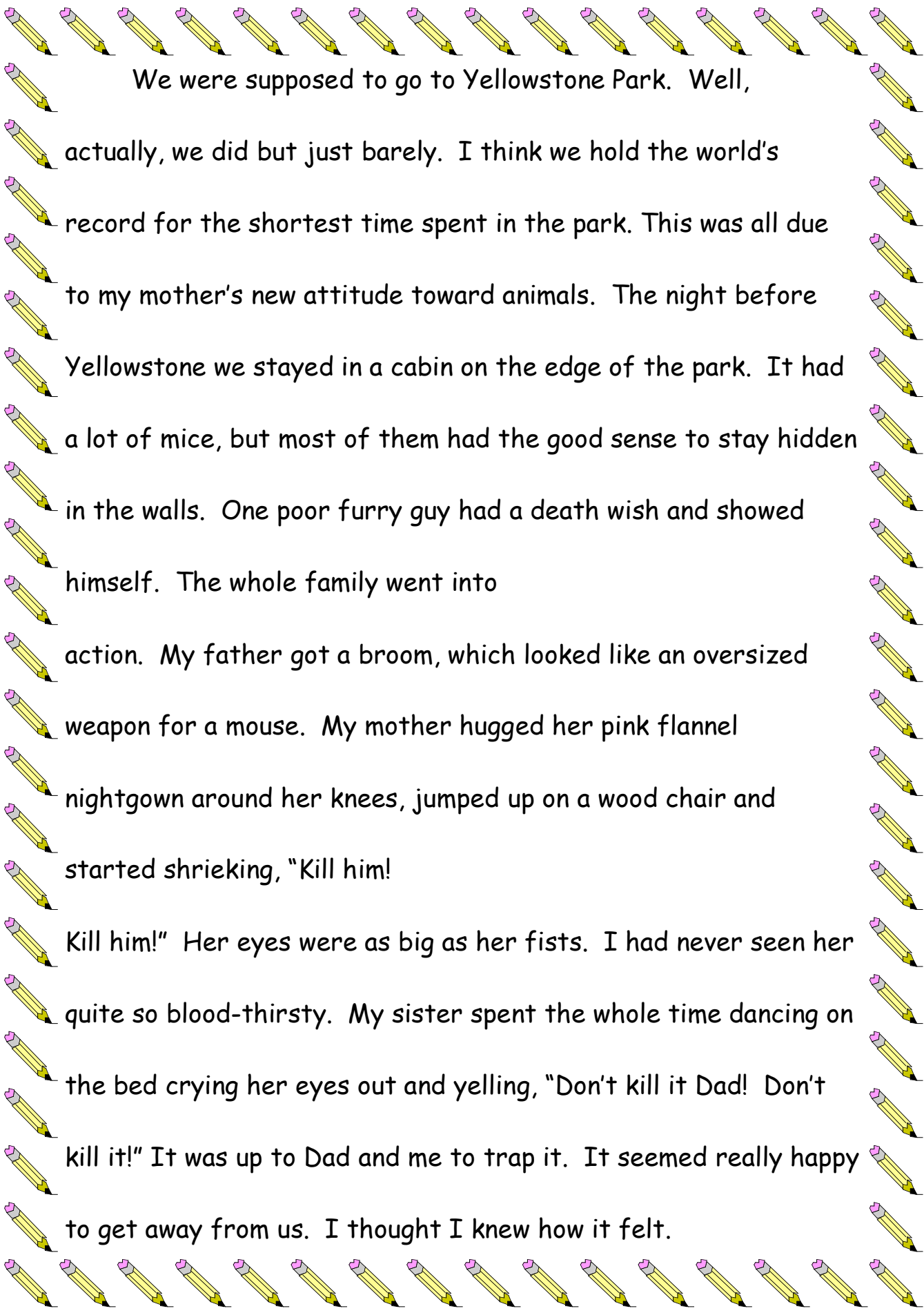


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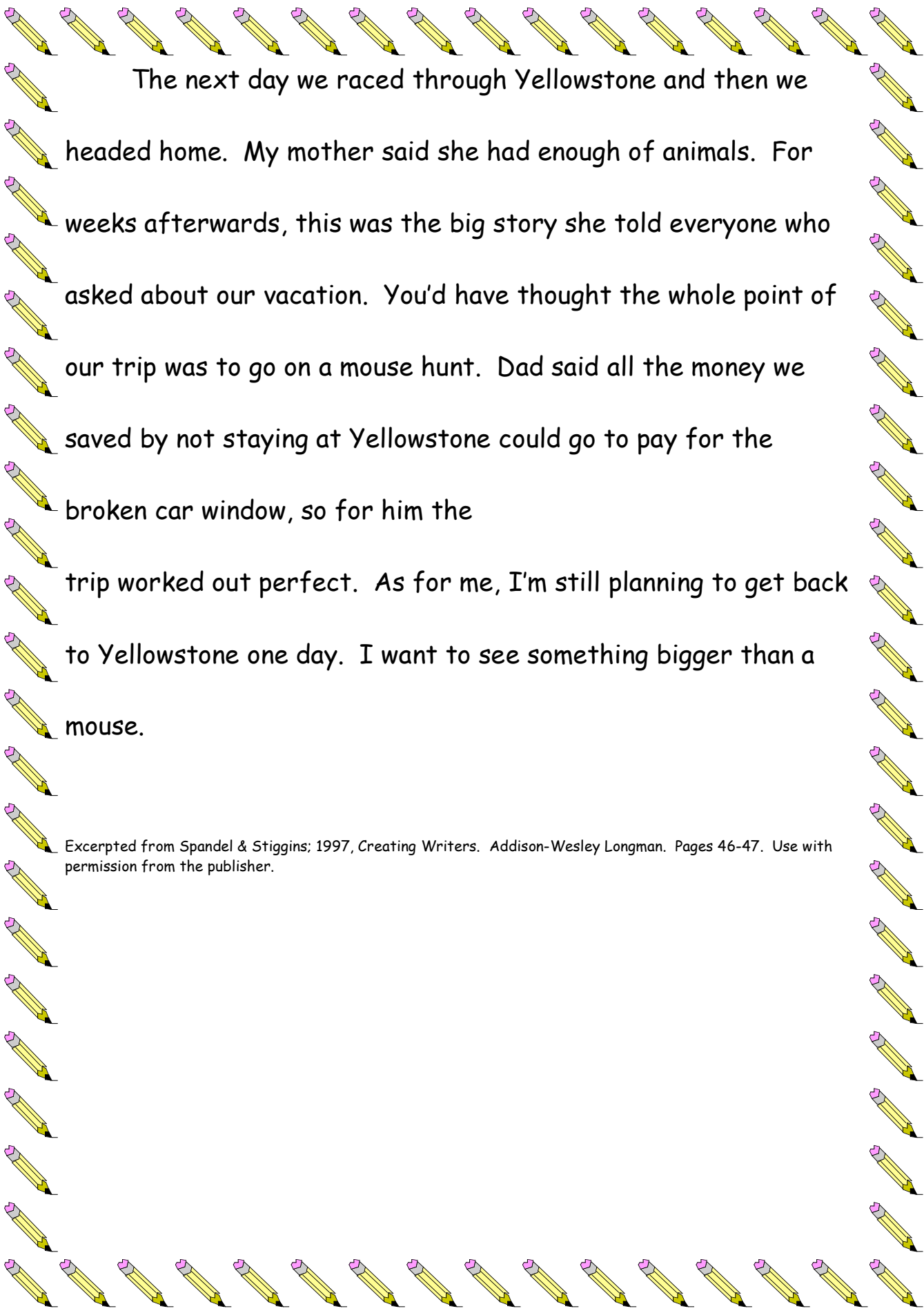


Mouse Alert

As soon as school was out, we left on vacation. Nothing went the way it was supposed to. Dad backed into a tree on the way out of the driveway, pushing the bike rack through the rear window and nearly scaring my sister to death. She was cranky the rest of the trip. We had to take our other car, which is smaller and you can't hook the bike rack up to it. Now my sister and me were crowded together so much she kept complaining about me breathing on her and taking up all her air and foot room. Plus now Dad knew a big bill would be waiting for him when we got home. It put everyone in a lovely trip starting mood.

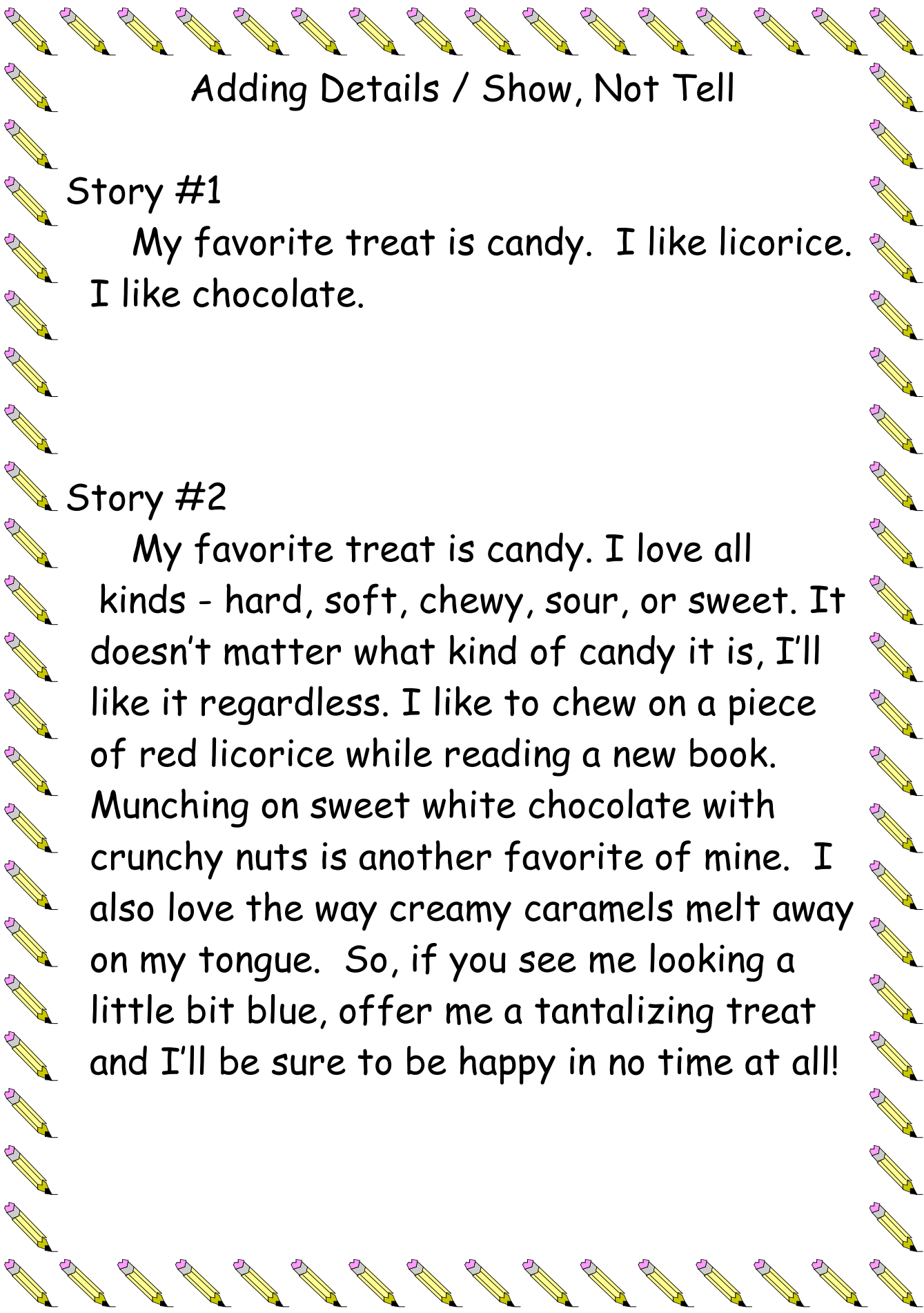


We were supposed to go to Yellowstone Park. Well, actually, we did but just barely. I think we hold the world's record for the shortest time spent in the park. This was all due to my mother's new attitude toward animals. The night before Yellowstone we stayed in a cabin on the edge of the park. It had a lot of mice, but most of them had the good sense to stay hidden in the walls. One poor furry guy had a death wish and showed himself. The whole family went into action. My father got a broom, which looked like an oversized weapon for a mouse. My mother hugged her pink flannel nightgown around her knees, jumped up on a wood chair and started shrieking, "Kill him! Kill him!" Her eyes were as big as her fists. I had never seen her quite so blood-thirsty. My sister spent the whole time dancing on the bed crying her eyes out and yelling, "Don't kill it Dad! Don't kill it!" It was up to Dad and me to trap it. It seemed really happy to get away from us. I thought I knew how it felt.



The next day we raced through Yellowstone and then we headed home. My mother said she had enough of animals. For weeks afterwards, this was the big story she told everyone who asked about our vacation. You'd have thought the whole point of our trip was to go on a mouse hunt. Dad said all the money we saved by not staying at Yellowstone could go to pay for the broken car window, so for him the trip worked out perfect. As for me, I'm still planning to get back to Yellowstone one day. I want to see something bigger than a mouse.

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Adding Details / Show, Not Tell

Story #1

My favorite treat is candy. I like licorice.
I like chocolate.

Story #2

My favorite treat is candy. I love all kinds - hard, soft, chewy, sour, or sweet. It doesn't matter what kind of candy it is, I'll like it regardless. I like to chew on a piece of red licorice while reading a new book. Munching on sweet white chocolate with crunchy nuts is another favorite of mine. I also love the way creamy caramels melt away on my tongue. So, if you see me looking a little bit blue, offer me a tantalizing treat and I'll be sure to be happy in no time at all!



Adding Details / Show, Not Tell

Example #1:

Silkworms are interesting bugs. They make silk. They hatch from eggs and then they eat a lot. Later they go into a cocoon. When they come out, they turn into moths. Next, the female lays eggs and it starts all over again.

The Japanese have been using their silk for 4000 years! They take the silk from the cocoon. Then they make silk for you and me. They're pretty cool bugs, aren't they?

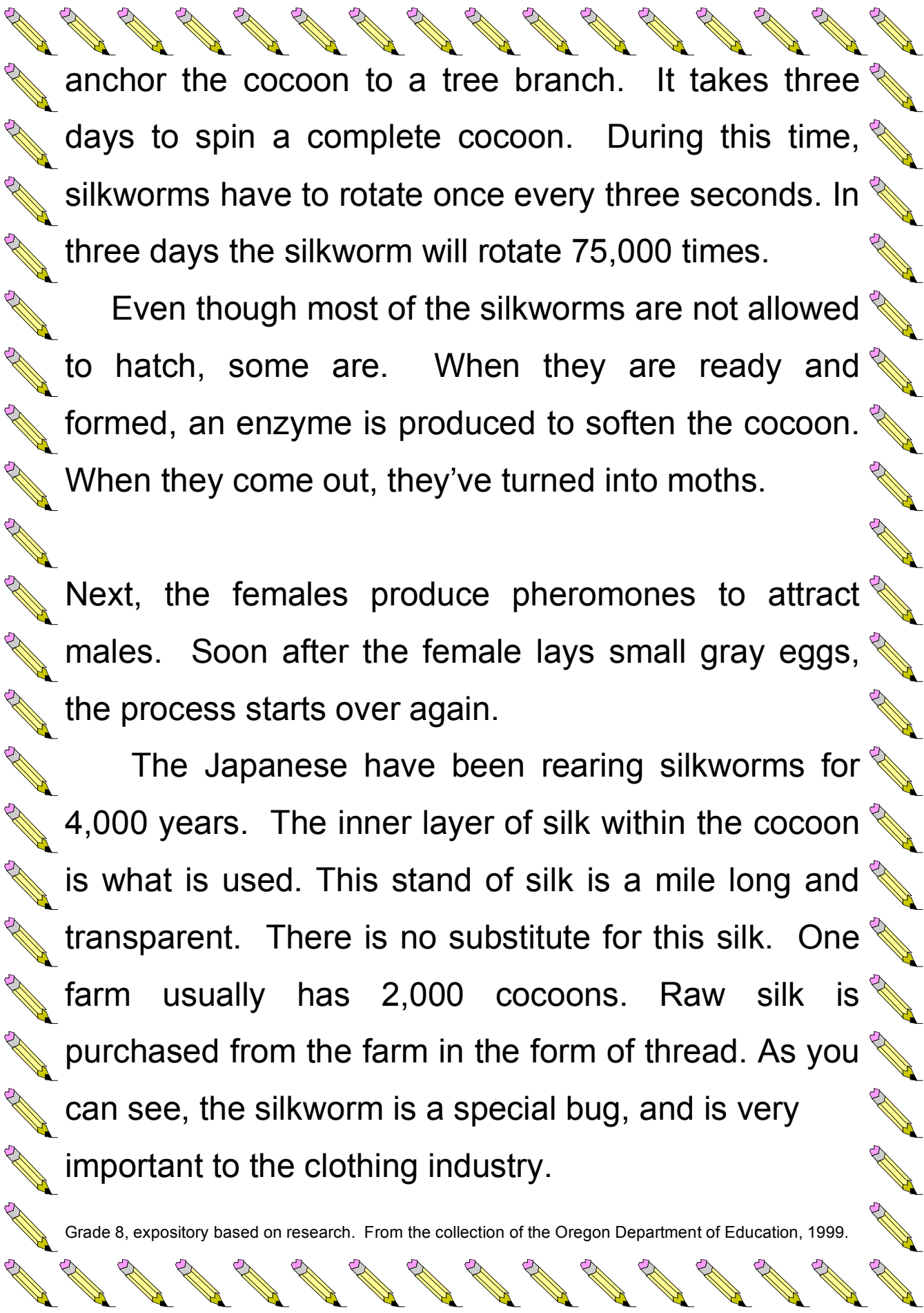


Example #2

Did you know that the beautiful, fine silk that feels tingly against your skin is actually produced by two glands on a silkworm's head? That's right, you may have worn something from a bug!

Hey, but don't worry, this is a cool bug. These interesting caterpillars start from a small, in fact tiny, gray egg. It takes fourteen days for the eggs to hatch. The eggs will hatch within an hour of each other. Instantly, they start eating mulberry leaves. Mulberry leaves are the silkworm's main diet. Silkworms eat constantly! In three weeks, the silkworm will weigh five grams. When they reach this point, they are ready to spin cocoons and they weigh 12,000 times more than when they were born. It takes 24 days to reach this point.

When they get sluggish, stop eating, and look waxy, that means they are getting ready to start spinning their cocoons. To start, they spin a line to



anchor the cocoon to a tree branch. It takes three days to spin a complete cocoon. During this time, silkworms have to rotate once every three seconds. In three days the silkworm will rotate 75,000 times.

Even though most of the silkworms are not allowed to hatch, some are. When they are ready and formed, an enzyme is produced to soften the cocoon. When they come out, they've turned into moths.

Next, the females produce pheromones to attract males. Soon after the female lays small gray eggs, the process starts over again.

The Japanese have been rearing silkworms for 4,000 years. The inner layer of silk within the cocoon is what is used. This strand of silk is a mile long and transparent. There is no substitute for this silk. One farm usually has 2,000 cocoons. Raw silk is purchased from the farm in the form of thread. As you can see, the silkworm is a special bug, and is very important to the clothing industry.

