

# Four Square Writing for Grades 3-5



# What is Four Square Writing?

- Four-square writing is a method of teaching basic writing skills that is applicable across grade levels and curriculum areas. It can be applied for the narrative, descriptive, expository and persuasive forms of writing.



# What is Four Square Writing?

## Cont...

- Prewriting and organizational skills are taught through the use of a graphic organizer.
  - This visual and kinesthetic aid is employed to focus writing, to provide detail and to enhance word choice.
  - The visual organizers help students to conceptualize, understand, and structure a piece of written discourse successfully.
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# Guidelines

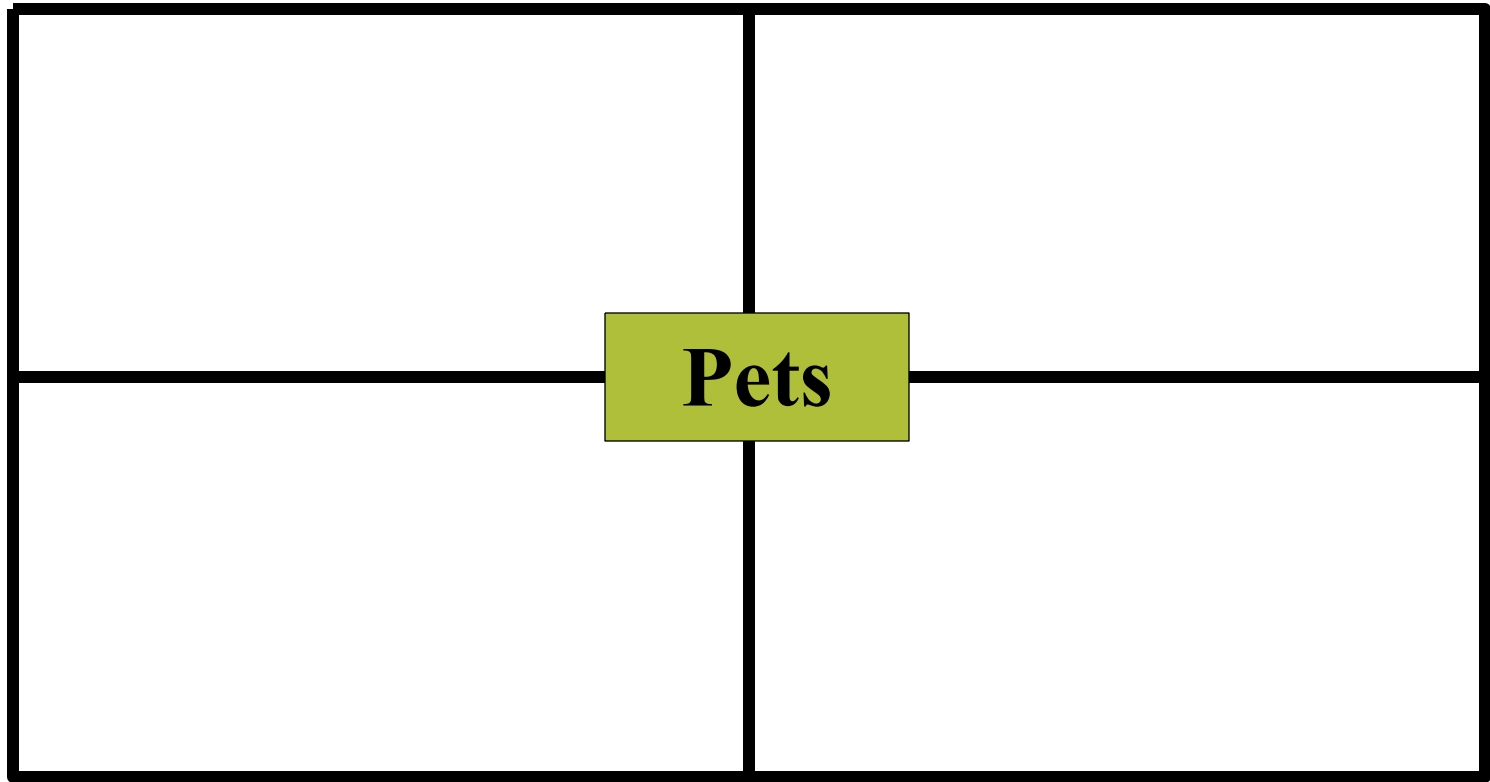
- Four square instruction should be done weekly to bi-weekly.
  - It should be accompanied by other writing activities.  
Ex. Journal Writing
  - It is recommended to use the same prompt repeatedly when introducing the steps because the familiarity will aid instruction.
  - It is important for students to understand the relationship of ideas as demonstrated in the four square format before moving on to paragraphs.
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# How to Create a Four-Square Graphic Organizer

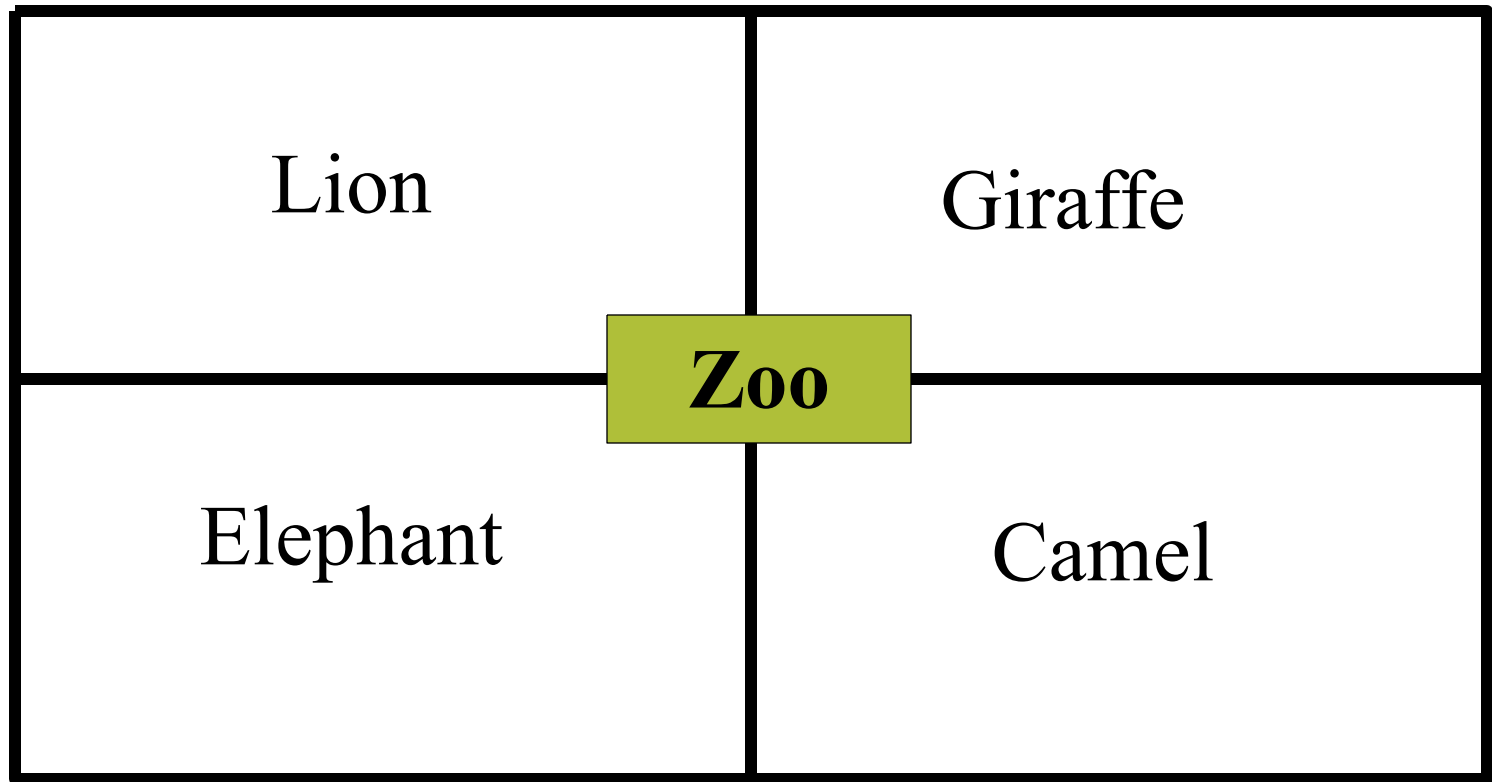
- 10 Fold a sheet of manila construction paper into four equal squares.
  - 10 Write a topic sentence in the middle of the paper.
  - 10 In three of the squares write a complete sentence which states reasons, examples, or explanations that support the sentence in the center of the paper.
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- 10 In the fourth box the students will write a feeling sentence to support the topic.
  - 10 Students will then draw in each box, which will describe their sentences.
  - 10 Students will then use their Four Square writing to write a story.
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# | Step 1: Categorizing - Pictures

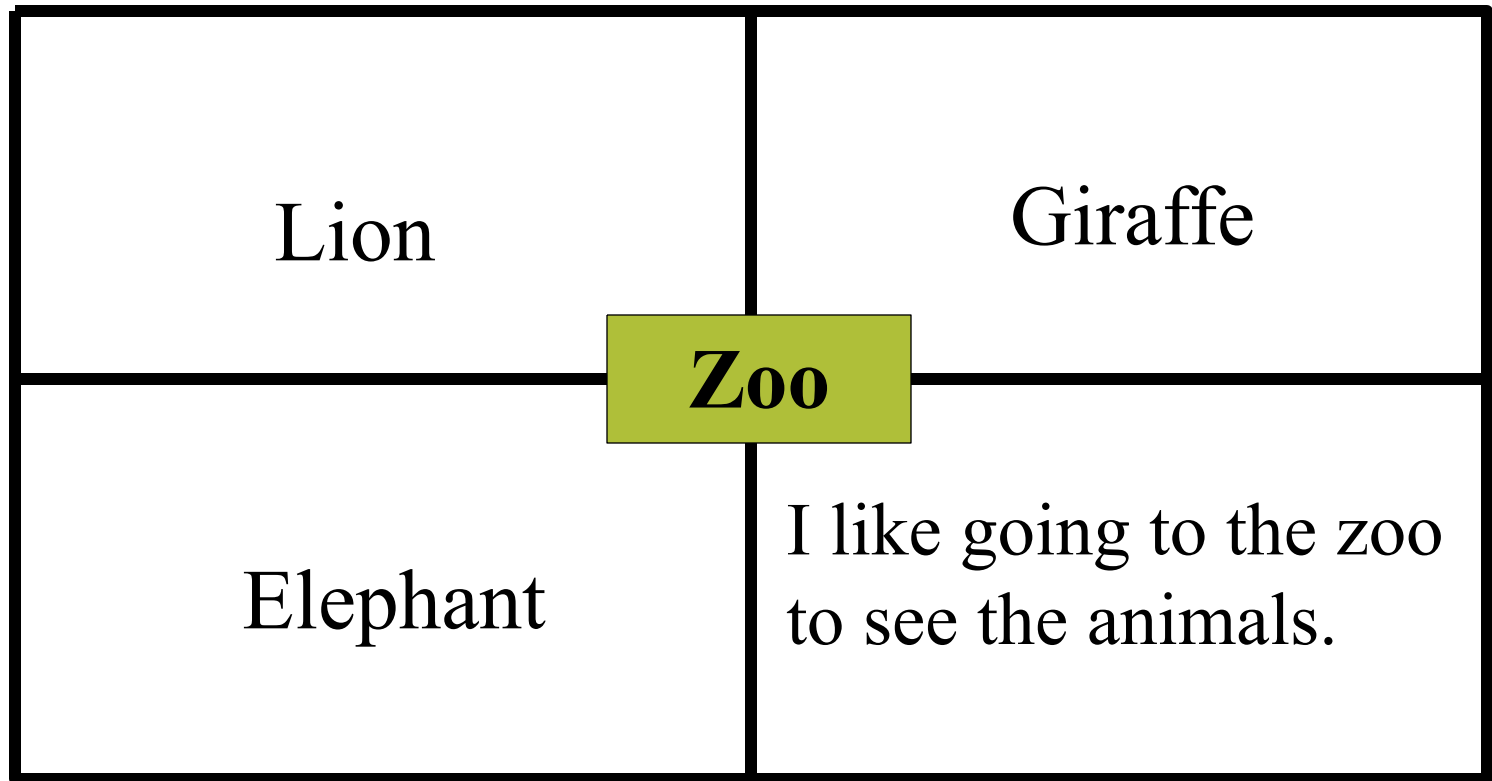


# | Step 1: Categorizing - Words





## Step 2: Examples and a Feeling Sentence



## Step 3: Using Complete Sentences

- Center box now contains a complete sentence.
  - Boxes 2-4 contain complete sentences which state reasons, examples or explanations.
  - Each must be different, real, and quantifiable.
  - Students should be encouraged to illustrate these four squares.
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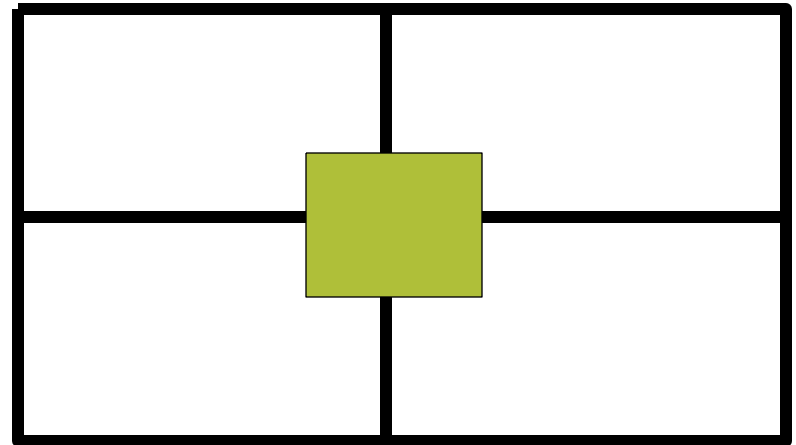
## Step 3: Cont...

<p>2. Reason –</p> <p>We learn here.</p>	<p>3. Reason –</p> <p>We meet friends.</p>
<p><b>Complete sentence –</b> <b>School is a great place.</b></p>	
<p>4. Reason –</p> <p>We do experiments.</p>	<p>5. Feeling –</p> <p>I love school.</p>

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## Step 4: Writing a Paragraph

- Paragraphs are several sentences on the same topic.
- Now transfer the sentences from the four blocks to lined paper for paragraph building.
- Whole class modeling is best to teach this.



## Step 5: Adding More Details

- Moving from a 5 sentence to an 8 sentence paragraph; go back into the 4 square.
- Add one additional detail sentence in each box.
- Elaboration: tell more about the topic or tell what is so great about it.

<p><b>Reason:</b> We learn here.</p> <p><b>Detail:</b> I like to learn science.</p>	<p><b>Reason:</b> We meet friends.</p> <p><b>Detail:</b> My best friend is in class.</p>
<p><b>Complete sentence—</b> <b>School is a great place.</b></p>	
<p><b>Reason:</b> We do experiments.</p> <p><b>Detail:</b> I built a volcano yesterday.</p>	<p><b>Feeling Sentence:</b> I love school.</p>

## Step 6: Add Supporting Details

- The reasons, examples or explanations developed in the previous step now need further development.
  - In a sense, boxes 2, 3, and 4 will each be four squared independently.
  - These details will make up the substance of the body paragraphs of the multiple-paragraph essay.
  - Using the four square to develop these ideas ensures that details are aligned with the main ideas, and topic sentences start every paragraph.
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# Step 6: Adding Supporting Details

## Learn

- read
- math
- science

## Friends

- share lunches
- invite over
- do homework together

**School is a great place.**

## Play

- in centers
- on playground
- recess

School is a great place  
because we learn, meet  
friends, and play.

# Sep 6: Adding Supporting Details

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# Evaluating – a Checklist for the Teacher

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes No

1. Are the four square reasons quantifiable and not opinions?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Is there repetition of detail?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Are the details logical expansions of reasons?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. Are the details quantifiable and factual, free of opinion?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there mechanical errors in the wrap-up

## Step 7: Adding Connecting Words to Provide Transition Between Ideas

- By now the thesis is developing into three reasons.
- These reasons should be different from each other and therefore necessitate the use of transition or connecting words.
- Connecting words can be explained as the “little sticking out part” of the puzzle.

Connecting words hold the different parts of the puzzle together.



# Step 7: Adding Connecting Words to Provide Transitions Between Ideas

## First

### Learn

- read
- math
- science

## Also

### Friends

- share lunches
- invite over
- do homework together

**School is a great place.**

## Next

### Play

- in centers
- on playground
- recess

## So you can see

School is a great place because we learn, meet friends, and play.

# Step 7: Adding Connecting Words to Provide Transitions Between Ideas

Connecting Word

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- 
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Connecting Word

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Connecting Word

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Wrap-Up Sentence:

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# Rote Instruction

- When moving from the information from the four square to the multiple essay, use a rote lesson by:

- ☐ The whole class builds a four square.
- ☐ Build the story one sentence at a time.
- ☐ As the composition is built one sentence at a time, students copy it down.
- ☐ During this time, the teacher integrates rules of composition.



# Expository – Usually nouns in boxes 2 – 4

- ⑩ Gives information
- ⑩ States reasons or examples
- ⑩ Very structured
- ⑩ Connecting words a must
- ⑩ Few quotations
- ⑩ Little action



# Narrative –

## Boxes 2 – 4 events or verbs

- Entertains
  - Has events
  - More loosely structured
  - Connecting words only  
as needed for  
chronology
  - More dialogue
  - Lots of action
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# Descriptive and Persuasive Writing Styles

- The expository form is a combination of persuasion and descriptive detail.
  - Begin with the expository form. It varies in the following manner:
    - Topic sentence
    - Intent of information in boxes 2-4
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# Four Square in the Language Arts Program

Four square is a way to organize thoughts. It is not the writing program. However, four square exercises can be published by following the writing process.

- *Brainstorming*: Generating ideas
- *Organizing*: Four square or other methods
- *Drafting*: Rough or first draft
- *Revising*: Revision of content and style
- *Editing*: Editing for surface features, punctuation, spelling, capitals, etc.

Remember this is a slow process. Try not to over teach.

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# Language Arts Use

## ■ Book Review

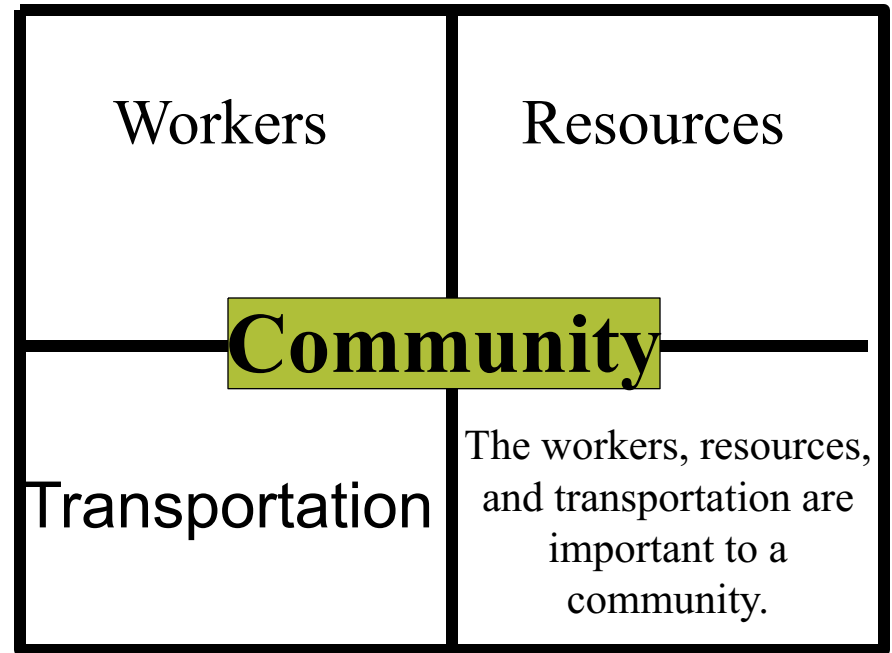
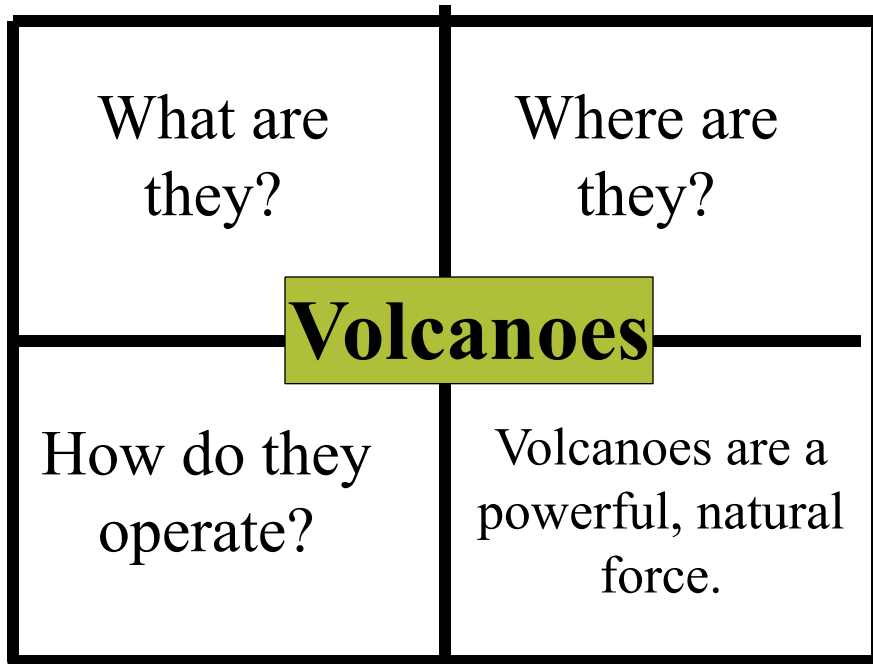
Beginning	Middle
<b>Title</b>	
End	Did you like it?

# Language Arts Use

- Speeches: Use the format for organizing and giving the speech.
  - Reading Comprehension:
    - Have students create a four square from a passage written by an author. Discuss the organization.
    - Have students create a four square written by a student.
    - Cut up a student's composition by sentences. Have students draw a sentence at a time and reconstruct the composition then reproduce it on at chart paper or overhead. (students can work in groups at centers for this)
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# Four Square in Science

- An excellent way to review or summarize information learned about a specific process.



# Four Square in Math

- Word problems require the employment of logic and reasoning different from the usual compute and solve drills.
- These problems require that students develop their own equation, and then perform an unnamed operation to find a solution.

