

Content Planning:

**Developing Effective
Unit Questions, Unit Maps & Teaching
Successfully with Unit Questions & Maps
(version 1.1--December 15, 2008)**

Instructional Coaching

The Kansas Coaching Project

Content Planning

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Unit Questions & Maps at a Glance

Unit questions and maps serve at least two major purposes. First, teachers may be better prepared to teach their classes if they have a very clear understanding of the objectives and content that they will be teaching in their classes. Second, students may learn better if they have a very clear understanding of the connections between what they are learning and what they will be learning.

Unit Questions

Effective unit questions should be comprehensive—that is, if students can answer all of the unit questions well, they should be do well on the end of unit assessments—and easy for students to understand. Unit questions can be written on the back of the unit map.

Unit Map

The unit map provides a visual summary of the content to be covered in the unit. The content on the map should provide students with a point of departure for answering unit questions.

Introducing Unit Questions and Maps

When introducing the unit, the teacher shares the main ideas that will be covered in the unit, and students write the main ideas on their map. Students should have a good idea of what the unit will be covering following the introductory lesson.

Daily Use

The unit map and questions can be used for advance and post-organizers for each class, and teachers should lead students to add new details to their organizers as they learn it.

End of Unit Review

The unit map and questions can be used by teachers to prepare students for an end of unit assessment.

Going Deeper

The ideas contained here are based primarily on the work of Keith Lenz, the author of *The Unit Organizer Routine*. You can gain more information about the unit organizer and other work by visiting www.kucrl.org.

Other useful books to review related to this topic include Wiggin's and McTighe's *Understanding by Design*, and The International Center for Leadership in Education's *Rigor and Relevance*.

DEVELOP UNIT QUESTIONS

Questions about Critical Questions	Yes or No?
Do the questions effectively address the standards for the unit and course?	
Have I written questions rather than objectives or commands?	
Are the questions written at the appropriate higher-order or lower-order level?	
Are the questions written in a form that requires an extended verbal explanation?	
Do the questions identify ways in which students should understand the information to be learned?	
Do the questions communicate how students should learn the content?	
Do the questions help students think not only about the content but also about how the content is meaningful or important?	
Do my questions include expectations for learning how to use the content in and out of the class?	
Do my questions help students identify the critical content structures, concepts, or ideas to be learned?	
Have I limited my number of questions to six or fewer?	

CHECKLIST: QUALITY MAP

Map Characteristic	√	Comments
No more than 7 content bubbles are included on the front section of the map.		
Bubbles are organized from left to right to mirror the sequence of lesson taught in the unit		
Line labels are used effectively to connect content bubble to the unit paraphrase.		
Unit questions refer only to content that is depicted in the unit map.		
At least two unit questions are “how” or “why” questions.		
Teacher has created a completed map (and expanded map) before the unit has begun		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

CHECKLIST: INTRODUCING THE UNIT MAP

TEACHING BEHAVIOR	√	COMMENTS
The teacher takes 25 – 45 minutes to thoroughly introduce the unit		
The teacher co-constructs the map with students		
Students complete their personal unit map in their own handwriting (at least partially).		
Students speak at least 50% of the time during the lesson		
Students store their map in a place where it will be easy for them to retrieve it.		

CHECKLIST: DAILY USE

Daily Use	√	Comments
90% of students have their unit map open on their desk when the bell rings to start the unit.		
90% of students can locate their unit map without difficulty		
Teacher begins each class with a review of the content covered up to the current point in the unit.		
Teacher uses the unit map to introduce the day's lesson.		
Teachers prompts students to record new content learned on the expanded unit map		
Teacher uses the unit map to end each day's lesson with a review of the material covered		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

CHECKLIST: END OF UNIT REVIEW

End of Unit Review	√	Comments
At least 90% of items on assessments refer directly to content that is named on the unit map		
Teacher takes at least 30 minutes to review content on the unit map prior to final unit assessment.		
Teacher prompts students to use unit map to prepare for unit assessment		
When returning the unit assessment, the teacher explicitly explains how the map could have helped students with the final unit assessment		

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Coaching The Unit Map Using the Components of Coaching

The following coaching sequence was created for a research study on the impact of coaching on implementation (there was a huge impact!). This sequence is based on the assumption that coaching will follow a workshop. If there's no workshop, then the coach would have to provide one-to-one or small group instruction in the development of unit questions and unit maps.

1. Enroll: Meeting Following The Workshop

- Time: 15 - 30 minutes
- Explain the coaching process (observation form, model, collaborative exploration of data)

2. Explain: Developing a Quality Map

- Time: 1 or 2 planning periods (40 - 90 minutes)
- Co-construct a checklist
- Co-develop or refine the map
- Use the co-constructed checklist to ensure you have a quality map

3. Explain: Introducing the Unit Map

- Time: 30 - 45 minutes
- Take the partnership approach, but with the goal of transferring everything on the checklist to the observation form

4. Model: Introducing the Unit Map

- Coach provides a model of how to introduce the unit map
- Teacher observes the model using a co-constructed observation form
- Coach and teacher discuss what is on the co-constructed observation form (perhaps during class)

5. Observe: Teacher Introducing the Unit Map

- Coach uses a co-constructed observation form while observing the teacher introduce a unit (ideally later in the same day of the model)
- Coach continues to observe and discuss the observation forms until teacher is fluent in use of the map

6. Explore:

- Coach reports data on the observation form non-judgementally
- Begins by asking the teacher "how do you think things went today"
- Shares data provisionally (e.g. "this is only my observation, what you think is way more important")
- Partners with teacher to identify specific next steps to be implemented (e.g. so as you look at this form, what do you think you should do differently next time?)

7. Explain: Daily Use of the Unit Map

- Time: 20 - 30 minutes
- Take the partnership approach, but with the goal of transferring everything on the checklist to the observation form

8. & 9. Model, Observe and Explore: Daily Use of the Unit Map

- Repeat steps 4, 5 & 6 but now applied to daily use

10. Explain: End of Unit Review

- Time: 30 - 45 minutes
- At least 90% of items on final assessment are on the unit map
- Take at least 30 minutes to review the content on the unit map
- Prompt students to use the map for review
- When returning the assessments, point out how the map could have helped

11. & 12. Model, Observe and Explore: End of Unit Review

- Repeat steps 5 & 6 but now applied to end of unit review

Unit Questions

1.How do I use capital letters and end punctuation?

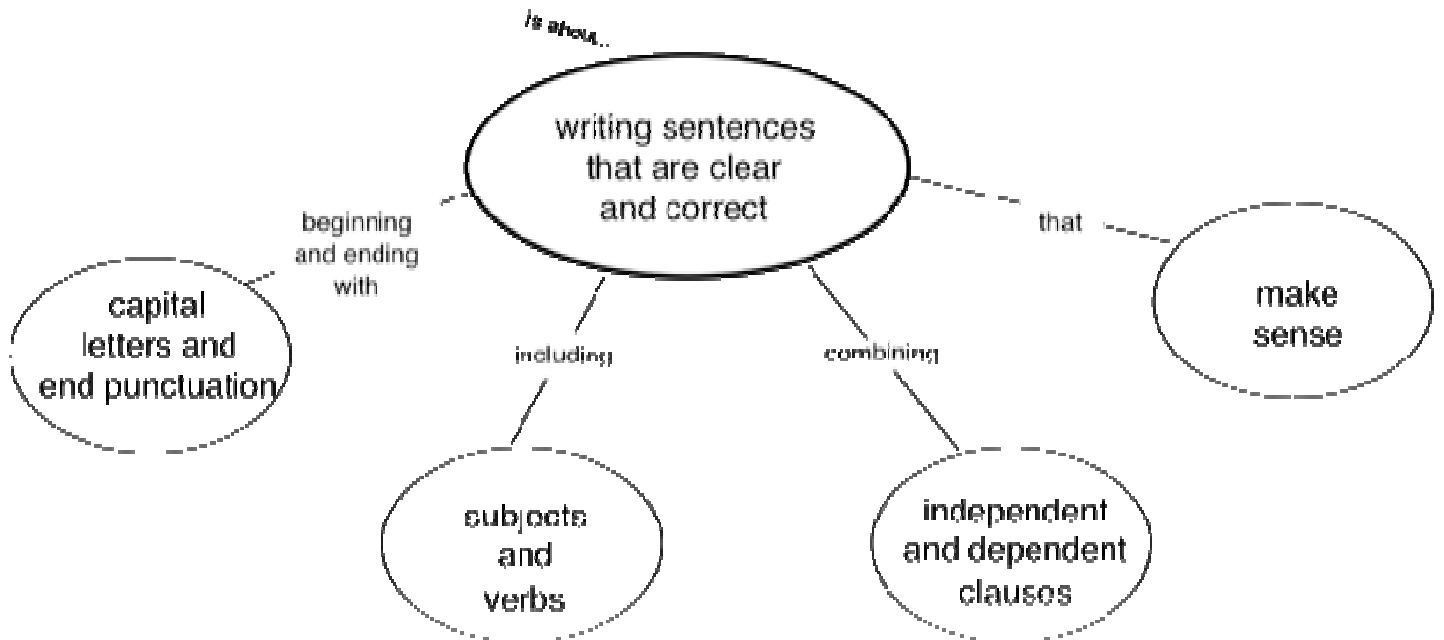
2.How are subjects and verbs used in sentences?

3.What are the sentence types using independent and dependent clauses?

4.How can I make sure that a sentence makes sense?

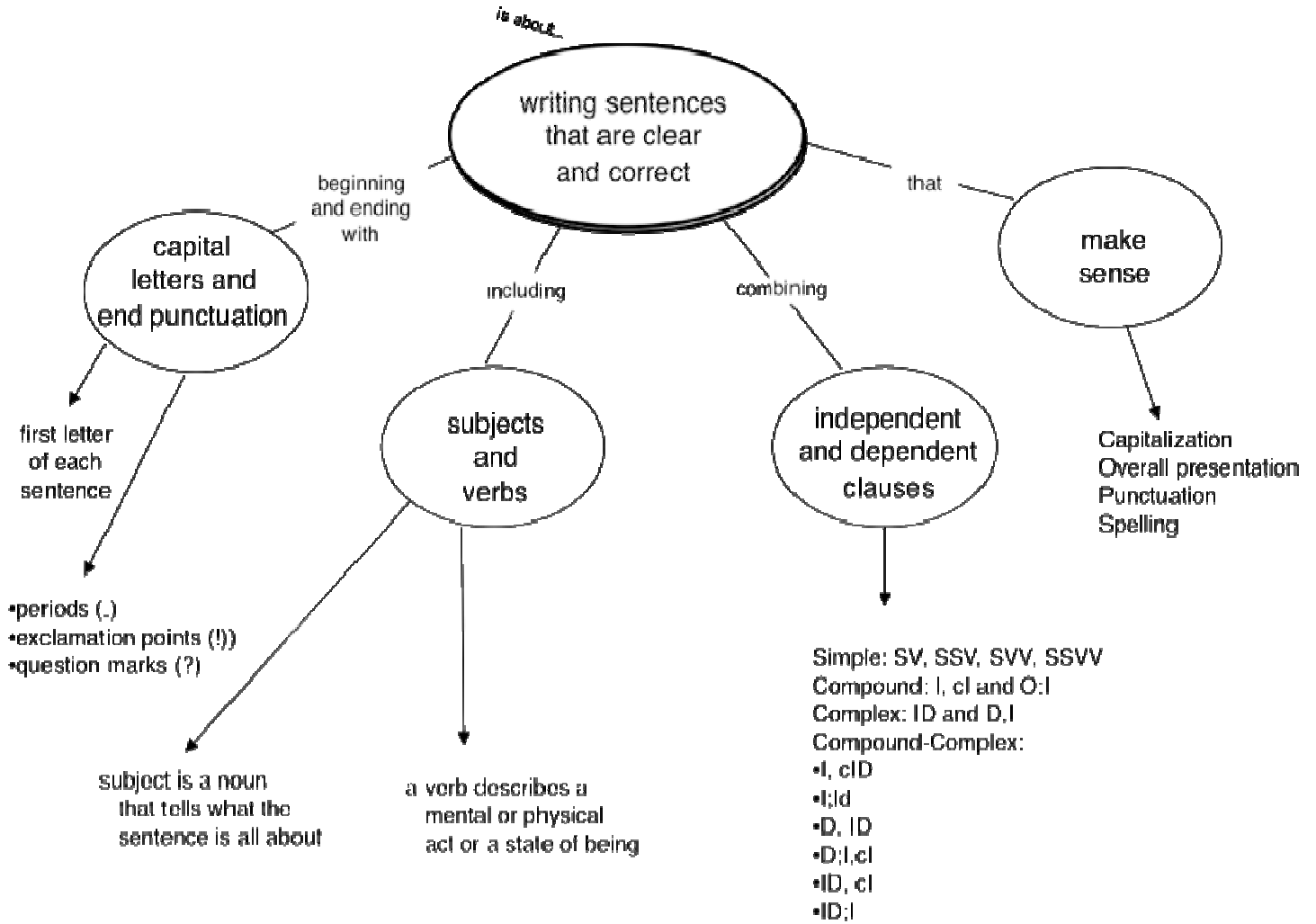
Unit Map
Sentence Writing

NAME _____



Unit Map
Sentence Writing

NAME



GOING DEEPER

This mini-manual is a quick overview for coaches interested in helping teachers use and develop unit questions and unit maps. To really refine and develop their learning, coaches should read widely in the field. Several excellent works, that influenced this mini-coaching manual are listed below. Keith Lenz's *Unit Organizer*, in particular, has influenced this mini-manual. Indeed if had Keith not written his book, this publication wouldn't exist.

Jacobs, H.,H. (1997). *Mapping the big picture: Integrating curriculum and assessment k-12*. Alexandria, VA. ASCD.

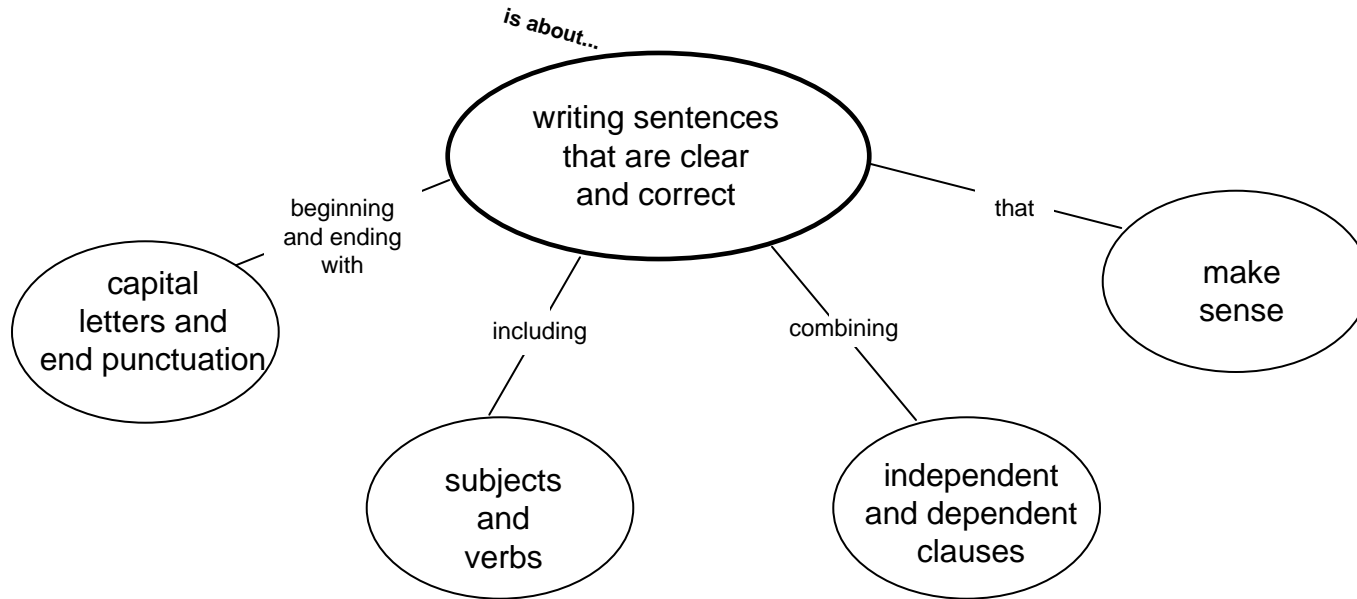
Lenz, B., K., Bulgren, J., Schumaker, J., Deshler, D., Boudah, D. (1994) *The unit organizer routine*. Lawrence, KS: Edge Enterprises.

Tomlinson, C.A., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating differentiated instruction and understanding by design: Connecting content and kids*. Alexandria, VA. ASCD.

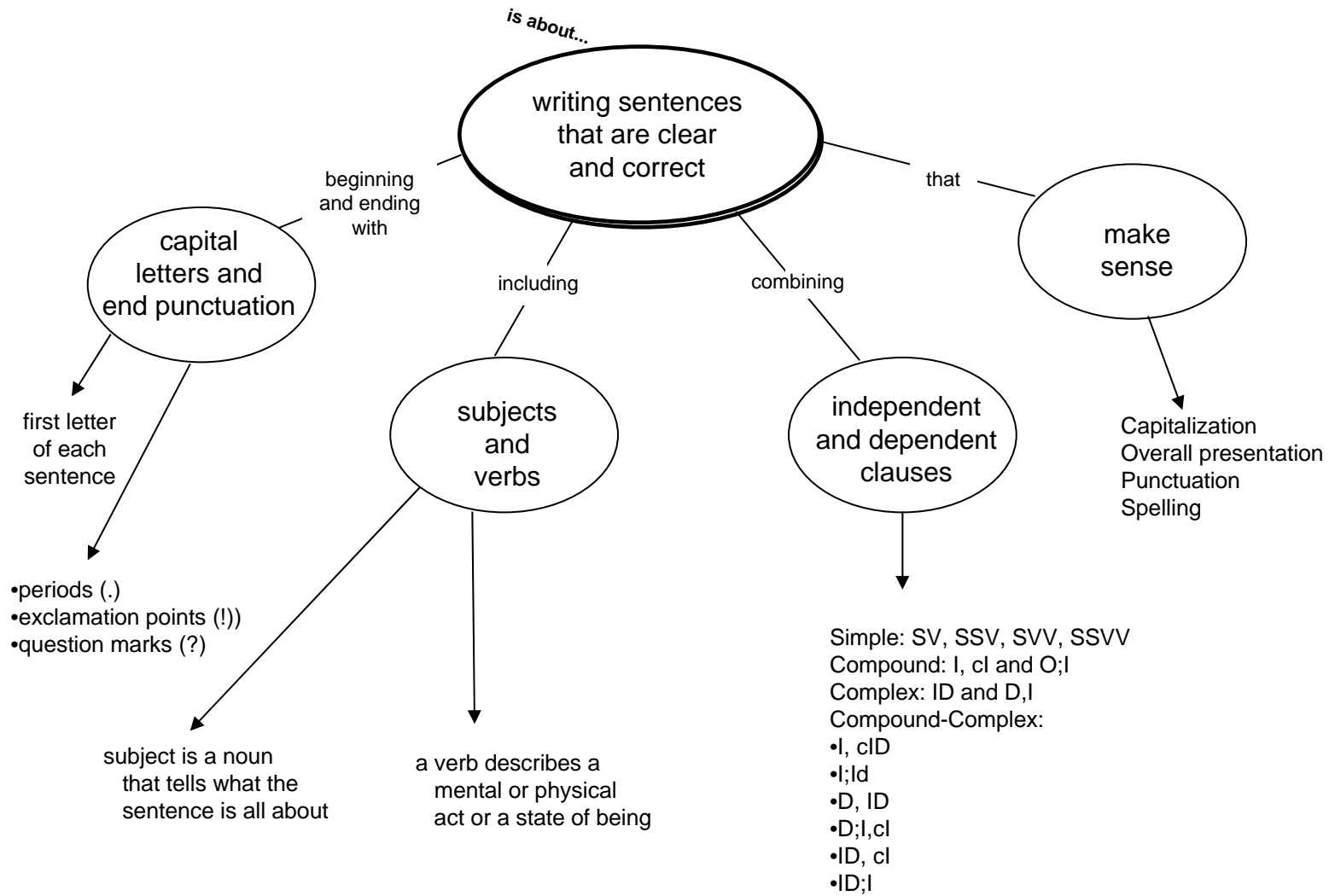
Wiggins, G. & McTighe, J, (2005) *Understanding by design(2nd ed.)* Alexandria, VA. ASCD.

1. How do I use capital letters and end punctuation?
2. How are subjects and verbs used in sentences?
3. What are the sentence types using independent and dependent clauses?
4. How can I make sure that a sentence makes sense?

Sentence Writing

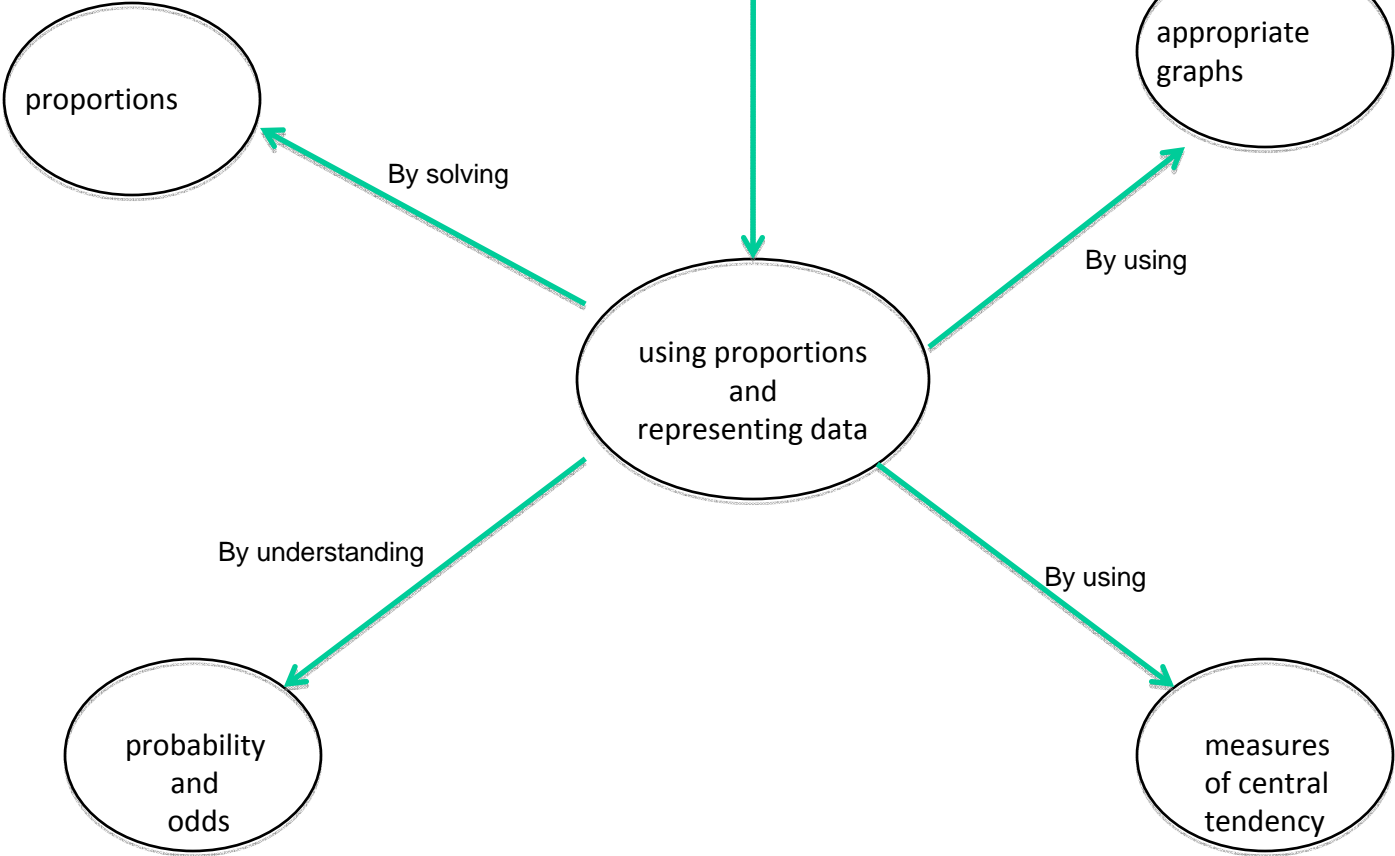


Sentence Writing



1. Which graph is appropriate for the given information?
2. When is it appropriate to use mean, median, mode, and range?
3. How do you solve proportions?
4. How do you calculate odds?
5. How do you calculate probability?
6. What is the difference between odds and probability? How would you compute one given the other?
7. How would you estimate the cost of an item when a percent off is given?
8. How would you calculate a percent increase or decrease in cost?

Proportional Reasoning and Statistics
is about



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is about



Paragraphs



begin with



Paragraphs



begin with

