**Academic Vocabulary: Explanatory Text**

Academic terms appear in all subjects and can help you read, write, and discuss with more precision. Explanatory writing relies on facts to inform or explain. Here are five academic words that will be useful to you in this unit as you analyze and write explanatory texts.

**Complete the chart.**

1. Review each word, its root, and mentor sentences.
2. Use the information and your own knowledge to predict the meaning of each word.
3. For each word, list at least two related words.
4. Refer to the dictionary or other resources if needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>MENTOR SENTENCES</th>
<th>PREDICT MEANING</th>
<th>RELATED WORDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| contribute | 1. Jennifer likes to contribute to the discussion when she has something meaningful to add.  
2. Julio wants to contribute a short story to the school literary magazine. |                 | tribute; attribute  |
| consistent | 1. Keeping consistent pressure on a wound helps stop bleeding.  
2. The runner kept a consistent routine to prepare for the race. |                 |                     |
| maintain   | 1. The disabled train struggled to maintain speed.  
2. The veterinarian maintained her belief that dogs need grooming. |                 |                     |
| observation| 1. Watching the rat every day, the scientist learned about it through observation.  
2. Observation of the moon was impossible because it was a cloudy night. |                 |                     |
| sufficient | 1. In order to prove your point, you must provide sufficient evidence.  
2. I don’t have sufficient money to buy that shirt. |                 |                     |
In April of 2012, 25-year-old Nick Kleckner was working as an electrician and cabdriver in northern California. And then, suddenly, he found himself at a crossroads. He left it all—his job, his family, his friends—and bought a one-way plane ticket to Jacksonville, Florida. He had a bold plan in mind. He was going to walk to California with virtually nothing on his back. He hoped the journey would change his life, but he had no idea how!

Nick, who was not exactly prepared, had nothing in the way of survival skills, so he planned to survive on the goodness of the people he met on the road.

Using the handle “Hobo Nick,” Nick began his journey on April 5, leaving Jacksonville with a backpack, a sleeping bag, and a travel kit. He also had an iPod and the ability to receive Internet service. Throughout the journey, he would document his experience in minute detail and send daily updates to his mother, who’d post them on his blog.

The question is: Why? What would make someone take off like that? Nick had a comfortable life. He had a good income, a house, a new car, and a new motorcycle. He was moving forward with his life. By society’s standards he should have been happy—but he wasn’t.

Nick was in a rut. His life felt repetitive and boring. It lacked a higher purpose. He felt he wasn’t growing as a person. He had “things” but didn’t appreciate them. “It got to the point where I couldn’t deal with everything anymore,” Nick said later. “I felt a lot of pressure, stress, and anxiety and decided to get out.”

As Hobo Nick, he trekked across miles of scorched desert and endured nights of pounding rain. In the towns and cities, he
slept on the street, where he knew that there were people to help him out.

7 Even with help, it was a hard journey. Nick would sometimes go days without food, or search dumpsters for things to eat. But whenever he felt that he had more than he needed, he decided to “pay it forward” by giving to other folks he encountered on his way. Paying it forward was one of Nick’s goals on his journey—giving more than he received. If he was offered money or a gift card he didn’t need, he gave it away to people who did. He was surprised at people’s generosity along the way. There was a time in Mississippi when the cars actually pulled over to the side of the road to check on him and give him money. The experience taught him a valuable lesson: if you share what you have, and help others as much as possible, you will never be stranded.

8 In his blog, Nick chronicled the important changes brought about by his selfless lifestyle and rejection of material things. He has learned to live in the moment and to be thankful for everything he has.

9 On September 29, after an epic 2,500-mile walk across the North American continent, Nick managed to make it all the way to Huntington Beach, California. More than a hundred family members, friends and well-wishers were waiting for him. During the six months of his journey, he destroyed five pairs of shoes and lost about 55 pounds.

10 In the future, Nick plans to do another cross-country trip. “The point is always to give more than you take,” he says, adding that “the biggest takeaway from this experience is to have realized that mankind is better than I ever dreamed.”

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**WORD NETWORK FOR TURNING POINTS**

**Vocabulary** A Word Network is a collection of words related to a topic. As you read the selections in this unit, identify interesting words related to the idea of turning points and add them to your Word Network. For example, you might begin by adding words from the Launch Text, such as *purpose*, *journey*, and *experience*. Continue to add words as you complete this unit.

**Tool Kit**

Word Network Model
Summary
Write a summary of “At the Crossroads.” A summary is a concise, complete, and accurate overview of a text. It should not include a statement of your opinion or an analysis.

Launch Activity
**Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down** Consider this statement: A person’s life can change in an instant.

- Record your position on the statement and explain your thinking.

  □ Strongly Agree  □ Agree  □ Disagree  □ Strongly Disagree

- Form a group with like-minded students in one corner of the classroom.
- Discuss questions such as “What examples from the text or your own prior knowledge led you to take this position?”
- After your discussion, have a representative from each group present a brief two- or three-minute summary of the group’s position.
- After all the groups have presented their views, move into the four corners again. If you change your corner, be ready to explain why.
QuickWrite

Consider class discussions, presentations, the video, and the Launch Text as you think about the prompt. Record your first thoughts here.

PROMPT: What can cause a significant change in someone’s life?

Review your QuickWrite. Summarize your point of view in one sentence to record in your Evidence Log. Then, record evidence from “At the Crossroads” that supports your point of view.

After each selection, you will continue to use your Evidence Log to record the evidence you gather and the connections you make. This graphic shows what your Evidence Log looks like.

Title of Text: ___________________________ Date: __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONNECTION TO PROMPT</th>
<th>TEXT EVIDENCE/DETAILS</th>
<th>ADDITIONAL NOTES/IDEAS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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How does this text change or add to my thinking? Date: __________

Tool Kit
Evidence Log Model