Unit 2: Information Writing

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **Mid October - December**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

In this unit, writers will examine a topic closely and convey ideas and information clearly. Writers will engage in research, including keeping track of, and citing relevant sources, convey ideas and information clearly, and make effective choices about structure while writing. In the first half, the draft will focus on organizing information in subsections; whereas the second part will have writers turn their attention to writing a more focused research report on one of those subsections. Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

Standards

LA.W.5.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
LA.W.5.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly to provide a focus and group related information logically; include text features such as headings, illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
LA.W.5.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
LA.W.5.2.C	Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
LA.W.5.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.5.2.E	Provide a conclusion related to the information of explanation presented.
LA.W.5.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.5.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
LA.W.5.6	With some guidance and support from adults and peers, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.
LA.W.5.8	Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
LA.W.5.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.5.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection,

	metacognition/self-correction and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.SL.5.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.L.5.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.5.1.B	Form and use the perfect (e.g., I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked) verb tenses.
LA.L.5.1.C	Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions.
LA.L.5.1.D	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.
LA.L.5.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.5.2.E	Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

Essential Questions

- How does expository and narrative writing differ? What is the same?
- How can I use all that I know about nonfiction reading and research to learn about a topic?
- How do I lead my readers to learn from me about a topic?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- information writing begins with a clear focus or topic and information is grouped logically
- correct verb tense is necessary to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions
- information writing pieces include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aid comprehension
- researchers organize what they are bringing with them to their writing
- writers must assess the credibility of resources, especially websites when researching information
- writers pay attention to not only the qualities of good writing, but the qualities of good history

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- use technology to publish writing
- analyze published authors and exemplar texts to emulate in their writing
- apply the basic skills of spelling, capitalization, and punctuation properly to their writing
- develop and strengthen writing with support and guidance from teacher and peers
- develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
- engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism
- Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations
- link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses
- produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented
- provide a list of sources
- Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources
- reflect upon writing experiences through rubrics
- summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work
- use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic
- Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions
- with guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach
- write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly
- write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content
- write with independence

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points are adapted from *Units of Study in Information Writing Grade 5* by Lucy Calkins. Teachers will adjust based on students' needs.

- Today I want to teach you that researchers organize what they are bringing with them to their writing. When things are organized, it is easier to carry and use those things- that is true for information too.
- Today I want to remind you that before a writer writes, the writer often gets full of the kind of writing he or she aims to make. Poets warm themselves up by reading poetry. Speech writers listen to the Gettysburg Address or other great speeches, and information writers, too, profit from filling themselves up with all that they know about how their kind of writing tends to go.

- Today I want to teach you that researchers shift between reading to collect and record information and writing to grow ideas. As note-takers, then, researchers record and also reflect. When reflecting, researchers think, and talk and jot about patterns, surprises, points of comparison or contrast, and they entertain questions.

- Today I want to teach you that when you write and revise as a historian, it is important to keep in mind not only qualities of good writing but also qualities of good history. For example, historians think it is important to include details about the places where things occurred- about the geography of that place- because geography will always have an impact on what occurs. And there's the cool thing: a history writer can think about the places in which a bit of history occurred simply by keeping a map close by as he or she reads, takes notes, and writes.

- Today I want to teach you that when you are researching something, you need to not just move facts from someone else's book to your page. You also need to think, to come up with your own ideas. One of the best ways to do this is to ask questions and then find your own answers to those questions, even if your answers are tentative: 'Maybe it's because...' 'I think it is because...' ' I wonder if perhaps...'

- Today I want to remind you that when you write and revise as a historian, it is important to keep in mind not only qualities of good writing but also qualities of good history. For example, historians write about relationships between events because the past will always have an impact on what unfolds in the future. This is called a cause-effect relationship, and here's another cool thing: a history writer can highlight relationships simply by having a time line close by as he or she writes.

- Today I want to teach you that informational writers take a moment to look back over their research and conjure an image of what they hope to create, sometimes by quickly sketching a new outline, and then writing fast and furious to draft fresh versions of their report.

- Today I want to teach you that to write research that is compelling to readers, your study of your topic needs to be driven not just by a desire to collect facts but also by an urgent need to find the raw material that you can fashion into something that makes reader say, 'Whoa!'

- Today I want to teach you that the chance to read - to study - primary sources is precious, so take every opportunity. When a source survives across the ages, allowing you to go back to hear the original message, you're being given valuable information, but it takes a special kind of close reading for you to make sense out of a primary source document.

- Today I want to teach you that although there are lots of ways writers organize their thinking or their information before they write, one thing all writers have in common is that they do organize it before they draft!

- Today I want to teach you that writers need to check to see if they have the structures and formats that will let their information and ideas grow. As always, to see possibilities for ways you can structure your writing, you can turn to published authors.

- Today I want to teach you that writers set up their writing almost the way we would set a table- matching up certain elements, patterning everything, and making the whole affair look welcoming and thoughtful. Writers do that by making matches and patterns in words, in structures and meanings.

- Today I want to teach you that writers can turn to published authors to see how they use text features. We are going to investigate mentor texts to search for text features, and as we notice them, we will ask ourselves, 'How do these text features teach the reader? Then we'll figure out how text features might

help our own information writing.

- Today I want to teach you that research writers introduce their writing by explaining its structure. Researchers also try to lure readers to read their writing.

- Today I want to teach you that writers have several ways of using punctuation to help load more information into the sentences they have already written.
- Today I want to teach you that correct verb tense is necessary to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions

Suggested Activities

- create and reference anchor charts
- share pages from students' writing journal as a model
- present and study mentor texts
- list events across fingers
- use technology to publish writing
- plan a celebration of student writing
- paraphrasing versus quoting
- shifts in verb tense
- use post-its to take down notes and then organize into categories
- draw on awareness of time lines
- analyze maps of the time period of their topic
- analyze nonfiction mentor texts
- use more primary sources for accurate information
- map out design of their nonfiction piece using text features
- caption text feature

Assessments

Assessment in this unit takes three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Assessment rubrics are available in Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Project resource kits, but teachers may also develop their own rubrics in order to include more specific elements of knowledge and skills listed in this unit summary.

Student self-assessment and peer assessment should take place whenever possible--again, in all three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Removing the traditional emphasis on teacher assessment enables students to take more initiative and become self-directed.

On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of a conference. Conferences, both small group and one-to-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice and/or assistance, and ultimately,

to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments

Review of student's portfolio from the previous school year, particularly informational projects

On-demand piece:

"Think of a topic that you've studied or that you know a lot about. You will have forty-five minutes to write an informational (or all-about) text that teaches others interesting and important information and ideas about that topic. If you want to find and use information from a book or another outside source to help you with this writing, you may bring into class. Please keep in mind that you'll have only forty-five minutes to complete this. You will have only this period, so you'll need to plan, draft, revise, and edit in one sitting. Write in a way that shows all that you know about information writing.

In your writing, make sure you:

- Write an introduction
- Elaborate with a variety of information
- Organize your writing
- Use transition words
- Write a conclusion" - Taken from *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5*)

Formative Assessments (Informal)

Daily observation of students' participation and products during the active participation segment of each mini-lesson.

Students' questions, comments, suggestions to teacher

Journaling assignments which are intended to practice teacher-selected skills

Comments, corrections, and records from peer conferences between students

Formative Assessments (Formal)

Teacher-student conferences

Summative Assessment

Summative writing will take the form of both handwritten pieces and pieces generated using appropriate technology.

Published informational writing

On-demand information writing (Same prompt as the diagnostic on-demand)

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

The design of Writer's Workshop allows for individualized instruction and independent growth for every child. At the heart of differentiation in Writer's Workshop is data and the analysis of data. Through the usage of monitoring student progress during independent writing, analysis of student writing using the learning progressions and writing checklists, teachers should be able to delineate which students are in need of additional supports, in what areas those supports should be targeted at, and which students are ready to be pushed further in their writing work.

Some methods to use to support struggling writers as well as advanced writers:

- Encourage student choice in topics to ensure that they are writing on topics that are meaningful for them
- Provide support as needed through conferencing
- Provide support as needed through strategy groups
- Provide modified and/or alternate grade level checklists and rubrics to scaffold or stretch learning
- Scaffold or stretch learning through the use of various strategies
- Provide appropriate writing partners
- Utilize charts to provide a visual reminder for students throughout the mini-lesson.
    - Add drawings and visuals to charts
    - Provide individualized copies of teaching charts
    - Depending on the concept, the chart may be most effective to visually break the concept into parts and touch each part during a demonstration
- For students needing more support at the end of the mini-lesson, keep them at the rug for an extra minute after dispersing the rest of the class and clarify the main topic of the mini-lesson or work one-on-one with them to start their writing
- Set writing goals for students and follow-up with the writing goals after an appropriate amount of time.
- Create group and one-on-one conferring calendars to ensure that students are being met with on a regular basis and working toward individualized goals
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen
- Assign roles to partners (Partner 1/Partner 2) to help scaffold which student should speak first and avoid one partner dominating the conversation and the other partner becoming a passive listener
    - For ELL students, creating a triad instead of partnership may be beneficial
- Demonstrate for students how to use writing checklists to set goals for their writing and also self-assess

Supports for ELL students:

- Provide consistent teaching structures
- Use consistent teaching language
- Offer plentiful opportunities for reading practice
- Provide access to a broad variety of texts
- Use assessment to provide extra support
- Support students in the preproduction and early production stages of learning English
- Use visual examples in your teaching
- Modify our mini-lessons to be as concise as possible
- Provide extra ?active engagement? time in mini-lessons for extra practice
- Provide readers with topic-based text sets
- Provide opportunities for listening and learning the social language of the reading workshop
- Provide opportunities to read in both their home language and in English
- Plan instruction with the ELL teacher
- Extend the language ELLs are producing through questioning
- Provide explicit instruction in tenses, pronoun references, and connectives
- Support students in building vocabulary using their own reading as the context
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen

In order to support this differentiation work, teachers may want to consult the following materials:

- Units of Study books at lower or higher levels for teaching strategies that are appropriate to the support needed.
- *The Writing Strategies* Book by Jennifer Serravallo
- If. . . Then. .. Curriculum book for alternate units or teaching points to support the individual reading levels.
- *A Guide to the Writing* Workshop (Primary Grades) chapter 14 for more in-depth information on differentiation

See the "Learning Progression for Information Writing" in *Writing Pathways* by Lucy Calkins for ideas on ways to differentiate for advanced learners. For example:

- incorporating essays, explanations, stories, or procedural passages
- writing an introduction which interests the reader with a quote or significant fact
- using subheadings and/or clear introductory transitions to separate sections
- using text features to help emphasize key points
- writing multiple sections in some sections
- giving credit for important excerpts in the text and in a bibliography
- using domain specific vocabulary and explaining these terms to readers

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

- Students can explore topics to write about related to any subject
- Make reference book

Social Studies:

- The students will be learning the history behind what they are writing about in their Our Nation social studies textbook along with Interactive notebook activities

Reading:

- The students will be reading nonfiction books in Reader's worksop

Technology:

- Use Chromebooks to write final copy
- Post writings in a blog, forum, or create a class book on topic for future use.

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

- *The Many Rides of Paul Revere* by James Gross Giblin
- *We the People: THe Great Depression* by Michael Burgan

- *If You Lived at the Time of the Civil War* by Kay Moore

(Websites)

www.timeforkids.com

www.history.com

www.smithsonianmag.com

www.nationalgeographic.com

www.crichetmag.com/MUS-MUSE-Magazine-for-Kids-ages-9-14

Units of Study in Informational Writing:

- *A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop*, Intermediate Grades; Lucy Calkins
- *Writing Pathways, Grades K-8, Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions*; Lucy Calkins
- *If...Then... Curriculum*, Grade 5 (Assessment-Based Instruction); Lucy Calkins; Julia Mooney; and Colleagues From the TCRWP
- *Resources for Teaching Writing* (DVD) Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing; Lucy Calkins

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.