Research Paper

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts, Generic District Course**
Time Period: **Generic Time Period**
Length: **Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Concurrent with Cycle 2 of the Gifted and Talented class's Writing Workshop, this project will focus on developing research and writing skills for an informational report. Teachers may choose (or offer the students the choice) to apply the research model to either an argumentative writing topic or an informative writing topic from Cycle 2.

The writer will provide information or inform the reader of a specific topic. Students will implement steps of writing a research report which include: choosing a research question, consulting sources, discerning validity and pertinence of sources and information, developing a thesis, developing an outline, organizing information (via notecards or digital resources), drafting, revising, editing and proofreading, and publishing.

This relatively modest project, requiring a minimum of four sources and a final product of at least three pages, prepares students for a larger-scale project in grade 8.

Each student in grade 7 must prepare a visual, multimedia companion presentation. Students may compose in any of a variety of platforms (PowerPoint, Prezi, SmartBoard), and they must make a presentation to their entire class.

Standards

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2.a	Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2.b	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2.c	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2.d	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.2.e	Establish and maintain a formal style.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are

	appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.7.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.4	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.5	Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.7.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Essential Questions

How can research inform a writer, a reader, and a written product?

How can one determine whether research sources are reliable and useful?

What elements can a writer include to make a piece more authoritative and better develop his/her writing voice?

How does the writing process contribute to effective pieces of writing and develop a well-written product?

How must one take special care to indicate which information and ideas come not from oneself but from outside sources?

Application of Knowledge and Skills...

Students will know that...

The student will know that:

-writing an effective research paper requires the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

-clear and coherent writing occurs when the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

-a sequence of components (introduction, body, and conclusion) along with relevant information and examples combine to ensure a clear product for readers.

-a formal style makes assertions and conclusions more authoritative.

-there are advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present a particular topic or idea.

-relevant information must come from multiple, credible print and digital sources.

-writers must follow a standard format for citation, attributing all information and concepts to their sources.

- -a formal style makes assertions and conclusions more authoritative.
- -a sequence of components (introduction, body, and conclusion) along with relevant information and examples combine to ensure a clear product for readers.
- -clear and coherent writing occurs when the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- -relevant information must come from multiple, credible print and digital sources.
- -there are advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present a particular topic or idea.
- -writers must follow a standard format for citation, attributing all information and concepts to their sources.
- -writing an effective research paper requires the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Students will be skilled at...

The student will be able to:

-write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

-produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

-introduce a topic clearly, develop the topic with relevant information and examples, use appropriate and varied transitions, and provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

-establish and maintain a formal style.

-evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present a particular topic or idea.

-gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources and assess the credibility and accuracy of each source.

-quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

- -establish and maintain a formal style.
- -evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different media to present a particular topic or idea.
- -gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources and assess the credibility and accuracy of each source.
- -introduce a topic clearly, develop the topic with relevant information and examples, use appropriate and varied transitions, and provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
- -produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- -quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
- -write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

Assessments

Research Question
Formative: Other written assessments

Students submit a research question and an explanation what they plan to investigate and explain. The teacher will either accept the research question as appropriate for the project or work with the student to modify the question in order to make it suitable.

Source List
Formative: Other written assessments

After consulting a variety of sources and considering their validity, accuracy, and credibility, students compose a list of sources they plan to use for their projects. This list, which follows MLA format and style, will enable the teacher to assess students' skills in consulting a variety of media, gathering information, and discerning its usefulness.

Thesis Statement

Formative: Other written assessments

After consulting a variety of sources and producing a source list, students digest the concepts and information they have found and arrive at a thesis statement in preparation for the composition of their research papers.

Research Paper Outline
Formative: Other written assessments

Students formulate the sequence and flow of their ideas in an outline as further preparation for the composition of the research paper.

Note Cards
Formative: Other written assessments

Students record the specific data, ideas, quotes, and insights that they have found in their sources. Each item taken from a source will have the name of the source and page numbers, if applicable.

Students compile these fragments either on individual 3"x5" note cards or in digital format using a resource such as Evernote.

First Draft
Formative: Written Report

Students compose first full-scale drafts of their research papers following MLA format guidelines, complete with parenthetical citations and a list of works cited.

Final Draft
Summative: Written Report

After receiving their first drafts back from the teacher, students continue to revise and refine their work in consultation with their peers and the teacher.

Multimedia Presentation
Summative: Other visual assessments

Each student must prepare a visual, multimedia companion presentation. Students may compose in any of a variety of platforms (PowerPoint, Prezi, SmartBoard), and they must make a presentation to their entire class.

- After consulting a variety of sources and considering their validity, accuracy, and credibility, students compose a list of sources they plan to use for their projects. This list, which follows MLA format and style, will enable the teacher to assess students' skills in consulting a variety of media, gathering information, and discerning its usefulness.
- After consulting a variety of sources and producing a source list, students digest the concepts and information they have found and arrive at a thesis statement in preparation for the composition of their research papers.
- After receiving their first drafts back from the teacher, students continue to revise and refine their work in consultation with their peers and the teacher.
- Each student must prepare a visual, multimedia companion presentation. Students may compose in any of a variety of platforms (PowerPoint, Prezi, SmartBoard), and they must make a presentation to their entire class.

- Final Draft
- First Draft
- Formative: Other written assessments
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- Formative: Written Report
- Multimedia Presentation
- Note Cards
- Research Paper Outline
- Research Question
- Source List
- Students compile these fragments either on individual 3"x5" note cards or in digital format using a resource such as Evernote.
- Students compose first full-scale drafts of their research papers following MLA format guidelines, complete with parenthetical citations and a list of works cited.
- Students formulate the sequence and flow of their ideas in an outline as further preparation for the composition of the research paper.
- Students record the specific data, ideas, quotes, and insights that they have found in their sources. Each item taken from a source will have the name of the source and page numbers, if applicable.
- Students submit a research question and an explanation what they plan to investigate and explain. The teacher will either accept the research question as appropriate for the project or work with the student to modify the question in order to make it suitable.
- Summative: Other visual assessments
- Summative: Written Report
- Thesis Statement

Activities

Project orientation, including explanation of objectives, activities, sequence, and schedule

Consultation period with the Media Specialist in the Media Center

Class discussions, examples, and handouts related to each phase of assessment

Peer conferences and teacher consultation with individual students at all phases of the project

Submission and assessment of each task: research question, source list, thesis, outline, note cards, first draft,

and final draft

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

Each student must prepare a visual, multimedia companion presentation. Students may compose in any of a variety of platforms (PowerPoint, Prezi, SmartBoard), and they must make a presentation to their entire class.

Peer conferences and reviews at all stages of the project enable students of varying abilities to learn from and to assist each other.

Students who generate their own research questions and topics tailor their work to their interests and abilities.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

The variety of topics that students take up will stretch across the entire curriculum.

Resources

Teacher website--for project guidelines and submission schedules

MLA.org--for style and format guidelines

www.evernote.com --a resource for managing and organizing information from various sources

GBMS Media Center website--for a wide variety of research ideas, advice, and online resources.

www.prezi.com --a resource for creating multimedia presentations