

Unit 3: Reading and Writing Informational Text Research

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **Reading 3, Writing 3**
Time Period: **December**
Length: **4 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Summary

The focus of this unit is to immerse students in the genre of reading informational text. This unit allows students the opportunity to move into the world of Native Americans, especially the Lenape tribe. Students will experience reading through informational websites, articles, and various text. This unit spotlights skills and habits essential to a reader of expository nonfiction: determining importance and finding the main idea and supportive details; questioning and talking back to text; figuring out and using new content specific vocabulary; and applying analytical skills to compare and contrast, rank or categorize. For this unit, non-fiction texts need to be matched to students, just as they have been with fiction text. Throughout this unit, it is also strongly suggested that students still maintain a fictional reading life in school or at home.

The focus of the writing unit channels students to work towards creating a lively, voice-filled, engaging, information book about the Lenape tribe. One rule of thumb is that writers can only make readers engaged in a topic if the writers themselves are engaged in the topic. This unit aims to build upon the work that students have completed in previous grades by asking students to become more sophisticated in this work, demonstrating that they can introduce a topic clearly, separate it into subtopics, and organize their writing in separate pages so that appropriate information is grouped together inside of these subtopics. Students can differentiate their work by utilizing different text structures, authority, and voice. Students become experts in this unit and use their expertise to communicate in writing their knowledge of their topic.

Standards

LA.W.3.2.A	Introduce a topic and group related information together; include text features (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, captions) when useful to support comprehension.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.8	Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
LA.RI.3.1	Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
LA.RL.3.3	Describe the characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the plot.
LA.RL.3.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.
LA.RL.3.5	Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.
LA.RL.3.7	Explain how specific aspects of a text’s illustrations contribute to what is conveyed by the words in a story (e.g., create mood, emphasize aspects of a character or setting).
SOC.6.1.4	U.S. History: America in the World: All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to

think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage. Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

SOC.6.1.4.D.1	Determine the impact of European colonization on Native American populations, including the Lenni Lenape of New Jersey.
SOC.6.1.4.D.10	Describe how the influence of Native American groups, including the Lenni Lenape culture, is manifested in different regions of New Jersey.
SOC.6.1.4.D.13	Describe how culture is expressed through and influenced by the behavior of people.
SOC.6.1.4.D.CS10	The cultures with which an individual or group identifies change and evolve in response to interactions with other groups and/or in response to needs or concerns.
SOC.6.3.4.CS1	Recognize that people have different perspectives based on their beliefs, values, traditions, culture, and experiences.
TECH.8.1.5.A.2	Format a document using a word processing application to enhance text and include graphics, symbols and/or pictures.
TECH.8.1.5.A.CS1	Understand and use technology systems
TECH.8.1.5.A.CS2	Select and use applications effectively and productively.
TECH.8.1.5.E.1	Use digital tools to research and evaluate the accuracy of, relevance to, and appropriateness of using print and non-print electronic information sources to complete a variety of tasks.
TECH.8.1.5.E.CS2	Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.
TECH.8.1.5.E.CS3	Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness for specific tasks.

Student Learning Objectives

With regard to Reading, students will learn to....

- be an active readers of informational text.
- identify key ideas and details about their topic.
- use text features to gain understanding of a topic.
- synthesize information and share their knowledge with others.
- explain how the present is connected to the past.
- compare information about people, places, regions and environments.

With regard to Writing, students will learn to....

- develop an informational book about a specific topic.
- organize information into subtopics and categories.
- use text features to enhance their readers understanding of the topic.
- revise, edit and publish an informational book.
- develop strategies to write effectively about an area in which they have an expertise.

Essential Questions

Essential Questions for Reading:

How can I read expository nonfiction texts in such a way that I can determine what is most important?

How can I consolidate information and ideas from an expository text?

How can I organize a rich nonfiction reading life for myself so that I read nonfiction often, and live towards goals that I set for myself as a nonfiction reader?

Can I use nonfiction reading strategies to 'get' what expository texts are saying-- to grasp the central ideas and supporting details? Can I use the expository text structure of boxes-and-bullets to help me organize my understanding of the texts I read?

Even though my mind will often be full of all that I have learned while reading, can I leave space in my mind, and time in my reading to grow ideas about the content? Can I push my thinking so that I elaborate on those ideas?

Essential Questions for Writers:

Why do we write?

Where do writers get their ideas?

How does our reading inform our writing?

What, when, how, and where do we write?

Why do writers share their ideas?

How do writers revise and edit their work?

Enduring Understandings

Students understand that...

- readers understand key ideas and details.
- readers not only 'read on' to seek answers, but think over everything they have read so far and synthesize it with everything they already know.
- readers learn concrete ways to notice where in the context of the word the definition is likely to appear and actively adopt the technical lingo of whatever subject about which they are reading.
- Readers use the following skills while reading a nonfiction text set: synthesizing to determine the main idea, questioning and reacting, and figuring out challenging vocabulary.

Students understand that...

- writers know many things that they can teach others.
- there are many ways (formats) to share ideas and knowledge with others.

Application

Students will be able to independently use their reading learning to...

- determine the overarching idea of a chapter or a two-page spread by noticing whether different sections continue to build on one main idea or whether the sections turn a bend.
- take notes on a few, select pages that seem particularly interesting or particularly worth sharing with their partner. Readers might use boxes and bullets, timelines, T-charts, or other note taking systems.

- paraphrase and synthesize text by responding to what the text teaches. They think and talk about the texts, and grow their own ideas about what they read.
- not just pose questions, but try to answer them. When readers are curious about something, they often jot that question in a notebook or on a post-it and then read on in search of answers.
- read a chunk of text, pause to recall content in summary form, boxes-and-bullets, then list that information across their hands.
- stop periodically to ask, 'What is the one big thing that this text is teaching and how do all the other details connect with this?'
- synthesize their learning by teaching someone else.
- notice vocabulary that is specific to the topic, determine the meaning of terms, and apply this learning by using the terms themselves when writing or speaking about a topic.
- look to the text features on the page for support to determine the meaning of new content-specific vocabulary words.

Students will be able to independently use their writing learning to...

- take notes on a few select pages that seem particularly interesting or particularly worth sharing with their partner. Readers might use boxes and bullets, timelines, T-charts, or other note taking systems.
- study published writing, imagining the books they will create and paying close attention to ways that published authors entice readers to learn about a topic.
- turn to mentor writers to discover new structures for their chapters and to find models for the structures they already know.
- take note of places where they need to collect more information and make a plan to either find out more about that particular subtopic or to replace it with one that they have more information about.
- organize the information they have collected within each subsection in a way that best teaches the reader.
- teach information in a variety of ways; using words, illustrations, charts, diagrams, and other tools that might help the reader to understand.
- use transition words to move from detail to detail and to connect subtopics to the main topic. We can use words like "in addition..." or "also" when we are adding on to similar information, and words like "however" or "on the other hand" when we are moving to information that's different or that shows another side.

Skills

Students will be skilled at ...

- actively reading informational text.
- researching a specific topic and extracting information for the purpose of teaching others.

Skills: Students will be skilled at ...

- writing an information book with subtopics, categories, illustrations and text features.
- using their writing voice to convey information.