Unit 4 Writing: Information Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing about Important People

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **4-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This unit links the skills of information writing with content from science, social studies, or reading. Students will be asked to write about a topic they've been studying at another time of the day. This unit is an extension of the information writing unit, one that makes more space for research and text citation. Third graders will build on their knowledge of information writing and also their knowledge of how to use mentor texts to raise the quality of their writing. They will create nonfiction books/magazine articles/slide presentations focusing on important people.

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision Date: June 2022

Pacing Guide

Please refer to this Language Arts Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 3. Sentence Study is paced and aligned within the Syntax, Style, Grammar and Conventions section. Please refer to this folder for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials.

A sample K-5 Literacy Schedule Across a Week is accessible in instructional materials section of the Grades K-5 folder.

Standards

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/ levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources.

LA.W.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
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.3.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
LA.W.3.2.C	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information.
LA.W.3.2.D	Provide a conclusion.
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.3.6	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.W.3.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
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.W.3.9	(Begins in grade 4)
LA.W.3.10	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.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.1.A	Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.
LA.L.3.1.B	Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.
LA.L.3.1.C	Use abstract nouns (e.g., childhood).
LA.L.3.1.D	Form and use regular and irregular verbs.
LA.L.3.1.E	Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk) verb tenses.
LA.L.3.1.F	Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
LA.L.3.1.G	Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between

	them depending on what is to be modified.
LA.L.3.1.H	Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
LA.L.3.1.I	Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.
LA.L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.3.2.A	Capitalize appropriate words in titles.
LA.L.3.2.D	Form and use possessives.
LA.L.3.2.E	Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., sitting, smiled, cries, happiness).
LA.L.3.2.F	Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.

Transfer

- Students will write about a content area they've been studying.
- Students will research and cite text.
- Students will build on their knowledge of information writing.
- Students will use mentor texts to raise the quality of their writing.
- Students will create nonfiction books on a topic.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

- How do information writers try on topics and then revise those topics, with an eye toward greater focus?
- How do writers plan and organize subtopics prior to drafting?
- How do writers draft information texts, incorporating all we know about a topic?
- How do information writers edit information texts and then prepare them for publication?
- How do writers determine their audience and write with them in mind?
- How do text features enhance information writing?

- Students will revise their topics.
- Students will use different structures to plan and organize their work prior to drafting.
- Students will incorporate all their know in their writing through drafting.
- Students will work with peers to edit their work.
- Students will write with a focus on their audience, depending on peer review to help.
- Students will incorporate a variety of text features to make their writing more informative.

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At...

Students will know:

- how to develop strategies to write effectively about a topic of research.
- how to write with independence.
- how to write with fluency, stamina, and speed.
- how to write introductions, logically organize information, and include text features that help their readers.
- how to elaborate their topics, including facts, definitions, and other important details.
- how to use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information.
- how to include a satisfying conclusion.
- how to plan, revise, and edit their writing.
- how to conduct brief research projects that build knowledge of a topic and recall information from experiences and other sources.

Students will be skilled at:

- Organizing their information as they write.
- Using transitional strategies and phrases.
- Balancing interesting facts.
- Researching using resources to find more information.
- Creating introductions using strategies learned from mentor texts.
- Reviewing their information writing using a checklist.
- Using revision strategies to clear up confusion in their work.
- Using text features to enhance their information writing.
- Using resources to get their information for accuracy.
- Editing, focusing on paragraphing.
- Utilizing nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in their writing, and explain their functions.
- Utilizing abstract nouns (i.g. childhood, love, freedom).
- Producing simple, compound, and complex sentences (i.g series/list sentences and sentences with conjunctions).
- Demonstrating command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration

or absence of skill.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

Formative:

- Answer essential questions
- Teacher observations/conferring notes
- Turn and talks
- Partnerships rehearsing their writing
- Peer Conferences
- Writer's Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites)
- Teacher checklists using mini-lessons for measurable skills
- Writing Conferences: Individual and small group
- Writing Partnership work and discussions
- Writing folders with student work
- Writing pieces to note the growth need of the writer
- Observations
- Listening in on partnership discussion of writing piece
- Drafts online (Google Docs)

Summative:

- Students should have 2-3 final pieces to score not including the post assessment.
- Published pieces
- Score grammar and spelling in final drafts only
- Student portfolios
- During publishing students read their piece to assess oral speaking and reading skills
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Learning Progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Rubrics and Student Samples
- Rubrics: created for the standards-based report card as well as teacher-created.
- Standards should be addressed as reported on the Standards-Based Report Card

Benchmark:

- Benchmark writing assessments: opinion, narrative, and informational, scored using rubrics, district-created and provided.
- Located in the shared Grades K-8 Language Arts folder on the Google Drive, reported three times per year

Learning Plan

Our upper elementary writing instruction follows a balanced literacy approach including a number of strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop. These include mini-lessons, shared writing, independent writing, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, partnerships and/or writing clubs. Writing Workshop emphasizes immersion, independence, and choice. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where children share their writing with others in the school community.

Lessons should follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses 'think alouds' when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point
- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point.

The architecture of a writing conference includes:

- Research
- Decide
- Teach and coach with guided practice
- Link

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Writing to Develop Expertise and Grow Ideas

Writers study mentor texts to get ideas for their own articles.

During this unit, students will be writing to teach others about a topic of research that they have been working on during reading workshop.

- Students should begin by listing noticings of characteristics from magazine articles and non-fiction books in their notebooks.
- CHART: "What I Notice About Non-Fiction Texts and What I Want to Try."

Writers prepare and plan their research articles.

Decide on a content area for students to study (Social Studies: New Jersey, Reading: Biography, Science: Animal). This unit should align with the reading/research done in the "Nonfiction Learning Through Reading" unit in reading workshop.

- Students choose a topic to research.
- Plan a purpose for writing that not only informs, but makes the reader think, wonder, and care.
- Decide where students will collect their notes and information (i.e. writer's notebook, social studies notebook, or science notebooks). Be sure to have resources for the topic chosen. There are many methods to capture what is learned.
- CHART: "Ways to Capture Information (or Learning)"

    Observational Writing: "I notice..." "I see..." "This reminds me of..."
    Sketches that include labels and captions
    Boxes and Bullets (Main idea and supporting details)
    Timelines with dates/times and facts
    Questions or Wonderings (hypothesize): "I wonder why..." "How come..."
    "Maybe..." "Could it be..."

Information writers think more deeply about their topics, going back and writing about what they think about the information that they have gathered.

- CHART: Your Thoughts Matter!

    "I know some things about..."
    "One thing I know..."
    "Another thing I know..."
    "This makes me realize..."
    "This helps me understand..."
    "I used to think... but now I know..."
    "My thinking changed because..."

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Planning a Table of Contents and Writing Chapters
Information writers use planning tools to structure writing.

The purpose of this lesson is to help third graders organize information within each of their subtopics. Subtopiscs may also be called "sections" or "chapters" depending on the expectations of the published text.

- Students can create a table of contents based on their research to serve as a possible outline. Remind students of previously learned skills about creating a table of contents.
- Note: Assess whether or not students are creating a logical structure to their table of contents. Are students thinking about their readers and what they hope to learn? Do students have a sense of that some of their chapters/sections will be written in a structure that matches the topic? (i.e. 'how to', compare and contrast, narrative, etc.)
- Students can use boxes and bullets or a web to plan out each section of their project.

Writers use their research notes to draft the body of their article or book chapters.

- Teach your information to a partner first and listen carefully to their questions and confusions. Think about how the information can be explained more clearly.
- Write your information in your own words; avoid copying from your sources.

   Note: To help students to avoid copying, encourage them to cover/close their sources when writing; then return to them to plug in precise names, specific quotes, and so on.

- Students should write in paragraphs, with a topic sentence and supporting sentences.

Writers craft an introduction that engages readers and conclude with summary that leaves a lasting impression.

- Give time for inquiry, looking at introductions and conclusions in a variety of non-fiction texts.
- Students will write introductions that hook the reader and introduce the topic.
- Engaging introductions might include: starting with a small moment story, explaining the main ideas or purpose of the text, beginning with questions, or starting with thoughts or feelings.
- A conclusion should summarize what was learned and why the reader should care about the topic.
- Engaging conclusions might include: speaking directly to the reader, posing thoughtful questions, providing recommendations, or giving interesting ideas to think about.

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Using Mentor Texts to Help Writers Revise
Information writers use mentor texts to spotlight structure.

Using mentor texts helps writers revise chapters they've written and ifts the level of upcoming chapters or sections. When studying a mentor text they ask, "What has this author done that I might try, too?"

- CHART: "Nonfiction Text Structures"

   Main idea and Supporting Sentences
   Compare and Contrast
   Problem/Solution

Cause and Effect

Sequence of Events

Narrative

Opinion

- Note: Point out that writers make choices about how they structure their chapters. They think about what they want to say and then think about the best way to organize that content. Students should reread their chapters and revise based on an appropriate structure.

Information writers often experiment with the organization of their own writing.

After learning that a chapter can be organized as a story, an essay, using a compare-and-contrast structure, or even by discussing similarities and differences between two topics, a writer can choose a few of these structures and try them out with one of their own chapters. They write the same chapter several different ways and several different times, until they find the structure that works best for them.

As information writers write new chapters and revise old chapters, they need to return to their research and possibly do more.

- Students will return to their notebooks, rereading their material or researching more to elaborate.

Information writers recall writing strategies used to revise by adding more. (*note: this is a re-teaching from the previous information unit)

- CHART: "Revision Techniques to Promote Elaboration"

  Partner sentences- If you can write one sentence about something, you can write two.
  Vocabulary- use specific words/expert words and define them when appropriate.

  Add numbers, names, and examples.
  Add extra pages for charts, maps, diagrams, timelines, illustrations, captions, front covers, back covers, and blurbs.

  Interview an expert and add information via quotes.

- CHART: "Give Credit Where Credit is Due: Cite Sources"

  "The book [title] says..."
  "According to [author]..."

Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Editing and Publishing to Get Ready to Teach

Others

Information writers draw on all that they have learned about editing to get ready to publish their writing.

- CHART: "Editing"

  Capitalization
  Beginning and ending punctuation
  Transition words and phrases based on the text structure used
  Spelling- check commonly misspelled words and review spelling patterns
  Paragraphs

Information writers revise with a lens for the characteristics of information writing.

- CHART: "Revise with the Lens of an Information Writer"

  Do your heading and subheadings match the information in that section?
  Do your diagrams have adequate captions and labels that explain each clearly?
  Do you need a glossary?
  Does your beginning introduce your topic?
  Does your conclusion explain why your topic is important or include your thoughts or opinions?
  Did you add color to diagram, create boldface words, or underline important words?

At this time, students will move on to publishing as the teacher sees fit. A celebration of the writing will follow before moving on to the next unit. Students should be given the opportunity to share their books and teach others.

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Materials used for grammar and convention study include the following: Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language by Jeff Anderson.

Instructional Materials

Possible Read alouds and Mentor Texts:

- Read Aloud Texts will be based on Science, Social Studies, or Reading curriculum.

Possible Teaching Chart:

- See *If…Then…*Curriculum Grade 3 for CHARTS
- Use resource CD for rubrics, student samples, and charts.
- Use *Writing Pathways* book for performance assessments, learning progressions, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing examples

Teacher Resources

- Units of Study for Teaching Writing, Lucy Calkins with Colleagues from the Reading and Writing Project, Grade 3 Heinemann, 2013.
- Resources for Teaching Writing CD, Grade 3, Heinemann, 2013.
- *The Writing Strategies Boo*k, Jennifer Serravallo
- *Feedback that Moves Writers Forward,* Patty McGee
- *Patterns of Power*, Jeff Anderson
- *Mechanically Inclined*, Jeff Anderson
- *The Story of My Thinking*, Gretchen Bernabei
- [Trail of Breadcrumbs](#) Website
- [Two Writing Teachers](#) Blog
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson
- Cranford Public School Grades K-8 Google Folder for instructional materials
- [Crosswalk (suggested IRA titles and Mini Lesson numbers)](#)

Suggested Strategies for Modifications and Accommodations

[Content specific accomodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here](#) for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

The structure of writing workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each reader:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- Students have individualized choice of topics within each unit.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

Possible accommodations during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to compete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Access speech to text function on computer

Possible modifications to content during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Refer to the Strategies for Striving Students in the K-8 folder for specific appropriate interventions.
- Adhere to all modifications and accomodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.