Unit 1 Writing: The Art of Information Writing

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **6-7 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This curriculum guide outlines a comprehensive Grade 3 writing unit focused on informational texts, spanning approximately seven weeks. It details three distinct "bends" or phases, guiding students from generating topics based on personal expertise to structuring, drafting, revising, and editing their work. The unit emphasizes using mentor texts, checklists, and peer collaboration to develop skills in writing with specific details, organizing information logically, and employing various conventions for clarity and impact. Ultimately, students are prepared to produce multiple informational books, culminating in a celebration where they share their writing and teach younger students about the process.

Students will create an informational writing piece based on a topic of expertise. Students will write daily and conference with their teacher/peer as needed. To assist students in reaching the goals for this unit, teachers will guide them through the following steps:

- Immersing students to study the purpose, structure, and characteristics of information writing while generating possible writing ideas
- Choosing topics by considering focused areas of expertise
- Organizing information and writing chapters
- Elaborating to increase writing volume and to add a variety of information
- Revising and editing to prepare for publishing

Through mentor text, students will be immersed in information text type in order to recognize text features and structures such as: table of contents, chapter headings, subtopics, and glossaries. It is suggested that students form writing partnerships with the goal of collaborating and supporting each other throughout the writing process. Grammar and conventions mini lessons will be taught throughout this unit.

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 2025

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.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

Bend 1: How can you write information books on topic of personal expertise?

Bend 2: How can you write information book with a logical structure?

Bend 3: How can you use mentor texts and authors to revise and edit your own information writing?

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.

These mandates may be hit through the selection of choice literature:

Amistad Commission

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

Asian American and Pacific Islander History Law

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

New Jersey Diversity and Inclusion Law

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional mater

economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with race and ethnicity, disabilitie

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; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

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ELA.L.WF.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of encoding and spelling.
ELA.L.WF.3.2.A	Spell single syllable words with less common and complex graphemes (ough, augh; -old, -ind, -ost, -ild families).
ELA.L.WF.3.2.B	Use digital or print tools such as a dictionary or thesaurus to check spellings of unknown words.
ELA.L.WF.3.2.C	Identify language of word origin, as noted in dictionaries.
ELA.L.KL.3.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
ELA.L.KL.3.1.A	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases.
ELA.L.KL.3.1.B	Choose words and phrases for effect.
ELA.L.VL.3.2	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning academic and

	domain-specific words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
ELA.RI.CR.3.1	Ask and answer questions and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of an informational text, referring explicitly to textual evidence as the basis for the answers.
ELA.RL.PP.3.5	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
ELA.RI.PP.3.5	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.
ELA.RI.CT.3.8	Compare and contrast the elements of informational texts regarding the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic.
ELA.W.IW.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
ELA.W.IW.3.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly.
ELA.W.IW.3.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and concrete details, text evidence, or other information and examples related to the topic.
ELA.W.IW.3.2.C	Include text features (e.g.: illustrations, diagrams, captions) when useful to support comprehension.
ELA.W.IW.3.2.D	Link ideas within sections of information using transition words and phrases (e.g., then, because, also, another, therefore).
ELA.W.IW.3.2.E	Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.
ELA.W.NW.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events with basic story elements.
ELA.W.WP.3.4	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
ELA.W.WR.3.5	Generate questions about a topic and independently locate related information from at least two reference sources (print and non-print) to obtain information on that topic.
ELA.W.SE.3.6	Use discussion, books, or media resources to gather ideas, outline them, and prioritize the information to include while planning to write about a topic.
ELA.W.RW.3.7	Engage in independent and task-based writing for both short and extended periods of time, producing written work routinely.
ELA.SL.PE.3.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
ELA.SL.II.3.2	Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
ELA.SL.PI.3.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
WRK.9.2.5.CAP.1	Evaluate personal likes and dislikes and identify careers that might be suited to personal likes.
TECH.9.4.5.CI.3	Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one's thinking about a topic of curiosity (e.g., 8.2.5.ED.2, 1.5.5.CR1a).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.2	Create a visual representation to organize information about a problem or issue (e.g., 4.MD.B.4, 8.1.5.DA.3).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.3	Represent the same data in multiple visual formats in order to tell a story about the data.
	Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.
	An individual's passions, aptitude and skills can affect his/her employment and earning potential.

Digital tools can be used to modify and display data in various ways that can be organized to communicate ideas.

Different types of jobs require different knowledge and skills.

Students Will Know/Students Will be Skilled At…

By the End of this Unit:

- Students will write multiple expert mini-books and one fully developed informational book.

- Their writing will show organized structure (e.g., compare/contrast, cause/effect) and clear transitions.

- Pieces will include strong leads, facts, elaboration, and improved sentence fluency.

- Students will revise and edit using mentor texts and feedback.

- Final drafts will show growth in conventions (e.g., commas, compound sentences).

- Students will self-assess using the checklist and share their work in a celebration.

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, including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 1-2 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

Grammar/Conventions: These skills are embedded in the unit. Here is a list of concepts in this unit. NOTE: Grammar should be taught organically within the context of writing at teacher discretion.

- Explain function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their general functions.
- Use abstract nouns
- Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions
- Produce simple and compound sentences
- Capitalization, punctuation, and spelling
- Comparatives and Superlatives

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

Detailed Curriculum Map

Teaching Points and lessons are located in the K-5 folder under Grade 3 Curriculum for Language Arts. These curriculum unit guides include not only aligned teaching points to standards, but also specific lessons and appropriate resources. Guidelines for preparing to teach the unit as well as goals for the end of the unit are outlined. Academic vocabulary and prerequisite skills are identified. Essential questions and possible assessments are detailed as well.

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.

The core materials for this unit include the Units of Study in Writing for grade 3, The Reading and Writing Project at Mossflower, 2025-2026.

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

Here is a link to the instructional materials for this unit.

Possible Read alouds and Mentor Texts:

- DK Readers
- Seymour Simon books
- Time For Kids
- Ranger Rick magazine
- National Geographic For Kids
- Scholastic News
- Expository Nonfiction Books from *The Reading Minilessons Book* (Fountas and Pinnell)

- Use Writing Pathways book for performance assessments, learning progressions, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing examples.
- See If...Then…Curriculum Grade 3 for specific ideas for small group or individual conferring scenarios
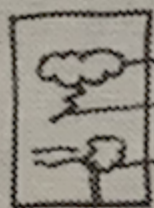
Anchor Charts

Teaching moves that Informati Writers should borrow
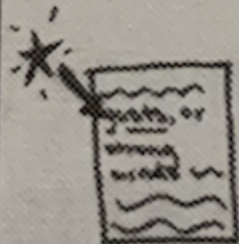
Explain what the **whol book** will be about.
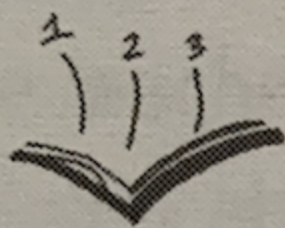
Tell a bit about the **big** you'll teach (Kind of like a table

Try to say at least a f **sentences** about each part

Talk like an **expert**

Use **fancy words** and **exp** what they mean.

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 Book*, 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 accommodations 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; eliminate 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 accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.
- Refer to the Pathways to Intervention documents in the K-5 folder for specific appropriate interventions.
- Consult with Cranford Problem Solving Team (CPST), as needed.

Framework for Alternative Setting (LEAP Program at Lincoln School)

In our K–5 alternative school setting, each class consists of students who require a highly personalized approach to reading instruction. The district's core Writing Units of Study will continue to serve as the primary writing curriculum framework; however, lessons will be further adapted to ensure accessibility and engagement for all learners. Teachers will use a combination of pacing adjustments, flexible timing, and individualized goal setting to meet students at their current skill levels. Instruction will be delivered through a blend of whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings, with intentional scaffolds in place to build confidence and reduce frustration. Please see this document for detailed information.