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.

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 2026

Pacing Guide

Please refer to the Language Arts Writing Workshop pacing guide for grade 3 in the curriculum folder. 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 for Sentence Study.

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

Essential Questions

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.

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

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.

The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

Different types of jobs require different knowledge and skills.

An individual's passions, aptitude and skills can affect his/her employment and earning potential.

Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.

9.2.5.CAP.1	Evaluate personal likes and dislikes and identify careers that might be suited to personal likes.
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).
L.WF.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of encoding and spelling.
L.WF.3.2.A	Spell single syllable words with less common and complex graphemes (ough, augh; -old, -ind, -ost, -ild families).
L.WF.3.2.B	Use digital or print tools such as a dictionary or thesaurus to check spellings of unknown words.
L.WF.3.2.C	Identify language of word origin, as noted in dictionaries.
	Digital tools can be used to modify and display data in various ways that can be organized to communicate ideas.
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).
9.4.5.IML.3	Represent the same data in multiple visual formats in order to tell a story about the data.
L.KL.3.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
L.KL.3.1.A	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases.
L.KL.3.1.B	Choose words and phrases for effect.
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.
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.
RL.PP.3.5	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
RI.PP.3.5	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.
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.
W.IW.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
W.IW.3.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly.
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.
W.IW.3.2.C	Include text features (e.g.: illustrations, diagrams, captions) when useful to support comprehension.
W.IW.3.2.D	Link ideas within sections of information using transition words and phrases (e.g., then, because, also, another, therefore).
W.IW.3.2.E	Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.
W.NW.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events with basic story elements.
W.WP.3.4	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
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.

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.
W.RW.3.7	Engage in independent and task-based writing for both short and extended periods of time, producing written work routinely.
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.
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.
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.

Performing Arts Standards

1.4.5.Cr3: (a). Collaborate with peers to revise, refine, adapt, and improve ideas to fit the given parameters of an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work through self and collaborative review. (b). Use and adapt sounds and

movements in a guided drama experience. (c). Refine technical choices by creating innovative solutions to design and technical problems that arise in rehearsal for a drama/theatre work.

1.4.5.Cn11: (a). Identify, respond to, and investigate connections to global issues including climate change, and other content areas in a dramatic/theatrical work. (b). Compare the drama/theatre conventions of a given time period with those of the present.

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.

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.

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

Sentence Study

Mentor Sentence study will be taught across the week to teach syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Student will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific entence patterns and applying it to their own writing. Please refer to this link in the K-5 folder for specific lessons and materials. Please refer to this folder for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials for Sentence Study.

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

Before Beginning this Unit

Before beginning this unit:

- Review the unit overview and teaching points to understand the arc of the work.
- Print and prepare the Grade 3 Information Writing Checklist and exemplar texts ("Cooking," "Stickers").
- Plan a topic-generation kickoff activity to spark student ideas and enthusiasm.
- Decide how and when you'll collect a pre-assessment using an early expert book.
- Familiarize yourself with the mentor text Deadliest Animals and its craft features.
- Prepare writing folders or notebooks for students to collect their mini-books and drafts.
- Coordinate with colleagues if planning a celebration or cross-grade collaboration.

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.

Instructional Materials

The instructional materials which correspond with this unit are linked in the detailed curriculum map under resources and housed in the Grades K-5 folder under grade 3.

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

Please refer to this folder for specific materials for Sentence Study.

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)

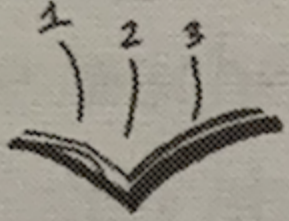
- Use Writing Pathways book for performance assessments, learning progressions, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing examples.

Anchor Charts

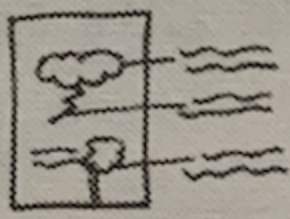
Teaching moves that Informati
Writers should borrow



Explain what the **whol**
book will be about.



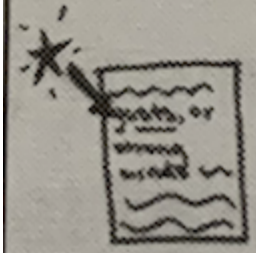
Tell a bit about the **big**
you'll teach (Kind of like a table



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

- Heinemann Online Flight Materials
- *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 Thining, Gretchen Bernabei
- Trail of Breadcrumbs Website
- Two Writing Teachers Blog
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson
- Cranford Public School Grades K-5 Google Folder for instructional materials

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.

To adapt any writing unit for an alternative school serving students with school avoidance, anxiety, behavior challenges, and social constraints, teachers should employ flexible, supportive modifications while aligning with grade-level writing standards (focusing on organization, elaboration, and mechanics) and speaking/listening standards (focusing on collaborative discussions).

- Timing Adjustments: Extend the pacing of instructional blocks or bends (e.g., extending a typical 2-week drafting phase to 3 weeks) with shorter daily writing sessions (20–30 minutes). Incorporate calming transitions or choice-based entry activities to ease transition anxiety.
- Activity Modifications: During the initial brainstorming and topic-generation phase, use sensory-friendly methods like drawing, sketching, or voice recording instead of demanding whole-group sharing. During structural planning, provide pre-made graphic organizers tailored to the specific genre's layout (e.g., chronological, narrative plot maps, or thesis-and-reason structures) and allow low-stakes, paired verbal rehearsals to build confidence. For the revision phase, incorporate supportive one-on-one teacher conferring for feedback, replacing peer review sessions with optional self-reflection journals. Simplify checklists and rubrics with visual icons, and offer flexible writing alternatives like dictated drafts or digital speech-to-text tools for students with severe writing aversion.
- Intervention Programs: Integrate comprehension-focused frameworks (such as Visualizing and Verbalizing) to unpack exemplar texts, structured foundations programs (like UFLI) for keyword jotting and sentence-level drafting, and systematic phonics/morphology programs (like Sonday System) during conventions exploration (e.g., mechanics, grammar, and parts of speech).
- NJTSS Framework: Implement Tier 1 universal supports, such as explicit modeling of introductions, transitions, and conclusions with visual aids; Tier 2 targeted small-group interventions for elaboration and planning, tracked via regular anecdotal notes; and Tier 3 intensive individualized sessions for goal-setting and revision, prioritizing emotional safety and student agency.
- Data Analysis: Leverage formative assessments (e.g., conferring notes, on-demand writing samples) and summative pre/post benchmarks to personalize pacing, ensuring students produce structured, cohesive compositions in a nurturing environment that celebrates writing progress through low-

pressure, voluntary sharing.