Unit 5 Writing: Researched-Based Informational Writing

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 3**
Length: **6 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will write researched-based expository essays that focused on purpose and audience, showing depth of idea development supported by elaborated, relevant details. The claim is logical and coherent; the product itself is well-organized. Students will learn the elements of feature writing in addition to academic research including using citations and credible sourcing.

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. In this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision date: July 2023

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 method; the difference between facts and opinions, accessing print and digital library resources.

LA.W.6.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
LA.W.6.2.A	Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aiding comprehension.
LA.W.6.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
LA.W.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

LA.W.6.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.6.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.6.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.
LA.W.6.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
LA.W.6.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources; assess the credibility of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and providing basic bibliographic information for sources.
LA.L.6.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.6.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.6.2.B	Spell correctly.
LA.L.6.3.A	Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.

Essential Questions

- How do feature article writers develop and describe their own opinions about nonfiction topics?
- How do writers use feature articles to bring readers' attention to timely and important nonfiction topics?
- How does writing help the writer gain self-discovery or a deeper understanding of a particular topic or interest??
- How is a feature article different from other kinds of informational writing?
- Why do intentional text structures and features enhance informational writing (such as feature articles)?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- How to deeply research both sides of issues.
- How to understand author's angle.
- How to use models to inspire writing and organization- see Vicki Vinton's handouts.
- How to vary sentence structure and lift the level of sentence complexity - see pages 90-93 unit 3 TC curriculum.
- incorporating evidence and author's technique into writing to enhance the analysis of text.
- writing with a purpose and audience.
- How to begin to create note taking stratagies- see pages 4-12 unit 3 TC curriculum.
- How to create claims and to support them using a variety of research.

- How to introduce evidence and explain.
- How to locate several sources for research .
- How to use a variety of informational writing crafts such as :headlines, leads, hooks, headings, subheadings, and text features: pictures, bold print, etc.
- How to use multiple methods of bias in writing.
- How to use transitions in writing to move through different examples.
- How to write for a specific audience.
- investigating issues- as well as investigate multiple perspectives of an issue.
- lifting the level of sentence complexity and the use of transitions.
- synthesizing research and create writing which demonstrates a logical analysis of both sides of an issue.
- the importance of understanding deeply both sides of an issue.
- understanding the importance of using evidence and explanation to support ideas.
- using a variety of author's crafts to elaborate and enhance the work.
- using basic craft moves for information writing and/or feature writing.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

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.

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.

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/Partnership Discussion and Rehearsing
- 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)
- Writing Club work and discussions

Summative including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 1-2 final pieces.
- 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.
- On-demand Writing Assessments
- Standards should be addressed

Benchmark Assessments:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
- Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, grades 3-8, Levels L-Z, Heinemann (part 3, Writing about Reading section)
- New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)

Learning Plan

Middle School 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 writers share their work 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

Throughout the year, students write in all modes of rhetoric including narration/description, argument/persuasion, and exposition. A variety of writing forms, including digital writing, are emphasized. Grammar lessons are embedded in writing instruction, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modeling is done through published and student-crafted mentor texts. Teachers focus equally on process and product with an emphasis on synthesizing across texts for nuanced understandings; teacher-created multi-modal text sets will be used as materials. High-and low-stakes writing and timed and untimed assignments will be used throughout the unit. Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Sentence study teaches syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Students will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific sentence patterns and applying it to their own writing. Please see this grade level folder for details.

This unit of study focuses on the teaching of writing as a researcher. Students will learn to evaluate information and gain a deeper understanding of an issue. Students will practice pulling information relevant to their topic from multiple sources and perspectives. Students will organize their information and make it their own in order to develop their informational article, practicing paraphrasing skills and ways to cite text. Students will record each source used for information and create a works cited page.

For this particular unit, teachers should...

- Prepare materials for discussion, writing, and synthesis
- Prepare instruction on examining sources and their credibility
- Select mentor texts for modeling

- Prepare for conferences with students
- Introduce graphic organizers for planning their informational essay
- Create formative and summative assessments

Instructional Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of leveled 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.

Please reference the materials in this Middle School ELA, grade 6 folder under "writing."

- Newsela, CommonLit
- Non-fiction short stories
- Scholastic Scope
- Time for Kids

Teacher Resources

- *Units of Study in Argument, Informatiion, and Narrative Writing, Grade 6*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
- Associated Online Resources, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, readingandwritingproject.org
- *Energize Research Reading and Writing,* Chris Lehman, Grades 4-8
- *Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action*, Stephanie Harvey and Harvey Daniels
- *Finding the Heart of Nonfiction,* Georgia Heard
- *The Power of Grammar,* Mary Ehrenworth and Vicki Vinton
- *A Writer's Notebook,* Ralph Fletcher
- *Writing a Life,* Katherine Bomer
- *In the Middle,* Nancie Atwell, associated videos
- *Study Driven*, Katie Wood Ray
- *Thinking Through Genre*, Heather Lattimer
- *Feedback that Moves Writers Forward*, Patty McGee
- *The Big Book of Details*, Roz LInder
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson

Strategies for Accommodation and Modification

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 writer:

- 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.
- Instruction provides focused small-group strategy lessons.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

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

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing.
- Offer graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques.
- Offer oral assessments
- 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
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts.
- 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
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual
- Use digital technology, eBooks,, audio version of printed text
- 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.

Adhere to all modifications and accomodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plan