

4th Writing 2024-2025 Unit 3 Informational Writing-History (Weeks 15-21)

Content Area: **Template**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Full Year**
Length: **9 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit 3 Informational Writing

Unit Rationale

This informational writing unit is the first informational unit of 4th grade. Informational writing represents one third of the fourth grade writing standards and appears on the NJSLA. This informational writing unit allows students to choose, research, and write about a topic of historical significance. It exposes students to topics within history that they want to learn more about and encourages them to become historians, crafting their own informational text. Students will use books and online resources to research, collecting and organizing facts. Students will draft and revise their text, making decisions about make decisions about formatting, structure, headings, grouping, and elaboration in order to convey meaning and importance. Students will also work to hook the reader with clear and though provoking introductions and conclusions. This unit also focuses on use of quotation marks and commas, paragraphs, and use of transitions words. This informational writing unit not only allows students to grow their research and nonfiction writing skills, but it also prepares students and provides a foundation for the upcoming Unit 5, Journalism.

SEL Competencies

SEL.PK-12.1	Self-Awareness
SEL.PK-12.1.1	Recognize one’s feelings and thoughts
SEL.PK-12.1.2	Recognize the impact of one’s feelings and thoughts on one’s own behavior
SEL.PK-12.1.3	Recognize one’s personal traits, strengths, and limitations
SEL.PK-12.1.4	Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges
SEL.PK-12.2	Self-Management
SEL.PK-12.2.1	Understand and practice strategies for managing one’s own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
SEL.PK-12.2.2	Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals
SEL.PK-12.2.3	Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one’s goals
SEL.PK-12.3	Social Awareness
SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others
SEL.PK-12.3.2	Demonstrate and awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others’

	cultural backgrounds
SEL.PK-12.3.3	Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ
SEL.PK-12.3.4	Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings
SEL.PK-12.4	Responsible Decision-Making
SEL.PK-12.4.1	Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills
SEL.PK-12.4.2	Identify the consequences associated with one's actions in order to make constructive choices
SEL.PK-12.4.3	Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions
SEL.PK-12.5	Relationship Skills
SEL.PK-12.5.1	Establish and maintain healthy relationships
SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
SEL.PK-12.5.3	Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure
SEL.PK-12.5.4	Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways
SEL.PK-12.5.5	Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

21st Century Life and Career

TECH.K-12.P.1	Act as a responsible and contributing community members and employee.
TECH.K-12.P.3	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
TECH.K-12.P.4	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
TECH.K-12.P.8	Use technology to enhance productivity increase collaboration and communicate effectively.
TECH.K-12.P.9	Work productively in teams while using cultural/global competence.

Essential Questions

Why study and write about history?

Why is important to research and write about history accurately?

How can we organized informational writing to best convey meaning and importance?

How can an author grab the reader's attention through an introduction?

Why might an author include questions in a conclusion?

Pre-Assessments

[Informational Pre-Assessment](#)

[Informational Assessment Scoring Rubric](#)

[Informational Assessment Guidance](#)

Instructional Plan

Indicators Of Understanding

- Writers choose topics of historical significance that they have SOME knowledge of and that interests them.
- Writers include facts, definitions, concrete details, and quotations to explain their topic as well as convey their bias.
- Writers make decisions about formatting, structure, headings, grouping, and elaboration in order to convey meaning and importance.
- Writers hook the reader by grabbing their interest and begin by letting the reader know what this piece will teach about. The writer also provides a concluding section that may include questions about the subject, a final insight, or suggestions for a future action.
- Writers spell and capitalize domain specific vocabulary correctly.

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Grammar:

- Writers link ideas within categories of information words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).
- Grammar Concepts to Revisit:
 - Writers use quotation marks to mark quotations from a text.
 - Writers organize texts by forming paragraphs.
 - Writers capitalize proper nouns.
- Grammar Concepts Already Mastered (3rd Grade):
 - Writers use commas and quotation marks in dialogue
 - Writers produce simple, compound, and complex sentences
 - Writers ensure subject, verb, and pronoun agreement in sentences
 - Writers use apostrophes appropriately to show possessions

- Writers use linking words and phrases

[Grade 4 Informational Writing Mini Lessons](#)

[Informational Writing Resources](#)

[Opinion Assessments, Rubrics, and Learning Progressions](#)

Informational History Collecting

Collecting An Informational Text

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT collect important historical topics.

WALT explore important historical topics.

WALT write about important historical topics.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can... read books and watch videos about important historical topics.

I can... list important historical topics of interest in my notebook.

I can... write about important historical topics in my notebook.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Shared Writing

Independent writing

Group work

Video/Text Analysis

Questioning

Cooperative Learning

Formative Assessments

Entrance/Exit slips

Writing checks/quizzes

Post It Notes

Student conferences

Class discussions

Observation

Turn and talks

Active Writing Notebooks

Color Coding of Writing

Instructional Materials and Resources

Heinemann Unit Resources

Jennifer Servallo Texts and Resources

Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive

BrainPop

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Informational History Developing

Developing An Informational Text

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT find resources to research a historical topic.

WALT organize research by subtopic.

WALT research to include facts, definitions, concrete details, and quotations to explain a topic as well as convey bias.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can... read books about my topic and take notes.

I can... watch videos about my topic and take notes.

I can... organize my research in a way that makes sense.

I can... include facts, definitions, details, and quotations in my research.

I can... identify bias in my research.

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Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Informational History Drafting

Drafting An Informational Text

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT draft an informational text.

WALT make decisions about formatting, structure, headings, grouping, and elaboration to convey meaning

and importance.

WALT include facts, specifically names, dates, and places when writing about history.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can...draft an informational text using research.

I can...organize my draft by topic.

I can...write about history in chronological order.

I can... make sure I use specific facts and domain specific vocabulary when I draft.

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Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Informational History Revising

Revising For An Informational Text

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT revise an informational text.

WALT revise to convey meaning, importance, and bias.

WALT revise by adding an introduction that grabs the reader's attention and lets the reader know what the piece or section is about.

WALT provide a concluding section that may include questions about the subject, a final insight, or suggestions for future action.

WALT use technology to add graphics, images, and text features to my text.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can... add missing information to my text.

I can... take away boring, repetitive, or unnecessary information from the text.

I can... add an introduction that grabs the reader’s attention and lets them know what the text will be about.

I can... add a conclusion that restates what the text was about and suggests a future action.

I can... use technology to add graphics, images, and text features to my text.

I can... revise using a checklist.

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Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Informational History Editing

Editing An Informational Text

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT edit an informational text

WALT to spell and capitalize domain-specific vocabulary correctly.

WALT edit to use commas correctly

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can... edit to capitalize proper nouns and headings.

I can... edit to make sure the text is spelled correctly.

I can... edit to ensure commas are used correctly, avoiding run-on sentences.

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Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Informational History Publishing

Publishing An Informational Text

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)

WALT publish informational texts.

WALT present our informational texts to our class.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can... finalize my text, ensuring it's my best work.

I can... share my text with my class by reading a portion of it out loud.

I can... celebrate my published text!

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Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Modifications and/or Accommodations

Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)

English Language Learners

Native language support: The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

Adjusted Speech: The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

Visuals: The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

Front-Loading Vocabulary: The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

Special Education Students

Chunking: The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

Checking for Understanding: It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

Extra time: The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

Oral Reading: The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

Timers: The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

Students with 504 Plans

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Gifted & Talented Strategies

Extensions/Enrichments: Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

Modify/Change Activities: Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

Students at Risk of School Failure

Directions or Instructions: Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

Peer Support: Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for clarification before going to you.

Alternate or Modified Assignments: Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

Increase One to One Time: When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

Contracts: It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

Hands On: As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

Tests/Assessments: Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by

having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

Seating: Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

Integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Climate Change; Informational and Media Literacy

See Crosswalks

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.W.IW.4.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), text features (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, captions) and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, text evidence, or other information and examples related to the topic.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.C	Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).
ELA.W.IW.4.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.E	Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.B	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
ELA.SL.II.4.2	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).
ELA.SL.PI.4.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.K-12.P.1	Act as a responsible and contributing community members and employee.
TECH.K-12.P.3	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
TECH.K-12.P.4	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
TECH.K-12.P.5	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
TECH.K-12.P.7	Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
TECH.K-12.P.8	Use technology to enhance productivity increase collaboration and communicate effectively.
TECH.K-12.P.9	Work productively in teams while using cultural/global competence.

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

Data can be organized, displayed, and presented to highlight relationships.

Technological choices and opportunities vary due to factors such as differences in economic resources, location, and cultural values.

Computing devices may be connected to other devices to form a system as a way to extend their capabilities.

Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSLs for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math

SOC.K-4.1	What are effective strategies for accessing various sources of information and historical evidence, determining their validity, and using them to solve a problem or find a solution to a public policy question?
SOC.K-4.1.1	Chronological Thinking
SOC.K-4.1.1.1	Place key historical events and people in historical eras using timelines.
SOC.K-4.1.1.2	Explain how the present is connected to the past.
SOC.K-4.1.2	Spatial Thinking
SOC.K-4.1.2.1	Determine locations of places and interpret information available on maps and globes.
SOC.K-4.1.2.2	Use thematic maps and other geographic representations to obtain, describe, and compare spatial patterns and information about people, places, regions, and environments.
SOC.K-4.1.3	Critical Thinking
SOC.K-4.1.3.1	Distinguish fact from fiction.
SOC.K-4.1.3.2	Identify and interpret a variety of primary and secondary sources for reconstructing the past (i.e., documents, letters, diaries, maps, photos, etc.).
SOC.K-4.1.4	Presentational Skills
SOC.K-4.1.4.1	Use evidence to support an idea in a digital, oral and/ written format.
SOC.K-4.1.4.2	Share information about a topic in an organized manner (e.g., provide a coherent line of reasoning with supporting/relevant details) speaking clearly and at an appropriate pace.

