Unit 3: Research-Based Essay (Weeks 19-27)

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

Unit 3: Research-Based Essay

Unit Rationale

Over the course of the unit, students will broaden their essay-writing knowledge to include research-based informational essays. They will learn to read and analyze multiple sources about the same topic in order to gain a wider view, and will also learn to use their prior knowledge of essay structure to plan our essays that are clear and logical. Students will learn the steps to conducting research on a topic of interest, and will also learn to make structural decisions that fit their writing topics. Significant time will be dedicated to the incorporation of quality evidence into our writing. Students will also understand the wider impact of writing about an issue of significance, and will see the power of writing to make change in the world.

Essential Questions

- In what ways is writing a powerful tool for change?

- How do writers establish and maintain credibility?

- How do writers find quality sources to support their arguments?

- How can writers produce and publish writing that can create real, lasting, positive change in the world?

Pre-Assessments

Pre-assessment: Because the pre-assessment for the previous unit required students to complete a timed essay prompt, it is not necessary to repeat this task. Students can instead be pre-assessed for informational writing by way of the flash draft that is part of an early lesson in the unit.

Instructional Plan

See lessons below.

There are specific materials for each of these novels within the 6th grade teacher's drive If you cannot access

this link please email Sarah Whitman at swhitman@collsk12.org for full access

Resource: Windows & Mirrors Grade 6 Textbook

ALL LESSONS CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS

Lesson 1: Informational Text Analysis

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

WALT informational text is shown in a variety of platforms.

WALT research is supported by credible evidence.

WALT nonfiction text features support a central idea.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...identify different types of informational text.

I can...differentiate fact from opinion.

I can...analyze nonfiction text features.

I can...identify the central idea of informational text.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

Formative Assessments

- Exit Tickets

- Class Discussion
- Flash Drafts
- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Becoming engaged with a topic

    o [Lesson slides](#)

- Reading for a wide view of a topic: teen activism

    o [Lesson slides](#)

- Preparing to write informational essays: finding and supporting key points

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.RI.CI.6.2	Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.RI.IT.6.3	Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
ELA.RI.TS.6.4	Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features (e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.
ELA.RI.PP.6.5	Identify author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.

Lesson 2: Research

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

WALT develop a topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples in informative/explanatory text.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...research a topic.

I can...annotate informational articles for relevant facts and concrete details.

I can...paraphrase to avoid plagiarism.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

Formative Assessments

- Exit Tickets
- Class Discussion
- Flash Drafts
- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Structure sets you free: using prior knowledge to flash-draft essays

- The trail of research: pursuing information and focusing in on topics

  o [Lesson notes](#)

  o [Sample notes](#)

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.RI.CI.6.2	Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.W.IW.6.2	Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
ELA.W.WR.6.5	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
ELA.W.SE.6.6	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.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
ELA.SL.II.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
ELA.SL.PI.6.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).

Lesson 3: Writing Informational Text

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

WALT informative and explanatory writing can be supported by text features such as headings, graphics, and multimedia

WALT text structures help us organize ideas, concepts, and information in informative/explanatory writing to aid in comprehension

WALT develop a topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples in informative/explanatory text

WALT produce clear and coherent writing with a voice that is appropriate to the task, purpose and audience

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...write for a purpose.

I can...apply knowledge from research to develop a topic.

I can...organize informational concepts to aid in comprehension.

I can...incorporate nonfiction text features to add more information.

I can...support my writing with facts and details.

I can...incorporate evidence that supports my research.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Explicit grammar instruction

- Whole class reading

- Independent reading

- Jigsaw

- Group work

Formative Assessments

- Short written responses

- Multi-text assignments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Envisioning structures to plan an information book

  o Sample e-book

- Constructing texts with solid bricks of information

  o Lesson slides

- Research: gathering specific information and creating meaning

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.W.IW.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 aid in comprehension.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.E	Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.

Lesson 4: Revisions

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

WALT appropriate transitions can create cohesion and clarify the relationship of ideas in informative/explanatory text

WALT use precise language to inform about or explain the topic in informative/explanatory text

WALT establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form in informative/explanatory text

WALT provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented

in informative/explanatory text

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...add appropriate transitions to connect informational concepts.

I can...add precise language and specific content language.

I can...maintain a formal style.

I can...conclude my essay by restating my topic and key facts.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Explicit grammar instruction

- Whole class reading

- Independent reading

- Jigsaw

- Group work

Formative Assessments

- Short written responses

- Multi-text assignments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Writing with detail

  - [Turning organizers into prose](#)

- Lifting the level of sentence complexity

- Using text features to strengthen writing

- Revising to fit digital formats: determining importance

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.KL.6.2.C	Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.D	Maintain consistency in style and tone.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.

Lesson 5: Grammar & Editing

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

WALT writers strengthen their writing by revising

WALT writers utilize the help of their peers and adults to improve their writing

WALT use technology to produce and publish writing

WALT identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language

WALT ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive)

WALT use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves)

WALT recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...improve my writing by responding to constructive feedback.

I can...identify pronouns and apply that knowledge to my writing.

I can...provide my peers with constructive feedback.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Explicit grammar instruction

Formative Assessments

- Student check-ins
- Peer editing

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Online grammar instruction programs

    o No Red Ink

    o Khan Academy

    o Grammar101

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.SS.6.1.A	Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.B	Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.C	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
ELA.L.SS.6.1.D	Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.E	Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive and parenthetical elements.
ELA.L.SS.6.1.F	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.
ELA.SL.PI.6.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).

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

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.

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

This unit allows for great discussion on a variety of informational texts. This can include DEI, climate change, and informational and media literacy.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uf0fWDvpqWFOAb51rOq7mN5xq-xu-M5Yp2FbEVZ9Kt8/edit?gid=0#gid=0

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.6.1.A	Ensure that pronouns are in the proper case (subjective, objective, possessive).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.B	Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.C	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
ELA.L.SS.6.1.D	Recognize and correct vague pronouns (i.e., ones with unclear or ambiguous antecedents).
ELA.L.SS.6.1.E	Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive and parenthetical elements.
ELA.L.SS.6.1.F	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.C	Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.D	Maintain consistency in style and tone.
ELA.RI.CI.6.2	Determine the central idea of an informational text and explain how it is supported by key details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.RI.IT.6.3	Analyze how a particular text's (e.g., article, brochure, technical manual, procedural text) structure unfolds by using textual evidence to describe how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text.
ELA.RI.TS.6.4	Use text structures (e.g., cause-effect, problem-solution), search tools, and genre features

	(e.g., graphics, captions, indexes) to locate and integrate information.
ELA.RI.PP.6.5	Identify author's purpose, perspective or potential bias in a text and explain the impact on the reader's interpretation.
ELA.W.IW.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 aid in comprehension.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.E	Acknowledge and attempt a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
ELA.W.IW.6.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.
ELA.W.WR.6.5	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
ELA.W.SE.6.6	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.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	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.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.
ELA.SL.II.6.2	Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
ELA.SL.PI.6.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.8.DC.4	Explain how information shared digitally is public and can be searched, copied, and potentially seen by public audiences.
TECH.9.4.8.DC.6	Analyze online information to distinguish whether it is helpful or harmful to reputation.

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

	The information sent and received across networks can be protected from unauthorized access and modification in a variety of ways. The evolution of malware leads to understanding the key security measures and best practices needed to proactively address

the threat to digital data.

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

The ability to write fluently and clearly is a necessity in all academic subject areas. Students will be able to respond to literature taught in other subject areas, noting authors' craft decisions and seeking to emulate in their writing the narrative techniques they come across in literature.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bNUBwwW9BLgTLqfjfVAJiet6rbmQ3THg-sXDz2rEnXk/edit?gid=0#gid=0

Political, economic, social, and cultural factors both change and stay the same over time.

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.

SEL Competencies and Standards

SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
SEL.PK-12.5.5	Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed