Unit 1:Paragraph Development (Week 1-6)

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

Unit 1:Paragraph Development

Unit Rationale

Ensuring students can develop coherent paragraphs with clear topic sentences, textual evidence to support central ideas, and clear analysis and explanation of evidence that shows readers how to think about the evidence is vital to success in essay writing, which is one of the main components of Writing Workshop. In essence, students will work toward mastering the RACE format as appropriate. That structure lends itself to body paragraphs for essays in units two through five. Also, creating objective summaries is an area middle school students must master. Being able to summarize a text clearly is vital to not only essays in which writers must be concise for their readers, but also in life. Additionally, this unit will introduce transitions to signal time, order and sequence, as well as introducing evidence and examples to readers. Transitions are a writer's best friend and knowing which type of transitions to use when is vital to developing clear paragraphs and writing in general.

Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of a topic sentence?

- What skills and information do I need to craft an objective summary of a text?

- Why do writers use textual evidence?

- What elements are needed to write a proficient RACE-formatted response?

- How do I know what genre of writing to use for a given task?

Pre-Assessments

Students receive an assignment in CommonLit.org "Baseball: From Pitch to Hits" by Stephen Orne. Students will annotate the text, write a summary and respond to an open-ended prompt requiring a RACE-formatted response. The prompt is: What connection does the author draw between studying the physics of baseball and improving the sport's safety?

After the pre-assessment, we will synthesize and analyze the data to determine our next steps. Most likely,

students at least need refreshers in annotating, and the citing evidence and explaining parts of RACE. As a result, the following plan will be used and is open to adjustment based upon pre-assessment and formative data collected throughout the unit.

Instructional Plan

Students will receive direct instruction, including modeling, in areas of annotating the text, planning and writing a RACE response, and planning and writing a summary. For annotating, students will learn three questions to consider when annotating nonfiction from Kylene Beers and Robert Probst's text titled Reading Nonfiction: Notice and Note Signposts and Strategies. The questions include:

- What surprised me?

- What did the author think I already knew?

- What challenged, Changed or confirmed my thinking (Beers & Probst, 2016).

In addition, students will learn the true definition of "nonfiction." Many think that "fiction is made up while nonfiction is true." They will learn that nonfiction "appears to tell us something about our world."

Students will also receive direct instruction on using graphic organizers, checklists and rubrics to make their writing the best it can be. In addition, students will analyze exemplars, including work from classmates, to make their writing the best it can be. A number of formative assessments (listed below) will be used to help students and teachers gauge a students' current level of understanding. Quizzes asking students to write a summary and write a RACE-formatted response will also be provided as checkmarks through the unit.

All lessons can take several days to complete.

Lesson 1: Central Idea

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

WALT Central ideas are developed over the course of a text

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...develop a central idea

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

I can...organize ideas for an objective summary.

I can...highlight main components of a text.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Annotating nonfiction texts focusing on "Things that surprised me," "What did the author think I knew?" and "What changed, challenged or confirmed my thinking?" (Beers & Probst, 2016).
- Complete graphic organizers (modeling included) to determine the central idea of a text. This will also lead into crafting an objective summary.

Formative Assessments

- Pre-assessment (see instructional plan above)

- Menti.com: Do Now questions asking what is nonfiction? What is a central idea? How does one find a central idea?

- Student annotations

- Completion of first two parts of the A+B+C Summary Organizer

- Quiz

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Annotating on Common Lit Screencast

- Screencast on Annotating Nonfiction Part 1 (Nonfiction definition and "What surprised me?")

- New American Lecture:What did the writer think I knew?

- Complete parts 1 and 2 of Summary Organizer.: Students will identify four story highlights or main ideas from the summary. They will then ask "What ties all of this together" and complete the Central Idea box.

- Turn-and-Talk and share central ideas.

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Integrated CommonLit informational texts The Founding of American Democracy and The Issues with the Articles of Confederation. Students started to understand the concept of thinking beyond the text and being open to new ideas, especially in relation to question 3. The idea of looking for "surprising" information gave clarity to finding that which is important or noteworthy.

ELA.W.IW.7.2	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.SL.PE.7.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1.D	Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

Lesson 2: Objective Summary

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

WALT provide an objective summary of the text.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...organize ideas for an objective summary.

I can...develop an central idea.

I can...write an objective summary of a text.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Students will complete graphic organizers to create topic sentences.
- Students will analyze sample objective summaries to determine what summaries include.
- Students will work to develop a checklist (model linked).
- Students will draft summaries using the model and organizers to help.
- Students will self-assess summaries and complete a reflection.

Formative Assessments

- Completion of A+B+C Organizer

- Reflection Form

- Summary drafts

- Observation

- Student discussions with peers

- Checklist development

- Quizzes

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Students will annotate the text "Dung Beetle as a Weapon Against Global Warming" for story highlights and central idea.

- A+B+C Organizer

- checklist (model linked).

- Rubric

- Transitions to show time, order and sequence

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Organizers make summary writing easier per many students (AR, JE, etc.). "Dung Beetle" text didn't grip the attention of this year's students as it has in the past. Next year, consider opening with articles on the history of writing per the ideas by Dr. Gholdy Muhommad in her book Cultivating Genius.

ELA.W.IW.7.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; 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.SL.PE.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Lesson 3: Organization

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

WALT organize the reasons and evidence logically in argumentative writing

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...analyze informational text.

I can...annotate for appropriate evidence.

I can...organize relevant evidence that support a claim.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Annotation

- Model organizer completion to gather thoughts.

- Analyze sample responses to figure out how others organize ideas

- Self-assess

Formative Assessments

- Peer discussion sharing evidence needed to support a claim, or answer.

- Completion of RACE organizer

- Draft RACE-formatted responses

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Analyze exemplar response

- Annotate text and prompt. Note evidence to support answer on text

- Complete RACE organizer. For "Dung Beetle" text/question.

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Organizer again helped students (MJ, AR, and others). One edit to the organizer might be in forming the topic sentence. Maybe break topic sentence/evidence into a separate table so students realize that those three boxes form a majority of the RACE response.

ELA.W.AW.7.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.

Lesson 4: Evidence

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

WALT arguments and claims need to be supported by clear reasoning and relevant evidence.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...identify relevant evidence to support a claim.

I can...compare different pieces of evidence and explain their relevance.

I can...differentiate between evidence and reasoning.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Analyze sample responses to determine structure and difference between evidence and reasoning.

- Analyze sample response and compare/ contrast citing evidence to explanation of evidence (look at percentage of paragraph each part is in the response (rule of thumb - 3-4 sentences of explanation per piece of textual evidence).

- Rely on the two most important Questions of Learning to guide explanations (how and why does the evidence I chose prove what I say it does?)

Formative Assessments

- Observation

- Student discussion

- Sample RACE responses

- Menti.com responses (practice explaining evidence)

- Do Now evaluating explanation of evidence from class responses from previous responses.

Instructional Materials and Resources

- [Analyze videos from America's Got Talent and Dance Moms to see the explanation judges provide the contestants. Attentive discussion of how/why the explanation is](#) effective. (Specificity)

- Attentive discussion n the Six Questions of Learning (who? What? When? Where? Why? how?)

- [Sentence starters for explaining evidence](#) (Via Calkins Writing Workshop resources)

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

It may be time to change the videos and find some newer judges comments - DWTS/Iman Shumpert? Six questions of learning and how/why questions do help students think about why they chose evidence.

ELA.W.AW.7.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.

Lesson 5: Transitions

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

WALT use appropriate transitions to create cohesion in informative/ explanatory text.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...introduce evidence with appropriate transitions.

I can...use appropriate evidence to show evidence is coming next.

I can...use transitions to create cohesion.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- TIVE method to introduce evidence (transition, indicator, verb, evidence).
- Focus on transitions to signal that evidence is coming next.

Formative Assessments

- DN to gather data regarding prior knowledge about quoting evidence and a quote sandwich

- Guided practice using the TIVE method to introduce evidence including transitions..

- Quiz

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Transitions by type

- Practice using the TIVE method

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Using the TIV method with summaries before RACE helped make the TIVE lesson go smoother. Definitely continue doing that. Checklists help those who use them. Maybe have a scavenger hunt using the checklist in the future to get students used to using them and see their value/relevance.

ELA.W.AW.7.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
ELA.W.IW.7.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.

Lesson 6: Formatting

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

WALT avoid plagiarism and follow a standard format for citation.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...follow a standard format when citing evidence.

I can...paraphrase text.

I can...properly embed evidence.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- MLA in-text citations (5Ps)

- Signal phrases to differentiate between "they say" and "I say."

Formative Assessments

- Practice incorporating the 5Ps (person page/paragraph).

- Google Form to collect data about MLA and in-text citation knowledge

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Guided notes and cheat sheet for 5Ps/in-text citations.

- Signal phrases to differentiate between what others say and "I say."

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

5Ps helps students remember in-text citations.

ELA.W.SE.7.6	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

Lesson 7: Grammar

This lesson should be taught throughout the unit and not necessarily in isolation.

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

WALT demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...apply proper grammatical rules to my writing.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Search for information online and via YouTube videos

- Ask a peer

- Ask a teacher

- Peer review and feedback

Formative Assessments

- Observation and drafts

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Grammar 101

- NoRedInk

- YouTube videos explaining grammar issues (we can include links in feedback on Google docs and tailor it based on individual needs).

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.SS.7.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
ELA.L.SS.7.1.E	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.L.KL.7.2	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

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

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

and informational and media literacy.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.7.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
ELA.L.SS.7.1.A	Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
ELA.L.SS.7.1.D	Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie but not He wore an old green shirt).
ELA.L.SS.7.1.E	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.L.KL.7.2	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
ELA.W.AW.7.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
ELA.W.AW.7.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
ELA.W.AW.7.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.
ELA.W.IW.7.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; 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.7.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
ELA.W.IW.7.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that follows the flow of ideas, reflects back on the topic, and supports the information or explanation presented.
ELA.W.SE.7.6	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1.B	Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
ELA.SL.PE.7.1.D	Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.8.DC.1	Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use.
TECH.9.4.8.IML.7	Use information from a variety of sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures for a specific purpose (e.g., 1.2.8.C2a, 1.4.8.CR2a, 2.1.8.CHSS/IV.8.AI.1, W.5.8, 6.1.8.GeoSV.3.a, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.4.b, 7.1.NH. IPRET.8).

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.6-8.8.1.8.DA.3	Identify the appropriate tool to access data based on its file format.

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

The reading and writing skills taught throughout this unit will provide knowledge, practice, and support in all content areas where reading and writing are required.

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

ELA.RI.CR.7.1	Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what an informational text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RI.CI.7.2	Determine a central idea in an informational text and explain how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
SOC.6.1.8.HistorySE.3.b	Analyze a variety of sources to make evidence-based inferences about how prominent individuals and other nations contributed to the causes, execution, and outcomes of the American Revolution.
	The United States system of government is designed to realize the ideals of liberty, democracy, limited government, equality under the law and of opportunity, justice, and property rights.
	Historians develop arguments using evidence from multiple relevant historical sources.

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

SEL Competencies and Standards

SEL.PK-12.1.1	Recognize one's feelings and thoughts
SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others
SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others