

Unit 2: Analyzing Informational Texts (Weeks 10-18)

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

Unit 2: Analyzing Informational Texts

Unit Rationale

Building on previous concepts and skills, students will learn more complex topics, focusing on gathering information through research, evaluating credibility of sources and analyzing how authors structure their texts to support their claim, including how they respond to conflicting evidence. Students will also be expected to draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis, reflection and research. This unit allows for a greater exploration of Informational Reading and Writing, while introducing students to Argument for the first time this year.

Essential Questions

- How can I write an informational essay?
- How do I cite information from nonfiction sources?

Pre-Assessments

[Pre-assessment:](#)

-Have the students read the article “Earth is a "living planet" and all life depends on one another to thrive, report says

“ by News ELA <https://newsela.com/read/importance-of-biodiversity/id/51824> and have them write an informational essay that describes how Earth’s biodiversity crisis can threaten all of humanity.

Instructional Plan

1. The [Google Slides](#) for the unit are available.
2. The students will take the pre assessment.
3. Do First journals will be available here.
4. The students will complete the anticipatory set activity called “[Animal Introduction](#)”. The students will

watch a short portion of the provided animal video to further get interested in the [topic](#). The next part of the anticipatory set will include the students watching the provided [TED video](#) and learning about how animals think. The last part of the anticipatory set will include the students completing a [Thing Link](#) on a variety of animal/ environment topics. The corresponding Google doc with questions can be found [here](#).

5. The students will write their [pet overpopulation essay](#). Please see the google slides and the chart below for the order of the activities. The focus for this essay is to have the students practice maintaining a formal writing style on a nonfiction topic. This will require the students to use accurate transitions.
6. The students will complete an essay on Antarctica's ice melting. The available activities and assessments are available in the Google Slides and in the chart below.
7. The students will write an essay on elephant poaching

ALL LESSONS CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS

Additional lessons and resources can be found [here](#).

Lesson 1: Introduction to Informational Writing

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

WALT identify components of various styles of informational writing.

WALT analyze informational writing.

WALT maintain a formal style while writing.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can...identify components of an informational text.

I can...analyze the structure and components of informational text.

I can...maintain a formal style when writing informational text.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Video Instruction

- Annotations

- Peer Work

Formative Assessments

- Observation
- Writer's notebook entries
- Flash drafts
- Exit Tickets
- Rubrics

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Elephant Poaching [Assignment](#)
- Sample [rubric](#) review

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.RI.CR.8.1	Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RI.CI.8.2	Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.W.IW.8.2	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.8.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Lesson 2: Essay Structure

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

WALT structure essays in appropriate formats.

WALT use organizers to structure our writing.

WALT develop ideas into paragraphs.

WALT form an appropriate introduction.

WALT include transitions.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can...use a graphic organizer to structure my writing.

I can...develop my ideas into paragraphs.

I can...use transitions to guide my writing along.

I can...write an introduction.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release

- Annotations

- Peer Work

Formative Assessments

- Observation
- Writer's notebook entries
- Flash drafts
- Exit Tickets

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Introduction [activity](#)
- Informational Essay [organizer](#)
- Transition [activity](#)

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.RI.CI.8.2	Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; 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.8.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.D	Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
ELA.W.RW.8.7	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.

Lesson 3: Conclusion

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

WALT restate key details.

WALT summarize main ideas and thoughts.

WALT conclude an essay.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can...restate the key details of informational texts in different words.

I can...summarize main ideas into a concluding paragraph.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release

- Annotations

- Peer Work

Formative Assessments

- Observation
- Writer's notebook entries
- Flash drafts
- Exit Tickets

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Informational Essay Draft

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.W.IW.8.2.F

Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.

Lesson 5: Grammar

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

WALT identify the purposes for commas.

WALT properly use commas in our every day writing.

WALT recognize spelling patterns.

WALT revise our word for spelling and grammar.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can...identify the purpose of a comma.

I can...properly use commas in my every day writing.

I can...recognize the spelling patterns of commonly confused words.

I can...revise my writing for spelling and grammar.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Peer work
- Video Instruction

Formative Assessments

- Observation
- Written Work
- Grammar quizzes
- Exit Tickets

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Noredink.com
 - commas
 - commonly confused words part 2
- Commas [activity](#)

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.SS.8.1.E

Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.

ELA.L.SS.8.1.G

Recognize spelling conventions.

Lesson 5: Revisions

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

WALT accept feedback from peers.

WALT make changes that improve the quality of our writing.

WALT provide meaningful feedback to peers.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can...review my work with a peer.

I can...accept their feedback.

I can...make changes based on feedback.

I can...provide meaningful feedback to my peers.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct instruction
- Gradual release
- Peer work
- Revising/Editing

Formative Assessments

- Observation
- Written Work

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Essay Draft
- [Rubric](#) review

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.W.WR.8.5

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

ELA.W.SE.8.6

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.

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.

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

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.8.1.E	Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
ELA.L.SS.8.1.G	Recognize spelling conventions.
ELA.RI.CR.8.1	Cite a range of textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections (including informational text features such as charts, graphs, and diagrams) that strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly, as well as inferences drawn from the text.
ELA.RI.CI.8.2	Determine a central idea of an informational text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; 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.8.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.D	Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
ELA.W.IW.8.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section (e.g., sentence, part of a paragraph, paragraph, or multiple paragraphs) that synthesizes the information or explanation presented.
ELA.W.WP.8.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; seeking out

assistance, models, sources or feedback to improve understanding or refine final products; focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

ELA.W.SE.8.6

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.W.RW.8.7

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.8.1

Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.8.CI.3

Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas (e.g., 2.1.8.SSH, 6.1.8.CivicsPD.2).

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

Technological disparities have consequences for public health and prosperity.

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/1bNUBwwW9BLgTLqjfjVAJiet6rbmQ3THg-sXDz2rEnXk/edit?gid=0#gid=0>

Human activities have significantly altered the biosphere, sometimes damaging or destroying natural habitats and causing the extinction of other species. But changes to Earth's environments can have different impacts (negative and positive) for different living things.

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP5.1

Career-ready individuals understand the interrelated nature of their actions and regularly make decisions that positively impact and/or mitigate negative impact on other people, organization, and the environment. They are aware of and utilize new technologies, understandings, procedures, materials, and regulations affecting the nature of their work as it relates to the impact on the social condition, the environment and the profitability of the organization.

SEL Competencies and Standards

SEL.PK-12.3.4

Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings

SEL.PK-12.4.2

Identify the consequences associated with one's actions in order to make constructive choices