

Unit 2: Reading Informational Texts & Writing Informative/Explanatory Pieces (Weeks 7-14)

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

Unit 2: Reading Informational Texts & Writing Informative/Explanatory Pieces

In this unit, students will read, discuss, and write about a wide variety of nonfiction texts, from news articles to essays to speeches and excerpts. As the Reading Informational Text standards indicate, students are expected to understand that each nonfiction text is written for a specific purpose, with a specific audience in mind, and that writers employ a variety of rhetorical strategies to communicate their intended message. To address the Writing Informative/Explanatory Texts standards, students will be expected to write responses of various lengths in which they relate the knowledge they gain from their nonfiction texts to the themes and ideas conveyed in an independent reading book of their choice; this will also help to reinforce the skills learned in the previous unit.

Essential Questions

1. What strategies do writers employ to convey their intended message?
2. In what ways does an author's purpose, point of view, and personal experience impact his/her/their work?
3. Why is it important to read a wide variety of texts on a particular topic to truly understand it?
4. What are the essential components of a clear and compelling explanatory/informative essay?

Pre-Assessments

Students will read multiple nonfiction texts on a particular topic relevant to a previously read whole-class text (via CommonLit) to assess their current progress with the Reading Informational Text standards. The results of this assessment will inform teachers' instructional plan for the rest of the unit, e.g., which standards to focus on more deeply.

Instructional Plan

Possible Texts & Topics:

See [link](#)

Pre-Assessment

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

WALT we cannot accurately analyze a text without using relevant textual evidence to support our analysis.

WALT consider what the text says explicitly and what the text implies to ensure accurate and thorough textual analysis.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can identify important parts of the text

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Students will read multiple nonfiction texts on a particular topic relevant to a previously read whole-class text (via CommonLit) to assess their current progress with the Reading Informational Text standards. The results of this assessment will inform teachers’ instructional plan for the rest of the unit, e.g., which standards to focus on more deeply.

Formative Assessments

Whole-Class Practice: After reading texts together, I will assess students’ understanding via whole-class participation and discussion.

Instructional Materials and Resources

- CommonLit
- Short written responses
- Google Form Surveys
- Individual reading and annotation of articles

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Commonit

Nonfiction Analysis - Whole-Class Practice

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

WALT a central idea is the overarching message of a work of nonfiction.

WALT every work of nonfiction should have at least one clear central idea.

WALT the central idea of a text is the sum of its most important details.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can identify and explain the central idea of a work of nonfiction

Instructional Strategies and Activities

We will read a variety of articles about different topics together to analyze them for meaning, structure, rhetorical devices, central ideas, authors’ purpose, etc.

Formative Assessments

- Exit quizzes
- CommonLit

Instructional Materials and Resources

Commonlit

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Nonfiction Analysis - Individual & Small-Group Practice:

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

WALT summaries are different from themes and central ideas in that they simply tell us what happened in a text, not what the text means; therefore, summaries are easier to write.

WALT authors organize their texts deliberately to build cohesive arguments/ explanations.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can evaluate the structure of a nonfiction text

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Students will work alone, then in small groups, to analyze a variety of nonfiction texts for meaning, structure, rhetorical devices, central ideas, authors' purpose, etc.

Formative Assessments

Small-Group Practice: After reading texts individually, then in small groups, students will meet with me to discuss their work; I will use this as an assessment of their current knowledge.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Commonlit

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Modeling Informative/ Explanatory Writing

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

WALT use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words.

WALT use reference materials such as online dictionaries to determine the meaning of unknown words when context clues do not suffice.

WALT authors are deliberate in their word choices and phrasing, i.e., they use and arrange words purposely to communicate literal and figurative messages.

Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"

I can use context clues to figure out the meaning of words

Instructional Strategies and Activities

As the end goal of this unit is for students to write an informative piece about a topic relevant to their IR book, the teacher will model this process via a topic relevant to the whole-class text of the previous unit. The essay will include evidence from the whole-class text as well as several relevant nonfiction texts.

Formative Assessments

Informative Essay Outline: Students will outline their essays prior to writing; this will allow me to assess their progress on what they understand thus far.

Instructional Materials and Resources

Graphic Organizers

Commonlit

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

Student IR Book & Topic Choice

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

WALT discuss works of literature and nonfiction with our teachers and classmates to better understand them.

WALT spend time reading and thinking about a text before we can actively participate in and contribute to a discussion about it.

WALT active participation in a discussion requires careful listening, thoughtful responses, and relevant contributions.

Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”

I can participate in discussions o better understand literature

I can prepare for an academic conversation

Instructional Strategies and Activities

Students will choose [a topic](#), then an IR book relevant to that topic, i.e., Black lives in America (The Hate U Give, Dear Martin, Long Way Down, Rebound, etc.) or Native Americans (The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian, Rain is Not My Indian Name, etc.). They will then log their IR book reading, taking notes on what they’re learning about the topic via the book and reading and responding to nonfiction texts relevant to that topic.

Formative Assessments

Reading Checks + One-on-one conferences: Much of the assessment that will occur in this unit is based on students' individual reading and journaling. I will be able to assess students on an individual basis and provide assistance to those who are struggling as well as more advanced challenges to those who are excelling.

Instructional Materials and Resources

IR Booklog

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.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.9–10.1.C	Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.
ELA.L.KL.9–10.2.A	Acquire and use accurately general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level.
ELA.L.KL.9–10.2.B	Vary word choice and sentence structure to demonstrate an understanding of the influence of language.
ELA.L.KL.9–10.2.C	Demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
ELA.RI.CR.9–10.1	Cite a range and thorough textual evidence and make clear and relevant connections, to strongly support an analysis of multiple aspects of what an informational text says explicitly and inferentially, as well as interpretations of the text.

ELA.RI.CI.9–10.2	Determine one or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze how it is developed and refined over the course of a text, including how it emerges and is shaped by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
ELA.RI.IT.9–10.3	Analyze how an author unfolds ideas throughout the text, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
ELA.RI.TS.9–10.4	Analyze in detail the author’s choices concerning the structure of ideas or claims of a text, and how they are developed and refined by particular sentences, paragraphs, or larger portions of a text (e.g., a section or chapter).
ELA.RI.PP.9–10.5	Determine an author’s purpose in a text (including cultural experience and knowledge reflected in text originating outside the United States) and analyze how an author uses rhetorical devices to advance that purpose.
ELA.RI.AA.9–10.7	Describe and evaluate the argument and specific claims in an informational text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and reasoning.
ELA.RI.CT.9–10.8	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) seminal and informational text of historical and scientific significance, including how they relate in terms of themes and significant concepts.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2	Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2.A	Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2.B	Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2.C	Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2.E	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
ELA.W.IW.9–10.2.F	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.12.CI.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).
TECH.9.4.12.CI.3	Investigate new challenges and opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and transition (e.g., 2.1.12.PGD.1).
TECH.9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.9-12.8.1.12.AP.7

Collaboratively design and develop programs and artifacts for broad audiences by incorporating feedback from users.

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

SOC.6.1.12.GeoPP.2.a

Analyze how the United States has attempted to account for regional differences while also striving to create an American identity.

SOC.6.1.12.HistorySE.14.a

Explore the various ways women, racial and ethnic minorities, the LGBTQ community, and individuals with disabilities have contributed to the American economy, politics and society.

21st Century Life and Career

CAEP.9.2.12.C.3

Identify transferable career skills and design alternate career plans.

CAEP.9.2.12.C.7

Examine the professional, legal, and ethical responsibilities for both employers and employees in the global workplace.

CAEP.9.2.12.C.8

Assess the impact of litigation and court decisions on employment laws and practices.

TECH.8.2.12.D.CS1

Apply the design process.

TECH.8.2.12.D.CS2

Use and maintain technological products and systems.

TECH.8.2.12.D.CS3

Assess the impact of products and systems.

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

See Crosswalks

SEL Competencies

SEL.PK-12.2.3

Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals

SEL.PK-12.3.1

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