Thoughtful Learning - Research Writing Grade 3

Content Area: **English**
Course(s):
Time Period: **March**
Length: **4 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

The Research Writing unit focuses on researching a topic. Students will use two or more resources and record and organize facts. Students will write an informational report based on their research. This unit also focuses on summaries and photo essays.

Enduring Understandings

- Students will learn to research using two or more sources.
- Students will learn to record facts and rephrase in own words.
- Students will understand how to organize facts into categories.
- Students will learn to write a three paragraph essay and cite resources.
- Students will learn how to summarize.
- Students will learn what a photo essay is and how to create one.

Essential Questions

What are resources and how do you cite them?

How do you state facts in your own words?

How should a paragraph be structured?

How do you effectively summarize a text?

What is a photo essay and how do you create one?

Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

Writing Classroom Reports - Start - Up Activity

Take a "Stand-Up Poll." Say to your students, "I want you to stand up when I name something you care about." Then list the topics on this page: "Dolphins." After students stand, tell them to sit before the next category. "Spiders." Continue with the other topics: "Volcanoes." "Tornadoes." "Space." "Holidays." "Books."

Afterward, have all students sit and say, "What else do you care about that I haven't mentioned? Raise your hand, and when I call on you, stand up and say what you care about."

After students share their ideas, tell them that writing a report is an effective way to learn even more about topics that are important to them

Writing a Report

Provide students a general subject area that you have been studying. Then ask them to write down specific topics that interest them in that subject area. Help them realize they don't have to know all about their topics. They just need to be interested enough to learn more.

After students choose an interesting topic, have them write as many questions as they can think of about the topic. They can write their questions on paper, cards, or a gathering grid. (See page 162.)

Downloads:

Gathering Grid

Encourage your students to find two or more sources of information about their topics. Have them read the sources listed on this page and select at least two.

As students study about their topics, have them write answers and source information beside the questions on their note cards, in their notebooks, or in their gathering grids. Tell them that if their reading brings up new questions, they should add them along with answers.

Gathering Grid

Use this page to help students create a gathering grid to guide their research. They can do so digitally with the download, or they can draw one by hand.

Downloads:

Gathering Grid

Writing Drafts

Once students complete their research, present to them the tips and examples for writing a strong beginning, middle, and ending. Then give them the time to create their first drafts.

Revising, Editing, and Proofreading

After students complete the first drafts of their reports, lead them through the "Revising" material on this page. Have them use the questions to improve their work. Also, have peer reviewers use the same questions to read and respond to the reports.

Once revisions are complete, present the "Editing and Proofreading" material on this page. Students should check spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Have them create a clean final copy, like the one shown on page 165.

Sample Classroom Report

Have volunteers read each paragraph from the sample classroom report. Then lead a discussion about this report:

- How does the writer make you interested in the subject?
- How does the writer make you interested in details reported about the subject?
- How could you apply these same strategies to your own report?

Writing Summaries - Start-up Activity

Bring in clippings of summaries. They might be movie plot summaries, back-cover copy for novels, chapter introductions in textbooks, TV listings, or concert notes. Read and discuss them with your students. Ask, "What is the purpose of a summary?" Among the answers, students may say that a summary lets you quickly "get a taste" for something to decide if you want to experience the whole thing.

Let students know summaries also help the writer truly understand the subject. Tell your class they will be writing their own summaries, not just for readers, but for themselves.

Original Reading Selection

Have volunteers read each paragraph of the article. Before moving on to the summary, ask students "What is the main point of that article?" Take their suggestions and write them on the board. Then look at the suggestions and say, "How could we sum up these ideas in a single sentence?" Work with the class to create a single summary sentence.

Then say, "Now, let's see how another writer summarized the main point in the first sentence of the sample summary." Have a volunteer read the sample summary. Compare your summary sentence to the one in the book. Then ask, "What details did the writer choose as the most important supports for the summary sentence? Do you agree or disagree? Why?"

Writing a Summary

Provide students with a text to summarize. If you like, select a reading you have for another area of study, such as science or social studies. Before students read the passage, lead them through the tips, "Read Carefully."

After they read, lead them through "How to Find Main Ideas." Then ask, "What is the main idea of this text?" Take suggestions and write them on the board. Then say, "On your own paper, I want you to write a single sentence that sums up the main idea." Once they have their sentences, ask the students to return to the reading and look for specific details they would use to support the main idea.

Writing, Revising, and Editing

Once students have their information gathered, lead them through "Writing a Draft." Then have them create their summaries.

Afterward, have them revise their summaries using the questions under "Revising."

Then have students edit and proofread their work and make a neat final copy to share.

Writing Photo Essays - Start-up Activity

Share appropriate magazines that include photos and text, such as *National Geographic* or *Life*. Have students page through the magazines, looking for photos that draw their attention. Ask what they like about the photos. Ask what they can learn from the photos. Ask them to close their eyes and imagine the magazine with no photos, just words.

Lead a discussion about the power of pictures. Help students understand that when they connect words and photos, they can reach their audience in all new ways.

Sample Photo Essay

Have volunteers read each paragraph of the sample photo essay. When a photo accompanies a paragraph, stop to discuss the photo. "How does the photo make the ideas clearer?" "What is the photo doing that the text can't do?" Point out to students that each photo must be carefully chosen and positioned, just as the words are carefully chosen and positioned.

Middle

Ask for a student volunteer to read the paragraph in the middle of the photo essay.

Then ask for other volunteers to describe "what the photo shows you." Help students understand that they can learn a great deal from a photo.

Ending

Have a volunteer read the paragraph. Then lead a discussion about what they see. Ask students

what the photos are doing that words alone can't do.

Then have a volunteer read the last part of the essay.

Writing a Photo Essay

Have your students list interesting people they know who have jobs or hobbies that other students would like to find out about. Students then should pick a topic.

Lead students through the next two sets of tips, having them research their topics and collect photos. If they know the person, they may want to interview him or her and take pictures. If they don't know the person, they may need to do research in books and online.

At the bottom of the page, remind students that the photos they include shouldn't just be "for show." They should communicate ideas that words can't express.

Writing, Revising, and Editing

After students have gathered information and images for their photo essays, lead them through "Writing a Draft." Then give them time to put their first drafts together.

When the time comes to revise, have students use the questions under "Revising" to improve their work. Also, have peer readers use these questions to suggest improvements.

After revising, have students check for spelling, capitalization, and punctuation errors.

Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills

The 21st century skills are a set of abilities that students need to develop in order to succeed in the information age. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills lists three types:

Learning Skills

- Critical Thinking
- Creative Thinking
- Collaborating
- Communicating

Literacy Skills

- Information Literacy
- Media Literacy

- Technology Literacy

Interdisciplinary Connections

These writing steps and skills can be utilized in science and social studies assignments. Students will research an animal from the habitat they studied in science and write a classroom report.

Differentiation

Modify expectations: Shorten or lengthen assignment depending on abilities.

Require basic or extended vocabulary.

Small group teacher instruction based on student's writing ability.

Pair students heterogeneously for centers to encourage students to learn from peers.

Allow for speech to text for longer writing assignments.

Provide choice extension projects as necessary to extend learning

https://k12.thoughtfullearning.com/minilesson/summarizing-ideas-nutshell

Modifications & Accommodations

Refer to QSAC, EXCEL SPED Accommodations spreadsheet in this discipline.

IEP and 504 accommodations will be utilized.

Formative Assessments

You can provide this formative assessment during different types of writing conferences:

- **Desk-Side Conferences** occur when you stop at a student's desk to ask questions and make responses. Questions should be open-ended. This gives the writer "space" to talk and clarify his or her own thinking about the writing.
- **Scheduled Conferences** give you and a student a chance to meet for 3 to 5 minutes in a more structured setting. In such a conference, a student may have a specific problem or need to discuss or simply want you to assess his or her progress on a particular piece of writing.
- **Small-Group Conferences** give you a chance to meet with three to five students who are at the same stage of the writing process or are experiencing a similar problem. The goal of such conferences is twofold: first, to help students improve their writing and, second, to help them become better assessors.

Summative Assessments

Decide which assignments require summative assessment, and then grade the writing following this process:

- Ask students to submit prewriting and rough drafts with their final drafts.
- Scan final drafts once, focusing on the writing as a whole.
- Reread them, this time assessing them using the qualities of writing.
- Make marginal notations, if necessary, as you read the drafts a second time.
- Scan the writing a third and final time. Note the feedback you have given.
- Complete your rating sheet or rubric, and, if necessary, write a summary comment.

Instructional Materials

Writer's Express Skills Book

Writer's Express Handbook

Standards

LA.RI.3.1	Ask and answer questions, and make relevant connections to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.
LA.RI.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.RI.3.2	Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea.
LA.RI.6.2	Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
LA.RI.3.3	Describe the relationship between a series of historical events, scientific ideas or concepts, or steps in technical procedures in a text, using language that pertains to time, sequence, and cause/effect.
LA.RI.6.3	Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).
LA.RI.3.6	Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text.
LA.RI.6.7	Integrate information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words to develop a coherent understanding of a topic or issue.
LA.RI.6.8	Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
LA.RI.3.8	Describe the logical connection between particular sentences and paragraphs in a text (e.g., comparison, cause/effect, first/second/third in a sequence) to support specific points the author makes in a text.
L.WF.3.3	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing including those listed under grade two foundational skills.
L.KL.3.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.W.6.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
LA.W.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 aiding comprehension.
LA.W.6.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
LA.W.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
LA.W.6.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.6.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.6.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.
LA.W.3.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
LA.W.3.2.A	Introduce a topic and group related information together; include text features (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, captions) when useful to support comprehension.
LA.W.3.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
LA.W.3.2.C	Use linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within

	categories of information.
LA.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.6.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
LA.W.3.2.D	Provide a conclusion.
LA.W.6.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of three pages in a single sitting.
LA.W.6.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and refocusing the inquiry when appropriate.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.6	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.W.3.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
LA.W.3.8	Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.