Gr. 8 ELA Unit 6: Person of the Year

Content Area: **English**
Course(s): **Language Arts**
Time Period: **May**
Length: **4 weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit overview

The purpose of this unit is twofold: the first half of the unit will focus on enhancing students' ability to read and understand complex nonfiction texts, while the second half of the unit challenges students to create their own Person of the Year (POTY) writing piece. Students will read several published POTY examples. We will use these examples to discuss necessary nonfiction reading skills such as identifying central idea, considering the structure of a nonfiction text, identifying bias, and evaluating the strength of an author's argument. Students' understanding of these concepts will be assessed using a quiz. Once students have been exposed to a variety of exemplars, students will be asked to identify their own influential person. They will then write an organized piece that blends informational and argumentative writing skills.

Enduring Understandings

Readers of dense nonfiction texts can use the structure and text features to help make meaning.

Readers should consider whose viewpoint is included in a text, whose is omitted, and why.

The ability to identify bias and to evaluate the strength of an argument is an essential skill to be a well-informed consumer of information.

Essential Questions

What are some of the differences between fiction and nonfiction texts?

How do readers approach these types of texts differently?

What strategies can readers use to make sense of complex informational texts?

What are the different ways that an author can organize information?

How do readers evaluate the strength of a writer's argument?

Instructional Strategies and Learning Activities

Day 1: What is Time's Person of the Year? Students will complete a webquest to help them learn about this type of informational writing.	Day 2: Text Features and Text Structures Students will be able to identify common text features and text structures. Students will be able to use these to help build their understanding of a text.	Day 3: Identifying Central Idea Students will be able to define central idea and identify the central idea in a whole text/section of a text. Students will be able to identify supporting details.	Day 4: Central Idea continued Students will read the Time Magazine 2023 Person of the Year piece. They will identify the central idea and supporting details of various sections of this text.	Day 5: Author's Purpose and Perspective Students will be able to identify a nonfiction writer's purpose in a text. Students will be able to define perspective and consider how bias plays a role in nonfiction writing. Students will read an opinion article which disagrees with Time's POTY decision.
Day 6: Notice and Note, Nonfiction Signposts Students will be able to identify and analyze the following: word gaps, contrasts and contradictions, absolute or extreme language, numbers and statistics, and quoted words. Students will read another POTY exemplar and practice identifying these signposts.	Day 7: Evaluating the Strength of an Argument Students will be able to evaluate the strength of a nonfiction writer's argument by considering the fairness, evidence, logic, and tone used in the piece. Students will practice this skill with an opinion piece posted on Google Classroom.	Day 8: Person of the Year Centers, Day 1 Students will move in small groups to the following centers. They will visit two centers today and two tomorrow. Center 1: Critical Reading Directions: Read the TIME Person of the Year profiles for Martin Luther King Jr. and Elon Musk. Then answer the corresponding questions.	Day 9: Person of the Year Centers, Day 2 Students will continue the previous day's activity, visiting the remaining two stations.	Day 10: Brainstorming for POTY Students will consider influential people in their lives and will complete a series of quick writes about these individuals (family members, friends, coaches, mentors, celebrities, politicians, etc.). Students will select their Person of the Year.

		Center 2: Compare and Contrast Directions: Read the TIME Person of the Year profiles for The Ebola Fighters and Joseph Stalin. Complete the Venn Diagram (hard copy handout) to compare and contrast these choices. Center 3: Unique "Person" of the Year Choices Directions: Read the TIME Person of the Year profiles for You and The Endangered Earth. Then answer the corresponding questions. Center 4: Research Directions: Do some research to respond to the following questions. Be sure to work as a group to complete this task. Who (or what) wasn't selected that you think should have been named Person of the Year, at any point in the last 25 years? Come up with at least five options. Be sure to include their name		

		and the reason they would have been a good Person of the Year. Select one of your choices. Name: Year they should have been chosen: Why do you think they deserve this nomination? Use specific evidence and examples to support your selection.		
Day 11: Students will complete the nonfiction reading quiz.	Day 12: The teacher will model how to write a Person of the Year piece using her own example. Students will draft their first body paragraph with guidance from the teacher.	Day 13: Students will draft their remaining two body paragraphs on Google Classroom.	Day 14: The teacher will model how to write an introduction using her own POTY piece. Students will write introductory paragraphs for their essay.	Day 15: The teacher will model how to write a conclusion using her own POTY piece. Students will write concluding paragraphs for their essay.
Day 16: Creating a Magazine Cover Students will use Canva to create a magazine cover for their Person of the Year piece.	Day 17: Editing Students will edit their work using a checklist. Students will peer edit to prepare for publication.	Day 18: Students will participate in a museum walk in order to share their writing pieces with their classmates.		

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

9.4.8.CI.1	Assess data gathered on varying perspectives on causes of climate change (e.g., cross-cultural, gender-specific, generational), and determine how the data can best be used to design multiple potential solutions (e.g., RI.7.9, 6.SP.B.5, 7.1.NH.IPERS.6, 8.2.8.ETW.4).
9.1.2.CR.1	Recognize ways to volunteer in the classroom, school and community.
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).
9.4.8.CI.4	Explore the role of creativity and innovation in career pathways and industries.
9.2.8.CAP.4	Explain how an individual's online behavior (e.g., social networking, photo exchanges, video postings) may impact opportunities for employment or advancement.
9.4.8.CT.1	Evaluate diverse solutions proposed by a variety of individuals, organizations, and/or agencies to a local or global problem, such as climate change, and use critical thinking skills to predict which one(s) are likely to be effective (e.g., MS-ETS1-2).
9.4.8.CT.2	Develop multiple solutions to a problem and evaluate short- and long-term effects to determine the most plausible option (e.g., MS-ETS1-4, 6.1.8.CivicsDP.1).
9.2.8.CAP.9	Analyze how a variety of activities related to career preparation (e.g., volunteering, apprenticeships, structured learning experiences, dual enrollment, job search, scholarships) impacts post-secondary options.
9.4.8.DC.1	Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use.
9.4.8.DC.2	Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products (e.g., W.6.8).
9.2.8.CAP.12	Assess personal strengths, talents, values, and interests to appropriate jobs and careers to maximize career potential.
9.4.8.DC.3	Describe tradeoffs between allowing information to be public (e.g., within online games) versus keeping information private and secure.
9.4.8.DC.4	Explain how information shared digitally is public and can be searched, copied, and potentially seen by public audiences.
9.4.8.DC.5	Manage digital identity and practice positive online behavior to avoid inappropriate forms of self-disclosure.
9.4.8.DC.6	Analyze online information to distinguish whether it is helpful or harmful to reputation.
9.2.8.CAP.18	Explain how personal behavior, appearance, attitudes, and other choices may impact the job application process.
9.2.8.CAP.19	Relate academic achievement, as represented by high school diplomas, college degrees, and industry credentials, to employability and to potential level.
9.4.8.GCA.2	Demonstrate openness to diverse ideas and perspectives through active discussions to achieve a group goal.
9.4.8.IML.1	Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
9.4.8.IML.2	Identify specific examples of distortion, exaggeration, or misrepresentation of information.
9.4.8.IML.3	Create a digital visualization that effectively communicates a data set using formatting techniques such as form, position, size, color, movement, and spatial grouping (e.g., 6.SP.B.4, 7.SP.B.8b).
9.4.8.IML.6	Identify subtle and overt messages based on the method of communication.
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).
9.4.8.IML.8	Apply deliberate and thoughtful search strategies to access high-quality information on

	climate change (e.g., 1.1.8.C1b).
9.4.8.IML.9	Distinguish between ethical and unethical uses of information and media (e.g., 1.5.8.CR3b, 8.2.8.EC.2).
9.4.8.IML.10	Examine the consequences of the uses of media (e.g., RI.8.7).
9.4.8.IML.11	Predict the personal and community impact of online and social media activities.
9.4.8.IML.12	Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
9.4.8.IML.13	Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information (e.g., 8.2.8.ED.1).
9.4.8.IML.14	Analyze the role of media in delivering cultural, political, and other societal messages.
9.4.8.IML.15	Explain ways that individuals may experience the same media message differently.
9.4.8.TL.3	Select appropriate tools to organize and present information digitally.
9.4.8.TL.4	Synthesize and publish information about a local or global issue or event (e.g., MSLS4-5, 6.1.8.CivicsPI.3).
9.4.8.TL.5	Compare the process and effectiveness of synchronous collaboration and asynchronous collaboration.
9.4.8.TL.6	Collaborate to develop and publish work that provides perspectives on a real-world problem.

Technology and Design Thinking

	Software and hardware work together as a system to accomplish tasks (e.g., sending, receiving, processing, and storing units of information).
8.1.5.CS.2	Model how computer software and hardware work together as a system to accomplish tasks.
	Shared features allow for common troubleshooting strategies that can be effective for many systems.
8.1.5.CS.3	Identify potential solutions for simple hardware and software problems using common troubleshooting strategies.
8.1.5.NI.2	Describe physical and digital security measures for protecting sensitive personal information.
8.1.5.DA.1	Collect, organize, and display data in order to highlight relationships or support a claim.
8.1.5.DA.4	Organize and present climate change data visually to highlight relationships or support a claim.
8.2.5.EC.1	Analyze how technology has contributed to or reduced inequities in local and global communities and determine its short- and long-term effects.

Interdisciplinary Connections

TECH.8.1.8	Educational Technology: All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.
TECH.8.1.8.D.2	Demonstrate the application of appropriate citations to digital content.
TECH.8.1.8.E.CS3	Evaluate and select information sources and digital tools based on the appropriateness for

specific tasks.

Differentiation

- Understand that gifted students, just like all students, come to school to learn and be challenged.
- Pre-assess your students. Find out their areas of strength as well as those areas you may need to address before students move on.
- Consider grouping gifted students together for at least part of the school day.
- Plan for differentiation. Consider pre-assessments, extension activities, and compacting the curriculum.
- Use phrases like "You've shown you don't need more practice" or "You need more practice" instead of words like "qualify" or "eligible" when referring to extension work.
- Encourage high-ability students to take on challenges. Because they're often used to getting good grades, gifted students may be risk averse.

- **Definitions of Differentiation Components**:

    - Content – the specific information that is to be taught in the lesson/unit/course of instruction.
    - Process – how the student will acquire the content information.
    - Product – how the student will demonstrate understanding of the content.
    - Learning Environment – the environment where learning is taking place including physical location and/or student grouping

Differentiation occurring in this unit: Additional support and/or additional challenges will be available to students in need of modifications. Small group and individual conferences will be used.

Modifications and Accommodations

Refer to QSAC EXCEL SMALL SPED ACCOMMOCATIONS spreadsheet in this discipline.

Modifications and Accommodations will be applied according to IEPs and 504 plans.

Benchmark Assessments

Benchmark Assessments are given periodically (e.g., at the end of every quarter or as frequently as once per month) throughout a school year to establish baseline achievement data and measure progress toward a standard or set of academic standards and goals.

Schoolwide Benchmark assessments:

Aimsweb benchmarks 3X a year

Linkit Benchmarks 3X a year

Formative Assessments

Assessment allows both instructor and student to monitor progress towards achieving learning objectives, and can be approached in a variety of ways. **Formative assessment** refers to tools that identify misconceptions, struggles, and learning gaps along the way and assess how to close those gaps. It includes effective tools for helping to shape learning, and can even bolster students' abilities to take ownership of their learning when they understand that the goal is to improve learning, not apply final marks (Trumbull and Lash, 2013). It can include students assessing themselves, peers, or even the instructor, through writing, quizzes, conversation, and more. In short, formative assessment occurs throughout a class or course, and seeks to improve student achievement of learning objectives through approaches that can support specific student needs (Theal and Franklin, 2010, p. 151).

Formative Assessments used in this unit: small group discussions, whole class discussions, writing conferences, reading conferences, readers' notebooks, daily writing work on Google Classroom, daily homework

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments evaluate student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or success at the conclusion of an instructional period, like a unit, course, or program. Summative assessments are almost always formally graded and often heavily weighted (though they do not need to be). Summative assessment can be used to great effect in conjunction and alignment with formative assessment, and instructors can consider a variety of ways to combine these approaches.

Summative assessments for this unit: Wordly Wise test; grammar quiz; nonfiction reading quiz; nonfiction reading test; final writing publication (*Person of the Year piece)*

Instructional Materials

The following instructional materials will be utilized:

- Smartboard
- Student chromebooks/Google Classroom
- Several published *Time* magazine "Person of the Year" articles (mentor texts)
- Teacher and student exemplars
- *Wordly Wise* level 8 workbooks
- *Write on Course 2020 : A Student Handbook for Writing, Thinking, and Learning* pages 192--221, 166-189
- *Write on Course 2020 Skillsbook* (grammar workbook, level 8)

Standards

L.SS.8.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
L.SS.8.1.A	Explain the function of verbals (gerunds, participles, infinitives) in general and their function in particular sentences.
L.SS.8.1.B	Form and use verbs in the active and passive voice.
L.SS.8.1.C	Form and use verbs in the indicative, imperative, interrogative, conditional, and subjunctive mood.
L.SS.8.1.D	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb voice and mood.
L.SS.8.1.E	Use punctuation (comma, ellipsis, dash) to indicate a pause or break.
L.SS.8.1.F	Use an ellipsis to indicate an omission.
L.SS.8.1.G	Recognize spelling conventions.
L.KL.8.2	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
L.KL.8.2.A	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
L.KL.8.2.B	Gather vocabulary knowledge when selecting a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
L.KL.8.2.C	Use verbs in the active and passive voice and in the conditional and subjunctive mood to achieve particular effects (e.g., emphasizing the actor or the action; expressing uncertainty or describing a state contrary to fact).
L.VL.8.3	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words or phrases based on grade 8 reading and content, including technical meanings, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
L.VL.8.3.A	Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
L.VL.8.3.B	Analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.
L.VL.8.3.C	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
L.VL.8.3.D	Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
L.VL.8.3.E	Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).
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.
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.
RI.IT.8.3	Analyze how particular elements of a text interact (e.g., how contexts influence individuals or events, or how individuals influence ideas or events) across multiple text types, including across literary and informational texts.

RI.TS.8.4	Analyze and explain how an author organizes, develops and presents ideas, establishes a point of view or builds supporting arguments through text structure.
RI.PP.8.5	Analyze how an author conveys or develops their perspective or purpose in a text and by acknowledging and responding to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.
RI.MF.8.6	Evaluate the choices made (by the authors, directors, or actors) when presenting an idea in different mediums and the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) to address a question or solve a problem.
RI.CT.8.8	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) two or more informational texts that provide conflicting information on the same topic and identify where the texts disagree on matters of fact or interpretation.
W.AW.8.1	Write arguments on discipline-specific content (e.g., social studies, science, technical subjects, English/Language Arts) to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
W.AW.8.1.A	Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
W.AW.8.1.B	Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
W.AW.8.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
W.AW.8.1.D	Establish and maintain a formal or academic style, approach, and form.
W.AW.8.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.
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.
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.
W.IW.8.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
W.IW.8.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
W.IW.8.2.D	Use precise language and domain/grade-level-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
W.IW.8.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal style/academic style, approach, and form.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
SL.II.8.2	Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and evaluate the motives (e.g., social, commercial, political) behind its presentation.
SL.AS.8.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.