Big Idea/ Topic

**These digital plans have been designed by Georgia educators as examples of what’s working well for their students. When making curriculum decisions for your students, consult the guidelines of your local school and district.**

Informative Writing

This ten-lesson mini unit introduces students to informative writing. Students will learn to brainstorm effectively, research a chosen topic of interest, organize research, learn to write an introduction with a “hook” that grabs the reader’s attention, learn to effectively conclude their writing, and review their work for editing purposes.

**Lesson Three Topic:** How do I begin my research for my informative writing?

**Note to the Teacher:** Before the lesson begins, you as the teacher need to form research groups among students (if students share the same interest). Also, create a table with the students’ names and selected research topics (or have students enter their final topic into a shared table at the end of class). After that table is created, keep it in a slide students cannot edit but that can be posted/shared throughout the process. This will help keep students accountable for their topic so that they do not change topics mid-write.

Students will use today to begin research online using websites and/or physical resources (books, informational texts, etc.). The teacher will model by doing a search for your own topic of interest. Teachers can create slides of the online sources you want your students to use for synchronous and asynchronous students. Let students take notes any way they wish today to see what they already know about note taking.

**Note:** The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) does not endorse the books, resources, websites, programs, products, and other materials identified in the Remote Learning Plan Units. Any use of books, resources, websites, programs, products, and other materials are intended to serve as examples only. All curriculum decisions are made at the local level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Targets</th>
<th>Lesson “Small Make(s)”</th>
<th>Unit “Big Make”</th>
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| I can effectively **research** using technology, library books, and/or other informational texts. | • Notetaking  
• Reflection response | Culminating task is a fully researched informative essay written by the student (about a topic of the student’s choice) that will be shared with other 5th grade students in a coffee house event. |

**Rubric Options:** *(The teacher can decide what rubric is preferred, including the option to use an informative writing rubric/checklist that is already working well in the classroom.)*

- **Georgia Milestones 5th Grade Informative Writing Rubrics**
- **Sample 5th Grade Informative Writing Learning Target Rubric** *(could be easily edited for personal preference)*

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**Standard Alignment**

**Standard(s):**

**ELAGSE5W2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.

b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.

c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

**ELAGSE5W7:** Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

**ELAGSE5W8:** Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work; and provide a list of sources.

**WIDA English Language Development Standards for English learners (ELs):**

Teachers of ELs are encouraged to use the resources in the [WIDA English Language Development Standards Framework, 2020 Edition](#) to design language expectations (p.28) specific to the GSE.

Examples of the English language needed to support informational writing can be found on pp. 114-115.
Instructional Design

For more information regarding daily routine practices and/or additional information on the unit framework (including materials), please see the Unit Overview.

Various evidence-based practices (EBPs) are identified throughout the lesson below; however, we believe good teaching can be eclectic, “...thoughtfully, intentionally taking some of the best of different teaching methodologies, while always holding onto some research-based, core beliefs, we can help our students flourish in ways that teaching only one way will not” (Roberts, 2018, p. 6). Always feel free to adapt the lesson to meet your professional needs with your specific student population. Ideas for student supports and enrichments can be found in the “Student Learning Supports” section.

Materials

Teacher— Informative Writing PowerPoint (Slides will include resources for students to use during research and note taking for the day.)

Students— Access to Google Classroom or alternative, computer with Wi-Fi, pen, paper, or journal; access to physical resources as appropriate for purpose (books, etc.) for f2f learners; Informational Writing: Lesson Three Handout (Unplugged).

Engage

Opening:

Yesterday we learned about three brainstorming ideas that helped us to find a topic to begin our informative essay today. Now that you know your topics, how will you begin your research? Most researchers use the internet to find resources about their topics. Today, I would like for you to find at least two sources so you can begin reading and taking notes for your essay. You may take notes any way you wish today. If you need help using the resources and looking for information, please drop a note in the chat box, send me a message in classroom, or email me during the period. I will do my best to get to you as soon as I can.
**Synchronous**
Students will begin research today using the resource links shared in the Informative Writing PowerPoint. Teachers will create additional slides or another presentation if they select different resources for students to begin their research. Today teachers should support students in looking up resources and helping students navigate the sites they wish to find information for their topic. Students will take notes in a Google document or alternate note taking digital platform. Teachers will review student note taking styles to discuss with students the following day. Students’ online documents should be labeled Last Name – Name of Research Topic.

[EBP: Select texts purposefully to support comprehension development. [Minimal evidence] (Shanahan et al., 2010)].

**Asynchronous**
Students will begin research today using the resource links shared in the Informative Writing PowerPoint. Teachers can create additional slides if they want to direct students to other resources. Resource links will be on slide presentations and each student will have their own copy. Students will take notes in a Google/Microsoft document or alternate note taking digital platform. Students’ online documents should be labeled Last Name – Name of Research Topic. Teachers will review student note taking styles to discuss with students the following day.

**Unplugged/Offline**

**Note to the Teacher:** Teachers should provide offline students with at least 2 resources for students to pick up in the morning, so they may complete their note taking assignment for the day. These resources may be gathered online and then copied for offline learners. Ask students to take notes as best they can.

1. Have students read Part I of the Informational Writing: Lesson Three Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
Explore

Synchronous
Students will spend the majority of today looking for information for their topic and then taking notes in their Google/Microsoft document (or alternative). You might want to tell students to save their links for any online resource they might want to review for more note taking tomorrow.

[EBP: Provide daily time for students to write [Minimal evidence]; EBP: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes. [Strong evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

Asynchronous
Students will spend the majority of today looking for information for their topic and then taking notes in their Google/Microsoft document (or alternative). You might want to tell students to save their links for any online resource they might want to review for more note taking tomorrow.

Unplugged/Offline
1. Have students work on Part II of the Informational Writing: Lesson Three Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).

Apply

Synchronous
Students will be asked to share their notes with the teacher who will look over notes for each student in real time to provide feedback. [EBP: Provide daily time for students to write [Minimal evidence]; EBP: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes. [Strong evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

Asynchronous
Students will be asked to share their notes with the teacher who will look over notes for each student to provide feedback by the next day.

Unplugged/Offline
1. Have students work on Part II of the Informational Writing: Lesson Three Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
**Reflect**

**Synchronous**
Students will be asked about their note taking experience online in a waterfall chat using a 1-4 rating. Then students will be asked to share one new thing they learned about their topic in the chat box as their Ticket-out-the-Door. Teachers should follow up if students show little to no effort in their note taking after review.

[EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Asynchronous**
Students will be asked about their note taking experience online using a 1-4 rating on a Google slide. Then students will be asked to share one new thing they learned about their topic in the same slide. Teachers should follow up if students show little to no effort in their note taking after review.

**Unplugged/Offline**
1. Have students work on Part II of the Informational Writing: Lesson Three Handout (Unplugged).
2. If possible, try to find a way to communicate with students about their thoughts and to provide feedback (even if it is via phone call or Google Voice).
3. If possible, ask students’ guardians or parents to send a picture of students’ notes to the teacher’s email or via Remind (or a similar service used by your district). Teacher will give feedback via email to students before the end of the day.
4. Teachers should follow up if students show little to no effort in their note taking.

**Evidence of Student Success**

**Formative Assessment “Small Make” Description**
- Evaluate the students’ notes to gauge for understanding of the research process, credibility of the sources, and the research questions as a formative check. Based on the results, follow-up with students as necessary.
- Tickets-out-the-door will help provide a large-scale gauge of the class’s learning experience.

**Formative Assessment**

“More of What’s Meaningful”: Formative Assessments (Serravallo, 2013)

Formative assessment can occur in two ways:
• Conferring [Guidance: Tips for Conferring to Maximize Student Engage]
  o “Supercharge your Conferring: Focus on Goals, Strategies, and Feedback” (Serravallo, 2018)
• Sharing ["How to Create an Inclusive Virtual Classroom” (Kern, 2020)]
  o “8 Strategies to Improve Participation in Your Virtual Classroom” (Minero, 2020)

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**Student Learning Supports**

At all levels, the English Language Arts standards encourage students to become critical thinkers and communicators. The following strategies, though not exhaustive, are designed to support students struggling to meet this lesson’s learning target, and/or learning English as an additional language, and/or are exceeding and would benefit from enrichment.

**Supports/Scaffolding**

- **Conceptual Processing**: Allow additional processing time. Review this content prior to the lesson occurring so that the student will have additional time to formulate responses. Summarize each lesson segment and keep summary accessible for students. Implement scaffolds identified below for various circumstances.
- **Language**: Prior to beginning of the lesson, explicitly teach vocabulary required to engage with the content. [EBP: Teach students academic language skills, including the use of inferential and narrative language, and vocabulary knowledge [Minimal evidence] (Foorman et al., 2016)].
- **Visual-spatial Processing**: Provide opportunities for students to engage with visual representations and/or manipulatives (virtual or concrete) as they explore concepts of power and communicate ideas.
- **Organization**: Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual space so that students can revisit lesson segments as necessary. Help students bookmark frequently utilized sites (such as Flipgrid) or how to group tabs in Chrome to assist with organization.
- **Memory**: Maintain logical progression of big ideas/lesson segments in the course’s shared virtual space so that students can revisit lesson segments, as necessary.

**Lesson-specific Scaffolds:**

- Teacher will provide support in breakout rooms or Google Meets for those students who need extra support.
- Guided notes can be used for students who need additional support.
- Based on student performance, you may want to pre-plan small groups or individuals to pull during the work session to help them find relevant sources. This time will probably be used to:
  o discuss/model the research procedure
  o discuss online source credibility
Scaffolds for English Learners:

- Suggestions for this lesson include but are not limited to: providing students with bilingual texts on chosen topic and/or allowing students to use credible sites in their home language, supplying students with a question bank to choose from to complete graphic organizer, providing sentence starters for notetaking, etc.
- Educators may find it valuable to review WIDA’s Proficiency Level Descriptors (pp. 136-138) when planning for differentiation based on students’ levels of English proficiency.
- Teachers of ELs are encouraged to incorporate high-leverage practices for teaching EL students and to utilize relevant evidence-based strategies such as those found in Project EXCELL’s downloadable GO TO Strategies (Levine et al., 2013).

Acceleration/Extension Activity:

- Have students include a note on how they evaluated the credibility of their sources.
- Have students create additional research questions to take their research to a deeper level.
- Have students engage in small group discussions to review findings and to help one another build upon ideas.
Aligning with your district’s family engagement plan to facilitate the most meaningful way to work with your families should remain the focus. If you have a parent liaison associated with your school/district, you may want to reach out to that individual for further guidance.

- Families can discuss topics of interest with their child and then discuss what they already know from their background knowledge.
- Students can share their topics with their families, and they can continue to look for supporting sources at home.
- As an extension, parents can ask their child to research the topic at home and take notes in their writing journals. This topic may end up being the topic their child chooses to write about for their informative writing.
- Encourage families of English learners to read or listen to informational texts in their home language together. Families can access content for free through websites such as Wonderopolis and Common Lit.

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References


