The lessons in this unit were created in collaboration with the Georgia Writing Project and Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB).

**Overview of Lesson Sequence:**

*Informational Writing: What is social media, and how does it affect young people?*

This ten lesson mini unit challenges students to think critically about a topic of their choice concerning social media by reading and composing a multi-genre informational text. Students will demonstrate what they have learned by creating a magazine article or ‘zine’ article and incorporating at least one additional informational genre of their choice in order to best communicate their research topic related to social media. Students with access to technology may use Canva or a similar digital tool to create their zine article and students who are unplugged may use images from magazines, white paper, plastic sheet covers, and a 1 inch. binder to create their zine.

**Introduction**

Informational writing is more specific than argumentative writing because it requires students to focus only on identifying and presenting factual information. The assumption is that the writer will be reporting the how, what, and why about a specific topic. It is important that as students create their zine article, they remember that a good informational text:

- has a clear introduction
- states a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully
- uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence

---

**Sample English Language Arts Learning Plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Big Idea/ Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The lessons in this unit were created in collaboration with the Georgia Writing Project and Georgia Public Broadcasting (GPB).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Informational Writing: What is social media, and how does it affect young people?**

This ten lesson mini unit challenges students to think critically about a topic of their choice concerning social media by reading and composing a multi-genre informational text. Students will demonstrate what they have learned by creating a magazine article or ‘zine’ article and incorporating at least one additional informational genre of their choice in order to best communicate their research topic related to social media. Students with access to technology may use Canva or a similar digital tool to create their zine article and students who are unplugged may use images from magazines, white paper, plastic sheet covers, and a 1 inch. binder to create their zine.

**Introduction**

Informational writing is more specific than argumentative writing because it requires students to focus only on identifying and presenting factual information. The assumption is that the writer will be reporting the how, what, and why about a specific topic. It is important that as students create their zine article, they remember that a good informational text:

- has a clear introduction
- states a focus/topic clearly, precisely, and thoughtfully
- uses specific evidence from the text(s) to support and develop the topic and explains that evidence
Every day students absorb bouts of information through various mediums including news articles, social media, and other entities. One of the most popular ways students receive information is through social media. Considering that students are relatively familiar with social media, this unit is a great way to engage them and get them excited about a topic related to them. The goal of this unit is to assist students with understanding how to disseminate information through a critical lens about a topic they are passionate about.

NOTE: This learning plan uses specific texts (e.g., written, performed, illustrated) as concrete examples of standards-based learning activities. These texts are not endorsements. The selection of classroom texts is completely a local decision and subject to local approval processes.

Standard Alignment

The 9-10 and 11-12 Georgia Standards of Excellence for English Language Arts encompass a dynamic skillset that steadily increases in sophistication, nuance, and complexity. All 42 ELA standards target important and specific skills that are interconnected and that spiral not only throughout students’ high school years but throughout their entire K-12 education. The ELA GSE are designed to be revisited and reinforced throughout every school year. High school students in Georgia regularly engage in the following holistic practices:

» Read texts of increasing sophistication and expand literary and cultural knowledge to better analyze and integrate references, inferences, allusions, and images.
» Make full use of diverse texts, resources, and evidence bases to support original ideas and evaluate intricate arguments.
» Address different aspects of the same topic and convey how complex ideas interact by putting texts and sources in conversation.
» Employ convincing examples and compelling evidence with cohesion to communicate knowledge, understanding, and perspective through a variety of well-reasoned writings, presentations, and discussions.

Of course, for students to expand their knowledge, increase their skills, and build lifelong literacy practices, they need to engage in focused instruction and participate in diverse educational experiences.
Even when lessons require students to use an array of literacy skills and knowledgebases (as they always do), instruction must zero in on specific skills at specific times.

The lessons in this sequence are unified by **ELAGSE9-10W2** with a special focus on elements A, B, and D. Additional standards are leveraged when students are required to read or write using specific skills and practices.

**ELAGSE9-10W2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

- 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 aiding comprehension.
- 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.
- 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.
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
- e. Establish and maintain an appropriate style and objective tone.
- f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).

**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. 186-187.
Instructional Design

GaDOE’s Standards-based Classroom Instructional Framework

This learning plan supports the whole child and aligns to the coherent instruction system of Georgia’s Systems of Continuous Improvement. Each lesson of the sequence is designed in accordance with the standards-based classroom instructional framework put forth by the Georgia Department of Education’s Division of School & District Effectiveness.

This standards-based framework follows a workshop model of instruction and includes an opening, a brief transition, a work session, and a closing. Figure 1 shows general percentages of class time devoted to each segment of the instructional framework; however, it is important to note that these percentages will vary with the instructional focus. For a more detailed description of the teaching practices contained within each segment, visit the instructional framework page on GaDOE’s website.

Tovani (Tovani & Moje, 2017) puts forth a similar framework, which she calls the student engagement model (Figure 2). This model includes a catch segment during which the teacher refocuses the class by clarifying misunderstandings or introducing a new strategy. For more information, please see the professional learning study guide and framework template to design your own lesson: “TIME: Planning for Students to do the Work” (Tovani, 2020). Both frameworks are flexible, and any segment may serve as an entry point. While most class periods will incorporate all segments, this, too, will vary with the instructional focus.

Tovani also writes about the “Curriculum You Anticipate (CYA)” structures, comprised of the six Ts: topic, text, time, targets, task, and tending, to help facilitate deeper dives into the content (2021).

LONG-TERM PLAN: Informational Writing ‘Zine Project

TOPIC: Informational Writing

TIME: 10 lesson sequence
### Primary Unit Learning TARGETS

- I can **describe** the purpose of informational texts.
- I can **examine** complex ideas about social media.
- I can **organize** complex ideas about social media by using headings, graphics and multimedia.
- I can **draw on** mentor texts to inspire my writing.
- I can **identify** facts about social media and its effects on young people.
- I can **determine** which quotations are best for explaining my topic.
- I can **engage** my reader at the beginning of my text.
- I can **use** precise language to manage the complexity of the topic.
- I can **demonstrate** my understanding of various perspectives while still clearly articulating my own.
- I can **revise** my writing to make sure it makes sense to others.

### TASK

**Unit “Big Make”**

Students will independently create their own **multi-genre magazine article or ‘zine’** to distribute information about a topic of their choice.

---

**TEXT:** The following mentor text genres will be useful for helping students understand the expectations for composing informational text: magazine articles, news articles, infographics, product descriptions, podcasts, documentaries, emails, how-to guides, memoirs, etc.

Also, keep in mind that these texts are selected solely to provide an example (not intended to be rigorous). However, feel free to select text with more rigor if you deem it necessary. Throughout the course of this unit, you should keep the focus on selecting accessible texts for your students, with an emphasis on text variety (both genres/types and perspectives connected to the topic), though the true focus should remain on selecting accessible texts for your students that will also be interesting.

**Disclaimer:** The Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) does not endorse any of the books, resources, websites, programs, products, and other materials that may be featured as part of 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.

**TENDING:** This mini unit is written for synchronous distance learning or face-to-face. If students have access to technology, they could use Canva, a free digital design website to design their article zine, or another site that is similar. However, if students are asynchronous/unplugged with no technology, you are encouraged to provide those students with magazines to assist them with designing their own zine article. To add rigor, feel free to allow students to select their own topic. Students will need guidance on annotating the informational text so be sure to model it. When tending to students' individual needs, utilizing “catch and release” times in addition to the other scaffolds, supports, and accelerations in the Student Learning Support.
portions can increase your awareness of your students’ needs. Catches happen during work time. They are quick whole class teaching opportunities that the teacher takes advantage of after they have observed patterns of confusion or moments of celebration. For more information on engagement strategies for a variety of disinclined learners, check out Tovani’s *Why Do I Have to Read This? Literacy Strategies to Engage Our Most Reluctant Students* (2021).

**Evidence-based Practices:**

In addition, evidence-based practices have been identified throughout the Remote Learning Plan Reading Power lessons, by color-coding the evidence-based practices (EBP) and accompanying citation; these are practices that have been found to be effective at producing positive outcomes with adolescent student populations. For more specific information, please review the IES Practice Guide cited for each practice.

**Lesson Sequence**

| Lesson Topic: #1 | *Introduction: What is the Purpose of Informational Writing?* |
| Lesson Topic: #2 | *Informational Writing: Spending Time with Mentor Texts* |
| Lesson Topic: #3 | *Informational Writing: Brainstorm/Conduct Preliminary Research on Topics (Facts Only)* |
| Lesson Topic: #4 | *Informational Writing: Select, Explore, and Develop Topic/Fact Check (read/annotate/take notes)* |
| Lesson Topic: #5 | *Informational Writing: Organize Information & Connect Ideas Drafting Day One* |
| Lesson Topic: #6 | *Informational Writing: Organize Information & Connect Ideas Drafting Day Two* |
| Lesson Topic: #7 | *Informational Writing: Writing Partner Day* |
| Lesson Topic: #8 | *Informational Writing: Genre Integration* |
| Lesson Topic: #9 | *Informational Writing: Final Draft & Design Independent Workday* |
| Lesson Topic: #10 | *Showtime/Reflection: Presenting the Final Product* |
Learning Environments

Synchronous, Asynchronous, & Unplugged/Offline Distance Learning

This mini unit is written for face-to-face (f2f) or synchronous distance learning; however, guidance is provided for modifications, including ideas for supporting students who are learning asynchronously and those with little or no access to technology. Throughout the lessons, the various learning environment modifications can be identified through the color-coded label of Synchronous, Asynchronous, or Unplugged/Offline. If you are in a face-to-face setting, you will likely be able to follow this plan with minimal adjustments; however, utilizing chart paper to create Anchor charts as you move through the lessons could be an excellent addition to keep track of the thinking.

Materials

Student Materials:
Students with access to technology may use Canva to create their zine article and students who are unplugged may use images from magazines, white paper, plastic sheet covers, and a 1 inch. binder to create their zine article. Students will also need their writer’s notebook.

Teacher Materials:
- Teacher materials are included in the unit (lesson plans, handouts for students, and guidance documents for various lessons).
- Digital tools such as Canva and Anchor are free (or have free versions for educators).

Evidence of Student Success

Assessment Plan:

Diagnostic or Pre-assessment:
- The “small make” from Lesson One can serve as a diagnostic writing assignment for you to gauge student’s individual readiness levels for informational writing.

Formative Assessment (“Little Makes”)
- Formative assessments are identified throughout the individual lessons, ranging from various lesson-based success criteria to peer feedback.
- Possible Resources: Guidance: Tips for Conferring to Maximize Student Engage, "How to Create an Inclusive Virtual Classroom" (Kern, 2020), "Small Group & Conferencing Tips from Kate Roberts (2018)"
**Possible Summative/Post-assessment (“Big Make”)**

- Students will independently create their own magazine or ‘zine’ to distribute information about social media and its effects on young people. Students with access to technology may use Canva to create their zine and students who are unplugged may use images from magazines, white paper, plastic sheet covers, and a 1 inch. binder to create their zine.

- Students will independently create their own [multi-genre magazine article or ‘zine'] to distribute information about a topic of their choice.

- Learning Targets [Rubric]

---

**Student Learning Supports**

- At all levels, the English Language Arts standards encourage students to become critical thinkers and communicators. The following strategies are designed to support students who are either struggling to meet this lesson’s learning target and/or are exceeding and would benefit from enrichment.

- In this section of each plan, supports are identified for students who might struggle with conceptual processing, language, visual-spatial processing, organization, and/or memory.

- In addition, scaffolding and acceleration/extension are provided for use for each lesson.
  - For more information about evidence-based teaching practices and scaffolding, see this [infographic] (REL Southeast, 2017).

---

**Engaging Families**

- Aligning with your district’s family engagement plan to facilitate the most meaningful way to work with your families. At the secondary level, much of the communication occurs with the student serving as a liaison.

Drawing upon the research of Day (2013), Ferguson (2005), and LaRocque (2013), Jacques and Villegas (2018) argue that family engagement best occurs for parents when the following conditions are met:

A relationship with a trusted staff person or teacher who is approachable, friendly, receptive to concerns, and a champion for the student and family. Perceptions that families are welcome and valued at the school. Receptivity, transparency, empathy, and flexibility from school staff regarding communication and collaborative efforts to support learning and success. (p. 1)
References

https://blog.heinemann.com/10-tips-for-conferring-with-student-writers-online

Bear, Jacci Howard. (2021, July 30). How to use pull quotes to add visual flare to articles. ThoughtCo.  
https://www.thoughtco.com/how-to-use-pull-quotes-1074473


YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YqQx75OPRa0

YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sByzHoiYFX0


https://www.edutopia.org/article/creating-inclusive-virtual-classroom

https://www.edutopia.org/article/8-strategies-improve-participation-your-virtual-classroom

https://www.dailywritingtips.com/10-techniques-for-more-precise-writing/


https://yesimadesigner.com/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtSt6yx2JiE&t=220s


Tovani, C., & Moje, E.B. (2017). *No more telling as teaching: Less lecture, more engaged learning (not this but that).* Heinemann.

