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 Four Topic: Where do I begin my research for my essay and what strategies can I use for note taking?

Students will begin reading and taking notes from their research material from yesterday. Teacher will show students how to highlight important information in paragraphs using any informational mentor text (book or passage). Teacher will then introduce and model the use of three different graphic organizers that students may use to take their research notes.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Targets</th>
<th>Lesson “Small Make(s)”</th>
<th>Unit “Big Make”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can <strong>use</strong> highlighters to highlight important information when taking notes.</td>
<td>• Notes and/or note-taking graphic organizers</td>
<td>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.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I can <strong>use</strong> graphic organizers as support if needed for my note taking.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rubric Options: <em>(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.)</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Georgia Milestones 5th Grade Informative Writing Rubrics</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• <strong>Sample 5th Grade Informative Writing Learning Target Rubric</strong> <em>(could be easily edited for personal preference)</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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.

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**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**—[Graphic organizers](#): Informational text of teacher’s choice to model determining main idea from an informational paragraph; [Informative Writing PowerPoint](#)

**Students**— Access to Google Classroom or alternative, computer with Wi-Fi, graphic organizers, pencil, highlighter, paper, or journal; [graphic organizers for synchronous/asynchronous](#) (more detailed directions found on the unplugged version for how students will use each version; you may decide you use that version instead); [Informational Writing: Lesson Four Handout (Unplugged)](#).
**Engage**

**Opening:**

Yesterday you began research on your topic and should have found at least two resources on which to take notes today. If you have not, you will have a little more time to research today before beginning your note taking. If you need help, please let me know in a chat box or through Google classroom, or email, so I can assist you.

Yesterday, I had the opportunity to look over your notetaking, and while some of you have created a good system for note taking already, there are some of you who might benefit from using a graphic organizer to help organize your notes. I have given you feedback on your notes, so if you feel ready to continue your note taking, please get to work right away. If you need an organizer or I have given you feedback that an organizer might benefit you, then please stay for a quick mini lesson on how to use these organizers. Teacher should share organizers and explain their use.

**Synchronous**

After the teacher has shared a passage (any passage from an informational text of your choice) and explained how to find the main topic of a paragraph, students will practice with the next paragraph to check for understanding in your example. Students will then be introduced to the three organizers they can use: 1) Summary and Notes, 2) Notes and Bullet Points, or 3) What did I learn from this paragraph? (Feel free to use any for differentiation purposes). You may need to spend some time explaining the Informative Writing PowerPoint slide on highlighting:
How do I highlight and take notes from a passage?

Bartering for Basics

important ideas:

- Look at this passage to the right and highlight or underline important information that you could use to tell about what bartering is.
- Use the line tool to underline information as shown in the passage as an example.
- This is how you would take notes on your own topic.
- We would then choose one of the following organizers to put our highlighted or underlined information into for us to use in our writing.

[EBP: Teach students how to use reading comprehension strategies [Strong evidence]; EBP: Teach students to identify and use the text’s organizational structure to comprehend, learn, and remember content [Moderate evidence] (Shanahan et al., 2010)].

Asynchronous

In a short video (such as a Flipgrid or Screencast), the teacher can share a passage from an informational text of choice then explain how to find the main topic. That can be done through modeling through a screencast, even showing a split screen with the original source and then the teacher’s note page. That video also needs to describe the three graphic organizers and how to use each one: 1) Summary and Notes, 2) Notes and Bullet Points, or 3) What did I learn from this paragraph? (Feel free to use any for differentiation purposes).

Unplugged/Offline

1. Have students read the directions for the Informational Writing: Lesson Four 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 today reading their research, highlighting texts, and note taking using one of the graphic organizers, or their own. Students will share their notes with me at the end of instruction. [EBP: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes. [Strong evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Asynchronous**
Students will spend today reading their research, highlighting texts, and note taking using one of the graphic organizers, or their own. Students will share their note taking with me at the end of instruction.

**Unplugged/Offline**
1. Have students complete their choice of graphic organizer for taking notes on the Informational Writing: Lesson Four 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 share new information they learned about their topic in breakout rooms. Teacher will pop into breakout rooms to listen in and give feedback and kudos for nice work. [EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Asynchronous**
Students will share new information with the teacher in a Google document that the teacher will review before tomorrow.

**Unplugged/Offline**
1. Have students complete their choice of graphic organizer for taking notes on the Informational Writing: Lesson Four 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 which note taking style or organizer they used for the day and why they chose that style. [EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Asynchronous**
Students will be asked which note taking style or organizer they used for the day and why they chose that style in a Google slide.

**Unplugged/Offline**
1. Have students complete the question at the end of the *Informational Writing: Lesson Four 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).

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**Evidence of Student Success**

**Formative Assessment “Small Make” Description**
- Break-out room reflections
- Note-taking/Graphic organizer copies

**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]
  - “Supercharge your Conferring: Focus on Goals, Strategies, and Feedback” (Serravallo, 2018)
Sharing ["How to Create an Inclusive Virtual Classroom" (Kern, 2020)]
  - “8 Strategies to Improve Participation in Your Virtual Classroom” (Minero, 2020)

### 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 scheduled meetings for those students who need extra support with note taking after mini lesson.
- More in-depth instructions can be found in the unplugged handout for students who are struggling with the process; each graphic organizer is broken down into steps for use.
- Individual mini-conferences can be conducted during the work session to
  - clarify misconceptions
  - provide more assistance/modeling with summarizing
  - review mentor texts or student exemplars (student or teacher-created)
**Scaffolds for English Learners:**

- Suggestions for this lesson include but are not limited to: working with students in a small group to provide additional support in finding the main idea of a passage (examples of strategies can be found [here](#)), using smaller chunks of texts in English to model writing notes, allowing students to record their notes orally, 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**

**Acceleration/Extension Activity:**

- Students may go ahead and begin organizing their information if you are satisfied with the depth of their research. The teacher will monitor progress to ensure students are on task and understanding the steps to taking notes and using them to write their informative essay.
- Students can locate additional sources to enhance the complexity of their informative essay.
- Students can organize their research using a free tool such as [Canva](#) to produce a graphic/infographic to help them guide their papers.

**Engaging Families**

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.

- Parents may have students read a paragraph from their text to practice note taking on graphic organizers. Parents can ask students to tell them the topic of each paragraph to help student know if they are comprehending text as well as finding important information to help write their essay.
- Students can present their information to their families and see if their family can find any holes in their research. What are they missing? What would help provide a better picture of what they are researching?

- Encourage families of English learners to read or listen to informational texts and record notes in writing or orally in their home language together. Families can access content for free through websites such as Wonderopolis and Common Lit.

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References


