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 Five Topic:** Why is it important to organize my research before I write?

This lesson will be a whole class discussion about why it is important to organize research before we begin writing. Students will utilize Flipgrid to record their answers, and peers will reply and respond to their answers in the Flipgrid platform. After students discuss the importance of organization and before beginning writing, the teacher will use exemplars to show examples of various student work from 5th grade informative assessments.

*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.*
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| I can **organize** my information before writing. | • Flipgrid Videos  
• Sample Essay | 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. |
| I can **collaborate** and give **feedback** to peers. |                                                 | **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)* |

**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](#); [Flipgrid](#); [Flipgrid: Getting Started Guide](#); [Informative Essay Prompt](#); [Informative Writing Sample: Score 1](#); [Informative Writing Sample: Score 4](#);

Students— Access to Google Classroom or alternative, computer with Wi-Fi, graphic organizers, pencil, highlighter, paper, or journal; [Flipgrid: Getting Started Guide](#); [Informative Essay Prompt](#); [Informative Writing Sample: Score 1](#); [Informative Writing Sample: Score 4](#); [Informational Writing: Lesson Five Handout (Unplugged)](#); [Graphic organizers](#)

Engage

Opening:

Synchronous/Asynchronous

Introduce students to Flipgrid as a fun resource to share thoughts. If asynchronous, you can make a quick Flipgrid to introduce Flipgrid. If you would like more information (or if you would like students to explore the getting started with Flipgrid guidance, you can share the “Getting Started” resource. [EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

If you have never used Flipgrid, prior to engaging in this activity, you will need to set up your educator’s account. Pose the question, “**Why is it important to organize my information before I write?**”
Give students time to record a response. Then allow time for students to watch their peers’ responses and respond (approximately 15-20 minutes in total).

If Flipgrid is not an option, you can just engage the class in discussion with the same question: “Why is it important to organize my information before I write?” [EBP: Create an engaged community of writers [Minimal evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students complete Part I of the **Informational Writing: Lesson Five 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/Asynchronous**

Show students the essay prompt about the U.S. Constitution and the two associated passages (all contained in the PowerPoint). Read the prompt to students and tell them they need to select the best passage to use as their essay base. Give students a few minutes to read both passages and to process what the prompt is asking.

Tell students that one strategy for identifying important information is highlighting. You can model that for students using a **Readworks article passage** as a sample informational text (included in the **Informative Writing PowerPoint** with sample highlighting done). (You can do this modeling with any informational text of your choice; you can edit the PowerPoint to use your own passage/highlights. These examples are only supplied as possibilities that hopefully make life a little easier. All curriculum decisions are made at the local level.) [EBP: Select texts purposefully to support comprehension development. [Minimal evidence] (Shanahan et al., 2010)].

The United States is a “Federal Republic.” This means that power, like the power to pass laws, is shared between the Federal Government in Washington, D.C., and the governments of each of the 50 states. The Federal Government has certain powers, and the states (and their local governments, like cities and towns) have certain powers. The Constitution of the United States sets out which powers belong to the Federal Government, and which powers belong to the states.

The United States Constitution is the highest law of the land. One of the things it does is to tell the 50 states what they must do, and also what they are not permitted to do.

The Constitution gives the states the power to conduct elections and to make their own rules about how they do it, and it also tells them what they are not allowed to do in conducting elections. For example, states are not allowed to reject people who have the right to vote in an election.

The Constitution says that to be allowed to vote, a person must be a citizen of the United States. You are a U.S. citizen automatically if you are born in the United States. There are also ways to become a U.S. citizen if you were not born there. One of the ways is a process called “naturalization.”

(Readworks, 2017)
If students have copies of the documents, they can use physical highlighters. If not, they can potentially use a highlighter on their copy of the presentation. Tell them they need to identify the important points they will use in their essay. [EBP: Select texts purposefully to support comprehension development. [Minimal evidence] (Shanahan et al., 2010)].

You can use the Informative Writing PowerPoint for both synchronous and asynchronous instruction, but you may make individual copies for students if asynchronous.

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students complete Part II of the Informational Writing: Lesson Five 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/Asynchronous**

Now allow students’ work session time to take notes (using one of the graphic organizers from Lesson Four) and to write their quick essay using the notes they take.

**Tending Note:** Let students know this is a quick essay, and it’s just a draft. Let them know you are looking at their content (what they include in the essay and how they organize it) to hopefully reduce some angst about grammar.

Students should create a shared Google/Microsoft document with you. The file name should be Last name – Constitution Essay.

**5th grade Informative Essay Prompt**

In a brief essay, explain what the U.S. Constitution is, why it was created and who was the main framer of this document. Support your explanation with facts, definitions and details from “Creating the Constitution”.

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

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students complete Part III of the Informational Writing: Lesson Five 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/Asynchronous**

Have students share their final essay with you at the end of class via the shared online document. Advise students that you will review their work and share global feedback soon. [EBP: Teach students to use the writing process for a variety of purposes. [Strong evidence] (Graham et al., 2016)].

**Note for the Teacher:** See if you can see patterns in the sample essays. Can you sort them into categories? As the basis for your formative assessment, you could use some of the categories below, but you might identify other patterns with your students:

- Students who are ready to write independently!
- Students who struggle with grouping ideas.
- Students who struggle with identifying information.
- Students who struggle with expressing their ideas clearly.
- Students who struggle with putting the source text into their own words.

**Unplugged/Offline**

1. Have students complete Part IV of the *Informational Writing: Lesson Five 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).

Evidence of Student Success

**Formative Assessment “Small Make” Description:**

- Sample essay based on notes

**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:

- The teacher will provide support in breakout rooms or scheduled meetings for those students who need extra support.
- The teacher will provide explicit instruction, including additional modeling of highlighting; you can provide an additional example with multiple paragraphs. In a small group or individually, you could highlight on your paper while students highlight on theirs, following your lead. Then you could ask them to highlight the next paragraph with teacher support if needed(or have them do it in pairs if a small group).
**Scaffolds for English Learners:**

- Suggestions for this lesson include but are not limited to: analyzing/dissecting prompt with students to aid in strategic notetaking, providing students with sentence or paragraph stems to support writing, chunking writing tasks to focus on parts of the essay individually, 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:**

- Allow students the opportunity to locate and utilize additional research in their quick sample essay.
- Have students pull up one of their original sources for their research essay and work on highlighting the text.
  - Did they identify something when highlighting that they missed when taking notes?
  - Do they need to adjust their notes? Give them a chance to do that.

**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.

- Have family members ask students what they learned during their research and note taking for the day. This could be a fun activity for them to do at the dinner table or in the car while commuting to and from school.
- Encourage families of English learners to write at home together. Websites like [Common Lit](#) contain texts and text-based questions in languages other than English, as well as parent and teacher guides.

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References


