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| **Grade 3**  **Unit Overview**  ***Informational Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas*** | |
| **Focus Teaching Points** | * Using notebooks to gather information, write observations, and sketch ideas from research * Taking notes using a boxes-bullets structure to record main ideas and supporting details * Writing not only to record information but to develop thoughts, ideas and opinions * Drawing from mentor texts for ideas about layout, structure and craft * Organizing information learned from study into chapters, sections, and/or categories; making sure related information is grouped together * Crediting texts and authors informally * Continuing to build stamina and volume in writing * Working with writing partners to develop ideas and gain feedback * Connecting ideas and information with linking/transition words * Using mentor texts to support revision * Including text features to guide the reader * Elaborating by including answers to questions, statistics, definitions, facts, terms, descriptions, observations, patterns, sequences, true anecdotes, using comparisons * Using technical “expert” vocabulary * Reviewing paragraphs for clear topic sentence followed by supporting information * Revising headings and subheadings * Editing * Writing introductions and conclusions |
| **Key CCSS Standards** | ***Writing Standards******(W)***   * *2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10*   ***Language Standards (L)***   * *1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*   ***Speaking and Listening Standards (SL)***   * *1, 2, 3, 6* |
| **Recommended Professional Resource(s) to Guide Instruction** | * “Information Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas” from the *If . . .Then . . . Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grade 3* from the *Units of Reading* (2015) byCalkins with Julia Mooney.   *AND/OR*   * *Art of Information Writing* by Lucy Calkins from the *Units of Study in Opinion, Information and Narrative Writing (2013)* |
| **Tips** | * This unit provides students with an opportunity to return to the lessons learned and skills developed through the earlier unit, *The Art of Information Writing*; however, this time, students will write about a topic they are researching*.* * Since this unit accompanies *Research Clubs: Elephants, Penguins, Frogs, Oh My!* we suggest students create information chapter books related to their animal research. It may be that students create a chapter book about an animal studied, about both animals studied or perhaps even about a concept they have learned across animals (migration, habitats, survival). The goal will be to write to teach others, using all students know and have learned about information writing.   + While there are many options for writing in this unit, we do discourage using a uniform template for all animal research. The goal will not be for children to hunt for and find pre-determined information. Instead, this unit aims for children to take greater ownership for the kinds of information they notice, learn and then teach others. * As always, start by gathering **assessment information**. This data will help you decide what students are already doing and what they are ready to learn next.   + Since information writing is similar to opinion writing in that it is structured similarly (related information is grouped together with a “boxes and bullets” structure) and requires skill in elaboration as well as conventions, you can refer to students’ essay writing from *Changing the World* and the *Literary Essay Writing* to inform your instruction*.*   + You can also conduct the [on-demand information](http://ppsgrade3.weebly.com/assessment4.html) writing assessment as you did before, looking again for whole class and individual strengths and needs. While the on-demand assessment will not provide you with information about students’ use of research in their writing, you will still gain plenty of information about what students do independently and what they’ve internalized—how students structure and organize writing, elaborate on writing, use conventions and so on. This information is also highly informative when considering the writing they will be asked to do on MCAS. * Once you have reviewed assessment data, it will be up to you to decide how you will use the professional resources available to you (listed above) and which sessions/teaching points to teach. You may decide to use just one of the professional resources or a combination—it is up to you. Below is one suggested sequence for planning using a combination of the resources:   + This writing unit will begin **about a week after** you have begun reading and researching in the Reading Workshop. During Reading Workshop children will learn to read and take notes as researchers.   + As children are finishing their first cycle of animal research in reading and moving onto researching their second animal, you will want to begin this Information Writing unit.   + One option is to begin with additional practice and instruction on notetaking, sketching, and making observations from Bend I in “Information Writing: Reading, Research and Writing in the Content Areas” from the *If-Then Curriculum* on pages 19-21. Students will be able to practice and apply these skills to their second cycle of research (second animal).   + Once students are a few days into their second cycle of research (second animal) in the Reading Workshop and have begun to take notes on their second animal, you may pause for one class period to “take stock” and discuss options for creating information books to teach others. Generate possible book ideas with students, considering the research they have already done and the work they will still continue to do within their second cycle of research. Support children in brainstorming ideas, sharing with partners and ultimately committing to the books they will write. As suggested earlier, it may be that students create a chapter book about the current animal they are studying, about both animals studied or perhaps even about a concept they have learned across animals (migration, habitats, survival).   + For the remainder of this unit, plan for instruction using **either** “Information Writing” in the *If-Then* unit or *The Art of Information Writin*g or a combination of the two. You will base your decisions for minilessons and small group work on the needs of your students as determined by the assessment information you gathered.     - When teaching these sessions, we recommend you model using your own demonstration text based on a topic you are addressing in reading workshop (e.g. penguins, frogs)     - Pay particular attention to lessons that help students **structure** their writing, **elaborate** (e.g. see sample list of elaboration strategies for information writing on page 49) and thoughtfully apply use of **conventions**. * When citing sources, use the Grade 3 PPS template found on this [link](http://www.ppsliteracycoachconnect.com/citing-sources.html) |
| **Materials and Resources** | Each child:   * Writer’s Notebook (preferably hard bound composition book that students personalize) divided into sections, such as: *Writing Ideas* (e.g. lists for generating seed ideas); *Try It!* (for minilesson exercises), *Writing* (this section can be labeled by genre or unit to house all entries students write in a particular unit and from which students can select ideas to draft longer outside of the notebook) * Writing folder for drafts and any reference materials (e.g. high frequency words)   Teacher:   * Writer’s Notebook for modeling * Teacher-generated writing for modeling * Anchor charts, co-constructed with students, that support brainstorming, generating seed ideas, revision and editing strategies; refer to anchor charts used during *The Art of Information Writing* unit earlier in the year |
| **Assessment** | * [On Demand Information Writing Assessment](http://ppsgrade3.weebly.com/assessment3.html) * [Information Writing Rubrics and Learning Progressions](http://ppsgrade3.weebly.com/information.html) to assess progress of students’ drafts and to identify next steps for instruction |
| **Celebrations** | * Provide an opportunity for children to share their information chapter books. For example, consider pairing your third graders with another younger group of students who are also doing informational writing. Then your third graders can present or read part of their books—highlighting certain sections or parts as an opportunity to practice using [PVLEGS](http://www.ppsliteracycoachconnect.com/teaching-speaking-and-listening-including-pvlegs.html) in a supportive environment. |