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| **Grade 3**  **Unit Overview**  ***Research Clubs: Elephants, Penguins and Frogs, Oh My!*** | |
| **Focus Teaching Points** | * Planning for a first cycle of research by previewing texts and creating a plan for reading * Creating a note-taking system * Synthesizing information across texts * Self-assessment and goal-setting; revisiting goals * Using the technical vocabulary (lingo) of one’s subject * Taking notes to hold onto meaning * Reading with zeal, interest and passion * Recognizing text signals to build mental models * Working effectively as a research team; monitoring club dynamics * Growing ideas about nonfiction * Writing to ask and answer questions * Planning a second cycle of research * Orienting one’s self to texts before reading * Reading with volume and fluency * Teaching others about our topics * Noticing text structures and using them to organize learning * Recognizing transition words as clues to organizational structure * Comparing and contrasting * Noticing and understanding cause and effect in nonfiction texts * Distinguishing between two structures (cause/effect and problem/solution) * Reading closely * Noticing patterns within and across texts * Pursuing questions * Moving from questions to evidence-based theories * Researching big-picture concepts * Applying knowledge developed through research * Finding solutions to real-world problems |
| **Key CCSS Standards** | ***Reading Standards for Literature (RL)***   * *1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10*   ***Reading Standards for Information (RI)***   * *1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10*   ***Reading Standards: Foundational Skills (RF)***   * *3, 3a-3f, 4, 4a-4c*   ***Speaking and Listening Standards (SL)***   * *1, 1a-d, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6*   ***Language Standards (L)***   * *1, 3, 4, 5, 6* |
| **Recommended Professional Resource(s) to Guide Instruction** | * *Research Clubs: Elephants, Penguins, and Frogs, Oh My!* by Lucy Calkins and Kathleen Tolan in the *Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grade 3* (2015) and the online resources in support of this unit at [heinemann.com](http://www.heinemann.com/). * *The Comprehension Toolkit,* particularly lessons, as appropriate, from books 3 (Ask Questions), 4 (*Infer and Visualize*), 5 (*Determine Importance*), and 6 (*Summarize and Synthesize*)—if not used in previous units. |
| **Bends in the Road** | * Researching a topic * A second cycle of research * Synthesizing, comparing and contrasting |
| **Recommended Anchor/Mentor Texts** | * *The Life Cycle of the Emperor Penguin* by Bobbie Kalman and Robin Johnson * *Penguins* by Bobbie Kalman * *The Penguin* by Beatrice Fontanel * *Excerpts from Frogs and Toads* (available within appropriate sessions on [heinemann.com](http://www.heinemann.com/)) * Other texts of your choosing that have clear infrastructure of headings/subheadings |
| **Tips for the Unit** | * This unit builds on your first informational reading unit. The first unit helped children read a wide range of nonfiction texts *across topics*. This unit helps students use the skills they’ve learned in reading nonfiction to conduct research within the company of peers. * We highly recommend that you read the first brief section, “An Orientation to the Unit,” to understand the goals and expectations for this unit and to get a sense of the unit as a whole (see pages vi-xvi).   + In particular, see the **Getting Ready section on pages xv-xvi** which provides guidance on how to prepare bins for each of your research groups.     - Note that the unit suggests creating small collections of books on a handful of animals (create a bin on sharks, a bin on wolves etc.) to provide some choice for students. That said, select the animals based on your available resources. You may want to do this in conjunction with grade level colleagues, so that perhaps one teacher provides their few turtle books to another colleague in exchange for the few monkey books s/he has with the goal to create bins with multiple texts at varying text complexity levels.     - Remember that [Storia](http://www.storiaschool.com) is another excellent resource for digital nonfiction texts. * The unit unfolds in this way: Your kids form clubs, and each club studies its own animal in Bend I, another animal in Bend II, compares and contrasts those animals in Bend III, and finally researches a more overarching concept like adaptation or survival, noting how that concept applies to the two animals they have studied in their clubs and to other animals they have also learned about. The unit ends with children applying what they’ve learned about animals to a real-world project, such as the challenge to design a better zoo. * As students go through this cycle in their own research clubs, you will simultaneously use a class topic to demonstrate and teach the skills you expect your students to apply in their teams. **The unit strongly recommends you demonstrate using first a study of penguins and then frogs (see mentor texts that support this unit).** This will support students in comparing two different types of animals, allowing you to teach them how to think carefully to notice similarities across seemingly different animals. * It is important that your students not only engage in one round of research with one animal, but move to studying a second animal. This second round of research will set up students for the comparative work expected of this unit and grade 3 standards. This comparison work also sets up children not only to collect facts but importantly, **grow ideas**. * While the unit is taught within the context of animal research, the unit’s purpose *really* is to teach nonfiction reading skills. For this reason, we strongly encourage you to get to know the unit *as it is written*, aiming to build children’s research skills in the context of this engaging subject matter. * Begin by conducting the pre-assessment found on [heinemann](http://www.heinemann.com/).com. This pre-assessment will provide you with information on key aspects of informational reading and will also support the type of thinking required on MCAS. This pre-assessment will also provide you with information to focus your minilessons, conferences with children and small group work. This means that you may stretch out particular sessions, add in additional minilessons as needed, target individuals in strategy groups who need the lesson conducted again or simply need more practice with the texts they are reading. We strongly encourage you to use the Informational Reading Learning Progression to teach the strands discussed below:   + Main Idea/Summary: Keep in mind that the more complex the texts are that students read, the harder it will be for students to easily identify a main idea and write a summary. **That’s okay**. Not everything 3rd graders read can be easily digested into a simplified box and bullets format or captured in a few quick sentences. Your goal will be to balance times when students CAN do this kind of notetaking/writing (perhaps for a section, short text, or text with a particular angle) with times when they are absorbing information, growing ideas and talking about these ideas with their peers. Research in this manner is not always straightforward—it is messy and that’s okay!   + Analyzing Part of a Text to the Whole:     - You can support children with this concept by asking questions in conferences such as, *“How does what you’re learning now fit with the rest of the text? Is it an example? It is another idea? Or what?”*     - Students can ask themselves the following question: *“How does this part connect to what I’ve read before?”*     - You can also help students understand part-to-whole (see pages x-xi) by reminding students of common ways information connects (cause/effect, first/ second/ next, compare/contrast). See chart on page 73.   + Cross-Text Synthesis:   This skill demands that students pull information from different texts into common subtopics (e.g. predators of giraffes) and then combine the information together to form a cohesive explanation of the information gathered. For example, one text may discuss lions as predators of giraffes; another may discuss humans as predators. When synthesizing, the researcher combines both bits of information into a more complete explanation.   * + Compare and Contrast:   Students need to learn the basics (i.e. compare and contrast means similarities *and* differences) and they also need to learn how to organize their thinking. The possibilities for compare/contrast for this unit are endless—two texts on the same topics, two different animals, two different types of texts etc.   * In addition to the texts children read in their research teams, they should continue to read “just right” novels to maintain fluency, stamina and to support the connection to MCAS that you will want to make from time to time.   + You can do this by asking students to continue thinking about the characters and lessons in their books (refer to Character Studies post-assessments for concepts you want to continue to return to) and by occasionally writing about their reading in a narrative format. For example, “Imagine a different ending for your story. How would it go instead? What would happen? Write the story as if you are the author, using all that you know about narrative writing strategies (craft techniques) to make your new ending interesting.”   + Consider allocating a portion of time (e.g. 10-15 minutes) for fiction reading at the end of Reading Workshop daily or at least a few days a week. We also suggest continued fiction reading at home. |
| **Assessment** | * We encourage you to use thePre and Post-Unit Assessment found under this unit on the [heinemann.com](http://www.heinemann.com/) website. This assessment will allow you to create a baseline and measure progress toward goals established within the unit. |
| **Celebrations** | * This unit culminates with two days for students to bring their real-world, high-level investigations to a close. * Students will aim to teach others through real-world applications of their research. One example is for students to design habitats for better zoos. They may write a persuasive speech or letter. Some might create pamphlets urging readers to visit their newly designed zoo or prevent deforestation. There are many creative options—let your research teams decide together on the best way to share their new expertise! See pages 154-157. |