

Informational Text Writing Grade 1

Background Information:

This study was developed for use with first grade classrooms that are already implementing the Writers' Workshop, as defined by the Literacy in Action Initiative. The intent of this study is to teach children to produce an illustrated informational report. This study is most effective when the assumptions are true.

Assumptions:

- Teacher understands the process of leading students through a K-W-H-L chart.
- Teacher has a large selection of informational text.
- Teacher understands style and attributes of informational text.
- Students can share prior knowledge about several subjects.
- Students can draw pictures with some detail.
- Word Walls are displayed in the classroom.
- Students understand beginning, middle and end of text.
- Students have been provided book baskets at their tables with a variety of informational books at least one week prior to the beginning of this study.

Teaching Objectives:

Students will understand the features of informational text. Students will produce an informational piece that:

- Requires information gathering and research
- Utilizes graphic organizers for the gathered information.
- Demonstrates the use of headings to organize their information.
- Includes appropriate facts and details.
- Includes a title.
- Uses technical terms and specific language.
- Includes illustrations with captions.

Sequence:

- Week One – Students will be introduced to informational text as a writing genre. Components of informational material such as chapters, headings, and bullets will be introduced. Two “Expert” charts will be developed to cover topics and strategies for gathering information. Students and teacher will gather information for a written presentation. Class will collaboratively develop an illustrated report.
- Week Two – Students will learn how to organize information into chapters and headings by using a graphic organizer.
- Week Three – Students and teacher will delete extraneous information from the modeled piece along with choosing appropriate details to enhance understanding. Students will illustrate the text. Two days will be devoted to developing a rubric.



- Week Four – Students will develop individual illustrated reports during Writer’s Workshop. They will use a rubric to evaluate their work, revise, edit and publish a final piece.

Materials Needed for this Unit:

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Favorite examples of informational writing with different organizational strategies:
chapter
question and answer
picture with text

Definitions of Terms:

Chapters – Sections of text with a title, main idea and supporting details for that main idea.

Headings – Small sections within a text. Each section with a heading pertains to a specific topic.

K-W-H-L chart – K stands for what we already know
 W stands for what we want to know
 H stands for how we are going to find out
 L stands for what we learned from the study

Print Features –

- Font
- Print
- Titles
- Headings
- Labels
- Captions

Illustrations-

- Graphics or pictures
- Charts or graphs



Informational Text Unit of Study
Components of Informational Text
Week 1, Lesson 1
Grade 1

Mini lesson Goal:

Students will be introduced to the genre of informational text and its attributes.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Charts tablet paper and markers
Selection of children’s informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Introduce informational texts to the class a week prior to beginning the study by reading aloud a selection of nonfiction texts to the whole group.
Place a variety of informational texts in book baskets on the students’ tables and allow students plenty of opportunities to explore the texts.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind the children informational writing is a way that writers inform readers about a subject they have researched and know a lot about. Similarities and differences between the books will be discussed. Students will generate “noticings” about these books to be compiled into a chart.

Teach:

Introduce various types of nonfiction to the whole group and point out the contrasts in style and present attributes evident in informational text. Direct students to begin thinking about the way information in each book is presented. Show examples from the books you’ve gathered.

Active Involvement:

Generate noticings from students and record on chart tablet.

Link:

Students sort different informational texts by their attributes at the student tables being sure to use the chart generated by the whole group as a model.

Homework:

Find a piece of informational writing and bring it to class



Informational Text Unit of Study
Expert List
Week 1, Lesson 2
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will be introduced to the concept of expert status and create a class list that details one thing each student feels expert at doing or knowing.

TEKS 1.18C 1.19A 1.19B 1.23B

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet paper and markers
Selection of children's informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Change the variety of informational texts in book baskets on the students' tables and allow students plenty of opportunities to explore the texts. This will expose the students to a wider range of informational books.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Bring in something you are an expert at doing or tell the class something you are an expert at knowing. Mention to the class that an expert is one who has enough knowledge about a subject to be able to tell several facts about the subject.

Teach:

Prepare a chart paper with the heading "Experts in Our Class". Begin by explaining to the students that in order for them to tell other people information about a topic, they need to know about it themselves. Ask them to seriously think about something that they are really knowledgeable about and can tell the class about in some detail. As the students name their topic, enter their name on the list of experts.

Active Involvement:

Students offer one topic they are an expert in until everyone is listed on the chart.
Every student should be listed on the chart with one topic.

Link:

Students are to create their own expert list in their notebooks. Encourage them to list at least a few things they know something about.

Homework:

Students find support for their chosen topic or one from the list either in books, talking to someone at home, etc.



Informational Text Unit of Study
K-W-H-L Chart
Week 1, Lesson 3
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

The class will select one of the topics on the chart to compose a class report as a model. Generate a K-W-H-L chart to model to students how they will begin sorting information.

TEKS 1.19A 1.19B 1.23A 1.23B

Materials Needed:

Chart from previous lesson “*Experts in Our Class*”
Chart tablet paper and markers
Selection of children’s informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Change the variety of nonfiction texts in book baskets on the students’ tables and allow students plenty of opportunities to explore the texts. This will expose the students to a wider range of informational books.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind students that experts use lists and charts to help them organize their thoughts and information. This guides them in planning their writing. A K-W-H-L chart helps us organize our thoughts so that we may record information in an orderly manner. This helps us plan for our writing.

Teach:

Through shared writing, demonstrate how to record ideas on a K-W-H-L chart. Chart headings will include:

What do you know?	What do you want to know?	How will you learn it?	What did you learn?
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Active Involvement:

As students share their thoughts and information on a selected topic for the class chart, the teacher records ideas under each heading.

Link:

Students will create a personal K-W-H-L chart in their notebooks for the topic selected from their expert lists.

Homework:

Have students begin recording facts they know about based on their selected topic on their personal expert list.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Sorting and Organizing Information
Week 1, Lesson 4
Grade1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Informational graphic organizers help students sort information gathered in order to plan for their writing.

TEKS 1.22A

Materials Needed:

K-W-H-L chart from previous lesson
Chart “*Experts in Our Class*”
Chart tablet paper and markers
Selection of children’s informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Select a book to use as a model for retrieving facts about a topic.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Graphic organizers help us sort information. This information will be sorted and categorized to be used a headers in our graphics organizer and in our writing.

Teach:

Refer to selected text to demonstrate the use of headings as a way to add detail when writing about a specific area from the general topic. Talk to the students about the *K-W-H-L* chart that was generated the day before. Point out that in that chart we recorded what we knew about the topic and what we wanted to know about the topic. Also point out to students that the facts gathered may add more details to our report. The different areas of information about the topic will be called headings.

Active Involvement:

Students will offer information from the selected text to be put on the chart as headings.

Link:

Students will create a graphic organizer for their own topics in their notebooks. They will begin to organize their information into headings.

Homework:

Have students complete the headings for their graphic organizers.
Students will gather ideas to support and become more expert on their topic.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Expanding Facts Into Complete Thoughts
Week 2, Lessons 1 and 2
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will learn how to convert facts that are on the class graphic organizer into complete sentences.

TEKS 1.21B

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet paper – graphic organizer
Markers
New sheet tablet
Selection of children’s informational texts.

Before the Lesson:

Teacher reviews the information that the students wrote on the class graphic organizer.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Authors use this procedure in order to write informational books that are clear and organized.

Teach:

Discuss with students that for the next two days they will write the facts they gathered into complete sentences. Together at the gathering spot, teacher reads the facts from a heading and models (by thinking aloud) how to put the facts into complete sentences. Students then help with another heading for practice the first day and complete the others on the second day.

Active Involvement:

Students participate in the lesson by responding to the teacher’s “thinking aloud”.

Link:

Students return to their desks. Using the facts they have written under each of their headers, the students will convert them in complete sentences. Use the class chart as a model. Conference with students needing help.

Homework:

Students take home graphic organizer with text and practice writing complete sentences with the informational facts that they have written.



Sample:	Length	Protects	Food	To
pic:				
Octopus		itself		Babies
	Giant – 29 feet	can change color brown, red, blue,	shrimp, lobster, scallops	Pacific octopus lays thousands of eggs
	Common – 10 ft. long	shoots a cloud of Ink, stops smell and sight	crabs crawl on ocean floor	strings eggs together
	Dwarf – 4 in. long			

Octopus

Length

Octopi come in many different sizes. Some are real long and are 29 feet long. Middle size octopi are 10 feet long. There are small octopi and they are 4 inches long.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Specific and Technical Terms
Week 2, Lessons 3 and 4
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will reread their sentences to check if they used specific and/or technical terms in their writing.

TEKS 1.19D

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet paper – graphic organizer
Markers
New sheet tablet
Selection of children’s informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Teacher reviews the information that the students wrote on the class graphic organizer and sentence chart.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Authors who write informational books about a specific topic always use technical terms. Help students look at their own sentences that they wrote for the past two days. Students will check their papers to see if specific terms were used to help the reader learn more about their topic. Show examples from books previously read in the book baskets. You may want to add appropriate and related words to the Word Wall.

Teach:

Discuss with students that for the next two days they will write the facts they gathered into complete sentences. Together at the gathering spot, teacher reads the facts from a heading and models (by thinking aloud) how to put the facts into complete sentences. The teachers also models the use of specific or technical vocabulary.

Active Involvement:

Students generate technical terms used by the teacher on the class chart.

Link:

Students return to their desks and begin reading the sentences they wrote for each heading and recheck the facts in the text where student took it. Use the class chart as a model to decide where to use technical terms.



Homework:

Students take home texts to find technical words that might help them with their piece..

Sample:

Topic: Octopus	Length	Protects itself	Food	Babies
	Giant – 29 feet	can change color brown, red, blue,	shrimp, lobster, scallops	Pacific octopus lays thousands of eggs
	Common – 10 ft. long	shoots a cloud of Ink, stops smell and sight	crabs crawl on ocean floor	strings eggs together
	Dwarf – 4 in. long			

Octopus

Length

Octopi come in many different sizes and length. Some are real long and they are called Giants because they are 29 feet long. A middle size octopus is called a Common Octopus because it is 10 feet long. Smaller octopi are called Dwarf Octopi because they are only 4 inches long.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Introducing Good Beginnings
Week 2, Lesson 5
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will understand there are several ways to begin a piece of informative writing and using literature as a model will identify critical elements of an introduction for informative writing.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet paper and markers
Selection of children's informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Change the variety of nonfiction texts in book baskets on the students' tables and allow students plenty of opportunities to explore the texts. This will expose the students to a wider range of nonfiction books.

Read and discuss selected non-fiction books with the class.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind the students that just as stories use good beginnings to make the reader interested in the book, so do nonfiction reports use effective introductions.

Teach:

Explain the reasons for using a good beginning in an informative piece of writing. Show the students the introductions in the books that have been selected and discuss the most effective points in getting the reader's attention.

Chart the effective points from each book as the class discusses and identifies them.

Active Involvement:

Chart noticings of good introductions (keeping these in mind as indicators on the rubric). See sample chart below.

Link:

Students will use the books in their book baskets and sort them into groups based on the introductions and the elements charted during the mini-lesson.

Homework:

Find a nonfiction book with an introduction you really like and bring it to class tomorrow.



Sample Chart

Good Introductions in Nonfiction Books

Starts immediately on the topic

Gives a brief explanation on the topic before using a heading

Uses a title

Defines technical terms



Informational Text Unit of Study
Creating Good Beginnings
Week 3, Lesson 1
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will understand there are several ways to begin a piece of informative writing and will try two different ways to introduce a piece of nonfiction writing.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Chart *Good Introductions in Nonfiction Books* made the previous day.
Selection of children's informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Read and discuss the selected nonfiction books with the class.
Place copies of nonfiction books which use headers and chapters in boxes or pods on the students' tables for them to browse through when it is reading time.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind the students that just as the books they looked at the previous day use different introductions, they too can try to start their own piece of writing in a couple of different ways. Remind the students that published authors try to write a piece in several different ways to get a feel for the way which will work best for the topic.

Teach:

Explain the reasons for trying to write a piece in a couple of different ways to see which might work the best and to have a choice in their writing.
Refer to the chart made the previous day and the discoveries the students made at their tables when they practiced looking at introductions in other books.

Active Involvement:

Students can read the elements listed on the chart out loud as the group reviews the chart. Each group can share with the whole group what was discovered at their tables the previous day when they looked at the introductions in the nonfiction books at their tables.

Link:

Students will use the elements listed on the chart and try two versions of an introduction for their piece of informative writing in their notebooks.

Homework:

Students read their two versions and get some feedback from a response group or from someone at home.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Illustrating Informational Text
Week 3, Lesson 2
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students draft an illustration that is directly correlated to their written text.

TEKS 1.12E

Materials Needed:

Examples of materials that provide illustrations with a label or caption to communicate information

Drawing paper

Colored pencils or crayons

Before the Lesson:

Students have had opportunity to decide on the piece that will be published. Review examples of informational books that have relevant illustrations that provide information and include a caption or label.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Often times it is easier to convey information through a picture rather than to try to describe it in written form.

Teach:

Discuss with the class and generate a list of ideas that can be illustrated to better communicate important information. A sample list might include:

animal habitats

parts of a system

Model with the students how to draw an illustration to go with the text. Show them how to add a caption or label to the picture.

Active Involvement:

Students create illustrations with labels or captions for their writing in their Writer's Notebook.

Homework:

Find text with exciting illustrations that communicate information.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Design a Graphic
Week 3, Lesson 3
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will design a graphic that provides more information to supplement the text.

TEKS 1.12E

Materials Needed:

Examples of informational text that have clear graphics with labels or captions

Before the Lesson:

Review the types of writing that includes graphic information such as newspapers, magazines, etc.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind students that a graph or a chart might make information more clear. If a chart or graph is difficult to understand, it should not be included.

Teach:

Demonstrate how graphs and charts are used in texts to add more information in a clear way. Discuss the merits of each graphic with the class. Decide on a chart or graph that can be added to the class text. Draw it including a caption or label.

Active Involvement:

Students provide ideas and information to contribute to the development of the class graphic.

Link:

Students design a graphic with a caption or label for an informational piece in their Writer's Notebook.

Homework:

Students find a very clear graph or chart from text at home.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Deleting Extraneous Details
Week 3, Lesson 4
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will understand there are extraneous facts that do not belong in an informative piece of writing. These facts are called “extraneous details” and must be removed from the piece.

TEKS 1.22B 1.22C

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet and markers
Whole group writing sample
Selection of children’s informational books.

Before the Lesson:

Read and discuss the selected nonfiction books with the class.
Place copies of nonfiction books which use headings and chapters in baskets on the students’ tables for them to browse through when it is reading time.
Begin composing a report from the whole group brainstorming list.

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind the students that when someone is telling a joke or a story and he/she stops to tell more about the setting or the people in the story, then the joke is not funny and the story becomes boring. In the same way their pieces of writing should not be too long or boring to read.

Teach:

Show the students how to identify what is needed and what is extra by referring back to the organization chart generated earlier in the study.
Use the class sample to show that writing stays on topic and does not wander into other areas.
Demonstrate how not to include personal comments about the topic and keep only to the facts about the topic.

Active Involvement:

Students give feedback to the teacher as the class reviews the class sample.



Link:

Students will review their writing to make sure it has been written “on topic” and does not have personal comments or reactions. If a piece does have extraneous information, then the student will revise the piece and remove the extra bits.

Homework: Students revise their writing and rewrite a clean version if any extraneous parts are found.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Good Endings
Week 3, Lesson 5
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will understand there are several ways to end a piece of informative writing and, by using literature as models, will identify different elements in informative writing.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet and markers

Selection of informational texts with a variety of conclusions

Book baskets of informational literature for groups of students

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind the students that just as good stories use good endings or conclusions to tie it up, nonfiction writing needs an effective conclusion as well.

Teach:

Explain the reasons for using a good concluding strategy in an informative piece. “The ending is the last thing that echoes in the ear of the reader.” (Fletcher and Portalupi, 1998). Using previously shared literature, chart the effective strategies from books as the class identifies and discusses them.

Active Involvement:

Chart examples of effective conclusions/endings

Ending Samples	Book Samples
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Surprise ending• Circular ending• Emotional/poignant ending (can be a question)• Image (visual ending)• Summarization (of key points) ending• A strong fact saved for the end• Drawing a personal conclusion or connection	<p><i>Animal Dads</i> <i>Bats Like the Dark...</i></p>



Link:

Students will use the books in their book baskets and sort them into groups based on the endings charted during the mini-lesson.

Follow-up (Homework):

Try writing an ending for your report like one in the books examined in class.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Adding a Title
Week 4, Lesson 1
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will create a title for their informational report.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet and markers

All other charts created during Weeks 1 to 4

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind students that a title gives the reader a clue about the topic in the report.

Teach:

Tell the students that the title is like the main idea of the report. It should be just a few words, not a sentence. Show students how rereading their piece will allow them to think about what the whole report is mostly about. This is one way to think of a title for their piece. Brainstorm with students possible titles for the class report.

Active Involvement:

Students actively participate in the selection of a title for the class report.

Link:

Students will return to their desks to reread their written reports and select a title. The teacher will conference with students on ways to select the best title for their written reports.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Rubrics
Week 4, Lessons 2, 3 and 4
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will create a rubric for informational writing that is based on the charts done in the classroom.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Chart tablet and markers

All other charts created during Weeks 1 to 4

Previous rubrics created by the class

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Remind students of other rubrics created in class (i.e. Living the Writerly Life)

All rubrics are based on the charts that come from the mini-lessons

Teach:

Tell the students that a rubric can help them by showing them what they need to be able to produce their best writing. Show the students a “skeleton” rubric divided into five parts with the headings labeled on chart or butcher paper. (See sample rubric)

Note: Use the sample rubric as a guide. Use student language when creating a rubric to use in the classroom. Be sure the rubric includes attributes or features of informational text taught throughout the unit of study:

- specific/technical vocabulary
- introduction/beginning
- illustrations
- graphic or chart
- labels or captions
- ending
- title

Active Involvement:

The students are actively involved in creating their rubric. Ask the students to look at the charts they have created and list all of the attributes that would make a “4” and then those that would make a “1” on the chart paper. Fill in the other behaviors of the rubric under “2”, “3”, and lastly “5”.

Link:

Tell the students that by using the rubric and comparing it to their drafts, it will be easy to improve their informational piece by adding what they need. Explain that now all of the other charts that were put up can now be taken down because they will not be needed. They have been combined into one.



Informational Text Unit of Study
Publishing a final Report
Week 4, Lesson 5
Grade 1

Mini Lesson Goal:

Students will complete a published Illustrated Report by the end of the week.

TEKS 1.14C 1.14D

Materials Needed:

Students' written pieces

Mini Lesson

Connection:

Informational text and illustrations/charts must be presented in a logical sequence so that the illustrated report makes sense and flows.

Teach and Active Involvement:

Continue using peer response groups and teacher conferences with students to revise and edit their writing for final publication.

Discuss with students ways to celebrate the publication of their written illustrated reports.

- Invite other classes to share and hear the reports
- Invite parents to join the celebration
- Invite administrators to sit in on the Author's Chair sharing of the reports

