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Scientia Potentia est: The Power of Informational Text [8th grade]

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Scientia Potentia est: The Power of Informational Text

Grade Level: 8th grade

Subject/Topic Area(s): English Language Arts

Designed By: Anna Clark

Time Frame: 4 Weeks

School District: Spring Hill ISD

School: Spring Hill Jr. High School

School Address and Phone: Spring Hill ISD
3101 Spring Hill Road
Longview, TX 75605
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Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

Informational text impacts our lives every day. In order to take advantage of the knowledge these texts offer, we must know how to read and analyze the information they contain. During this unit, the students will learn the elements of informational text, apply their knowledge by reading and analyzing a variety of writings, and demonstrate what they have learned through the composition of informational texts of their own. They will learn just how important informational text is and has been to their lives and how they can use it to communicate knowledge.

Unit: Scientia Potentia est: The Power of Informational Text

Grade: 8th grade

Stage 1: Desired Results

Established Goals (Standards)

Standards or Scope & Sequence

TEKS:

8.10 Comprehension of Informational Text/Expository Text

8.12 Comprehension of Informational Text/Procedural Text

8.14 Writing/Writing Process

8.17 Writing/Expository and Procedural Texts

Scope & Sequence:

8th grade ELA Unit Three: Informational and Procedural Texts

Understandings

Students will understand that...

*we use informational texts every day.

*analysis of informational texts makes us stronger learners.

*the use of graphics and text features can add to or distract from the efficacy of a text.

*informational writing is necessary for the communication of knowledge.

Essential Questions

1. How does informational text impact our lives and our communities?
2. Why do we read and write informational and procedural texts?
3. How do graphics and text features add to or detract from informational text?
4. How do writers use language and structure to communicate information?

Knowledge

Students will know...

*the role informational text plays in our daily lives.

*organizational structures of informational text.

*text features of informational text.

*how writers communicate information effectively to their audiences.

Skills

Students will be able to...

*make subtle inferences and draw conclusions about informational texts.

*make informed decisions based on analysis of a text.

*analyze text for missing or extraneous information.

*distinguish factual claims from opinion.

*summarize a text.

*recognize elements of informational text.

*use graphics and text features effectively in nonfiction writing.

*respond to expository text in writing.

*communicate multi-step procedures through writing.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

Each student will create the materials for a hypothetical community course based around an activity of their choice (ex: cooking, skateboarding, art, travel, chess, photography). The student will create materials for the class including:

*a newspaper article announcing the course

*a one paragraph course description for the course catalog

*a procedural manual for the activity

Materials will be posted on the class website for peer review. Each student must complete at least 3 reviews.

Other evidence:*(quizzes, tests, academic prompts, self-assessments, etc.**note – these are usually included where appropriate in Stage 3 as well)*

notes, summaries, blog responses, worksheets, self-assessment, formative quiz, participation

Stage 3: Learning Activities*(Steps taken to get students to answer Stage 1 questions and complete performance task)*

Timeframe	TEKS, EQs	Learning Activities	Assessments
<i>Week 1</i>		<i>Week 1</i>	
Day 1	EQ1 TEKS: 8.10.B 8.17.C	1. We have just finished a unit on persuasive writing and speaking. Open with an activity on fact v. opinion. To connect to this unit, create a Venn diagram comparing the different expository texts: persuasive v. informational, with special emphasis on author's purpose, which has already been covered. Use a prezi on expository v. persuasive to make the transition from the opinion based writing of persuasive to the fact based writing of informational text. Homework: 1) On the blog, respond to the questions posted about the articles read in class. 2) Track the types of text they read and write through the next two days. Fill in a chart with the results. Due on day 3.	Venn diagram Blog post Homework chart
Day 2	EQ1-2 TEKS: 8.14.A	2. The performance task requires students to outline a community course, but some of them may not be familiar with what exactly that means. Using articles on community courses, explain the concept and analyze the information in the articles through a think aloud. Explain and assign the performance task. Use a graphic organizer to brainstorm ideas for the activity each student will use for the project. Homework: text structures handout and worksheet. Due the next day.	
Day 3	EQ4 TEKS: 8.12	3. The night before, students were to review the handout on text structure and complete an accompanying worksheet. Review the worksheet. Introduce the different types of informational texts. Begin with procedural as a whole class activity. Show the video "How not to make a cake" and discuss what went wrong. Then show an example procedural text and discuss the format of it. Does it match any of the text structures? Have students write down a simple procedure, such as "how to get ready for school." While a student tells you the steps, act out the procedure. Hopefully students will skip steps and cause activity failure. Explain that in a procedural text, steps need to be very clear and detailed. Read another text in which some steps were skipped and ask students to analyze it. They should be able to tell you that steps are missing and explain if the graphic is effective. Guide them. For the rest of the types of informational text, use a jigsaw. The groups should be: 1) magazine, online, newspaper articles, 2) travel guides, encyclopedia/Wikipedia entries, 3) textbooks, informational guides, and 4) posters, flyers, brochures. Homework: text features PowerPoint and notes. Due the next day.	Text Structure worksheet Jigsaw participation
Day 4	EQ3 TEKS: 8.10.B 8.12.C	4. The night before, students were to review the PowerPoint on text features and complete the notes. Review the notes at the beginning of class and clarify any questions. Then discuss which text features students may have seen in which type of text. Are these found in only nonfiction/informational texts? In small groups, do a scavenger hunt with different types of text. The students will be analyzing what they found in each and	Notes Scavenger hunt worksheet

Day 5	EQ1-4	<p>how the features affected the efficacy of the text and their understanding of the information.</p> <p>5. Review persuasive vs. expository, text structure, and text features. Perform a formative assessment. Debrief. Homework: watch the Summarizing PowerPoint before class on Monday.</p>	Formative assessment
Week 2 Day 6	EQ2 TEKS: 8.10.A	<p><i>Week 2</i></p> <p>6. This week will be about analysis of informational texts. Begin with summarizing. Show several Pixar shorts. For each, discuss what the main point of the video is, and what 2-4 main details might be, using the Summary Graphic Organizer. Challenge the students to write a 1 sentence summary of the video. Next, use an informational text and talk through finding the main idea and supporting details. Write a summary together. In cooperative learning groups, assign students roles to summarize an article together: Reader, Main Idea Dude, Detailer, and Summarizer. Discuss the task. Homework: choose an article and summarize it on the blog. Due the next day.</p>	Summary from PowerPoint CL group summary Blog summary
Day 7	EQ1-2 TEKS: 8.10.C 8.17.C	<p>7. Introduce inference by showing several photos and having students complete the sentence starters on their inference worksheet. Use the “Inference and Drawing Conclusions” video to define the terms and transition from visual to literary inferences. Once the concept is within reach, talk through an informational article and challenge students to find information that is not explicitly written in the text. Use a worksheet to write down evidence from the text that supports their claims. Guide students through the first article and then put up another for students and let them read through it. Have students Think-Pair-Share before they record their inferences and evidence and then discuss what the students found. Use their inferences to think aloud a conclusion about the entire text. Explain that inferences are generally about a specific detail, whereas conclusions are your thoughts about the entire article. Practice with one more article, time permitting. Homework: respond to the article posted on the blog, making at least one inference and sharing your overall conclusion about the article.</p>	Inference wksht T-P-S handout Blog response
Day 8	EQ1-4 TEKS: 8.10 8.12 8.17.C	<p>8. For the next two days, the students will be working through stations and analyzing different informational texts. Using texts of all types, establish a procedure for analysis and allow students to work in small groups. At least one station will include a comparison of two texts from different genres. Each station is accompanied by a worksheet outlining the procedure with spaces for analytical responses, inferences and conclusions about the text, and a summary of the article. These should be turned in each day before the end of the class period. Homework: each student is responsible for at least 2 responses to articles on the blog and at least 2 comments making connections with other people’s responses. Due by 9pm Friday.</p>	Analysis wkshts Blog responses
Day 9		<p>9. Repeat day 8, reviewing any material that appeared in deficit after the first day of analysis.</p>	Analysis wkshts Blog responses
Day 10		<p>10. Buffer Day! Last day before Thanksgiving Break</p>	
<i>Turkey week!</i>		<p><i>Turkey week! No classes all week.</i></p>	

Week 3 Day 11	EQ1-4 TEKS: 8.10 8.12	Week 3 11. Review day for all the knowledge that was drowned in turkey and gravy over the break. Depending on resources, activities can be done in a large group, small groups, or individually. For text feature: computer game “Fling the Teacher” or text features crossword. For text structure: computer game “Quia – Challenge Board” or jeopardy labs game. For summary: Read several encyclopedia entries and complete the “text and twitter alert” activity handout. For analysis (inferences, conclusions, evidence): Read several news articles and record inferences, evidence, and conclusions on the news article response worksheet. Also provide more in depth activities for students who are moving ahead. Now is a good one-on-one opportunity for those students who are falling particularly behind. Homework: newspaper article PowerPoint and notes. Due the next day.	Review activity participation Formative assessment
Day 12	EQ3-4 TEKS: 8.10.A 8.14.A 8.14.B 8.17	12. Begin the lesson with a newspaper session, where we all just get to read the newspaper. Ask students to choose one article from the newspaper they are reading and use it to complete the reverse outline worksheet individually. Discuss what students found in their outlines. Do their articles follow the format laid out in the PowerPoint on effective newspaper article writing? What other elements of informational text do they see in their articles? After discussion, analyze an article of similar topic and begin the writing process. Brainstorm as a class what information should be included in the newspaper article they will be writing to announce their community course. Emphasize clear, factual language. Give the students time to work alone or with a partner on filling in outlines for their articles. Monitor progress and conference when needed.	PPT notes Reverse outline
Day 13	EQ3-4 TEKS: 8.10.A 8.14.A 8.14.B 8.17	13. Using model texts, such as course catalogs from universities, analyze together the format of the course descriptions. Discuss descriptive language and its particular role in communicating information for this purpose. Show examples and non-examples and discuss what works or does not work in each. Record findings on the board. Together, rewrite one of the descriptions for different audiences. Then rewrite the paragraph as persuasive. Discuss how the description makes you interested (or doesn't) without being persuasive. What information is not included and what is necessary? Allow students time to complete the outline and start writing their descriptions.	Participation
Day 14	EQ3-4 TEKS: 8.12 8.14.A 8.14.B 8.17	14. Bring in several procedural texts (cookbooks, instruction manuals, DIY guides, game rules, scientific lab report, physical directions). Compare and contrasts the texts to find the similarities. Together, write a procedural manual for a task, following the “Parts of a procedural text” format. Highlight the importance of text features and graphics. Have students brainstorm together for what task they will use to write their own procedural manual, and how they can effectively incorporate different graphic elements. Give students time to fill out their outline and begin writing their procedural texts. Homework: self-assessment of progress and understanding. Due the next day.	Participation Self-assessment
Day 15		15. Buffer Day!	

Week 4 Day 16	EQ1-4 TEKS: 8.14.B 8.17	Week 4 16. Use this day to review the formats of the newspaper article, course description, and procedural manual, for those who need review. Allow students time to write. Hold writer's conferences as needed. Check progress. Everyone should have a rough draft of all three writing pieces before the next lesson. Homework: complete rough drafts. Due the next lesson.	Writer's conferences
Day 17 Day 18	EQ1-4 TEKS: 8.14.C 8.14.D 8.14.E 8.17	17. Buffer Day! Use this day if more time is needed for drafting. 18. Editing day! Using an editing protocol, students should work their way through self-editing and peer-editing of their writing pieces, one at a time. Each student must pair with at least 2 others to review their work. Any remaining time will be used to revise and type their final version. Homework: All parts of the performance task must be typed and emailed to the teacher to be posted on the blog by no later than 9:00 that night. A hard copy is also due in class the next day.	Editing protocol
Day 19	EQ1-4 TEKS: 8.10 8.12 8.17.C	19. At the beginning of class, hand out and discuss the response format. Each of the students is responsible for posting an analytical response to the work of at least 3 of their peers before the next day. The rest of the class time will be presentations of material.	Performance task Blog responses
Day 20		20. Presentations. Debrief.	

SPRING HILL JR. HIGH COLLEGE: YOU BE THE PROFESSOR!

“Knowledge is like money: to be of value it must circulate, and in circulating it can increase in quantity and, hopefully, in value.”

Louis L'Amour

(1908-1988, American author)

Each of us have our own unique set of knowledge and skills, but that gift cannot reach its full value until it is given to others. In this unit, we will be designing community education courses based on an activity or subject that you would like to share with the world.

After analyzing the writing of other authors, you will be responsible for writing your own materials for your class. These materials include:



- ◇ A newspaper article announcing the course,
- ◇ A short course description, and
- ◇ A procedural manual for one activity in the course.

Once completed, the materials will be compiled into a class project book and posted to the class blog, where each person is required to write a response to at least three courses.

Possible course subjects

- Cooking
- Skateboarding
- Art
- Travel
- Chess
- photography



Included in your assignment packet is a rubric to follow for the materials. The rubric explains what you will be graded on and provides guidelines for what is expected in each category. Please review the rubric carefully as you are writing so that you are sure you have done everything that is needed.

All materials are due
in email form by _____

in paper form by _____

Blog responses are due
by _____

*I, _____, acknowledge that I have
received and understand this assignment.*

Signed _____

Informational Course Materials Rubric

	Exceeds Standards (4)	Meets Standards (3)	Approaching Standards (2)	Needs Improvement (1)	Score
Content and Focus (20)	You show a clear understanding of what information is required, and who your audience is. You clearly understand the purpose for writing this piece.	You show an understanding of what information is required, and who your audience is. You understand the purpose for writing this piece.	You show a partial understanding of what information is required and who your audience is. You may not fully understand the purpose for writing this piece.	You do not show an understanding of what information is required and who your audience is. You do not seem to understand the purpose for writing this piece.	
Writing Process (20)	You have devoted a lot of time and effort to the writing process. You have worked hard and obviously take pride in your work.	You have devoted sufficient time to the writing process. You worked well enough to get the job done. Your final product is complete.	You have devoted some time and effort to the writing process but were not very thorough. You did enough to get by. You do not seem to own your work.	You have devoted little time and effort to the writing process. Some parts are incomplete. You don't seem to care about your work.	
Organization (20)	Your writing is very organized. You use transitions well, and the order of your information makes good sense. This paper is easy to read and understand!	Your writing is organized well. Your transitions are mostly correct, and your order of information makes sense. This paper can be read and understood with very few problems.	Your writing is not very organized. Some of your transitions are used correctly. The information is not well organized. Overall the errors make it difficult to understand.	Your transitions are not present, or not used correctly. There is no clear sense of organization. This paper is unclear and difficult to understand.	
Style and Format (20)	You clearly understand how informational pieces are written, and your tone is clear. You use the structure and features effectively.	Your writing has many parts that resemble informational pieces, and your tone is clear. You have used either structure or features effectively.	You demonstrate some knowledge of how informational pieces are written, but your tone is unclear. Text features are present but not effective.	You show little understanding of how informational pieces are written. Your tone is difficult to recognize. Text structure and features are not evident.	
Conventions (15)	You use a variety of sentence structures. You have very few errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation. The errors do not make the writing unclear.	You use a variety of sentence structures. You have some errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation. A few of these errors may make parts of the writing unclear.	You do not use a variety of sentence structures, and some sentences may be fragments. There are many errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation.	Many sentences are awkward or are fragments. There are many grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation errors. These errors make the paper very difficult to read.	

<p style="text-align: center;">Presentation (10)</p>	<p>You have carefully formatted your writing. Each page is carefully typed, unwrinkled, and clean. Special care has been taken with titles and headings. Font is correct.</p>	<p>You have formatted your writing. Each page is typed and unwrinkled, though there may be some typos. Titles and headings are present. Most of the font is correct.</p>	<p>Your formatting is incomplete. Each page is typed, but contains distracting typos. Pages are generally neat. Some titles or heading are missing. The font is not correct.</p>	<p>You have not formatted your writing. Some of the pages are not typed, and work is wrinkled and unclean. No titles or headings are included.</p>	
<p>Total (out of 105)</p>					