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Third Grade Writing Skills and Project Based Learning

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THIRD GRADE WRITING SKILLS AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING

A Project

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By

Julie M. Martin

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We hereby approve the project of

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ABSTRACT

THIRD GRADE WRITING SKILLS AND PROJECT BASED LEARNING

By

Julie M. Martin

The project was designed to utilize project based learning to help improve the informational and opinion writing skills of third grade students. A unit was created that used the PBL Works project based learning Essential Design Elements and Teaching Practices along with a modified version of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units. The goal was to combine the proven benefits of project based learning with the required informational and opinion writing skills mandated by the Common Core State Standards. The unit consists of 25 lessons with roughly 30 total hours of combined teacher instruction and student worktime over a two-month period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Among the goals of the public education system lies a responsibility to prepare students to be economically self-sufficient and active citizens of a democratic society (Kober, 2007). As a result of those goals, upon leaving their formal education, students need to have mastered fundamental skills that allow them to go into the world and utilize the developed abilities as active and productive members of society. Currently, due to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), those fundamental skills have a heavy focus on literacy (Graham & Harris, 2015). While literacy plays a role in all school grade levels, research indicates that literacy competency by the end of grade three can be predictive of future success on standardized tests and high school graduation rates (Hein et al., 2013; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019). Within the school of Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym), third grade students are generally the lowest scoring cohort in the tested literacy area of writing.

Over the years of the public education system through a drive to increase student success, learning target measurements and curriculum have become increasingly standardized (Cramer et al., 2018). The goal of that standardization has been to provide all students equal access to mandated learning requirements. Today, for most states, those learning requirements come in the form of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) which rely heavily on literacy as their foundation (English Language Arts Standards, 2020). Writing is an important component of literacy and at the elementary school level, third grade is the first grade during which writing skills are subject to standardized testing. While the goal of standardized curriculum and testing is to improve the education system, the standardization of public education curriculum has not

necessarily had the desired effects. Not all students are succeeding at the looked-for level of proficiency in many areas.

One area of focus, English Language Arts (ELA), has a high failure rate for students in the United States school system. ELA can be defined as the combined core skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and using language correctly in a wide variety of contexts (English Language Arts Standards, 2020). Nationally, the average failure rate of students in the United States in the area of ELA is measured by student performance on a reading assessment called the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2018). Over the eight-year time period from 2011 to 2019, the average failure rate of tested students in the United States in grades 4 and 8 was 64.9% (NAEP Report Card: Reading, n.d.).

At the state and local levels, ELA is tested in a variety of ways that examine reading and writing skills in combination. In the state of Washington, third through eighth grade and tenth-grade students take the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) annually to test their grasp of the required reading and writing basic skills (Washington State Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.). SBA data over the eight-year time period from 2011 to 2019 shows that on average, 42.38% of students in grades three through eight and grade ten did not pass the ELA portion of the SBA (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, n.d.). Locally in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) located in the western portion of Washington state, on average, 19.16% of third through eighth grade and tenth-grade students did not pass the ELA portion of the SBA (Microsoft Power BI, n.d.). More specifically, at Lakeshore Elementary School, (pseudonym) a school within the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym), an average of

11.3% of students in grades three through five did not pass the ELA SBA for the eight-year time period of 2011 to 2019.

While overall SBA scores for ELA skills are expressed via percentage of students reaching standard in the combined areas of reading and writing, when pared down to an examination of writing skills without the reading element, scores in the state of Washington via the SBA, are calculated using skill-based rubrics. For each strand of writing, informational, argumentative (referred to as opinion for students in grades kindergarten through five) and narrative, students are assessed on three separate rubrics. One rubric is for analysis of the organization and purpose of the written piece. The second rubric details the score for evidence and elaboration of the writing, and the third rubric shows the score for the conventions used in the writing. The first two rubrics are each evaluated using a 4-point scale with the conventions' rubric utilizing a 2-point scale. Thus, an overall score out of a possible 10 points is calculated for each student in the area of writing (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.). Though the evaluation is based upon the 10-point scale, there is not a target number out of 10 that indicates proficiency. Rather, the rubric scores can be used to analyze student data in a comparative way to determine if certain writing strands or skills are weaker than others.

When considering the components that make up the ELA portions of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), a critical one to consider is writing. The ability to write is an important skill. Written language serves many purposes in society including the capability to connect to others, the opportunity to influence others, and as a necessary tool for learning (Graham, Gillespie & Mckeown, 2012). Not only is written language important educationally and socially, but with the advent of technology into our daily lives, written communication has become

increasingly crucial and common throughout every aspect of our society (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016).

Given the importance of writing, students need to have adequate learning opportunities to master the art of written communication. It has been noted that not enough time, nor the right type of writing assignments are being given to students to foster growth of their writing skills (Graham, 2019). Graham (2019) notes that because writing is complex, challenging, and relies on multiple skills, both adequate time and quality instruction are needed. Additionally, student engagement and joy in the writing process can be an essential part of writing instruction (Calkins & Ehrenworth, 2016). In keeping with the thoughts of Calkins and Ehrenworth, many educational philosophers and educators believe that student choice in learning, rather than standardization, is what will boost the success of the school system and improve student learning (Noddings, 2015). Considering that fact, the question becomes, would students perform better if choice through project based learning, an instructional model through which students engage in real-world and personally meaningful projects, was put in place as part of the standard curriculum?

Statement of the Problem

Through the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) students are expected to annually demonstrate proficiency or growth toward proficiency in core academic subjects (Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). In the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) in the state of Washington, the Board of Directors has created the goal of greater than 90% of students being deemed proficient in ELA as evaluated by the SBA (Lake Washington School District School Board, 2020). Currently, students are failing to perform at the desired level of proficiency outlined by the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) Board of Directors in the English Language Arts

(ELA) categories. ELA encompasses both the subjects reading and writing. Nationally, data is collected on ELA through the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2018) using fourth, eighth, and twelfth-grade students. Data from 2019 indicates that students had lower proficiency scores in the area of reading than they did in 2017. At the National level in 2019, 65% of fourth-grade students and 66% of eighth-grade students were deemed not proficient in the ELA measure of reading based on the National Association of Educational Progress (NAEP, 2020).

In the state of Washington, data spanning the five-year time period from 2014 through 2019 shows 42.38% of all students failed to pass the ELA portion of the state mandated Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) (College and Career Ready Student Outcomes, 2020). At the local level, in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym), over the same five-year time period from 2014 to 2019 an average of 19.16% of students scored a Level 2 or lower indicating a lack of proficiency and failing scores in the area of ELA (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2020). To be deemed proficient, students must score Level 3 or higher.

While students attending Lakeshore Elementary School (pseudonym) in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) score higher than the district, state, and national averages, there is area for growth. Over the past five years, students in grades three through five at Lakeshore Elementary had an 11.3% failure rate on the ELA portion of the SBA (Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2020). When broken down into specifics, it is apparent students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) show the largest deficits in the written portions of the ELA SBA. More specifically, student deficits in the opinion writing and informational writing portions of the ELA SBA (Microsoft Power BI, 2020) are the largest with grade 3 generally showing the least proficient performance rates. Therefore, increased ability in the area

of opinion and informational writing by third grade students may increase the overall ELA scores of the students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) and consequently the scores of the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym).

Additionally, as part of the ESSA mandate, schools in the state of Washington create growth goals for students. The goals are outlined through a School Improvement Plan (SIP) created at each school, consolidated at the school district level and sent on to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction at the state level. For the time period from the fall of 2018 to the spring of 2022, at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) the stated growth goal for students in grades three through five is, "75% of students in grades 3-5 will score at least three out of four on the organization/purpose and evidence/elaboration rubric on the Smarter Balanced Performance Task for Informational and Opinion Writing by the Spring of 2022" (McAuliffe Elementary School, 2019). Evidence and elaboration can be defined as the specifics a writer uses to reach a conclusion or judgement (Colorado State University, 2021) and providing specific details (Editage.com, 2020) respectively. Organization can be defined as how ideas are presented (Colorado State University, 2021), while purpose is the reason an author is writing a particular piece (Colorado State University, 2021). Currently students in grades three through five are achieving a combined proficiency rate of 35% for organization/purpose and 36% for evidence/elaboration in informational writing. In opinion writing, 28% and 26% of third through fifth-grade students are scoring 3 out of 4 in organization/purpose and evidence/elaboration respectively. (McAuliffe Elementary School, 2019). Thus, students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) have significant growth to make to achieve the stated goal.

A factor to consider when looking at ELA success on the SBA is that of student interest and buy-in to the learning. Studies have shown that students are more engaged, and consequently learn more when there is choice given in the learning content (Batdi et al., 2018; Chumdari et al., 2017; Clark, 2016; Fraumeni-McBride, 2017; Johnson et al., 2019). While standardized testing and standardization of curriculum have given educators more data to work with to analyze student success, simultaneously, those tools led to a decrease in students' interest in learning (Cavendish et al., 2017). Given the fact that mandated standardization is the current norm, a choice-based instruction platform, such as project based learning, may help to increase student engagement of third graders in the area of opinion and informational writing while still allowing schools the ability of working within the context of the standardized curriculum and testing system.

Background of the Problem

The United States public education system is a government run entity that holds the duty of being accountable to taxpayers and the greater society for doing the task set upon it, adequately educating students to be ready to be productive members of the society (Kober & Center on Education Policy, 2007). To measure whether the system is doing its job, standardized testing has been put in place. As a tool for students to have an equal chance to perform well on the standardized data collection tests, national standardized curriculum has been adopted. The balance between meeting accountability measures and creating well-educated, inspired learners has been a challenging balancing act. Because of the emphasis placed upon use of high stakes testing data, instruction in school has become more focused on teaching content that will be tested (Levitt, 2016) and provides less for student choice in what will be explored and learned.

This trend has taken education far away from the much-desired path of choice-based learning or learning in which students have more control over the educational process.

Along with standardization of curriculum and testing came expectations in three major strands of writing through the Common Core State Standards. Those three areas consist of Narrative Writing, Informational Writing and Opinion Writing (English Language Arts Standards, 2020). In the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym), a noted deficit in ELA lies in writing, especially in the third-grade cohort. Thus, writing is a good place to begin implementing the idea of adding more student choice into the curriculum.

To get at the problem of a 19.16% five-year average failure rate in the area of ELA, the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) developed a writing curriculum titled Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District, 2017). The writing curriculum focuses on the three main writing categories named by the CCSS: Narrative, Informational, and Opinion. The writing curriculum development was overseen by the Lake Washington School District Curriculum Department but created by staff members of the Lake Washington School District. The combination of the heavy emphasis of literacy in the CCSS and percentage of failing test scores created recognition of the need to better support the teaching of writing throughout the district.

In August of 2017, staff district-wide were introduced to the Lake Washington School District Writing Units and instructed to treat the year as a learning year, by using as many parts of the curriculum as possible, with no pressure to complete the entire curriculum. The expectation for the 2018/2019 and following school years was to have teachers implement the curriculum in full. Despite the attempt by the district to create a unified curriculum, teachers note that the units are cumbersome, and contain far more lessons and information than can be

taught in a year. Since the implementation of the Lake Washington School District Writing

Units, writing score growth has improved incrementally but an increased pace of growth is

needed in order for the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) to meet the growth goal of

greater than 90% ELA proficiency targeted by the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) Board

of Directors and the 75% proficiency in informational and opinion writing growth goal created

by Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) for the year 2022. For students to achieve at the desired

rate in the area of ELA, further actions need to be taken to increase students' writing skills.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to create a curriculum designed to incorporate the use of

project based learning (PBL) to increase the writing skills, and the ELA scores, of third-grade

students at Lakeshore Elementary School (pseudonym) in the state of Washington. Through

project based learning students will be given the opportunity to increase their level of

engagement. As levels of engagement rise, the expectation was that student learning will

increase. Additionally, by targeting third-grade students, the hope was that a lasting educational

impact would be seen since it has been noted that third-grade mastery of skills can be indicative

of future educational success (Council of Chief State School Officers & Center on Enhancing

Early Learning Outcomes, 2019).

Significance of the Project

Upon adoption of NCLB along with the updated mandates put in place by ESSA, schools

became increasingly tied to standardization of curriculum, standardized testing, and analysis of

student test data. The test data became high stakes with money and consequences tied to the

success level reported by standardized test scores. While many in the education field do not

believe this push for standardization is the right path for the education system, there is no

evidence that standardized testing is going away any time soon. Consequently, the ideal

situation is to incorporate elements of student choice into the highly standardized educational

culture that exists in the United States. This project targets the idea of project based learning

within the needed area of writing. If project based learning can be proven to be combined with

standardized elements of the CCSS such as writing, then implications for learning while

simultaneously improving required standardized testing measures could make an improvement in

the writing test scores of students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym). Applied on a larger

scale, the ideas presented could impact Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) test scores, and

Washington state test scores for third-grade students.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined to help facilitate understanding of their use throughout

the project.

Choice-Based Learning: A learning process through which learners participate in their own

learning and in the manner by which such process is designed – learners are able to make

choices, take control and orchestrate their own learning processes (IGI Global, 2020)

Common Core State Standards (CCSS): A standardized curriculum used in 41 out of 50 states in

the Unites States and developed with the idea of consistent, real-world learning goals for

students (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020)

Elaboration: In reference to writing, elaboration means providing specific details (Editage.com,

2020).

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): An act put in place by President Lyndon B. Johnson that provided federal funding to schools for programs intended to increase equity in the United States education system (Casalaspi, 2017)

English Language Arts (ELA): The combined core skills of reading, writing, speaking, listening, and using language correctly in a wide variety of contexts (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020)

Evidence: In reference to writing, evidence consists of the specifics a writer uses to reach a conclusion or judgement (Colorado State University, 2021).

Formative Assessment: an assessment used during instruction to gauge learning while it is happening (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014)

Informational/Explanatory Writing: Written communication with the purpose of accurately conveying information to increase a reader's knowledge of a subject, help readers better understand a procedure or process, or give readers a deeper understanding of a concept (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020)

Inquiry-Based Learning: An instructional method where students create questions about a phenomenon, fact, or piece of literature, and work to answer their questions through an exploration of the topic (State of Washington Governor's Office, 2010)

Lake Washington School District (LWSD) Writing Units for Grade Three: Writing units developed by a committee of staff in the Lake Washington School District due to recognition of the need to support the teaching of writing throughout the school district (Lake Washington School District, 2017)

Minilesson: A short lesson with a narrow focus that provides instruction on a skill or concept that students relate to a larger lesson that will follow (Teacher Vision, 2007)

Narrative Writing: A form of writing that describes real or imaginary situations with the intended purpose to inform, instruct, entertain, or persuade a reader (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020)

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP): Also referred to as The Nation's Report Card, is the only national assessment that measures what students know and can do in a variety of subject areas (NAEP, 2020).

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): A United States law put in place in 2002 which outlined educational mandates for the success of all public-school students (Klein, 2018)

Opinion Writing: The term used in grades kindergarten through five to refer to argument writing, or a "reasoned, logical way of demonstrating that the writer's position, belief, or conclusion, is valid" (Common Core State Standard Initiative, 2020)

Organization: In reference to writing, organization is how ideas are presented including how sentences and paragraphs are written (Colorado State University, 2021).

Problem-Based Learning: An instructional (and curricular) learner-centered approach that empowers learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem (Savery, 2006)

Proficiency: The ability to do something at grade level (State of Washington Governor's Office, 2010)

Project Based Learning (PBL): An instructional model through which students engage in real-world and personally meaningful projects (PBL Works, 2020). The term project based learning can be written either unhyphenated or hyphenated (project-based learning). Due to the fact that the conceptual framework of this project is PBL Works whose organization does not hyphenate the term project based learning, throughout this paper, project based learning was written in its unhyphenated form.

Purpose: In reference to writing, purpose is why the author is writing (Colorado State University, 2021).

Race to the Top (RTT): A competitive grant initiative put in place by United States President Barack Obama in 2009 intended to stimulate implementation of programs to improve education (Race to the Top Program Executive Summary, 2009)

Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA): A standardized achievement test created by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and used in 15 states in the United States (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.)

Standards-Based Education: Systems of instruction, assessment, grading and academic reporting that are based on students demonstrating mastery of the knowledge or skills they are expected to learn as they progress through the levels of their education (Great Schools Partnership, 2017)

Summative Assessment: an assessment used to evaluate student learning at the end of an instructional period (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014).

Text Type: The forms of writing (argument, informative/explanatory, narrative) outlined by the CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020).

Writing Workshop: An organizational framework for teaching writing. The framework consists of minilessons, work time and share time. (Children's Literacy Initiative, 2016)

Summary of the Project

Schools are being asked to have students meet standardized levels of achievement regardless of student needs or interests. Studies show that students demonstrate greater learning success when an element of choice is incorporated in school learning. Additionally, students in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) demonstrate the need for growth in the area of written communication. Opinion and Informational writing are elements of ELA that students in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym), and more specifically, Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) within the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym), are not meeting the hoped-for levels of achievement. This project was created to incorporate the desired element of student choice through project based learning into writing with the intended goal of raising the ELA scores of the lowest scoring cohort, third-grade students, at Lakeshore Elementary School (pseudonym). Chapter 2 of this project details literature that supports project based learning as well as the importance of written communication skills, specifically opinion and informational writing skills.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Introduction

Students in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) are not performing at the desired level in the area of ELA. The Board of Directors for the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) has indicated a target goal of greater than 90% of students in grades three through eight and grade ten demonstrating proficiency in the area of ELA as evidenced by scores on the SBA. Additionally, third through fifth grade students in Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) are expected to reach a level of 75% proficiency in the English Language Arts (ELA) areas of informational and opinion writing as measured by the 2022 Smarter Balanced Assessment in Washington State. The literacy skills highlighted in the areas of ELA are a necessary set of life-long tools for success. Literacy rates by the end of grade three can be predictors of future success and therefore are an important area on which to focus meaningful, proven instruction practices to increase student success (Hein, et al., 2013). One such instructional practice is that of project based learning (PBL) (PBL Works, 2020). Through PBL students are given the opportunity to make choices in their learning to create educational experiences that are more meaningful and result in deeper learning. While PBL is a proven method of instruction, the standardization of the United States learning systems seem to stand in the way of student choice in learning. The standardization of education in the United States has long roots in history and in recent times has evolved into government systems that heavily impact the content and process of instruction and testing in America.

Standardization of Education

History of the Standardization of Education

Throughout the history of education, the question of how students should be instructed has been a focus (Noddings, 2015). Philosophers have long debated not only who should be educated, but how education should take place to best meet the needs of the learners and the society into which those learners will become an integral part. As education evolved in the United States to become a public system, a common theme in instruction was the desire to have a standardized curriculum. As early as 1892, some in the field of education were pushing for a national system that would achieve common results (Greer, 2018). Through the desire to have all groups of students experience the same level of success, endeavors such as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) (Greer, 2018) and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) (Greer, 2018) were put into place. ESEA was initiated in 1965 with the intent of equalizing the educational system to aid students in low-income areas. In 1969 the first ever NAEP was administered to students in an effort to determine the success of the public education system. While both ESEA and NAEP were designed with the intention of making the public school system better and more equitable, they were the trailhead leading to the No Child Left Behind Act and an increased push to use standardized testing as a measure of the success of the United States public education system (Greer, 2018).

Standardized testing became an educational mandate when the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) was put in place in 2001 (Ladd, 2017). While standardized tests existed prior to that time, they were not used on such a wide-spread scale to identify which schools were considered successful in their quest to educate students. With the inception of NCLB, data driven teaching became the norm. Test scores were analyzed at the building and district levels to set goals for

instruction, and consequences for school systems were put in place based upon the test scores (Klein, 2018). Following NCLB came the, Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), signed into law by President Obama (Greer, 2018). The goal of ESSA was to follow in the intended footsteps of ESEA while removing some of the cumbersome, and difficult to fulfill, expectations of NCLB (Every Student Succeeds Act, n.d.). Along with ESSA came Race to the Top. Race to the Top was the largest ever federal investment in competitive school reform (Fact Sheet – Race to the Top, 2011). Through Race to the Top, the goal was to equalize access to education by putting in place national curriculum standards and motivating teachers and schools to help students succeed on standardized tests through monetary rewards and punishments. NCLB, ESSA and Race to the Top were attempts to standardize, incentivize, and make competitive, public education in the name of helping students succeed (Martin, 2018).

With the standardized education system plan came the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). The goal of the CCSS are, "To ensure all students are ready for success after high school, the Common Core State Standards establish clear, consistent guidelines for what every student should know and be able to do in math and English language arts from kindergarten through 12th grade" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). Though increased student success was the desired outcome of the CCSS, the opposite seems to be the case. According to Deas (2018) the graduation rate has declined, and the student dropout rate has increased in states that have adopted the Common Core State Standards.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act

Under the guidelines established in the Unites States Constitution, educational decisions throughout the country fell under the jurisdiction of state governments. With that being the constitutional case, the funding and decision-making regarding the public education system have been mostly in the hands of state and local government leaders (Shanahan, 2014). In 1965 a piece of legislation proposed, and then signed into law, by President Lyndon B. Johnson led to a slow change in the direction of who oversees education policy though. In January of 1965 President Johnson noted that the United States' schooling system was struggling. The dropout rate was high, college enrollment rates were low, and opportunities were diminishing for citizens who did not obtain advanced-level education (Casalaspi, 2017). To combat the bleak educational outlook and its impact on America, President Johnson signed into law the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) on April 11th, 1965 (Casalaspi, 2017).

The overarching goal of ESEA was to provide equal access to education for all and assist in fighting the war on poverty (Paul, 2018). Programs put into place through ESEA had federal funding attached and thus, federal requirements tied to them. One important program put in place through ESEA was Title I. Title I allocated federal funding to school districts with a high percentage of low-income students. The goal of the increased funding for low-income student populations was focused instruction for those students to improve reading, writing and math skills (Paul, 2018). ESEA and Title I were the start of what would become a system in which local school organizations were tied to federal mandates and funding that would change the shape of the educational landscape in the United States (Casalaspi, 2017).

National Assessment of Educational Progress

In 1969 the first National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) was administered. The goal of NAEP was to gauge the success and progress of education in the United States (Greer, 2018). The idea behind NAEP was lofty. The test was designed to be given to students aged 9, 13 and 17 and to young adults between the ages of 26 and 35 to determine not only the level of learning while students were in school, but whether learning carried over and was remembered and applied in adult life (Jacobsen, et al., 2014). In addition to wide cohorts of citizens being tested, the desire was to have NAEP administered in a non-standardized testing format. Questions covered not only basic subjects and factual knowledge, but also behaviors that could lead to the overall civic well-being of the society. Test items were often open-ended, and in addition to paper-pencil assessments, observations needed to be incorporated to evaluate the application of behaviors (Jacobsen, et al., 2014).

Over time, NAEP was modified with the removal of the young adult cohort test; and in 1996, the civic-minded behavioral portions of the test were eliminated, and the focus became strictly academic with no behavior or values components (Jacobsen, et al., 2014). Today NAEP is administered nationally in different yearly time increments dependent upon skill area and student grade level. Tested areas include reading, writing, math, science, civics, geography, economics, United States history, arts, and technology. Math, reading, science and writing are the areas assessed most often. Students in grades four, eight, and twelve are tested depending on the subject area, with students in grades four and eight being tested in more areas than students in grade twelve (NAEP, 2020). Over the years, NAEP has moved toward more standardized formats for testing and score reporting and has become a much looked to entity in determining what students in the United States are, and should be able, to do (Greer, 2018).

A Nation at Risk

In 1983 a report titled *A Nation at Risk* was released by The National Commission on Excellence in Education (Gardner, et al., 1983). The report, commissioned by the United States Department of Education, noted that for the first time in the nation's history, United States' students were going to be less well educated than their parents (Mehta, 2015). The report indicated concerns regarding the United States' ability to remain economically competitive on a global scale given what was deemed a failing school system.   The notion put forth by *A Nation at Risk* that the education system was the nation's instigator of problems regarding economic factors and international competition, led to immense focus on the school system. An expectation that solutions to the country's issues could be found within a reformed education system became the norm, and heightened efforts to make changes in the nation's school system began (Mehta, 2015). Within 15 months of the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, 46 states were working on comprehensive plans to reform their school systems. Prior to the report's publication, only five states were working to reform their school systems (Guthrie & Springer, 2004). One outcome of the abundance of school reform spurred by *A Nation at Risk* was the shift toward evaluating schools on outcomes achieved by students rather than the financial resources that were allocated to support schools (Guthrie & Springer, 2004).

No Child Left Behind

The 2001 reauthorization of ESEA provided an opportunity for more continued focus on reform of the education system and even greater federal involvement than had been seen in the past (Ladd, 2017). On January 8, 2002, President George W. Bush signed into law the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB) (No Child Left Behind, 2002). NCLB became an update to ESEA and was the newest guideline for education reform (Klein, 2018). NCLB was based upon four main

components. Those components are stronger accountability, more flexibility for states in the use

of federal funds, more schooling options for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, and the

use of proven teaching methods (Husband & Hunt, 2015). To achieve stronger accountability,

NCLB required schools receiving federal funding to annually evaluate student performance

using state-chosen standardized tests. All students, regardless of their race, ethnicity, academic

abilities, first language, or socioeconomic status were expected to take and pass the tests (Levitt,

2017). NCLB extended the reach of the federal government into the education system through

attaching funding to standardized testing outcomes and creating consequences for schools who

did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (Ladd, 2017). School districts across the nation

were now held accountable for students passing yearly standardized tests with consequences

being tied to control over schools and enrollment freedom for families attending schools where

AYP was not met. While AYP was based upon a yearly growth percentage determined by a

school's academic standardized testing performance (Yell, et al., 2006) the ultimate goal set for

schools by NCLB was to have 100% of all tested students reach proficiency by the year 2014.

Given this imposing requirement, by 2011, nearly half the schools in the nation were deemed to

be failing and some states lowered what was considered the proficiency rate in an attempt to

meet the 100% passage criteria (Ladd, 2017).

Following testing, success of schools was measured in terms of AYP which was deemed

to consist of 95% of the students in a school taking the test with each school on target to have

100% of all tested students reach proficiency by the year 2014. Schools not meeting AYP faced

increasingly higher consequences based on the number of consecutive years AYP was not met

(Husband & Hunt, 2015). Failure to meet AYP for two consecutive years resulted in mandated

spending of a portion of Title I funds to provide tutoring and school choice for students (Klein,

2018). If schools continued to not meet AYP, consequences became greater including loss of

decision making control by school administration, replacement of teaching staff, revision of

curriculum and finally, fundamental restructuring of the school including the possibility of

turning the school over to be run by the state or a private company if AYP was not met for a fifth

consecutive year (Husband & Hunt, 2015). These high stakes consequences tied to standardized

testing led to instructional changes in classrooms including a narrower curriculum focus and

"teaching to the test" (Ladd, 2017; Levitt, 2016).

Race to the Top

In 2009 United States President, Barack Obama, put into place an initiative titled *Race to*

the Top. (RTT) (Race to the Top Program Executive Summary, 2009). RTT was a competitive

grant program through which states could compete to receive extra funding for schools. RTT

focused on four main components. Those components included 1) development of rigorous

standards and better assessments, 2) adoption of better data systems to provide schools, teachers,

and parents with information about student progress, 3) support for teachers and school leaders

to become more effective, and 4) increased emphasis and resources for the rigorous interventions

needed to turn around the lowest-performing schools (Race to the Top Program Executive

Summary, 2009). Through RTT, states were able to apply for grant awards by submitting plans

pledging to put reforms in place. While only a few states were awarded money, evidence shows

that all states in the country, whether they applied for, or were awarded money, made rapid

policy changes following the enactment of RTT (Howell, 2016). One focus of RTT, development

of rigorous standards, led many states to adopt a unified set of standards called *Common Core*

State Standards (CCSS) (Eitel, 2012).

Common Core State Standards

Throughout the history of schooling in America the idea that educational equality and a common curriculum would be of benefit to students has arisen repeatedly (Greer, 2018; Ravitch, 1983; Coleman, 1967; Evaluation of Secondary Schools, 1939). In 2009 a standardized national curriculum came to life through the Common Core State Standards Initiative (CCSSI) (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). Though the curriculum was created for a national purpose, it was not produced with involvement of the federal government. Rather, the initiative was put together by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices (NGA Center) and the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) in consultation with several teacher organizations such as the National Education Association (NEA), American Federation of Teachers (AFT), National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). The completed curriculum, referred to as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) was ready for release and implementation in April of 2009, endorsed and incentivized through RTT and originally was adopted by 46 states across the United States (Ed Gate Correlation Services, 2020).

The aim of the CCSS was to create "Consistent, real-world learning goals . . . to ensure that all students, regardless of where they live, are graduating high school prepared for college, career, and life" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). With the end goal of life preparation in mind, a focus of the standards was on higher order thinking and application of rigorous content (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). CCSS were developed for learners in grades kindergarten through twelve in the areas of ELA and math. The standards declare what students should know and be able to do upon high school graduation but are not

themselves a curriculum. States, districts, schools, and individual teachers are left to determine

how best to convey the standards to students.

Opposing views about the CCSS exist. Proponents of CCSS state that the standards focus

on college and career readiness which is beneficial to all students (Gardner & Powell, 2013).

Additionally, students benefit from a common curriculum because it provides consistency in the

educational experience no matter where a student attends school and employers can expect that

all students have been exposed to the same skillset (Gardner & Powell, 2013). Adversaries of

CCSS believe that a one-size-fits-all curriculum disregards the unique abilities, interests, and

situations of different groups of students across the United States (Cramer et al., 2018).

Furthermore, a common curriculum may inhibit creative teaching and discourage creativity and

inquiry (Deas, 2018). In the years since the 2009 implementation of CCSS, nine of the original

adoption states reversed their decision to adopt the curriculum, eight more states rewrote portions

of the curriculum to fit the needs of the state and one state adopted only the ELA portion of the

standards (Ed Gate Correlation Services, 2020).

Every Student Succeeds Act

December 10, 2015, an updated reauthorization of ESEA was signed by Barack Obama.

This reauthorization replaced NCLB and was titled the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA)

(Every Student Succeeds Act, 2015). While ESSA continues the focus on student outcomes and

standardized testing, a key difference between NCLB and ESSA is the level of choice provided

for state school systems when measuring and reporting student achievement. While NCLB

required academic achievement to be measured purely by standardized testing with a 100%

proficiency goal, under ESSA, states are given the freedom to determine, within a menu of

choices, some of their own accountability measures. The basic guidelines of ESSA assert that all

states must measure student academic achievement in English, mathematics, and science, have a second valid and reliable academic indicator that demonstrates student growth, track and report high school graduation rates, have a tool to measure progress toward English language proficiency for English language learners, and at least one other measure of school success that is measurable and comparable across the state (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2016). Additionally, ESSA focuses on equity for the marginalized student groups including English Language Learners, students in special education programs, students in poverty, and minority students (Lee, 2020).

Signed into law in 2015, ESSA was mandated to be fully implement in the 2017/2018 school year. States developed ESSA Consolidated Plans that were submitted to the national Secretary of Education for approval. The goal of each Consolidated Plan was to provide informational about how ESSA would be implemented in a specific state (United States Department of Education, 2017). The Washington State ESSA Consolidated Plan can be found on the website of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2018). The Consolidated Plan for the State of Washington indicates that student achievement will be monitored through the use of the Smarter Balanced Assessment, student growth goals, high school graduation rates, performance by English Learner students on the ELPA 21 test, and student attendance rates (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2018). At Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym), the student growth goal targets opinion and informational writing for students in grades three through five.

For communities to have open access to performance data of schools, ESSA mandates that annually, states and districts publish report cards demonstrating proficiency percentages of standardized testing scores (United States Department of Education, 2016). In the state of

Washington, that report card can be found on the website of the Office of Superintendent of

Public Instruction (Washington State Report Card, n.d.). Additionally, specific areas of growth

broken down by academic category and student group can be found for the state of Washington

through the Washington School Improvement Framework (Office of Superintendent of Public

Instruction, 2020).

Effects of Standardization

As standardization and federal funds have become more prevalent in the United States

school system, testing and standardized curriculum requirements have grown. What began early

on as standardized testing for only a few grades, has become a list of required tests to measure

progress of students in general education as well as students who have exceptional needs. In the

state of Washington, standardization has resulted in testing of all students in grades three through

eight and grade ten in ELA and math as well as science testing in grades five, eight and eleven.

In Washington, the standardized tests take the form of the Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA)

for ELA and math and the Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science (WCAS) for

science (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – Science, 2019). In place of the SBA

and WCAS, students with special education needs may be given the Washington Access to

Instruction and Measurement (WA-AIM) (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – State

Testing, 2018).   Additionally, fourth and eighth grade students in Title I schools take the NAEP,

student's families who indicate English is not their child's home language take the English

Language Proficiency Assessment for the 21st Century (ELPA21) test to determine English

language proficiency and students entering kindergarten are given the Washington Kindergarten

Inventory of Skills (WaKIDS) (Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction – State Testing,

2018). In the state of Washington students must pass the SBA, or an acceptable replacement

test, in ELA and math one time in high school as a graduation requirement (Office of

Superintendent of Public Instruction – Graduation Requirements, 2017). All this testing equates

to lost instruction time. Typically, students in grades three through eleven nationally, spend

more than 20 hours taking standardized tests each school year (Fink, 2016). In addition to the

time spent taking tests, class time is lost due to a focus in schools of preparing students to pass

the tests (Erksine, 2014).

Federal standardization of curriculum and testing systems within schools were intended

to benefit students. Evidence shows that overall, student learning has not increased as a result of

the standardization of the public-school system (Deas, 2018). Additionally, research suggests

that both teaching and learning have been harmed by the pressures placed upon the outcomes of

standardized testing (Husband & Hunt, 2015). High-stakes standardized testing and a unified,

standardized curriculum have made an impact on the function of the United States education

system. Non-tested subjects, such as social studies have suffered a decrease in instructional

time. As noted by Jacobsen and Rothstein, "When schools are held accountable for math and

reading scores, less attention is paid to history, science, citizenship, physical education, oral

presentations, cooperative learning, the arts and music" (2014). In addition, research suggests

that standardization of education produces higher academic results for white students than for

minorities (Erksine, 2014). While standardization has become the federally led direction for the

United States' education system there is evidence that other, more inquiry based, student driven

instruction methods are best for student learning (Duke et al., 2018; Khalaf, 2018; McClung et

al., 2019; Merritt et al., 2017).

Project Based Learning

Alongside the desire to have a standardized education system are voices of those who believe that student choice, rather than mandated learning objectives, is the best path toward creating students who are life-long learners and valuable contributors to society. In the early 1900's philosopher John Dewey posited that the system of education should inspire students to continue learning throughout their lives (Dewey, 1907). Dewey believed that as living beings, students should be involved in the creation of establishing the objectives of their own learning, and that through that involvement, life-long, successful learners would be created (Noddings, 2015). Today, many educators agree with the philosophy of Dewey and numerous studies support the idea that educational activities that promote student choice lead to more student engagement and greater student success. (Johnson et al., 2019; Cress & Holm, 2016; Thomas, 2000). One method used in the educational system to incorporate student choice is project based learning (PBL) (Thomas, 2000). PBL is a form of teaching through which students learn by actively engaging in real-world and personally meaningful projects (PBL Works, 2020). Project based learning has been shown to increase student engagement and thus, student performance (West & Roberts, 2016; Condliffe et al., 2017; Johnson et al., 2019).

In the national system of education, standardization has been the movement, but many researchers and educational philosophers believe that a standardized learning path for students is not the correct approach. Instead, many suppose that promotion of student choice in learning is what will create deeper, more meaningful knowledge acquisition for students (Dewey, 1907; Buchanan, et al., 2016; Clark, 2016; Cress, et al., 2016; Fukuzawa, et al., 2017). Additionally, with the ESSA goal of a graduation rate of 100%, of critical importance is keeping students in school. In a three-year study of economically disadvantaged high school students, Creghan

&Adair-Creghan (2015) found that students involved in engaging, choice-based learning were more likely to have regular school attendance than students participating in standard methods of instruction.

History of Project Based Learning

The history of student-engaged learning such as project based learning reaches far into the past. As early as the time of Confucius in 550 BC, the idea of involving students in the learning process was discussed. Confucius stated, "Talk to me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I will understand, step back and I will act" (Graff & Kolmos, 2007, p. 1). In the early 1900's, philosopher John Dewey held beliefs that lend themselves well to the idea of promoting student choice in learning (Dewey, 1907). Dewey thought that students need to be involved in the creation of objectives for their own learning (Noddings, 2015). Under that idea, Dewey posited that the quest for knowledge, rather than a derived set path, was the desired route for education. Dewey believed that the best way to create students who strive to be on a quest for knowledge is to provide freedom of choice in learning content. Dewey thought that children had four main interests. Those interests lie in making things, finding out, expressing themselves artistically, and communication. The first two interests, making things and finding out, can be thought of as construction and inquiry (Noddings, 2015). In today's standardized learning environment, opportunities for students to be involved in learning activities such as construction and inquiry have become limited (Erksine, 2014).

When looking specifically at the educational history of project based learning, American teacher, William Heard Kilpatrick, is considered to be the first in the education field to incorporate project based style learning (Condliffe, et al., 2017). In the early 1900's, Kilpatrick

utilized the idea referred to as project-method learning through which projects were student

initiated. The goals of project-method learning were for students to be intrinsically motivated,

emerge with higher degrees of skill and knowledge, view school as important and approach

school activities with joy and confidence (Pecore, 1970).

Though Kilpatrick utilized project-method learning with college age students, educators

such as Maria Montessori recognized that student engagement was important even for young

students. In 1907 Montessori introduced a self-created method of instruction in Rome through

the opening of a preschool for children ages three through six (Editors of Encyclopedia

Britannica, 2020). The method, known as the Montessori method, focuses on individual

initiative and self-directed learning for students (Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020).

Today the Montessori method is used widely around the world. In the United States, over 5,000

Montessori schools serve more than one million students and thousands more Montessori schools

exist world-wide (History of Montessori Education, n.d.). While schools utilizing the

Montessori method value student engagement and creativity, systemically student creativity is

not on the rise.

Over the last century, IQ scores in the United States have increased, indicating that the

population is becoming more intelligent (Kim, 2011). However, while IQ scores have increased,

creativity scores in the population have decreased. The most noted decreases occurred in

students in grades kindergarten through three beginning in 1990 as evidenced with data from the

Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (Kim, 2011). The decrease in creativity is significant

because creativity and imagination are important for citizens to innovate and be prepared to take

on changes and challenges in an uncertain world (Cho et al., 2017). Today, creative,

entrepreneurial people are what are needed in the workplace and hold the jobs that earn the most

income (World Class Learners, 2012). Additionally, Cho (2017) notes that studies have shown that the ability to be creative enhances students' capability for learning.

Elements of Project Based Learning

Some theorists introduced the idea of student choice early in the 1900's and many researchers have followed that train of thought and outlined ideas related to the notion that student choice and high engagement level produce stronger, superior learning outcome results (McClung et al., 2019; Merritt et al., 2017; Ostroff, 2016). There are many methods that can be utilized in schools to promote student choice in learning. Choice-based learning is a broad term and can be defined as, "A learning process through which learners participate in their own learning and in the manner by which such process is designed" (IGI Global, 2020). Additionally, there exist several educational models that utilize elements of choice. Those models are inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning, and project based learning. Inquiry-based learning can be defined as, an "Instructional method where students create questions about a phenomenon, fact, or piece of literature, and work to answer their questions through an exploration of the topic" (State of Washington Governor's Office, 2010). With elements of inquiry-based learning, problem-based learning involves learner choice, but is most often used in relation to the sciences. Problem-based learning is defined as, "An instructional (and curricular) learner-centered approach that empowers learners to conduct research, integrate theory and practice, and apply knowledge and skills to develop a viable solution to a defined problem" (Savery, 2006). Similar to problem-based learning, but without the purely scientific focus is project based learning. Project based learning (PBL) can be defined as an instructional model through which students engage in real-world and personally meaningful projects (PBL Works, 2020). PBL allows

students to tackle research tasks in school that hold personal interest and imply productivity and an element of real-world application that promotes student engagement.

Project based learning has four major criteria as identified by John Thomas (2000). Those criteria are: Projects are central, not peripheral to the curriculum, projects are focused on questions or problems that drive students to encounter the central concepts and principles of a discipline, projects involve students in a constructive investigation, projects are student-driven and projects are realistic rather than school-like. The organization PBL Works has created a comprehensive framework that engages with the criteria outlined by Thomas. PBL Works has its roots in the Buck Institute. The predominant focus of the Buck Institute is to end the threat of age-related diseases for current and future generations (Buck Institute for Research on Aging, 2021). An offshoot of the Buck Institute for Research on Aging is the Buck Institute for Education. This nonprofit organization opened in 1988 with the goal of creating educational programs that would develop students into the type of inquisitive learners that science needs (The Buck Institute, 2021). Thus, the Buck Institute for Education focuses its efforts on project based learning. In 2011, the Buck Institute for Education changed its name to PBL Works to more accurately represent the work of the organization (Vector Solutions, 2019). PBL Works is a predominate resource for project based learning with the organization holding a strong commitment to advancing educational equity and empowering learners from all levels of opportunity (PBL Works, 2020). When examining PBL as an educational tool, most roads lead to PBL Works, with other PBL organizations utilizing research and frameworks created by PBL Works.

PBL Works lays out a framework for teachers and students to guide the use of project based learning. That framework consists of the Seven Project Based Teaching Practices for use

by teachers and the Seven Essential Project Design Elements for use by students. In order for students to successfully utilize the Seven Essential Project Design Elements, guidance and structure must be provided by the teacher. Teachers have access to guidance strategies through the Seven Project Based Teaching Practices established by PBL Works. Those teaching practices are Design and Plan, Align to Standards, Build the Culture, Manage Activities, Scaffold Student Learning, Assess Student Learning, and Engage and Coach. The Design and Plan element involves teachers creating or adapting an existing project for students by planning its implementation from start to finish, including the timeline and structure through which student voice and choice will be utilized. Through the Design and Plan element, teachers control the scope of the project, but not the specific details that will be decided upon by each student as the project is completed. In Aligning to Standards, teachers are ensuring that the project addresses important knowledge and understandings suggested by local or national standards. Through Building the Culture, teachers promote student independence, open-ended inquiry, collegial spirit, and attention to quality. Manage Activities involves teachers assisting students as a guide through organizing tasks and schedules, setting checkpoints and guidelines, helping with resource location, and providing the method to make products public. To support students in reaching the project goals, teachers utilize the element of Scaffold Student Learning by instructing a variety of lessons, providing tools, and using instructional strategies to support student learning. As a teacher, assessing student learning is part of many tasks. Assess Student Learning is the project element in which teachers use formative and summative assessments to evaluate students' knowledge and skills used and gained during the project. Formative assessments are those used during instruction to gauge learning while it is happening (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014) and summative assessments are used to evaluate student learning at

the end of an instructional period (Glossary of Education Reform, 2014). Throughout the

process, teachers use the PBL Works element of Engage and Coach to participate in learning

alongside students while providing skill-building, redirection, encouragement, and celebration as

needed.

The Seven Essential Project Design Elements used by students encompass the

components of Challenging Problem or Question, Sustained Inquiry, Authenticity, Student Voice

and Choice, Reflection, Critique and Revision, and Public Product. Each element serves a

unique function in the overall structure of the project. The Challenging Problem or Question is

the frame around which the project is built. It is a meaningful problem to be solved or a question

to be answered by a student. Sustained Inquiry connotes that students will work through a

process of posing questions, finding resources, and using information over an extended time

period. Authenticity within in the project signifies that the work has real-world meaning to the

student, whether in only their personal life, or in their broader community or world. Through

Student Voice and Choice, students make decisions about how the project is managed and

presented.   Reflection involves students and teachers looking at problems that arise and

developing strategies for overcoming those problems. In addition, Reflection encompasses

analysis of the learning that has taken place. In the Critique and Revision portion of the Seven

Essential Project Design Elements students give, receive, and apply feedback to improve the

project. The final element, Public Product, involves students sharing their work with an

audience outside of the classroom.

Research Around Project Based Learning

Many studies have demonstrated that student choice in learning provides positive results.

Johnson, et al. (2019) researched kindergarten students engaged in learning about the five senses

and speculated that students' deep learning of the observed content area was due to the project based learning format of the instruction. Diffily (2001) noted that first-grade students given a real-world problem to solve came up with creative solutions that were effectively communicated through writing. Fisher & Frey (2018) and Fraumeni-McBride (2017) discovered that allowing students choice in reading materials had a positive impact on students' reading abilities, and in comparing traditional and inquiry-based learning methods, Khalaf (2018) determined that in today's world, inquiry-based learning models are more relevant for learners than are traditional instructional models. Jacobson (2018) found that project based learning when combined with writing tasks increased student engagement levels across other subjects and Johannessen (2001) proposed that in order to help students enter the complex, problem focused workplace of the future, writing instruction should be centered on problem solving or inquiry. Finally, in a review of literature surrounding PBL, Condliffe et al. note that PBL provides promising results for student engagement levels and learning (2017).

Written Communication

Writing, the Common Core State Standards and Third Grade

The Common Core State Standards made writing a central focus and integral part of all learning areas (Graham & Harris, 2015). Through the CCSS, educators began focusing writing on three specific categories. Those categories are writing to inform, writing to persuade, and writing to entertain. The categories are officially noted as Informational or Expository Writing, Argumentative or Opinion Writing and Narrative Writing. As part of the Common Core State Standards came the effort to have writing take on a fundamental role in other instructed subjects. Thus, writing has become an integral part of the efforts to improve learning and education (Graham et al, 2015). Not only is writing an important skill within education, but employers

have expressed a noted lack of ability in employees' written communication skills (Kleckner &Marshall, 2014). Therefore, increased focus on writing as a component of the CCSS is not the lone factor when considering the importance of writing. Additionally, development of writing skills is necessary to have students prepared to enter the workforce.

Third grade, generally made up of students ages eight or nine in the United States' education system, is an important year of writing instruction in terms of the CCSS. The standards are written to outline ten primary writing skills that fall into the categories of Text Type and Purpose, Production and Distribution of Writing, Research to Build and Present Knowledge, and Range of Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). In grades kindergarten through two, only three of the writing categories are addressed with Range of Writing being added into the standards for the first time in grade three. Through Range of Writing, students are expected to "Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes and audiences" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020, p.21). Additionally, in kindergarten through second grade, each addressed category has only one broad learning target. Third grade is the first year in which the learning targets contain sub-targets that must be addressed. Third grade students are expected to be able to gather research from print and digital sources, take notes, sort evidence, and independently create research projects. The jump from guided, group learned writing in the younger grades toward independent use of writing skills for grade three through the CCSS targets is one that makes third grade an important cohort when it comes to writing skills.

Washington State Consolidated ESSA Plan and Writing

When signed into law, ESSA took much of the accountability for demonstration of

student success out of the hands of the federal government and put it in the hands of each state.

Rather than student success being gauged primarily by scores on an annual standardized test as

had been the case under NCLB, student success was now to be measured by multiple factors.

Every state was required to demonstrate student learning through a predetermined set of

measures, but within that set of measures existed some choice to be defined at the state level.

Standardized testing now stood alongside several other reported measurements to show student

progress. In order to be held accountable for the chosen points of measure being used, prior to

full implementation of the ESSA mandates in the 2017/2018 school year, each state submitted a

Consolidated Plan to the national Secretary of Education. The Consolidated Plan detailed how

the state specifically planned to go about meeting the requirements of ESSA for its student

population. The guidelines of ESSA state that student academic achievement must be measured

in English, mathematics, and science, and that in addition to the initial measurement, states must

have a second valid and reliable academic indicator that demonstrates student growth. States

must also track and report high school graduation rates, have a tool to measure progress toward

English language proficiency for English language learners, and have at least one other measure

of school success that is measurable and comparable across the state (Darling-Hammond, et al.,

2016).

In the state of Washington, the ESSA mandate that academic achievement be measured in

mathematics and English is met through the use of the standardized Smarter Balanced

Assessment which is given each spring to students in grades three through eight and students in

grade ten. To measure science, students in grades five, eight and eleven are given the

Washington comprehensive Assessment of Science. ESSA states that a second, valid and reliable academic indicator must be used to measure student growth. As that second indicator, the state of Washington uses Student Growth Goals created at each school building level and reported to the state in the fall of each school year through a Student Improvement Plan (Washington State Legislature, n.d.). The state of Washington uses ELPA21 to test students for whom English is not their first language and as an additional measure of school success that is measurable and comparable across the state, student attendance is used.

At Lakeshore Elementary, students in grades three through five take the prescribed grade level Smarter Balanced Assessments. To meet additional ESSA guidelines of incorporating student growth, Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) staff created the following student growth goal: "75% of students in grades 3-5 will score at least three out of four on the organization/purpose and evidence/elaboration rubric on the Smarter Balanced Performance Task for Informational and Opinion Writing by the Spring of 2022" (McAuliffe Elementary School: School Improvement Plan, 2019). As of the most recent available test data, the 2019 SBA, only 31.25% of students in grades three through five at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) achieved a level 3 or higher proficiency rating in the areas of organization, purpose, evidence, and elaboration on informational and opinion writing (Microsoft Power BI, n.d.) (see Tables 1-3).

Table 1

2019 SBA Lakeshore Elem. Passage Percentages for Organization/Evidence Informational Writing

Writing Component	Organization	Evidence	Organization	Evidence	Organization	Evidence
Student Grade Level	3	3	4	4	5	5
Passage Percentage	33	33	24	24	48	51
Combined Passage Percentage	33		24		49.5	

Table 2

2019 SBA Lakeshore Elem. Passage Percentages for Organization/Evidence Opinion Writing

Writing Component	Organization	Evidence	Organization	Evidence	Organization	Evidence
Student Grade Level	3	3	4	4	5	5
Passage Percentage	21	21	21	28	50	33
Combined Passage Percentage	21		24.5		41.5	

Table 3

2019 SBA Combined Writing Percentages for Organization and Evidence in Info and Opinion

Writing Type	Grades 3-5 Passage Percentages
Informational Organization, Purpose	35
Informational Evidence, Elaboration	36
Opinion Organization, Purpose	28
Opinion Evidence, Elaboration	26
Informational Organization, Purpose, Evidence, Elaboration and Opinion Organization, Purpose, Evidence, Elaboration Average Passage Percentage	31.25

Written Communication Importance

Written language being an integral part of the CCSS is not the only reason for writing to be a strong educational focus. Written language holds importance in the acquisition of knowledge. Graham (2019) posits that writing is important because it can help students increase knowledge in other subjects since the act of writing has been shown to help students learn and retain information. Thus, writing can be a tool used to advance learning. Not only does writing serve to advance learning of individuals, Olson and Oatley (2014) note that writing is important to the advancement of civilization because written language allows communication to take place across space and time. Additionally, Olson and Oatley state that writing creates a record of knowledge that accumulates and can be expanded upon, and that writing produces more abstract and logical levels of thinking. Given those ideas, it is easy to see how written language is

foundational for the growth of the global society, and as such, is an essential skill at which all humans should be proficient.

While all forms of writing hold importance, opinion writing, also known as persuasive or argumentative writing, may have some special benefits. According to Burkhalter (1993) persuasive writing has an important tie-in with critical thinking skills. Burkhalter (1993) notes that persuasive writing encompasses a special set of skills that involve a writer not only conducting research and capturing the thoughts of other writers, but the persuasive writer must also propose ideas or solutions that are unique to that writer's situation. Additionally, Stevens (2005) states that the writing of persuasive documents requires many skills such as the ability to analyze an audience, propose arguments, use evidence in a convincing manner and keep an appropriate tone in the writing. Stevens (2005) posits that persuasive writing skills are especially important for those in the field of business management and that in order to be effective managers oral and written persuasive skills are important to a successful career in business.

Writing Proficiency

Through use of the CCSS, the literacy skills of reading and writing are often viewed together under the umbrella of ELA. Nationally and throughout individual states, there are a variety of measures used to test student ELA proficiency levels. Due to the compiling of data under the topic of ELA rather than data being separated into reading and writing categories, it is necessary in some cases to analyze overall ELA data when considering writing proficiency of students in the United States. Nationally, literacy proficiency is gauged by scores from the NAEP reading and writing assessments. NAEP is administered in different years to varying grade levels, covering assorted subjects. For the eight-year time period from 2011 to 2019, tested fourth grade students had an average failure rate in reading of 64.6% on NAEP (see Table 4) and

tested eighth grade students had an average failure rate of 65.2% on NAEP (see Table 5). Tested

twelfth-grade students showed an average failure rate of 63% in reading between the years 2005

and 2015 (see Table 6) (NAEP, 2020). While assessment intervals occur differently for each

tested grade level, it is apparent that students in all three examined grades are struggling to reach

proficiency in literacy with the average failure percentage for all three grades being higher than

60%.

Table 4 *Eight Year NAEP National Failure Rates by Percent in Reading for Fourth Grade Students*

Year	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	Average
Failure Rate %	66	65	64	63	65	64.6

Table 5

Eight Year NAEP National Failure Rates by Percent in Reading for Eighth Grade Students

Year	2011	2013	2015	2017	2019	Average
Failure Rate %	66	64	66	64	66	65.2

Table 6

Ten Year NAEP National Failure Rates by Percentage in Reading for Twelfth Grade Students

Year	2005	2009	2013	2015	Average
Failure Rate %	65	62	62	63	63

The NAEP is administered less frequently for writing than for reading, and scores indicate that eighth-grade students have an average failure rate of 70.3% in writing for the tested years from 2002 to 2011 (see Table 7) and twelfth-grade students have an average failure rate of 75% for the tested years from 2005 to 2015 (NAEP, 2020). When comparing ELA skills on a national level using NAEP, it is apparent that the overall failure rates of tested students are higher in writing than in reading. Comparisons of eight-grade reading and writing NAEP scores show an average failure rate of 65.2% in reading and 70.3% in writing. Comparison of twelfth-grade ELA category scores on the NAEP show a failure rate of 63% in reading and 75% in writing (see Table 8 and Table 9).

Table 7

Nine Year NAEP National Failure Rates by Percent in Writing for Eighth Grade Students

Year	2002	2007	2011	Average
Failure Rate %	69	68	74	70.3

Table 8

Nine Year NAEP National Failure Rates by Percent in Writing for Twelfth Grade Students

Year	2002	2007	2011	Average
Failure Rate %	77	75	73	75

Table 9

Avg. NAEP Failure Rate Percentage Eighth and Twelfth Grade Students in Reading and Writing

Grade	8	12
Average Failure Rate % for Reading	65.2	63
Average Failure Rate % for Writing	70.3	75

In the state of Washington, student proficiency and failure rates for literacy are determined by the annual Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBA) in English Language Arts (ELA). For the five-year time period from 2014 to 2019 the average failure rate of tested students in grades three through eight and grade ten in ELA is 42.83% (see Table 10). Statewide, ELA scores are not disseminated by reading and writing, but are available as an overall, ELA score. In the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) student ELA failure rate as measured by the SBA for grades three through eight and grade ten in the five-year time-period from 2014 to 2019 is 19.16% (see Table 11).

Table 10

Five Year Washington State SBA ELA Failure Rate Percentages, Grades 3 through 8 and 10

School Year	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Average
Failure Rate %	49.4	40.2	41.3	40.6	40.4	42.38

Table 11

Five Year Lakeshore School District SBA ELA Failure Percentages, Grades 3 through 8 and 10:

School Year	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Average
Failure Rate %	27.2	16.8	18.0	17.0	16.8	19.16

Locally, at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) tested students in grades three through

five demonstrate an 11.3% failure rate on the ELA portions of the SBA for the five-year time-

period from 2014 to 2019 (see Table 12).

Table 12

Five Year Lakeshore Elementary SBA ELA Failure Rate Percentages for Grades 3 Through 5:

School Year	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017	2017/2018	2018/2019	Average
Failure Rate %	12.2	10.1	12.3	10.3	11.6	11.3

While overall SBA scores for ELA skills are expressed via percentage of students

reaching standard, when pared down to an examination of writing skills without the combined

reading element, scores in the state of Washington via the SBA, are calculated using skill-based

rubrics (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.). For each strand of writing,

informational, argumentative (referred to as opinion for students in grades kindergarten through

five) and narrative, students are assessed on three separate rubrics. One rubric is for analysis of

the organization and purpose of the written piece. The second rubric details the score for

evidence and elaboration of the writing, and the third rubric shows the score for the conventions

used in the writing. The first two rubrics are each evaluated using a 4-point scale with the conventions' rubric utilizing a 2-point scale. Thus, an overall score out of a possible 10 points is calculated for each student in the area of writing. Though the evaluation is based upon the 10-point scale, there is not a target number out of 10 that indicates proficiency. Rather, the rubric scores can be used to analyze student data in a comparative way to determine if certain writing strands or skills are weaker than others.

This 10-point scale is put forth by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium as a measure of student performance on each strand of writing (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.). Writing scores for the time period from 2017 to 2019 for third, fourth and fifth-grade students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) can be seen in Table 13.   (Microsoft Power BI, n.d.).

Table 13

Three Year SBA Writing Scores on 10-point Scale by Grade Level for Lakeshore Elementary

Student Grade Level	3	3	3	4	4	4	5	5	5
Year	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019	2017	2018	2019
Narrative Writing Score out of 10	5.92	6.54	6.21	6.40	7.03	6.50	7.68	8.37	7.55
Informational Writing Score out of 10	6.14	5.49	6.42	5.26	5.84	5.39	7.19	5.65	6.59
Opinion Writing Score out of 10	4.81	4.63	5.83	6.18	5.80	5.93	6.71	7.00	6.15
3 Year Average out of 10		5.77			6.03			6.99	

When writing skills are parsed out into examining the skills of "Organization and Purpose" and "Evidence Elaboration" for the categories of informational, opinion, and narrative writing, in every category except informational writing, third-grade students have a higher percentage of failure than do fourth and fifth-grade students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) for the years 2017 to 2019 (see Tables 14, 15, and 16). Most critical to note is the fact that in the year 2018, third-grade students had a 100% failure rate in the specific categories related to opinion writing (see Table 14). In 2019 the failure percentage dropped by nearly 22%. This educational year coincided with the mandatory teaching of a new writing curriculum that may have positively impacted third-grade students' writing abilities.

Table 14

Grade 3 Lakeshore Elementary 3 Year SBA Failure Percentages by Writing Category

Writing Category	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	Average % of Failure
Informational Organization/Purpose	58	83	67	69.3
Informational Evidence Elaboration	58	83	67	69.3
Opinion Organization/Purpose	94	100	79	91
Opinion Evidence/Elaboration	95	100	79	91.3
Narrative Organization/Purpose	56	52	26	44.6
Narrative Evidence/Elaboration	60	52	32	48

Table 15

Grade 4 Lakeshore Elementary 3 Year SBA Failure Percentages by Writing Category

Writing Category	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	Average % of Failure
Informational Organization/Purpose	86	72	76	78
Informational Evidence Elaboration	83	76	76	78.3
Opinion Organization/Purpose	68	73	78	73
Opinion Evidence/Elaboration	64	71	71	68.6
Narrative Organization/Purpose	47	38	35	40
Narrative Evidence/Elaboration	47	38	35	40

Table 16

Grade 5 Lakeshore Elementary 3 Year SBA Failure Percentages by Writing Category

Writing Category	2017 %	2018 %	2019 %	Average % of Failure
Informational Organization/Purpose	44	70	51	55
Informational Evidence Elaboration	53	78	48	59.6
Opinion Organization/Purpose	43	40	50	44.3
Opinion Evidence/Elaboration	50	47	67	54.6
Narrative Organization/Purpose	16	9	10	11.6
Narrative Evidence/Elaboration	16	9	10	11.6

Current State of Field

In 2019, American analytics and advisory company, Gallup conducted a national study to examine the extent to which students, parents and teachers value creativity as a part of learning and to what extent creativity is being fostered as part of learning in American classrooms (Gallup Inc., 2020). The study found that 87% of teachers and 77% of parents surveyed believe that teaching methods which incorporate student creativity are more beneficial for students. In line with thoughts about creativity, the survey found that only 13% of parents and 12% of teachers believe that learning to perform well on standardized tests is an important skill for students. Despite the beliefs by survey participants about the importance of creative elements in education, teachers and students surveyed stated to varying degrees that rote memorization and repetition are given more time in school than is devoted to endeavors of creativity. When surveyed, 36% of teachers and 58% of students identified that memorization of facts and definitions takes place

often or very often during school. Similarly, 49% of students and 57% of teachers declared that

students practice what is learned in school through exercises and repetition often or very often

(Gallup Inc., 2020). While opinions of surveyed parents, teachers and students along with

evidence from numerous researchers (Johnson et al., 2019; Cress & Holm, 2016; Thomas, 2000).

point to the idea that student-choice, creativity and critical thinking are beneficial methods of

education, the United States education system still relies on repetitive and standardized methods

to educate students.

As has been noted, student choice in learning is a way to engage students and increase

knowledge. Though project based learning was the choice-based format selected for this project,

there are other forms of choice-based learning that work to inspire students and increase their

level of knowledge and skill acquisition. One such method that is currently popular is that of the

Genius Hour, also known as 20% time (Von Jan, 2017). Genius hour is modeled after a plan put

in place by the technology company Google when they provided employees one hour per week

to pursue their own ideas. Google found that when employees were untethered to work on any

creative endeavor of their choosing, new, successful ideas blossomed that benefited the company

(Page, 2004). Now some teachers have adopted the idea of Genius Hour into classrooms and

have students spending one hour per week pursuing their own learning passion (Kessler Science,

2017).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this project was Project Based Learning, specifically the

Seven Essential Project Design Elements (Challenging Problem or Question, Sustained Inquiry,

Authenticity, Student Voice and Choice, Reflection, Critique and Revision, Public Product)

combined with the Seven Project Based Teaching Practices (Design and Plan, Align to

Standards, Build the Culture, Manage Activities, Scaffold Student Learning, Assess Student

Learning, Engage and Coach) created by PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020). The framework of

PBL was chosen because it can be used to teach critical content areas and skills. In the state of

Washington, the CCSS outline the essential skills and knowledge for each grade level (Common

Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). For this project, PBLWorks (PBL Works, 2020) was the

overarching framework with the CCSS as a supporting framework defining the writing skills to

be learned. The CCSS encompass the writing strands of Informational, Opinion, and Narrative

Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). Due to shortcomings in the

performance of students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym), particularly third grade students

within Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym), on standardized testing assessing writing skills in

the areas of opinion and informational writing, utilizing the PBL framework (PBL Works, 2020),

this project focused on those two writing strands.

Alongside the CCSS, the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake

Washington School District Writing Units, 2017) were used to format the writing portions of this

project. The Lake Washington School District Writing Units were developed to align with the

ELA CCSS and support writing instruction throughout the district (Lake Washington School

District, 2017). Thus, the curriculum addresses the necessary strands and skills expected to be

mastered by students through the CCSS. While the Lake Washington School District Writing

Units provide instruction in skills, the units do not offer students the project based learning

elements that may be critical to increasing students' levels of engagement and learning. The

curriculum consists of units of instruction in the areas of opinion, informational, and narrative

writing for grade levels kindergarten through five, though only the informational and opinion

writing lessons for grade three will be utilized in this project. Each unit was designed to function

within a writing workshop classroom format that follows a pattern of immersion, writing

process, and presentation. The immersion phase of each unit involves students being exposed to

a variety of sources in the text type with the purpose of gaining familiarity with the writing

format. Following immersion, each day of the unit typically involves a minilesson to provide

students with a focus skill to work on incorporating into their product. Through the unit,

students follow the steps of the writing process to develop a writing piece. At the end of the unit

students demonstrate their gained skills by presenting the completed writing piece through a

writing celebration. Lessons were presented in the format created by the Lake Washington

School District through the use of the Lake Washington School District Unit and Lesson

Planning Guides and Templates (Lake Washington School District, 2019).

Summary

Over time the United States school system has become increasingly standardized both

through testing requirements and adoption of the CCSS. Overall, standardization has not created

positive, equitable results for all populations of students. As standardization has increased,

curriculum has become more narrowly focused on math and literature with little time devoted to

student choice or engagement in learning. Studies have shown that student choice in learning

promotes student engagement which results in deeper, more meaningful learning. Project based

learning is one instructional method that incorporates choice and may help increase student

learning.

Though the CCSS have created a narrower curriculum focus with more time devoted to

tested subjects, students in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) are not meeting the level

of greater than 90% proficiency to meet the goal set by the school board, students at Lakeshore

Elementary (pseudonym) within the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) are not yet meeting

the goal stated in the School Improvement Plan of 75% proficiency in the areas of

organization/purpose and evidence/elaboration in informational and opinion writing for grades

three through five. When looking at indicators of future success, including likelihood of high

school graduation, student performance in grade three can be predictive (Hein et al., 2013;

Council of Chief State School Officers, 2019). Thus, third grade is a good focal point for

intervention. Additionally, with the adoption of the CCSS came writing requirements that were

integrated throughout other content areas. Writing became an embedded, important focus for

student success. Third grade is a pivotal year in writing in terms of the CCSS as requirement for

independence and depth of written content increase in grade three from the expectations laid out

for students in grades kindergarten through two. Thus, project based learning that contains a

focus on writing for third-grade students may lead to deeper engagement and learning and help

students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) and the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym)

increase their proficiency levels in writing.

   With the intended goal of increasing informational and opinion writing skill levels of

third grade students, the purpose of this project was to create an instructional unit for use by

teachers of third graders. The unit combined project based learning methodology, writing

standards outlined in the CCSS, and writing skills specific to informational and opinion writing.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods that were used in the development of the project.

Chapter 3

Method

Introduction

Schools in the United States, under the mandate of the Every Student Succeeds Act are

expected to demonstrate proficiency or growth toward proficiency in the area of ELA. Students

across the United States, as evidenced by NAEP have high ELA failure rates. In the state of

Washington, for the span from 2014 to 2019, students taking the SBA had a 42.38% failure rate.

Locally, the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) School Board and Lakeshore Elementary

(pseudonym) have set target goals to show growth toward proficiency in the area of ELA. The

targeted ELA growth of greater than 90% of students in the district meeting standard in ELA and

the school goal of 75% of students demonstrating proficiency in organization, purpose, evidence

and elaboration in opinion and informational writing have not yet been met by the students

attending Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym). ELA data at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym)

is measured in grades three through five through student performance on the SBA. Expectations

in the writing area of ELA increase at grade three, and the third-grade students at Lakeshore

Elementary (pseudonym) are generally the lowest performing cohort in the school in opinion and

informational writing. The ability to communicate through writing is an important skill and

combining an element of student choice through project based learning may increase the writing

abilities of third grade students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym). The purpose of this

project was to create a unit steeped in the project based learning format while complying with the

requirements of the CCSS and the writing curriculum prescribed by the Lake Washington School

District.

Project Overview and Design

The project was designed for use by third-grade teachers at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) in response to unsatisfactory performance on the opinion and informational writing portions of the SBA. The evaluated components of opinion and informational writing on the SBA are organization/purpose, evidence/elaboration, and conventions. Because the growth goal in the School Improvement Plan for Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) of 75% proficiency are in the areas of organization/purpose and evidence/elaboration in informational and opinion writing for grades three through five, does not target the conventions skills, that area was not a focus of this project. The project goal was to have students utilize project based learning through the use of PBL Works (PBL Works. 2020) to apply the writing skills of organization, purpose, evidence, and elaboration addressed in the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017) and the CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). Those skills include supporting a point of view with reasons, writing to communicate ideas and information clearly, producing writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to the task and purpose, building knowledge about a topic on which to gather information and take brief notes, and sorting information into categories (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020).

Application of writing skills through the project based learning process may increase students' immersion in, and therefore, success with, the skills. The unit was developed following the project based learning guidelines set forth by PBL Works in terms of designing the overall framework of the choice-based element of the project (PBL Works, 2020). The guidelines include having a project that is

1. designed to teach students key knowledge based on standards.

2. formed around a challenging, real-world problem or question.

3. sustained inquiry learning, which means the education takes place over time.

4. created so students are provided choice about what is created and how work time is used.

5. culminated with a publicly presented product.

The modified LWSD writing lessons for this project were intertwined with critical PBL

Works (2020) elements and teaching practices. A Challenging Problem was developed and

added to the project which serves as the overarching instructional theme from which the entire

unit was designed. The Challenging Problem follows:

> You are the mayor of a community that is having difficulty maintaining its
>
> population. People keep moving away and you cannot sustain your community
>
> with so few people. You have decided that you need to recreate the image of your
>
> community by designing a special focus. You need to give your community a
>
> new theme that will interest people in living there. For example, your community
>
> is a frog sanctuary, your community has a candy store on every corner, your
>
> community has a train that runs through it to get people where they want to go.

The challenging problem serves to substantially change the LWSD Writing Units in a

variety of ways. First, by giving students an engaging purpose and turning the lessons into a

project rather than lessons designed to create a single piece of informational or opinion writing.

Second, modifications of the LWSD Writing Units were made to include Sustained Inquiry,

Authenticity through the use of a real-world situation and Student Voice and Choice as students

will base their own project on a theme of their creation. Third, the lessons were modified to

incorporate Student Reflection, and Critique and Revision so students would revise their written

work as well as determine if they met the intended target. Fourth, the unit modification incorporated a Public Product to be presented at the close of the unit.

To use and modify the LWSD Writing Units, permission was given by Lake Washington School District principal, B. Howden (personal communication, October 5, 2020). The learning targets for the writing units and lessons were aligned to the CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020), the mandated learning targets for teaching writing in the state of Washington.

Connection to Literature

The project was founded in research literature that supports project based learning. Additionally, the research outlined the progression of the United States' education system's evolution into a curriculum standards and standardized testing focused learning platform that does not best nurture deep and meaningful learning for students. Finally, the research supports the importance of writing skills for both the broader society and within the school system. The project design was focused on incorporating the benefits of project based learning supported through the research literature in the content area of writing with the use of the CCSS and writing curriculum created by the Lake Washington School District (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017).

Role of Researcher in Developing the Project

The project, titled Third Grade Writing Skills and Project Based Learning, was designed by me in consultation with my graduate project committee. I am an elementary school teacher with varied experience instructing grades three, five, and six. Where I have been a classroom teacher, instructing in an elementary classroom involved a self-contained environment with

nearly every subject taught by me. I instructed students in math, science, social studies, health, and most importantly, regarding this project, ELA. In my role as an instructor of ELA, I taught informational, opinion and narrative writing. After adoption of the CCSS in the state of Washington my teaching of ELA was based upon the guidelines dictated by the CCSS. Two years ago, I received my Library Media Specialist endorsement and currently work as an elementary school librarian. The skills involved in ELA continue to be a focus in my current role because the job of a librarian has a strong emphasis on literacy. Over my 29-year teaching career, standardization of curriculum and standardized testing has been put in place across the nation, state and school district in which the I have taught. Consequently, I have witnessed first-hand, the effects those movements have had on the education system. The foundational research inquiry, unit plan and individual lessons for this project were created by me over a year-long period of time.

Criteria and Rationale for Project

The third grade targeted PBL writing project was developed based upon evidence from

SBA data demonstrating third grade students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) are failing

to meet proficiency goals in the area of writing as set forth by both the Lakeshore School District

(pseudonym) Board of Directors and the School Improvement Plan developed by staff at

Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) (McAuliffe Elementary School, 2019). The SBA data

indicated students are most deficient in informational and opinion writing. A project based

learning component added to writing instruction may help increase the integration and, thus

absorption of, skills related to informational and opinion writing.

Three phases were necessary for development and implementation of the project. The

first phase was data collection and exploration of research. The research supported the

importance of written communication and the fact that students benefit from the ability to make

choices regarding their learning. Following Phase 1, Phase 2 focused on developing the project

plan and adhering to the guidelines set forth by PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020), the CCSS

(Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020), and the Lake Washington School District

Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017). Parameters set forth by

PBL Works, the CCSS and the Lake Washington School District Writing Units all played

important roles in the project as detailed below.

The overarching principles from PBL Works laid down the foundation for the project.

The PBL frameworks set up the project as one where students are provided choice in their

learning. Using that framework, teachers will instruct students to focus on a challenging

problem or question with real-world application for their work. While the PBL Works

framework provides the overarching umbrella for the project, informational and opinion writing

are the critical skills to be developed through the instruction. The CCSS outlines the general standards necessary to teach informational and opinion writing to third grade students. Those skills include supporting a point of view with reasons, writing to communicate ideas and information clearly, and producing writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to the task and purpose. Additionally, the CCSS asks third grade students to conduct research projects to build knowledge about a topic and to gather information on which brief notes are taken and information is sorted into categories (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). The Lake Washington School District Writing Units provide specific lessons to teach skills needed to master the standards for informational and opinion writing.

The third phase of the project will be future implementation by third grade teachers at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym). Phase 3 is not incorporated within the timeline of this project and will take place during the 2021/2022 school year. Four third grade teachers will implement this project with their students prior to the administration of the SBA in the spring of 2022.

Methods Used to Achieve Product

This project was completed through the following steps.

Phase 1 - Research and Analysis: An analysis of data and research was conducted. Numerous professional articles written by scholars in the areas of the history and philosophy of education, written communication, and project based learning were reviewed and consulted to gather evidence to support the importance of written communication and project based learning. The initial analysis of research was conducted on the topic of student choice in learning. Research suggested when students are afforded choice about the topical content to be learned,

pupils experience increased enthusiasm and engagement for learning as well as increased depth

of gained knowledge (Batdi et al., 2018; Buchanan et al., 2016; Cherniak et al., 2019; Clark,

2016). When looking to provide students choice in learning, project based learning is a

framework that gives teachers a pathway down which to lead students, while providing the

learner autonomy.

In consideration of the topic of written communication, an analysis of ELA SBA scores

of students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) was conducted. That analysis identified a

lack of proficiency regarding the target goal of a 90% passage rate outlined by the school board

of the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) and the 75% target growth goal in informational

and opinion writing set by Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) staff. Through the data analysis,

identification of the third-grade student cohort being the lowest scoring third of the test results

was discovered. More specifically, third grade students were the lowest scoring cohort in the

area of opinion writing.

At the completion of research analysis, the chosen path was to create a project designed

around student choice through the utilization of project based learning. A web-based template,

titled Project Designer, and guidelines from PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020) were used as the

conceptual framework for the project. The instructional content focused on within the project

was informational and opinion writing. The standards for the informational and opinion writing

came from the Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020)

and the lessons were created utilizing the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake

Washington School District, 2017).

Phase 2 - Project Development: Once project based learning with a focus on writing

was established as the conceptual framework of the project, tools to create a project based

learning unit focused on informational and opinion writing were explored. PBL Works (PBL

Works, 2020) was chosen as the overarching conceptual framework of the project under which

the content areas would reside. The CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020),

Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District, 2017) and

Lake Washington School District Unit and Lesson Planning Guides and Templates (Lake

Washington School District, 2019) were the standards and formats for the project.

PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020) was selected due to the variety of materials available

through the organization. For this project, of the provided tools on the PBL Works website, the

PBL Works Project Designer, the Seven Project Based Teaching Practices, and the Seven

Essential Project Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) were used. The Seven Project Based

Teaching Practices (Design and Plan, Align to Standards, Build the Culture, Manage Activities,

Scaffold Student Learning, Assess Student Learning, Engage and Coach) are to be utilized by

teachers in the instruction of the unit. The Seven Essential Project Design Elements

(Challenging Problem or Question, Sustained Inquiry, Authenticity, Student Voice and Choice,

Reflection, Critique and Revision, Public Product) are directed toward the work done by

students.

The CCSS guidelines were chosen because they are the mandated guidelines that shape

teaching in the state of Washington where the project is being developed. Lake Washington

School District Writing Units were selected as part of the project framework for the reason that

the units cover in detail, the informational and opinion writing skills needed to be taught as well

as the fact that those units are mandated to be used in some form by teachers in the Lakeshore

School District for the instruction of writing. Additionally, the Writing Units contain complete

lessons that meet the guidelines of the CCSS. Most of the lessons for the project were newly

created while other lessons were modified from the Lake Washington School District Writing

Units (Lake Washington School District, 2017) using the Lake Washington School District Unit

and Lesson Planning Guides and Templates (Lake Washington School District, 2019).

Phase 3 – Project Application: Through this project, teachers were provided guidelines,

worksheets, and rubrics to escort students through the use of project based learning. Teachers

steer students through a choice-based project using lessons specific to writing skills involved in

informational and opinion writing. While given the opportunity to make choices about their

learning path, students will be given specific instruction to support them through a sustained

inquiry project. Students will also receive specific instruction on writing skills needed to create

informational and opinion pieces of writing to present their findings and solutions.

The unit will take roughly two months from start to finish with approximately three hours

per week of in-class teacher instruction combined with student work time. The unit was broken

into an Overview titled, "You Are the Mayor" and 5 sections labeled Section 1 "What Makes a

Successful Community?", Section 2 "How Can I Teach the City Council About My Community

Idea?", Section 3 "How Can I Convince the City Council to Adopt My Community Idea?",

Section 4 How Can I Present My Community Idea to the City Council?", and Section 5 "How

Can I Demonstrate the Growth in My Informational and Opinion Writing Skills?" Opinion and

informational writing skill lessons intertwine with lessons about how to conduct a research

project under the umbrella of project based learning. First, in Section 1, "What Makes a

Successful Community?", teachers will instruct students about the idea of selecting a real-life

problem or situation that they will research with the intent of developing and proposing a

solution to the problem or situation. Throughout the unit, lessons will focus on PBL Works

project based learning proficiencies such as instructing students about developing a driving

question, teaching students research skills, coaching students on evaluating the need for further

questioning and deeper topic evaluation and preparing students to get the work ready to present

to others. Under the umbrella of project based learning, the instruction is focused on the

informational and opinion writing skills needed to research and present the sustained inquiry

project. Some lessons cover skills related to informational writing. The informational writing

skills include research and notetaking strategies, organization skills such as main idea, writing

paragraphs that encompass an introduction, body and conclusion of a paper and how to

incorporate quotes from research into the written work. Those lessons are found in Section 2 of

the project titled, "How Can I Teach the City Council About My Community Idea?". Other

lessons focus on skills related to opinion writing. The opinion writing skills include researching,

arranging ideas, developing an opinion statement, writing organized introduction and conclusion

paragraphs and forming complete body paragraphs. Opinion writing lessons are found in Section

3 of the project titled, "How Can I Convince the City Council to Adopt My Community Idea?"

Section 4, "How Can I Present My Community Idea to the City Council?" is focused on the

creation of a public product that provides students the opportunity to share their community

theme and written documents supporting their idea. Section 4, "How Can I Present My

Community Idea to the City Council?" addresses the Public Product of the PBL Works Seven

Essential Project Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020). Section 5, "How Can I Demonstrate the

Growth in My Informational and Opinion Writing Skills?" culminates the project with

summative assessments that mirror the pre-assessments completed by students in Lesson 6 and

Lesson 17. The summative assessments will be used by teachers to gauge students'

informational and opinion writing skills at the close of the project.

Summary

This project was created using the PBL Works project based framework (PBL Works, 2020) from the conceptual frameworks supported by the CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) and writing curriculum created by the Lake Washington School District (Lake Washington School District, 2017) to target, and thus improve, the writing skills of third-grade students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym). The standardization of curriculum and focus on standardized testing have limited the creativity and student choice in learning activities in the school system. This project was designed to cover mandated Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) and writing curriculum of the Lake Washington School District (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017) while incorporating a foundational element of student choice using project based learning. The upcoming Chapter 4 will provide the project description and implications. The full project itself will be found in Appendix A.

Chapter 4

Project

Introduction

The project was designed to improve writing skills and standardized test scores in the areas of informational and opinion writing for third grade students attending Lakeshore Elementary School (pseudonym) in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym). A project based learning unit was created utilizing the PBL Works web-based tool called, "Project Designer" (PBL Works, 2020). In addition to the PBL Works Project Designer, the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District, 2017), the writing standards outlined by the Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) and the Lake Washington School District Unit and Lesson Planning Guides and Templates (Lake Washington School District, 2019) were used to support the development of the unit. The constructed unit provides students with choice about their learning while still receiving instruction in the basic writing skills required for third grade students. The desired outcome of the project based learning element was to increase student engagement, therefore increasing student learning and performance in the areas of informational and opinion writing.

Project Description and Summary

The unit begins with an overview detailing the overarching task posed to students. The overview is titled, "You Are the Mayor" and poses the Challenging Problem (PBL Works, 2020) that is the foundation of the students' project based learning work. Following an overview of general informational about the unit, the unit itself consists of five main sections.

Within the structure of the PBL Works Project Designer, each section was also described as a Project Milestone. Each Project Milestone was given a title to describe the content of that Milestone. Section 1 of the project details the all-encompassing task students will complete. The Project Milestone for Section 1 is titled, "What Makes a Successful Community?" Sections 2 and 3 developed students' informational and opinion writing skills. The Project Milestone for Section 2 was titled, "How Can I Teach the City Council About My Community Idea?" and focused on the creation of a piece of informational writing. Section 3 has a Project Milestone titled, "How Can I Convince the City Council to Adopt My Community Idea?" The focus of Section 3 was on the creation of a piece of opinion writing. Section 4 prepared students to create the public product portion of their project to be presented to an audience. The Project Milestone for Section 4 was titled, "How Can I Present My Community Idea to the City Council? Section 5 is evaluative with the Project Milestone titled, "How Can I Demonstrate the Growth in My Informational and Opinion Writing Skills?" In Section 5, students create pieces of informational and opinion writing using the same tools (Assessment packet containing instructions and three factual articles covering the topic to be written about) used earlier in the unit as pre-assessments in Lesson 6 and Lesson 17. The pieces of writing created in Section 5 will be used to evaluate students' overall performance for the project.

The sections and lessons were organized and created as follows:

Section	Lesson Number	Time Frame	Creator	Topic
1	1-5	Approx. 6 hours over 5 days	Researcher	• PBL Immersion • Scaffolding for Informational Writing Skills
2	6	Approx. 1 hour over 1 day	Researcher	• Informational Writing Pre-Assessment
2	7-11	Approx. 5 hours over 5 days	Lake Washington School District (LWSD)	• Informational Writing Text Type (form of writing) Immersion
2	12-16	Approx. 6 hours over 5 days	Researcher Modified	• Integration of PBL and LWSD Writing Unit Informational Writing Skills
3	17	Approx. 1 hour over 1 day	Researcher	• Opinion Writing Pre-Assessment
3	18-19	Approx. 3 hours over 3 days	Lake Washington School District (LWSD)	• Opinion Writing Text Type (form of writing) Immersion
3	20-22	Approx. 4 hours over 3 days	Researcher Modified	• Integration of PBL and LWSD Opinion Writing Skills
4	23	Approx. 1 hour over 1 day	Researcher	• Creation of PBL Public Product
5	24-25section 4	Approx. 2 hours over 2 days	Researcher	• Informational and Opinion Writing Summative Assessments

While the conceptual framework of the project is project based learning, the content to be taught within that framework surrounds informational and opinion writing. The informational

and opinion writing standards for the unit were taken from the CCSS (Common Core State

Standards Initiative, 2020). Throughout the unit, standards for writing, informational reading,

and speaking and listening were used. When standards from the CCSS were noted within the

unit, the format was as follows:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W indicates a writing standard

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI indicates an informational reading standard

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL indicates a speaking and listening standard

Though this project was focused on the development of writing skills, at times, it was

necessary for students to use informational reading skills and strategies in order to gather

information for their writing which is why reading standards were included in the lessons.

Similarly, while this project was not specifically focused on speaking and listening skills, in

Section 4 of the project, students will showcase their work in a public product that will require

the use of speaking and listening skills. Below are descriptions of 27 sample lessons that make

up the unit.

Section 1
Project Milestone: What Makes a Successful Community?

Section 1 with the Project Milestone titled "What Makes a Successful Community?"

contains 5 lessons numbered 1 through 5 which were designed to immerse students into the

project based learning format of the unit as well as provide scaffolding on which to build

informational writing skills. Lesson 1, "Our Community" introduces the Challenging Problem of

the project which is, "You are the mayor of a community that is having difficulty maintaining its

population. People keep moving away and you cannot sustain your community with so few

people. You have decided that you need to recreate the image of your community by designing a special focus. You need to give your community a new theme that will interest people in living there. For example, your community is a frog sanctuary, your community has a candy store on every corner, your community has a train that runs through it to get people where they want to go." Following the introduction to the project, the main focus of Lesson 1 is for students to investigate what draws people to live in certain communities. Lesson 2 has students investigate why communities need people to live in them, while Lesson 3 has students dive into thinking about how to develop a community in which people desire to live. Lessons 1 through 3 incorporate videos students view to gain knowledge toward the lesson objectives. Two of the lessons utilize videos from Discovery Education which is a Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) purchased tool for teacher and student use. One of the videos comes from YouTube. YouTube is approved for teacher use with students by the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) if teachers show videos on one main screen controlled by the teacher. Lessons 4 and 5 focus on students developing the specific idea for the community they will create for the project, with the goal being a chosen project idea by the conclusion of Lesson 5.

Lesson 1 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills

Our Community

Lesson 1, which can be found in Appendix A, utilizes the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) as shown in Figure 1. Identification letters attached to Common Core State Standards are "W" for writing standards and "RI" for informational reading standards (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020).

Figure 1

Lesson 1 PBL Immersion Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Scaffold Student Learning
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10:
Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames
for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Through this lesson students are introduced to the overall project idea,

"You are the mayor of a community that is having difficulty maintaining

its population. People keep moving away and you cannot sustain your

community with so few people. You have decided that you need to recreate the

image of your community by designing a special focus. You need to give your

community a new theme that will interest people in living there. For example,

your community is a frog sanctuary, your community has a candy store on every

corner, your community has a train that runs through it to get people where they

want to go."

Following the project introduction, students learn the definitions of community and

theme. Students also watch a Discovery Education video about the elements of communities

titled, "Social Studies Kids: Exploring Your Community and Its Workers" (Wonderscape, 2016).

In small groups, students complete a worksheet titled, "Our Community" through which they

identify aspects of the specific community in which they live. Finally, as a class, the teacher and students create an interview worksheet to be taken home for students to interview the adults in their home about what aspects of the community draw them to live in this specific community. Students take the worksheet home to be completed and returned. While laying the foundation for the PBL elements of the project, students are utilizing basic informational writing skills by recording factual information on worksheets.

Lesson 2 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills

Why Do We Need People to Live Here?

Lesson 2 (Appendix A) asks students to think about why it is important that communities have a sizable population. Students gain the understanding that without sufficient population, communities cannot meet the essential needs of the people who live there, and over time the community may deteriorate and no longer be able to function or exist. Lesson 2 addresses the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the CCSS, as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Lesson 2 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Scaffold Student Learning
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related informational together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
 	
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

As part of Lesson 2, students will view the Discovery Education video, "How Communities Grow and Change, Second Edition" (100% Educational Videos, 2004). Following the video students participate in a class discussion about how the community they live in might be different if its population was significantly larger or smaller than it currently is. Then with a partner or small group, students will create a poster that explains how a community may be affected if its population is significantly decreased. To create the poster, students will use the informational writing skills of recording factual information in writing and using illustrations to help convey ideas. Through this activity, students should note that it is detrimental to a

community if the population greatly decreases because the community may not be able to

continue to function.

Lesson 3 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills

Community Development

Lesson 3 (Appendix A) focuses on how students can develop a community in which

people want to live. Lesson 3 addresses the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design

Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the CCSS outlined in Figure 3.

Figure 3

Lesson 3 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices: 　　Design and Plan 　　Align to Standards 　　Build the Culture 　　Scaffold Student Learning • PBL Essential Design Elements: 　　Challenging Problem or Question 　　Sustained Inquiry 　　Authenticity 　　Student Voice and Choice
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

In Lesson 3 students reflect on the answers to the interview questions family members

contributed to from Lesson 1, and watch the YouTube video, "Ten Ways to Build a Sense of

Community" (Zebroff et al., 2017). Following the video, students complete a worksheet based

on what they watched to help them generate ideas for the theme of the community they are

creating. Through Lesson 3, students are applying the informational writing skill of writing for a range of purposes.

Lesson 4 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills

Researching Possible Topics

Lesson 4 (Appendix A) focuses on the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020), the Common Core State Standards in Writing and Reading (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) outlined in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Lesson 4 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
Design and Plan
Align to Standards
Build the Culture
Scaffold Student Learning
Manage Activities
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
Challenging Problem or Question
Sustained Inquiry
Authenticity
Student Voice and Choice
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate informational relevant to a given topic efficiently.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

The primary focus of Lesson 4 is on students conducting brief research on some of their brainstormed community theme ideas formed in Lesson 3 to determine if the ideas are founded in enough informational to be a viable option to use for a community theme. Students are reminded about how to access the district provided databases and library catalog system to find resources. They complete a worksheet to list three sources found for each theme idea chosen. The goal of this lesson is to assist students in narrowing down a possible theme choice and also

remind students that their informational needs to be founded in researched facts. While working

to narrow down the theme ideas, students will be utilizing the informational writing skills

involved in researching and recording information about a topic.

Lesson 5 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills

Choosing an Idea

Lesson 5, (Appendix A) focuses on the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential

Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020), and the Common Core State Standards in Writing

(Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) outlined in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Lesson 5 PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Scaffold Student Learning
    Assess Student Learning
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
    Student Voice and Choice
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

The goal of Lesson 5 is for students to choose the theme for their community on which their project will be based. Students will create T charts listing the possible topics researched the day before to determine how much they think they know about and wonder about, each topic. The headings for the T chart are, "What I Think I Know About [Insert Topic]" on the left-hand

side of the chart, and "What I Wonder About [Insert Topic]" on the right-hand side of the chart. At the lesson conclusion, students choose the single topic to focus on as the theme of their community. While focusing on choosing a community theme, students utilize the informational writing skills of recalling information from past experiences as well as recording information in a clear way and using writing for a range of purposes.

Section 2

Project Milestone: How Can I Teach the City Council About My Community Idea?

Section 2 of the project with the Project Milestone titled, "How Can I Teach the City Council About My Community Idea?" is focused on informational writing skills. In Section 2, students will create a piece of informational writing to be used to teach a mock city council, actually a group of school community members, about their community idea. Section 2 consists of a preassessment activity, which is Lesson 6, and ten sample lessons numbered 7 through 16. Lesson 6 was created for this project to establish a baseline of students' informational writing skills. At the culmination of the unit, in Lesson 27, students will repeat the content of lesson 6 as a summative, post-assessment for the teacher to use to analyze student growth in the area of informational writing. Both the pre and post assessments will be scored using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) because that is the rubric mandated for use by the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) and it is aligned with the scoring rubrics for the Smarter Balanced Assessment (Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, n.d.).

The first five lessons following the pre-assessment, Lesson 7, Lesson 8, Lesson 9, Lesson 10, and Lesson 11, were entirely created by the Lake Washington School District as part of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing

Units, 2017). The focus of Lessons 7 through 11 is immersion in the text type of informational

writing. Lessons 7 through 11 are important to the unit in that they provide students with the

foundational knowledge needed to understand the components of informational writing. The

remaining five lessons in Section 2, Lessons 12 through 16, guide students through the beginning

steps of the creation of an informational piece of writing. The writing elements of Lessons 12

through 16 were created by the Lake Washington School District as part of the Lake Washington

School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017) utilizing

the Common Core State Standards (Common Core State Standards initiative, 2020) and modified

by me to include the Seven Essential Design Elements (Challenging Problem or Question,

Sustained Inquiry, Authenticity, Student Voice and Choice, Reflection, Critique and Revision,

Public Product) and Seven Project Based Teaching Practices (Design and Plan, Align to

Standards, Build the Culture, Manage Activities, Scaffold Student Learning, Assess Student

Learning, Engage and Coach) of project based learning (PBL Works, 2020). The modification of

the lessons is the critical piece of this project as it provides students the opportunity to learn the

mandated writing skills in a more engaging way through the use of project based learning.

Because of the modifications, the lessons revolve around the critical project based learning ideas

of the You Are the Mayor project. While receiving writing instruction and learning the skills

necessary to create a piece of informational writing, students are now focused on the larger

picture of solving a real-world problem and creating a community designed by them with their

own choice of community theme in mind. The lesson modifications provide the engagement and

choice elements needed to provide students with an engaging and real-world purpose for their

writing piece. The added elements of the lessons are the crux of this project as they evolve the

Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing

Units, 2017) into a more engaging, project focused, learning experience for students.

Lesson 6 Informational Writing

Informational Writing Pre-Assessment

Lesson 6 was created for this project to be used for teacher information about where

students are starting out in their knowledge and skills surrounding informational writing.

Students will be given informational articles (see articles in Lesson 6) about astronaut Christa

McAuliffe which will be used for students to independently create a piece of informational

writing about the topic. The topic of Christa McAuliffe was chosen because students at

Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) have a foundational knowledge of the space shuttle

Challenger and astronaut Christa McAuliffe. The teacher will assess each student's piece of

writing using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric

(Lake Washington School District, 2019) (see Lesson 6). The pre-assessment can be used to

guide instruction for individual students as well as to assess student growth as it will be repeated

at the end of the unit as a summative assessment tool. PBL Elements, and CCSS addressed in the

lesson can be seen in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Lesson 6 Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL

• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Assess Student Learning

CCSS • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.c: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.d: Provide a concluding statement or section. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.D: Provide a concluding statement or section. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lessons 7-11 Informational Writing

Lake Washington School District Writing Units Informational Writing Immersion

Lessons 7 through 11 (Appendix A) were created by the Lake Washington School District as part of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2018). The lessons focus on immersing students in the text type of informational writing. Informational writing is communication with the purpose of accurately conveying information to increase a reader's knowledge of a subject, help readers better understand a procedure or process, or give readers a deeper understanding of a concept (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020). Through the units, students read many published pieces of informational writing to define and identify the components of a good piece of informational writing. As a class, teacher and students create an example piece of informational writing to practice the skill. The use of these lessons was deemed necessary to help students understand the text type (form of writing) they will be creating. The knowledge students gain from the immersions lessons is an important foundation for their ability to effectively create their own piece of informational writing. Since these lessons were not modified by me, no PBL Elements are present in them. These lessons are focused entirely on writing standards.

Lesson 12 PBL Informational Writing

Taking Notes

Lesson 12 marks the beginning of where the Lake Washington School District writing curriculum titled Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2018) was utilized but modified by me to incorporate the PBL Works Seven Project Based Teaching Practices and Seven Essential Design Elements (PBL Works,

2020). Through that modification, the lessons became central to a Challenging Problem, involved Sustained Inquiry, Authenticity, Student Voice and Choice, Reflection, Critique and Revision and a Public Product. In order to modify the lessons, the Seven Project Based Teaching Practices (Design and Plan, Align to Standards, Build the Culture, Manage Activities, Scaffold Student Learning. Assess Student Learning, Engage and Coach) were used and incorporated throughout the unit. The modifications to the lessons were the critical piece of this unit that turned the Lake Washington Writing Units lessons into engaging, choice based activities for students. Lesson 12 (Appendix A) addresses the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the Common Core State Standards in Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Lesson 12 PBL Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
Design and Plan
Align to Standards
Build the Culture
Scaffold Student Learning
Assess Student Learning
Engage and Coach
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
Challenging Problem or Question
Sustained Inquiry
Authenticity
Student Voice and Choice
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

In Lesson 12, students read sources and take notes about their topic. Students utilize the "Brief Research" worksheet created in Lesson 4 as a resource guide to begin their research and note taking process. Students will continue this work in Lesson 13.

Lesson 13 PBL Informational Writing

More Taking Notes

Lesson 13 sees students not only continuing the notetaking process but using a "Task Completion" sheet to help them evaluate if the work they are doing is on task and meeting the target goal. The Task Completion sheet provides the students with the opportunity to dive into the Reflection piece of the PBL Works Seven Essential Project Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) by thinking deeply about whether the work they have created so far is leading them in the correct direction to complete the task. Lesson 13 (Appendix A) addresses the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the Common Core State Standards in Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) as shown in Figure 8.

Figure 8

Lesson 13 PBL Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL

• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Scaffold Student Learning
    Assess Student Learning
    Engage and Coach
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
    Student Voice and Choice
    Reflection

CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson 14 PBL Informational Writing

Forming Questions and Finding Answers

   Lesson 14 (Appendix A) guides students to form questions about their research topic and then find answers to those questions as a form of gathering informational. The lesson focuses on the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the Common Core State Standards in Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) as shown in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Lesson 14 PBL Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

•   PBL Teaching Practices:
      Design and Plan
      Align to Standards
      Build the Culture
      Scaffold Student Learning
      Assess Student Learning
      Engage and Coach
•   PBL Essential Design Elements:
      Challenging Problem or Question
      Sustained Inquiry
      Authenticity
      Student Voice and Choice
•   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
•   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
•   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
•   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
•   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
•   CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson 15 PBL Informational Writing

Main Idea

Lesson 15 (Appendix A) encompasses the PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential

Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the Common Core State Standards in Writing

(Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Lesson 15 PBL Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Scaffold Student Learning
    Assess Student Learning
    Engage and Coach
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
    Student Voice and Choice
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related informational together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson 15 instructs students to form a main idea sentence for their paper. This sentence encompasses the entire idea of their paper and will form the basis of what students present to the city council as the overview of the factual background of the chosen theme for the community.

Reading over their notes, students analyze what the overarching ideas of their research are and then create a list of possible sentences that could serve as a main idea sentence. By the culmination of the lesson, the goal is for each student to have created the main idea sentence that will be the anchor for their informational paper. Lesson 15 serves as a good opportunity for teachers to gauge whether students are currently having success with the informational writing process thus far or if they need extra support.

Lesson 16 PBL Informational Writing

Boxes and Bullets

Lesson 16 (Appendix A) marks the beginning of the draft phase of the students' informational papers. Students will take their research notes and begin to put them into organized paragraph structures utilizing a graphic organizing tool called, "Boxes and Bullets." The PBL Works Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements (PBL Works, 2020) and the Common Core State Standards in Writing (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) covered in lesson 16 are shown in Figure 11.

Figure 11

Lesson 16 PBL Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Scaffold Student Learning
    Assess Student Learning
    Engage and Coach
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
    Student Voice and Choice
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Section 3

Project Milestone: How Can I Convince the City Council to Adopt My Community Theme Idea?

Section 3 of the project with the Project Milestone titled, "How Can I Convince the City Council to Adopt My Community Theme Idea?" focuses on opinion writing. Similar to Section 2, the first two lessons were created by the Lake Washington School district as a component of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2019) The focus of the first two lessons is on immersion in the opinion writing text type, specifically how to write a persuasive letter. The remaining three sample lessons in Section 3 were created by me through use of the Common Core State Standards and modification of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District, 2019) to fit the needs of the project. The lessons lead students through the beginning steps of the creation of a piece of opinion writing. Students' opinion writing will be in letter format and intended to convince the city council to adopt their theme idea for the community.

Lesson 17

Opinion Writing Pre-Assessment

Lesson 17 was created for this project to be used for teacher information about where students are starting out in their knowledge and skills surrounding opinion writing. Students will be given factual articles (see articles in Lesson 17) about the United States' Space Shuttle program which will be used for students to independently create a an opinion letter about the topic. The topic of the Space Shuttle program was chosen because students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) have a foundational knowledge of the space shuttle Challenger and the

pre-assessment for informational writing was on the topic of the astronaut, Christa McAuliffe.

The teacher will assess each student's opinion letter using the Lake Washington School District

3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) (see Lesson 17). The

pre-assessment can be used to guide instruction for individual students as well as to assess

student growth as it will be repeated at the end of the unit as a summative assessment tool. PBL

Elements, and CCSS addressed in the lesson can be seen in Figure 12.

Figure 12

Lesson 17 Opinion Writing Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
  Design and Plan
  Align to Standards
  Assess Student Learning
 	
CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A: Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.c: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.

Lessons 18 and 19 Opinion Writing

Lake Washington School District Writing Units Opinion Writing Immersion

Lessons 18 and 19 (Appendix A) were created by the Lake Washington School District as part of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017). The lessons focus on immersing students in the text type (form of writing) opinion writing. Through the units, students read several examples of letters to the editor to define and identify the components of a good piece of opinion writing, specifically an opinion letter. As a class, teacher and students create an example letter to the editor to practice the skill. The use of these lessons was deemed necessary to help students understand the text type they will be creating. The knowledge students gain from the immersions lessons is an important foundation for their ability to effectively create their own opinion letter. Since these lessons were not modified by me, no PBL Elements are present in them. These lessons are focused entirely on opinion writing standards.

Lesson 20 PBL Opinion Writing

Organize Ideas

Lesson 20 was created for this project to have students start the drafting portion of their opinion papers. Through Lesson 20, students organize previously researched facts (see Lessons 12-14) in preparation for writing the draft of their opinion letter. Students use a graphic organizer titled "RACE" to plan the paragraphs of their letter by organizing the factual information they have previously gathered (see Lessons 12-14) about their topic. The elements and standards addressed in Lesson 20 are found in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Lesson 20 PBL Opinion Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL
• PBL Teaching Practices:
Design and Plan
Align to Standards
Build the Culture
Scaffold Student Learning
Assess Student Learning
Engage and Coach
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
Challenging Problem or Question
Sustained Inquiry
Authenticity
Student Voice and Choice
CCSS
• CCSS W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Lesson 21 PBL Opinion Writing

Body Paragraphs

Lesson 21 was created for this project to develop students' skills in the area of opinion

writing through creation of the body paragraphs of an opinion letter. Students use the

information from the RACE graphic organizer (created in Lesson 20) to write the body

paragraphs of their opinion letter. The elements and standards addressed in Lesson 21 can be

found in Figure 14.

Figure 14

Lesson 21 PBL Opinion Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL • PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Build the Culture Scaffold Student Learning Assess Student Learning Engage and Coach • PBL Essential Design Elements: Challenging Problem or Question Sustained Inquiry Authenticity Student Voice and Choice **CCSS** • CCSS W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons • CCSS.ELS-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

Lesson 22 PBL Opinion Writing

Task Completion Opinion Writing

Lesson 22 was created for this project to evolve students' opinion writing skills by having them do a Task Completion form to reflect on whether they are creating a piece of opinion writing that meets the criteria of the text type (form of writing). Specifically, students work to determine if they have created body paragraphs that state an opinion and support the opinion with facts. Students also work with a partner to double-check that their reflection on their work matches a partner's viewpoint. The elements and standards addressed in Lesson 22 can be found in Figure 15.

Figure 15

Lesson 22 PBL Opinion Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS
PBL

• PBL Teaching Practices:
     Design and Plan
     Align to Standards
     Build the Culture
     Scaffold Student Learning
     Assess Student Learning
     Engage and Coach
 • PBL Essential Design Elements:
     Challenging Problem or Question
     Sustained Inquiry
     Authenticity
     Student Voice and Choice
     Reflection
     Critique and Revision

CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons   • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion   • W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences

Section 4

Project Milestone:

Section 4, the final project section, focused on creating a public product, consisting of

one sample lesson. The lesson, Lesson 23, guides students through the beginning phases of

creating and practicing a presentation that will be given to groups of school community members

consisting of staff, students, and parents. The presentation goal is to inform community

members about the theme idea and persuade the community members that the proposed

community is one in which they should live. Presentations will be given at a "Community

Development Fair" at the school. Upon entry, community members will each be given three

tickets to be used to indicate their community choice by placing a ticket at the presentation

station of communities in which they would like to reside. At the end of the fair, students will be

able to use the accumulated ticket to determine how effective their project was in convincing fair

attendees to live in the designed community. The ticket votes by fair attendees are not considered

to be an evaluative tool in terms of the accuracy of students' ability to create correctly formatted

pieces of informational and opinion writing. The fair attendees are not deemed to be experts

skilled in those forms of writing. The formal evaluation of students' writing will be conducted by

the teacher who instructed the unit. The assessment tools used will be the Lake Washington

School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019)

(see Appendix A, Lesson 6) and the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing

Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) (see Appendix A, Lesson 17) as detailed in

Section 5.

Lesson 23

Public Product

Lesson 23 (Appendix A) begins the Public Product portion of the You Are the Mayor

project. This lesson starts the students on the path toward creating the presentation to be shared

with school community members at the Project Development Fair. The PBL Elements and

Teaching Practices (PBL Works, 2020) and CCSS covered in Lesson 23 can be found below in

Figure 16.

Figure 16

Lesson 23 PBL Informational Writing Elements and Standards

PBL Teaching Practices and Essential Design Elements, CCSS

• PBL Teaching Practices:
    Design and Plan
    Align to Standards
    Build the Culture
    Manage Activities
    Scaffold Student Learning
    Assess Student Learning
    Engage and Coach
• PBL Essential Design Elements:
    Challenging Problem or Question
    Sustained Inquiry
    Authenticity
    Student Voice and Choice
    Reflection
    Critique and Revision
    Public Product
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Section 5

Project Milestone: How Can I Demonstrate the Growth in My Informational and Opinion Writing Skills?

Section 5 contains two lessons, Lesson 24 and Lesson 25. These lessons are duplicates of the informational writing pre-assessment in Lesson 6 and the opinion writing pre-assessment in Lesson 17. The pieces of writing created in these lessons will be used by the teacher as

summative assessments to gauge the level of informational and opinion writing proficiency of

the students at the culmination of the project and will be scored using the Lake Washington

School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2017)

and the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington

School District, 2017) (Appendix A). The lessons assess the CCSS in informational and opinion

writing as shown in Figure 17.

Figure 17

Lesson 24 and Lesson 25 Informational and Opinion Writing CCSS

CCSS
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A: Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.c: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.d: Provide a concluding statement or section.CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Project Implications

Third grade students at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) are not showing adequate

levels of performance in the areas of informational and opinion writing as evidenced by scores

on the standardized Smarter Balanced Assessment. Teachers in the Lakeshore School District

(pseudonym) instruct writing using the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake

Washington School District Writing Units, 2017), which have shown a trend toward some

increased student performance in tested areas of writing, but more growth needs to be made. By

combining the element of project based learning, which has been proven to increase student

learning performance, with elements of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units

(Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017), students may show increased growth in

the areas of informational and opinion writing. If writing growth in the area of informational and

opinion writing skills is evidenced through the use of this project, future learning in other areas

could benefit from the incorporation of project based learning as well.

Summary

Chapter 4 provided a project summary, description of project lessons and implications of

the project. The project included 25 sample lessons. The lessons incorporated five (Lessons 1

through 5) to introduce the project idea and immerse students in the project based learning

aspects of the unit. Eleven of the sample lessons focused on informational writing, including a

pre-assessment (Lessons 6 through 16) and nine of the lessons focused on opinion writing,

including a pre-assessment (Lessons 17 through 22). One lesson (Lesson 23) gets students

working on the presentation that will be the Public Product. The final two lessons (24 and 25)

focus on creation of a public product and a summative assessment, respectively. Seven of the

total sample lessons, five for informational writing and two for opinion writing, were created

entirely by the Lake Washington School District (Lake Washington School District Writing

Units, 2017) as part of the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington

School District Writing Units, 2017) and were designed to instruct students about the proper

format of both informational and opinion types of writing. Inclusion of those lessons in the

project was deemed necessary for students to receive a solid foundational understanding of the elements of informational and opinion writing. All lessons in this project, both those created solely by the Lake Washington School District, those modified by me, and those created entirely by me, were designed for use by third grade, general education teachers at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) in the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym The lessons were developed in response to third grade students at Lakeshore Elementary failing to meet desired proficiency levels, as measured by the Smarter Balanced Assessment, in the areas of informational and opinion writing. Chapter 5 will conclude the project with a discussion, conclusions, and project recommendations.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Discussion

The purpose of the project was to create a unit to increase the informational and opinion writing skills of third grade students at Lakeshore Elementary School (pseudonym). The goal was to utilize project based learning through PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020) and incorporate mandated CCSS (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2020) writing standards alongside the Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017). By embedding the mandatory standards and skills into a project based learning framework, the hope was that students would be more engaged and therefore demonstrate increased gain in writing skills. The project was designed for use by teachers at Lakeshore Elementary (pseudonym) with third grade students.

Review of the literature indicated that project based learning can increase student engagement and student learning (Batdi et al.,2018; Buchanan et al,. 2016; Cherniak et al,. 2019; Clark, 2016). While standardization of the United States school system has become the norm, standardization does not have to exist in a vacuum that prohibits the engagement and success provided by project based learning. Project based learning and mandated standards can coexist and work together to improve student success.

Conclusions

The Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017) on their own are not producing adequate levels of student proficiency in the areas of informational and opinion writing. The implementation of this unit which incorporates

project based learning to those writing lessons may increase student proficiency levels in

informational and opinion writing.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are suggested:

- Teachers using the created unit may want to consider incorporating standards from topic areas other than writing, for example social studies standards, to the unit.

- Teachers using the created unit may want to seek out training in project based learning through PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020) via published books, webinars, and podcasts.

- Based upon the research supporting the success of project based learning, the Lakeshore School District (pseudonym) may want to look toward utilizing project based learning district-wide in a variety of subjects and contexts.

- If fully utilizing the elements of project based learning is not deemed possible in a district or classroom, students may benefit from choice whenever and wherever it is possible in the learning environment.

Summary

Chapter 5 included a discussion of the project, conclusions, and recommendations for future use of both the project and project based learning. The project included 25 sample lessons which incorporated project based learning into an already existing curriculum created by the Lake Washington School District (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017). The Through the added PBL Works Seven Essential Design Elements and Seven Project Based Teaching Practices, the hope is student engagement and thus, student performance in informational and opinion writing will increase.

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Appendix A

The following project was created using the PBL Works Project Designer tool (PBL Works, 2020). The Project Designer tool allowed for formatting of the project on a web-based platform and provided the headings and structural layout for the project. The Project Designer did not provide any of the content of the unit.

ELA Grade 3
Project Overview:

You Are the Mayor

Driving Question

How can I create a theme for a town that encourages people to live there?

Project Summary

In this unit students will find an answer to a real-world problem posed to them. While all students are producing an answer for the same problem, the solution they find for the conundrum will be entirely unique to their choices and thoughts. Each student will do research and utilize informational and opinion writing skills to present their solution for the problem to an audience.

Problem Posed: You are the mayor of a town that is having difficulty maintaining its population. People keep moving away and you cannot sustain your town with so few people. You have decided that you need to recreate the image of your town by designing a special focus. You need to give your town a new theme that will interest people in living there. For example, your town is a frog sanctuary, your town has a candy store on every corner, your town has a train that runs through it to get people where they want to go.

Unit Objective

Through the use of project based learning, students will develop skills related to informational and opinion writing.

Key Elements

PBL Seven Project Based Teaching Practices
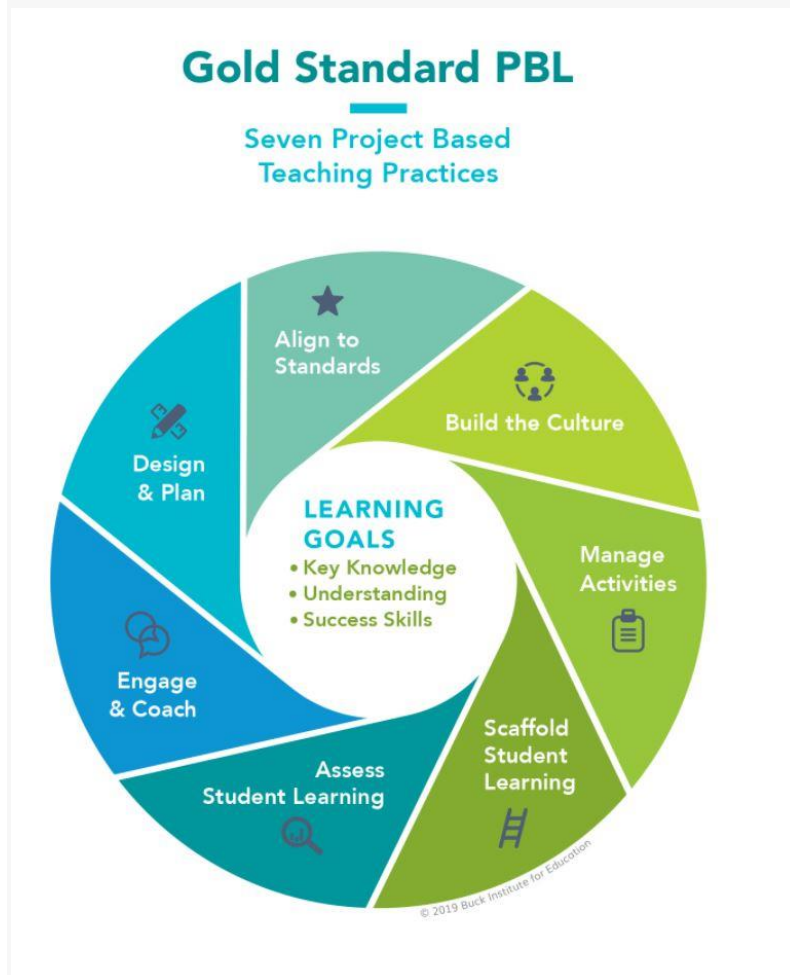
Design and Plan: Teachers create or adapt and existing project for students by planning its implementation from start to finish.

Align to Standards: Teachers ensure that the project addresses important knowledge and understandings suggested by local or national standards.

Build the Culture: Teachers promote student independence, open-ended inquiry, collegial spirit and attention to quality.

Manage Activities: Teachers assist students as a guide through organizing tasks and schedules, setting checkpoints and guidelines, helping with resource location and providing the method to make products public.

Scaffold Student Learning: Teachers instruct a variety of lessons, provide tools and use instructional strategies to support student learning.

Assess Student Learning: Teachers use formative and summative assessments to evaluate students' knowledge and skills used and gained during the project.

Engage and Coach: Teachers participate in learning alongside students while providing skill-building, redirection, encouragement, and celebration as needed.

PBL Seven Essential Project Design Elements

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Challenging Problem or Question: A meaningful problem to be solved or a question to be answered by a student.

Sustained Inquiry: Students work through a process of posing questions, finding resources and using information over an extended time period.

Authenticity: The work has real-world meaning to the student in their personal life, their broader community, or the world.

Student Voice and Choice: Students make decisions about how the project is managed and presented.

Reflection: Students and teacher look at problems that arise a develop strategies for overcoming those problems. Student and teacher also analyze the learning that has taken place.

Critique and Revision: Students give, receive, and apply feedback to improve the project.

Public Product: Students share their work with an audience outside of the classroom.

Key Standards

Common Core State Standards

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W indicates writing standard
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI indicates informational reading standard
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL indicates speaking and listening standard

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A: Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.c: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.d: Provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.D: Provide a concluding statement or section.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.6: With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Key Vocabulary

- Community
- Theme

Literacy Skills Vocabulary

- Informational Writing
- Opinion Writing
- Research Skills

Major Products

Individual Products

- Informational Paper: Written to the city council (actually a group of school community members) to explain the solution. For example, if a student wants the town to be a frog sanctuary, the paper will explain information about frogs and how to create a frog sanctuary.
- Opinion Paper: Written as a letter to the city council.

Making It Public

Each student will create a display to be shown at a public "fair." The display may take many forms such as a tri-fold board display with drawings and info, a 3-D-model, a PowerPoint presentation etc.

Considerations

Consider Your Students

- What do your students already know about informational and opinion writing?
- What do your students already know about the need to have people live in a city to sustain it?
- What do your students know about the elements of a city or what might make a city attractive to people, so they want to live there?

Consider the Context

What kind of community partners (local mayor, city council members, adults who live in the city or are looking for a place to live) might be able to serve as guest speakers or mentors to students for the project?

Consider the Content & Skills

- What texts might work to deepen student understanding of the topic?
- What lessons, activities and supports might be used to help students create their products to present?
- How will you differentiate for students' varying levels of literacy development?

Note: This project has been written with the assumption that both the teacher and the students are familiar with a writing workshop learning format. Writing workshop can be defined as an organizational framework for teaching writing. The framework consists of minilessons, work time and share time. (Children's Literacy Initiative, 2016). If you and your students are not familiar with the writing workshop format, further learning and preparation regarding writing workshop may be needed. Information about writing workshop can be found at wearcteachers.com/whatiswritingworkshop (Mulhavill, 2018).

Section 1

Project Milestone:

What Makes a Successful Community?

Students focus on a Challenging Problem and examine what makes a community desirable to live in.

Estimated Duration of Section 1

Lessons 1-5

5 days (approximately 6 hours combined instruction and worktime)

Assessment(s)

- Completed Information About Our Community worksheets (Lesson 1)
- Completed Population Posters (Lesson 2)
- Completed Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming worksheets (Lesson 3)
- Completed Brief Research worksheets (Lesson 4)
- Completed T charts and ability to select a community theme (Lesson 5)
- Daily teacher observation and interaction with students to gauge student engagement and understanding of concepts (Lessons 1-5)

Key Student Question

What makes a successful community?

Lesson 1 Our Community

Lesson Focus: PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS

The lesson includes an introduction to the overall project, development of students' awareness of communities, and use of informational writing skills to record information.	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	    Design and Plan
	    Align to Standards
	    Build the Culture
	    Scaffold Student Learning
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	    Sustained Inquiry
	    Authenticity
	    Student Voice and Choice
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10:
	    Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)
• Students will be aware of some of the elements that make up a community and demonstrate their knowledge through the completion of an information worksheet and a written exit ticket.

Resources and Materials
• Discovery Education Video: Social Studies Kids Exploring Your Community and Its Workers (Wonderscape. (2016). *Social Studies Kids: Exploring Your Community and Its Workers*. Discovery Education.https://office365.discoveryeducation.com/learn/videos/1247fc23-3ee0-4752-a952-22d7f82cf6bd.) • Our Community Worksheet • Interview worksheet (brainstormed by class during lesson and created by teacher prior to end of school day)

Environment
• Students will work individually to complete the Our Community worksheet to record specific information about the community in which they live.   • Students will participate as a whole class by watching a video, participating in whole class discussions about the ideas of community and theme, go over the answers to the Our Community worksheet, and brainstorm questions that could go on a family interview worksheet.
Vocabulary
• Community: A group of people living and working together in the same area (Wonderscape, 2016)   • Theme: the particular subject or idea on which the style of something (such as a party or room) is based (Merriam Webster Incorporated, 2021)   • Mayor: The head of the city council (Bower, 2010)   • City Council: The group of people who make laws for the community (Bower, 2010)   Note The terms mayor and city council will be defined via the video and worksheet portions of the lesson.
Assessment Plan
• Students' completed Our Community worksheet   • Students' ability to complete exit ticket describing one piece of information learned about communities.

Lesson 1 Our Community (continued)

Lesson Introduction

Explain to students that we are embarking on a project with the following goal:

You are the mayor of a community that is having difficulty maintaining its population. People keep moving away and you cannot sustain your community with so few people. You have decided that you need to recreate the image of your community by designing a special focus. You need to give your community a new theme that will interest people in living there. For example, your community is a frog sanctuary, your community has a candy store on every corner, your community has a train that runs through it to get people where they want to go.

Ask students: *What is a community?*

Listen to some student suggestions and then be sure to define community as: a group of people living and working together in the same area.

Then point out to students that in the above statement the word theme was mentioned. Ask students: *What do you think is meant by creating a theme for a community?*

Listen to some student thoughts and then be sure to define theme as: the particular subject or idea on which the style of something (such as a party or room) is based. Therefore, a theme for a community would be an idea around which the community is designed.

Lesson Core

Say: *Before we can develop our own community theme ideas, we need to make sure we understand the things that make up a community.*

Show students the *Discovery Education* video *Social Studies Kids: Exploring Your Community and its Workers (*Wonderscape. (2016). Social Studies Kids: Exploring Your Community and Its Workers. Discovery Education. https://office365.discoveryeducation.com/learn/videos/1247fc23-3ee0-4752-a952-22d7f82cf6bd.)*.

The video covers the content: What is a Community?, Getting to Know Your Community, Who Keeps a Community Safe?, Who Keeps a Community Healthy?, Who Helps Build and Maintain a Community?, and Who Helps Communities Keep Running?

Say: *Now let's gather some information about the community we live in.*

Have each student complete the *Our Community* worksheet (see below).

Give students 5 to 7 minutes to complete the worksheet. Roam among the students and discuss students' ideas with them.

Call students together and discuss worksheet answers as a class. Worksheet answers, found below following the Our Community worksheet, are specific to the community in mind for this lesson's creation and will be different depending on school location.

Point out to students that the items just discussed from their worksheet are all parts of what make our community a livable place.

Collect students' worksheets to look over.

Tell students: *Now we know some details about what makes a community run smoothly and become a place people want to live. Gathering information about communities and some other factual topics is going to be important to our "You Are the Mayor" project. As a matter of fact, information is so important to our project that eventually, we will be creating a piece of informational writing to help develop and explain our thoughts to an audience. You will also eventually use the factual information you collect to write an opinion letter about your community. To begin collecting some of the information we need for our project, tonight or tomorrow night, with an adult at home, you are going to discuss what aspects of the community draw your family to live here.*

Explain to students that they are going to interview their adult(s) at home to understand why they live in the community they do. Ask students: *What questions do you think we could ask our at-home adult that will help us understand why our families choose to live in this community?*

As a class, develop the questions that will be asked in the interview. Steer students towards questions such as: What did you like or dislike about the place you lived before you lived here? How did you end up living here? What do you like about living here? What are some things you might like to see or have in this community?

Note: prior to discussing possible questions to add to the interview sheet, point out to students that not all families might be able to answer every question suggested and that will be just fine! It is perfectly acceptable to return a worksheet that has some unanswered questions on it. When they take the sheet home they will let the adults

they are interviewing choose which questions they would like to answer. The goal will just be to gather as much information for yourself about what makes our community a place people desire to live.

Teacher types and distributes a document of class created questions to send home with students so they can conduct their interview as homework. Completed student assignments will be used in lesson 3.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *We are working to create an idea for a community that people want to live in. First, we must do some learning about the elements of communities and begin to gather information that will help us with our project.*

Pass out sticky notes or notecards. Say: *To help us on our project journey, today we learned about some elements of communities. As an Exit Ticket, on your [sticky note or notecard], write your name and one piece of information you learned about communities today. When you are finished, I will collect your paper.*

Notes:
After the lesson, the teacher needs to type up a student interview sheet using the questions developed by the class. The sheet should be distributed to students prior to going home so it can be completed as homework.

In smaller communities it might be possible to have the mayor or city council member(s) visit your school. This would be a nice tie-in once Lesson 1 is taught.

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- What went well?
- How do you know your students understand some elements of communities?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Group Member Names: _____

Information About Our Community

What kind of community do we live in (city, suburb, rural)?

Who do you think makes the rules/laws for our community?

What types of jobs do people in our community have that keep people safe?

What types of jobs do people in our community have that keep people and animals healthy?

What types of jobs do people in our community have that help our community continue to grow and work effectively?

Group Member Names: _____

Information About Our Community (Answer Sheet)

Note: Students may think of other good ideas in the community that are not listed here as possible answers.

What kind of community do we live in (city, suburb, rural)?

We live in a suburb.

Who do you think makes the rules/laws for our community?

Our community has a mayor and a city council who make the rules. There are 7 city council members who are elected by a vote of the city's citizens. The city council members choose one person on the council to be the mayor. The mayor acts as the head political officer of the city. The city council and the mayor work together to create the laws after hearing ideas and viewpoints from community members.

What types of jobs do people in our community have that keep people safe?

Our community has police officers, fire fighters and paramedics.

What types of jobs do people in our community have that keep people and animals healthy?

Our community has nurses, doctors, dentists and veterinarians.

What types of jobs do people in our community have that help our community continue to grow and work effectively?

Our community has construction workers, garbage collectors, mail carriers, teachers, grocery store workers and utility workers (water, power, phone, cable). Students will probably have many more ideas for this question.

Lesson 2 Why Do We Need People to Live Here?

Lesson Focus: PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills	**PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS**

Students will understand some possible negative effects of underpopulation on a community and will use informational writing skills to demonstrate their knowledge through the creation of a poster.	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	    Design and Plan
	    Align to Standards
	    Build the Culture
	    Scaffold Student Learning
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	    Challenging Problem or Question
	    Sustained Inquiry
	    Authenticity
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will become aware of some effects of underpopulation on a community and will demonstrate their awareness through the creation of a poster.
- Students' informational posters will contain a title, pictures, and words to explain the possible negative effects of a shrinking population.

Resources and Materials

- Discovery Education Video: How Communities Grow and Change, Second Edition (100% Educational Videos. (2005). *How Communities Grow and Change, Second Edition*. Discovery Education. https://office365.discoveryeducation.com/learn/videos/56e4b479-585b-418d-99d6-38c19f17124e/?utm_source=56e4b479-585b-418d-99d6-38c19f17124e&utm_medium=quicklist&utm_campaign=hublinks.)
- 12x18 size construction paper for student posters
- Population Poster Scoring Rubric (see below)

Environment
Students will participate in whole class discussions about the possible effects of a shrinking population and work in small groups on the creation of a poster.
Vocabulary
- Community: A group of people living and working together in the same area (Wonderscape, 2016)   - Population: The number of people who live in a place (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2021)
Assessment Plan
Evaluation (through use of Population Poster Rubric -see below) of students' ability to use a title, words and pictures to convey factual information about at least 3 realistic, negative effects of underpopulation.

Lesson 2 Why Do We Need People to Live Here? (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Remember that our ultimate goal is the completion of the following project.*   *You are the mayor of a community that is having difficulty maintaining its population. People keep moving away and you cannot sustain your community with so few people. You have decided that you need to recreate the image of your community by designing a special focus. You need to give your community a new theme that will interest people in living there. For example, your community is a frog sanctuary, your community has a candy store on every corner, your community has a train that runs through it to get people where they want to go.*   *As we work on this project you are going to get to develop both your informational and opinion writing skills to help you convince the city council that your community theme idea is the best one.*   *Yesterday we discussed communities and you took home some questions to ask an adult at home. Tomorrow we are going to look at the answers from your adult to help*

us think a bit about why people live in certain communities. Today we are going to think about what would happen to a community if lots of people chose not to live there any longer.

Lesson Core

Show students the Discovery Education video *How Communities Grow and Change, Second Edition.* (Approximately 21 minutes) (100% Educational Videos. (2005). *How Communities Grow and Change, Second Edition*. Discovery Education. https://office365.discoveryeducation.com/learn/videos/56e4b479-585b-418d-99d6-38c19f17124e/?utm_source=56e4b479-585b-418d-99d6-38c19f17124e&utm_medium=quicklist&utm_campaign=hublinks.)

Upon completion of the video say:

Population is the word that means how many people live in an area. What in your opinion, would be different about our community if it had only half the population it does now?

Call on a few students to answer. As students share ideas, write them down on the Smart Board at the front of the room. After several ideas have been shared, point out that some of the effects students are mentioning are positive and some are negative. Create a T chart on the board that shows positive effects on the upper left-hand and negative effects on the upper-right hand.

Say: *Let's put the ideas we've talked about into this chart. Help me categorize them into positive and negative effects.*

Take suggestions from students who raise their hand to contribute and write the suggestions on the Smart Board. Students' ideas about which items are positive (examples might include less traffic, less waiting in line at the grocery store, easier to get an appointment at the dentist etc.) and which items are negative (restaurants might have to close because there aren't enough people to eat there, grocery stores might have to close, schools might have to close, we might not have as many parks or sports fields built because there wouldn't be enough people to use them etc.)

Say: *Our project is going to be focused on creating an idea for a community whose population is decreasing. So today, with a partner or small group, you are going to create a poster that shows some ideas about what can happen to a community whose population decreases by a significant amount.*

Say: *We have talked briefly about the fact that eventually we are going to create an informational piece of writing as part of our project. Informational writing involves*

using facts to inform or teach someone about a topic. Today, your posters are going to be a simple piece of informational writing.

Your poster needs to meet the following requirements:

- *It must have a title*
- *It must have pictures and words*
- *It must show at least three realistic negative effects that could happen to a community whose population shrinks.*

Show students the Population Poster Rubric (see below) and say: *Here is the rubric that will be used to assess your posters.*

Go over the details of the rubric with the students so they are aware of the exact expectations for the posters.

Using a 12x18 piece of construction paper, demonstrate quickly what a poster could look like. Explain to students that you are creating a very rough draft just so they can get an idea of what to do.

Say: *I am going to put you in groups of two or three to work on your poster. Once you are with your group you need to do the following tasks:*

1. *Come up with the title for your poster.*
2. *Discuss what three negative effects you want to show on your poster.*
3. *Discuss what you want the words on the poster to say to share the information.*
4. *Discuss what you want the pictures on your poster to show.*
5. *Come to me as a group and let me know your plan. Then I will hand you the poster paper and you can get to work!*

Provide students with roughly 30 minutes of work time.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today we thought about why we need people to live in a community. Without a population, there are a lot of things in a community that cannot exist. You have created some great informational posters to show possible negative effects of having low population in a community. I am going to hang your posters around the room, so over the next few days we can be reminded of some of the reasons communities need people to live in them.*

Teacher Reflection
Upon completion of the lesson use the Population Poster Rubric to assess students' posters. Then reflect on these questions: • What went well? • How do you know your students achieved the objectives? • What is your evidence of student learning? • Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed? • What were challenges in the lesson? • What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Population Poster Rubric

Content	4 (Above Standard)	3 (At Standard)	2 (Approaching Standard)	1 (Not Yet at Standard)
Title	Title creatively describes the content of the poster	Title accurately describes the content of the poster	Title sort of describes the content of the poster	Title is missing or does not describe the content of the poster
Pictures	Pictures are created neatly, relate to the words on the poster and the reader can use them alone to understand the content of the poster	Pictures are created neatly, relate to the words on the poster and help the reader understand the content of the poster	Pictures are messy and may not relate to the words on the poster or help the reader understand the content of the poster	Pictures are missing or not relevant to the content of the poster
Words	words are created neatly, large enough and help the reader understand the content of the poster in a creative way	words are created neatly, large enough and help the reader understand the content of the poster	words are not created neatly or large enough and help the reader understand only some of the content of the poster	words are missing, not created neatly or large enough or do not help the reader understand the content of the poster
Negative Effects of a Shrinking Population	Poster details more than 3 realistic effects of a shrinking community population	Poster details 3 realistic effects of a shrinking community population	Poster details only 2 or 1 realistic effects of a shrinking community population	Effects detailed on poster are not realistic effects of a shrinking community population

Rubric Scoring Guide

4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1
16	15–14	13–12	11–10	9-8	7-6	5 or Below

Lesson 3: Community Development

Lesson Focus: PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills	**PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS**

Students will think about how a community can be developed in a way so that people want to live there and will record their thoughts on an information gathering worksheet titled, "Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming."	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	     Design and Plan
	     Align to Standards
	     Build the Culture
	     Scaffold Student Learning
	 • PBL Essential Design Elements:
	     Challenging Problem or Question
	     Sustained Inquiry
	     Authenticity
	     Student Voice and Choice
	 • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
	 • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10:
	     Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)
•   Students will develop ideas about ways to create a welcoming community.   •   Students will use writing to record their ideas about ways to create a welcoming community on the "Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming" worksheet.

Resources and Materials
•   Students' completed family interview sheets   •   YouTube Video: _10 Ways to Build a Sense of Community_ Zebroff, S., Humphrey, J., Salisbury, B., & Salisbury, K. (2017, May 31). _10 Ways to Build a Sense of Community_. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqMtpk754ns&t=10s.)   •   _Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming_ worksheet (see below)

Environment
Students will participate in whole class viewing of a video about some ways to create a welcoming feeling in a community, will work in small groups to share information from their family interview worksheet (from lesson 1). and students

	will work independently to complete the Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming worksheet.
	Vocabulary
	• Community: A group of people living and working together in the same area (Wonderscape, 2016) • Theme: the particular subject or idea on which the style of something (such as a party or room) is based (Merriam Webster Incorporated, 2021)
	Assessment Plan
	• Students' ability to write relevant information on the Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming worksheet (viewed by the teacher the following lesson)

Lesson 3 Community Development (continued)

	Lesson Introduction
	Say: *Two days ago, you took home some questions to ask an adult at home. Today we are going to discuss your interview answers and dive deeper into thinking about what might cause people to want to live in a community. Remember that your goal is going to be to create a theme for a community so that people want to live there. Today is going to help us focus on what types of things make communities desirable to people.*
	Lesson Core
	Have students take out their completed interview sheets (If there are students who were not able to complete the assignment, let them know they can participate in their group as listeners and also can tell what they might know themselves about why their family lives in the community. Also remind students that it is just fine to not have answers to share for some of the questions if their adults at home chose not to answer some of the questions.) Direct students to share the answers to the interview questions with their table group (or assign students to groups of 3 or 4 if they are not sitting in table groups). Provide

about 10 minutes for sharing to take place. Then pull the group back together and ask if there are any volunteers who would like to share some of their answers.

Say: *Now we have an idea about what drew some of your families to live in our community. To think more about not only what causes people to live in certain communities, but also what helps people feel welcome in a community, we are going to watch the Youtube video 10 Ways to Build a Sense of Community (*Zebroff, S., Humphrey, J., Salisbury, B., & Salisbury, K. (2017, May 31). *10 Ways to Build a Sense of Community*. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqMtpk754ns&t=10s.).

Show the video and then show students the *Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming* worksheet. The worksheet outlines the 10 topics identified in the video plus has 2 boxes that are left completely blank for students to develop their own ways to build a welcoming community if they would like.

Say: *This worksheet is going to be the start of you deciding what you want the theme for your created community to be. Filling in these boxes can help you get ideas for your community.*

Model how to use the worksheet yourself by completing a few boxes. Attached is a sample completed worksheet to help provide ideas. Next, supply each student with a blank copy of the worksheet and give them 10 minutes* to work on putting down thoughts on their worksheet.

*At the five minute mark, have some volunteers share ideas with the class to help inspire ideas for other students.

After 10 minutes (allow more time if students are still working diligently and appear to want or need more time) gather students back together as a class. Ask for volunteers to share some ideas from their sheet. Explain to students that they are going to complete their sheet as homework that evening and that they are welcome to talk with family members at home to help with ideas.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today we thought about ways to develop welcoming communities and how those ideas could lead to a theme for your community. Show me on your fingers, how many ideas you put down on your sheet so far that could be a theme for your community.* Look around the room at students' fingers to gauge a general idea of students' progress. *Tomorrow I will collect your worksheets from you so I can look at all of your fun ideas.*

Note: The following day, the teacher should collect the student worksheets and should not move on to Lesson 4 until the teacher has had a chance to review the students'

work by looking for content detailed in the Worksheet Assessment portion of the lesson (see below).

Worksheet Assessment

Once the *Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming* worksheets have been collected, the teacher should assess them for the following:
- Did students write information in every box?
- Does the information in the boxes make sense?
- Is the information written in the boxes relevant to the question asked?

If the answers to the above questions are yes, students are ready to move on to the next lesson. If there are students who do not have the boxes completed and/or the information in the boxes doesn't make sense or isn't relevant to the question asked, the teacher should meet with those students individually or in a small group to guide students to complete the boxes correctly before moving on to Lesson 4.

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Name_____

Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming

1. Volunteer How might the idea of volunteering be built into your community?	**2. Honor Seniors** How might the idea of honoring seniors (or another group) be built into your community?
3. Community Garden How might the idea of having a community garden be built into your community?	**4. Help People in Need** How might the idea of helping people in need be built into your community?

5. Neighborhood Park How might the idea of having neighborhood parks be built into your community?	6. Buy & Sell Local Goods and Services What are local goods and service that could be offered in your community?
7. Use the Local Library How might the idea of using the local library (or other local organizations) be built into your community?	8. Speak Up How might the idea of speaking up when something concerns you be built into your community?

9. Community Parties How might the idea of having a community parties be built into your community?	10. Groups & Clubs How might the idea of having local groups and clubs be built into your community?
11. My Idea:	12. My Idea:

Name_____

Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming

(Completed Sample)

1. Volunteer How might the idea of volunteering be built into your community? *My community could have people volunteer to clean up litter one weekend a month, so the community is very clean.*	**2. Honor Seniors** How might the idea of honoring seniors (or another group) be built into your community? *My community could highlight the fact that over 90% of the people who live their own dogs.*
3. Community Garden How might the idea of having a community garden be built into your community? *Where there are usually planters along sidewalks and streets, my community could have vegetable gardens instead. People could volunteer to work in them, or the city could hire employees to maintain the gardens. The food could be sold at a local market.*	**4. Help People in Need** How might the idea of helping people in need be built into your community? *My community could be a place that takes in stray pets from other areas around the country and the citizens of the community are focused on taking care of the animals at their homes or in designated shelter buildings. (This isn't helping people in need, but it is helping animals in need – we can think creatively!)*

5. Neighborhood Park

How might the idea of having neighborhood parks be built into your community?

My community could have parks that highlighted different sports. There would be a basketball park, a tennis park, a baseball park etc.

6. Buy & Sell Local Goods and Services

What are local goods and service that could be offered in your community?

My community could have a lot of people who are beekeepers, and we could sell the local honey.

7. Use the Local Library

How might the idea of using the local library (or other local organizations) be built into your community?

My community has one library for every 500 people so there are always a lot of materials available.

8. Speak Up

How might the idea of speaking up when something concerns you be built into your community?

My community could have a different government system so that every neighborhood has a representative on the city council. Neighborhoods could have monthly meetings to talk about city ideas that the representative would then take to the city council meeting.

9. Community Parties

How might the idea of having a community parties be built into your community?

My community has a monthly theme party at city hall. People dress in costumes. Food and decorations align with the theme.

10. Groups & Clubs

How might the idea of having local groups and clubs be built into your community?

My community has Lego building clubs. The clubs meet weekly to work on Lego creations and once a year there is a Lego building contest in the community.

11. My Idea:

My community is heavily focused on birds. We have community classes that teach about bird watching and how to create bird-friendly yards.

12. My Idea:

My community is filled with only multi-family homes and apartments. That way, housing takes up less of the land and extended families get to live together.

Lesson 4 Researching Possible Topics

Lesson Focus: PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills	**PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS**

Students will conduct research, take brief notes and cite sources to narrow their community theme ideas. To conduct research students will use district approved databases and the school library catalog.	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	    Design and Plan
	    Align to Standards
	    Build the Culture
	    Scaffold Student Learning
	    Manage Activities
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	    Challenging Problem or Question
	    Sustained Inquiry
	    Authenticity
	    Student Voice and Choice
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)	
• Students will narrow down theme ideas based upon information availability. • Students will review how to access the district approved databases and may utilize those tools. • Students will review how to access the school library catalog and may utilize that tool. • Students will develop ideas for an informational article by citing sources of information.	

Resources and Materials

- Students completed (and teacher reviewed) *Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming* worksheets from Lesson 3.
- Computers with internet access for student use
- District provided research databases and school library catalog
- *Brief Research* worksheet (see below)
- Prior to the lesson, fully complete your copy of the *Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming* worksheet from lesson 3. See this sample completed worksheet for ideas if needed.

Environment

Students will participate in whole class instruction to review access to the district date bases and school library catalog and to watch the teacher model how to complete the Brief Research worksheet. Students will work individually to complete the Brier Research worksheet.

Vocabulary

- Brief: Lasting for a short period of time (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2021)

Assessment Plan

- Review students' completed Brief Research worksheets to determine if students were able to find and correctly record sources of information for their topics.
- Look for:
  - Were students able to narrow down their possible theme ideas to 3 choices?
  - Did students find 3 resources for each of their 3 ideas?
  - Do students listed resources reflect use of district provided databases?
  - Do student listed resources reflect use of the school library catalog?
  - Are students' sources cited as was modeled by the teacher in the lesson?

If the answers to the above questions are yes, students are ready to move on to the next lesson. If there are students who do not have their worksheet completed, were not able to narrow down their possible theme to 3 choices, did not use the expected sites to gather information, or did not correctly cite their sources, the teacher should meet with those students individually or in a small group to guide them through successful completion of the worksheet.

Lesson 4 Researching Possible Topics (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Remind students that they are working to create a community theme that will draw people to live in the community. Say: *Yesterday you came up with some great ideas for the focus of your community. Today we are going to begin to narrow down your ideas to get closer to picking the one idea that you feel works the best.*
Lesson Core
Say: *In order for you to create a community around a theme, you need to have some knowledge about the theme topic. Today we are going to do some brief research to see if you can find information about the topics you are considering. I am going to show you what I mean by demonstrating with the topics I am considering for my community.* Using your completed *Ways to Make Your Community Welcoming* worksheet, model for students how to star your top three choices on the sheet. Say: *I am going to choose my top three ideas by putting a star in the box of each one. I am choosing these ideas because I feel the most excited about them, and I think they are ideas that could work well for a community focus.* Have students take out their completed worksheets and give them 3 or so minutes to star their top 3 ideas. Say: *Now that we have chosen the topics we want to focus on, it is time for us to see if these are topics we can actually find research about. Remember that if you are going to base a community on this idea, you are going to have to know a lot about it.* The next step is to briefly research each topic to see if it is a viable option for the project. Say: *I am going to use this Brief Research worksheet to see if I can find enough sources of information about my topic for it to be a good one for me to use. Brief means short or quick, so today I am not looking for a lot of in-depth information. I am just looking to see if I can find sources of information that I can use to do deep research later.*

Say: *On my worksheet I have starred the ideas Community Garden, Buy and Sell Local Goods, and Honoring Seniors or Another Group. In my ideas I would have gardens in public spaces all around the community, the local goods involve bees and the group I would be honoring are dog owners. So, today I am going to look for research sources for gardens, bees and dogs.*

Say: *To conduct my research I am going to use our district approved <u>databases</u> and our school <u>library catalog</u>.*

Model how to go to a research database and look for the topic of gardens. If you find a source, write down the source in one of the boxes on the worksheet. Have students write the title of the website page as well as the web address. For example: Britannica School Elementary, https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/garden/353164. Students are not creating full citations at this point. They just need to be able to find their source again if they want to use it.

Also model how to find a nonfiction book title in the library catalog. When a resource is found, write down the book title, author and call number. For example: In the Garden, David M. Schwarz, E581.49 SCH.

Note: Database and library catalog use are not new skill sets for the students in mind at the creation of this unit.

Say: *Now you are going to get to work looking for research sources on the three topics you have starred on your Ways to Create a Welcoming Community worksheet. Remember to write down the sources you find on your Brief Research sheet.*

Have students get to work. Roam the room to talk with students and assist as needed. Give students roughly 30 minutes to complete this task with interruptions as needed to point out tips or get suggestions from students about what they are finding is working well to help them conduct their research. Also, you may need to periodically remind students that they are not looking in-depth at the resources they find today but are just looking to see if resources are available on the topic.

After 30 or so minutes, pull students back together and ask:

What do you think it means if you have looked for research on a topic but have not been able to find the three sources you need to complete the worksheet boxes for that topic?

Help the students come to the determination that topics that do not have adequate research sources are not going to be good topics on which to base a community because students won't be able to learn enough about the topic to be able to base their community on it.

Lesson Conclusion
Say: *Today we have spent time narrowing down the possible theme for your community. Raise your hand if you think you know what the theme for your community is going to be. It is perfectly fine if you do not yet know, I just want to get a feel for where we are at in our decision making process.* Observe number of raised hands to get a feel for how many students think they have a decision. Say: *I am going to collect your Brief Research sheets so I can see the topics you are considering. I will look at your sheets tonight and give them back to you tomorrow.* Collect student sheets.

Teacher Reflection
Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions: • What went well? • How do you know your students achieved the objectives? • What is your evidence of student learning? • Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed? • What were challenges in the lesson? • What would you change the next time you teach this lesson? After viewing students' complete worksheets, reflect on these questions: • Which students are ready to move on to the next phase of the project? • Which students need more support in order to be able to pick a theme for their community?

Brief Research

Write each of your chosen topic ideas and the websites or books you can find about each topic. Try to find 3 resources for each idea.

For websites list the website title and address. Example: Britannica School Elementary, https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/garden/353164

For books list the book title, author and call number. Example: In the Garden, David M. Schwarz, E581.49 SCH

Topic Idea: _____

List the website or book information

Source 1:	
Source 2:	
Source 3:	

Topic Idea: _____

List the website or book information

Source 1:	
Source 2:	
Source 3:	

Topic Idea: _____

List the website or book information

Source 1:	
Source 2:	
Source 3:	

Lesson 5 Choosing an Idea

Lesson Focus: PBL Immersion and Informational Writing Skills	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS

• Creation of T charts about at least 2 of the topics sources about which sources were previously found. The charts will contain *What I Think I Know About My Topic* and *What I Wonder About My Topic* columns.
• T charts will be completed using information students believe they know about the topic and information they want to find out about the topic.
• Selection of community themes
	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	    Design and Plan
	    Align to Standards
	    Build the Culture
	    Scaffold Student Learning
	    Assess Student Learning
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	    Challenging Problem or Question
	    Sustained Inquiry
	    Authenticity
	    Student Voice and Choice
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will create and use T charts.
- Students will write to create lists of facts they know about at least two of the subjects examined in Lesson 4
- Students will write to create lists of questions about at least two previously researched subjects.

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks

Environment

Students will participate in whole-class instruction to learn about the use of T charts through viewing teacher modeling of the process. Students will participate in independent work through the completion of T charts detailing what they think they know and what they wonder about at least 2 of their community theme ideas.

Vocabulary

T Chart: a type of chart in which a student lists and examines two facets of a topic (Enchanted Learning, 2018)

Assessment Plan

- Collect and look over students' completed T charts. The teacher should look for:
    - Does the student have T charts completed for at least 2 topics?
    - Has the student written at least 5 items they know and 5 items they wonder about for each of the topics?
    - Has the student indicated a chosen community theme idea?

If the answers to the above questions are yes, students are ready to move on to the next lesson. If there are students who do not have at least 2 correctly completed T charts and a chosen theme, the teacher should meet with those students individually or in a small group to guide them through successful completion of the T charts.

Lesson 5 Choosing an Idea (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Good writers choose topics that they are informed about and that they are interested in. Today we are going to work to narrow down your community theme by determining how much you know about, and how interested you are in, each of your possible ideas.*
Lesson Core
Say: *Yesterday I narrowed my theme ideas down to three possible topics that I did some research on. I was able to find three sources for each of my topics, so I decided that each of them is a possible option for me to base my community on. Today I am going to do some thinking about how much I think I already know about, and what questions I still have about, at least two of my topics.* *In order to think about what I might know and what I want to know, I am going to create a T chart to divide my thoughts into two columns. A T chart is a chart that helps us think about a topic in two different ways. Today the ways we are thinking about our topics are what we think we already know and what we would like to find out.* Open your writer's notebook and demonstrate for students how to create the T chart. On the top of the left-hand column write *What I Think I Know About [fill in a topic from yesterday's research]* and on the top of the right-hand column write "What I Wonder About [*fill in with the same topic*]. Point out to students that on the left-hand side of the T chart I am writing "What I think I Know" because while I might believe I know some facts about the topic, when we do informational writing we need to be sure that the facts we write down really are true, so they need to be based in research. Right now, I am not doing any research and just gathering facts from my head that I believe are true. Choosing one of your topics from yesterday's research lesson, model for students how to complete the T chart by writing things you think you know about the topic in the left-hand column and things you wonder about in the right-hand column. Demonstrate writing at least 5 items in each column of the T chart. Say: *Today your task is to complete T charts for at least two of the three topics you researched yesterday (if you have time, you can create charts for all three). You need to write at least 5 items under the What I Think I Know column and at least 5 items under the What I Wonder About column. Later, one of these topics is going to end up being the theme for your community, so choose carefully which ideas you want to focus on today!* Give students 15-20 minutes to create T charts for their topics.

Mid-Workshop Interruption (After about 7 minutes)

Say: *As I wander around the room, I see some really great T charts filling up with things we think we know and things we wonder. Does anyone have any things they wonder about one of their topics they would like to share?*

Take three to five students to volunteer an idea.

Say: *As we get back to work, the ideas you just heard might inspire new things you wonder about for your topics. I also want to remind you that part of being a writer is sitting and thinking. It is alright if ideas don't come to you immediately. Spend some time sitting silently thinking about your theme ideas and more questions will continue to come to you.*

Have students get back to work on their T charts. Continue to wander among students to monitor and assist as needed.

At the end of the 15-20 minute timeframe, gather students back together and say:
Now we are each going to choose the theme for our community! Remember that earlier I mentioned that good writers write about things they know about and are interested in? Look over the T charts you created. Do you see one topic that has the most you think you know about or the most you wonder about? Do you see one topic that you feel the most excited about using as the theme for your community? Put a big star on the top of the T chart that is the topic you want to use as the theme for your community. Model doing this by starring one of the T charts you created and let students know which topic you are choosing for your community theme (For the purposes of this unit, gardens is being chosen as the theme example for the lessons.).

Give students a minute or two to star their theme idea.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today is an exciting day for us as community developers! We have chosen the theme we are going to use to create a community that people will want to live in. As we move forward, our next few days are going to be spent working on learning about how we can best convey the factual information about our topic to the city council members who we need to give our presentation to.* ***I want you to know that we will not be presenting our ideas to an actual council of a city but will be holding a fair at which you will get to present your community theme to school staff, other students, and family members who will be here to view your ideas and will serve as our city council by casting votes about whether they would want to live in your community. We will talk a lot more about that later as we get further into the project.*** *I am so excited about the work all of you are doing! Today I am going to collect your writer's notebooks so I can see the interesting theme each of you has chosen for your community.*

Collect students' writer's notebooks to look over their completed T charts.

Teacher Reflection
Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions: • What went well? • How do you know your students achieved the objectives? • What is your evidence of student learning? • Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed? • What were challenges in the lesson? • What would you change the next time you teach this lesson? After reviewing students' T charts, reflect on these questions: • Which students were able to write ideas about their topics? • Which students wrote little or nothing about their topics? • Which students were able to select a theme for their community? • How will you follow-up with students who were unable to select a theme or selected a theme that they wrote little or nothing about to help them be successful?

Section 2

Project Milestone:
How Can I Teach the City Council About My Community Idea?

Students will work to create an informational paper about their topic to be presented to the city council (actually a group of school community members who attend a project fair).

Estimated Duration of Section 2

Lessons 6-16
11 days (approximately 12 hours combined instruction and worktime)

Assessment(s)

- Informational writing pre-assessment (Lesson 6)
- Writers notebook evaluation of student notes for fact based information(Lesson 13)
- Writers notebook evaluation of student notes for questions and answers Lesson 14)
- Writers notebook evaluation of student notes for main idea (Lesson 15)
- Writers notebook evaluation of student notes for Boxes and Bullets (Lesson 16)
- Student completed informational writing piece assessed using Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019)
- Post-assessment using the same content as the pre-assessment from Lesson 6 (Lesson 27)

Key Student Question

How can I teach the city council about my community idea?

Note: The first portion of Section 2, Lesson 6, is a preassessment. Students will be given a packet of informational articles about the astronaut, Christa McAuliffe (see articles in lesson below) and will use the information from the articles to create an informational paper. The teacher will use the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019 (see below) to assess students' informational writing pieces. This is the same assessment and grading rubric that will be used as a summative tool to analyze students' mastery of informational writing skills at the culmination of the unit.

Following the preassessment, Lessons 7 through 11 are an immersion into the text type (form of writing) informational writing. These lessons were created by the Lake Washington School

District as part of the Lake Washington Writing Units (2017). The purpose of the immersion is to familiarize students with the aspects of a piece of informational writing. The immersion portion can take up to five days, but teachers may choose to use as few or as many of the five lessons as they see necessary based on their students' level of familiarity with the informational writing text type.

Lessons 12 through 16 will guide students through the creation of their own piece of informational writing utilizing the PBL Works (2020) Seven Essential Design Elements and Seven Project Based Teaching Practices to modify the existing Lake Washington School District Writing lessons.

Lesson 6: Informational Writing Pre-Assessment

Lesson Focus: Informational Writing	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS
Students will independently complete a piece of informational writing to be used as a pre-assessment tool.	- PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Assess Student Learning - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.d: Provide a concluding statement or section. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.D: Provide a concluding statement or section. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended CCSS time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

	Objective(s)
	• Students will create a piece of informational , on the topic of astronaut, Christa McAuliffe, writing entirely on their own without instruction in the text type (form of writing).
	• Writing will be used as a pre-assessment for teacher to gauge students' skill levels.
	• Writing will be used as a baseline assessment on which to compare student progress at the end of the unit (Lesson 26).
	Resources and Materials
	• Informational Writing Pre-Assessment Packet that contains a direction sheet, articles pertaining to Christa McAuliffe, and paper on which to create writing piece (see articles below or print from the following links).
	Article 1
	https://www.biography.com/astronaut/christa-mcauliffe (A&E Networks Television. (2020, September 16). *Christa McAuliffe*. Biography.com. https://www.biography.com/astronaut/christa-mcauliffe.)
	Article 2
	https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Christa-Corrigan-McAuliffe/312405 (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. (2014). *Christa Corrigan McAuliffe*. Britannica School. https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Christa-Corrigan-McAuliffe/312405.)
	Article 3
	https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mcauliffe.pdf National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2007, April). *Biographical Data S. Christa Corrigan McAuliffe*. https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mcauliffe.pdf.
	Environment
	Students will participate in independent work to write an informational paper to the best of their ability without adult assistance.
	Assessment Plan
	• The teacher will use the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) to assess students' informational writing skills prior to teaching the informational writing unit. See rubric below.

Lesson 6: Pre-Assessment (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Remember that part of our You Are the Mayor project will involve creating a piece of informational writing. Before we jump into learning all about informational writing, it is important for me to understand how much you already know about creating a piece of informational writing. Today you are going to create a piece of informational writing on your own. You will start and finish the piece all today. We will work on this for about an hour today and if you do not finish, I will provide you more time later in the day to complete your paper.*
Lesson Core
Say: *Today we are all going to be writing about the same topic for our informational paper. That topic is the astronaut, Christa McAuliffe. You are going to be given three factual articles about Christa McAuliffe to help you create your piece of writing.* Provide each student with a packet that contains the direction sheet, factual articles about the topic (see below) and binder paper for students to create their writing piece. Let students know where to turn in their work when they are finished and what to do with the remainder of their work time if they finish before the allotted work time is over. Allow roughly 1 hour for students to work independently to complete their writing piece. Do not provide assistance. If students are stuck or discouraged, remind them that this is just a pre-assessment for you to gather information about what you need to teach them and that it will also help them get to celebrate how much they learn through this unit. Encourage them to just do their best!
Lesson Conclusion
Say: *Today we worked on showing what we already know about informational writing. If you haven't finished your writing piece yet, you will have a chance to complete it later today.* Make sure to build work time into the day's schedule so students who did not finish have the opportunity to complete their writing.

Teacher Reflection
Upon completion of the lesson, score students' written work using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (see below) (Lake Washington School District, 2019). Then consider the following: • What do the students already know about informational writing?

- Are there students who are significantly advanced in their informational writing skills? If so, how can you further the learning of those students beyond the basic third grade writing skills?
- Are there students who are significantly lacking in their informational writing skills? If so, how can you add extra scaffolding and supports to the lessons to help those students reach standard during the unit?

Name_____

Informational Writing Pre-Assessment Packet

Directions: Your task is to create a piece of informational writing about the astronaut, Christa McAuliffe. You will create your informational writing on the binder paper attached at the back of this packet. You should use the factual articles in this packet to help you create your piece of writing. Do your best and use any and all of the skills you have that involve creating a piece of informational writing.

Image from: https://forumhome.org/remembering-christa-mcauliffe-p24915-1.htm

Article 1, Source: A&E Television Biography.com

BIOGRAPHY.

Photo: NASA

NAME
Christa McAuliffe

BIRTH DATE
September 2, 1948

DEATH DATE
January 28, 1986

EDUCATION
Marian High School, Framingham State College, Bowie State College

PLACE OF BIRTH
Boston, Massachusetts

PLACE OF DEATH
Cape Canaveral, Florida

ORIGINALLY
Sharon Christa Corrigan

FULL NAME
Sharon Christa McAuliffe

Christa McAuliffe

Biography
(1948–1986)

UPDATED: SEP 14, 2020 · ORIGINAL: APR 27, 2017

High school teacher Christa McAuliffe was the first American civilian selected to go into space. She died in the explosion of the space shuttle 'Challenger' in 1986.

Who Was Christa McAuliffe?

A high school teacher, Christa McAuliffe made history when she became the first American civilian selected to go into space in 1985. On January 28, 1986, McAuliffe boarded the Challenger space shuttle in Cape Canaveral, Florida. The shuttle exploded shortly after lift-off, killing everyone on board.

Early Life

Born Sharon Christa Corrigan on September 2, 1948, in Boston, Massachusetts, Christa McAuliffe was the first of five children born to Edward and Grace Corrigan. When she was 5, she and her family moved to Framingham, Massachusetts. An adventurous child, McAuliffe grew up in a quiet, suburban neighborhood during the space age.

McAuliffe graduated from Marian High School in 1966 and enrolled at Framingham State College, where she studied American history and education. She received a bachelor's degree in 1970 and married Steven McAuliffe soon after. The couple had met and fallen in love during their high school days.

After NASA announced the selection of McAuliffe, her whole community rallied behind her, treating her as a hometown hero when she returned from the White House. As for McAuliffe, she saw the space mission as a chance to go on the ultimate field trip. She believed that by participating in the mission she could help students better understand space and how NASA works.

One of the more difficult aspects of the program was leaving her family for extensive training. She headed to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, in September 1985, returning only for the holidays. More than any other year, 1986 was to be the year of the space shuttle, with 15 flights scheduled. McAuliffe's mission, STS-51L, was to be the first to depart for space.

Selected for Space Mission

McAuliffe was an extraordinary teacher with a dream of being a passenger on the space shuttle, so when NASA announced a contest to take a teacher into space, she jumped at the chance and applied. McAuliffe won the contest, beating out more than 11,000 other applicants. Vice President George H.W. Bush delivered the good news at a special ceremony at the White House, stating that McAuliffe was going to be the "first private citizen passenger in the history of space flight."

The shuttle was originally scheduled for lift-off on January 22, but there were multiple delays. The first one was a routine scheduling delay. The second was because of a dust storm at an emergency landing site. The third delay was because of inclement weather at the launch site. One final delay was due to a technical problem with a door latch mechanism.

Challenger Tragedy

On January 28, 1986, McAuliffe's friends and family, including her two children, anxiously watched and waited for the Challenger space shuttle to take off from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Her students in Concord also tuned in with the rest of the country to watch the history-making space expedition. However, less than two minutes after lift-off, the shuttle exploded, and everyone aboard died.

"The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and 'slipped the surly bonds of earth' to 'touch the face of God.' " - Ronald Reagan, January 28, 1986

A shocked nation mourned the passing of the seven crew members of the Challenger. President Reagan spoke of the crew as heroes shortly after the accident: "This America, which Abraham Lincoln called the last, best hope of man on Earth, was built on heroism and noble sacrifice," he stated. "It was built by men and women like our seven-star voyagers, who answered a call beyond duty, who gave more than was expected or required and who gave it little thought of worldly reward."

NASA spent months analyzing the incident, later determining that problems with the right solid rocket booster had been the primary cause of the disaster. The findings revealed a gasket had failed on the rocket booster, the cold had affected the O-rings and a leak caused fuel to ignite.

Lasting Legacy

After her death, this courageous educator received the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. As a tribute to her memory, a planetarium in Concord was named after her, as well as an asteroid and a crater on the moon. In addition, the Christa Corrigan McAuliffe Center at Framingham State College was established to carry on her legacy and support the advancement of educational practices throughout the region.

Citation Information

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Christa Corrigan McAuliffe

(1948–86). An American teacher, Christa Corrigan McAuliffe was chosen to be the first private citizen in space. The death of McAuliffe and her fellow crew members in the 1986 space shuttle Challenger disaster was deeply felt by the country and had a strong effect on the U.S. space program.

Sharon Christa Corrigan was born on September 2, 1948, in Boston, Massachusetts. She earned her B.A. from Framingham (Massachusetts) State College in 1970 and the same year married Steve McAuliffe. She received her master's degree in education from Bowie (Maryland) State College (now University) in 1978. In 1970 she began a teaching career that impressed both her colleagues and her students with her energy and dedication.

When in 1984 some 10,000 applications were processed to determine who would be the first nonscientist in space, McAuliffe was selected. In her application she proposed keeping a three-part journal of her experiences: the first part describing the training she would go through, the second chronicling the details of the actual flight, and the third relating her feelings and experiences back on Earth. She also planned to keep a video record of her activities. McAuliffe was to conduct at least two lessons while onboard the space shuttle to be simulcast to students around the world, and she was to spend the nine months following her return home lecturing to students across the United States.

Problems dogged the ill-fated Challenger mission from the start. The launch had been postponed for several days, and the night before the launch, central Florida was hit by a severe cold front that left ice on the launchpad. The shuttle finally was launched at 11:38 am on January 28, 1986. Just 73 seconds after liftoff the craft exploded, sending debris cascading into the Atlantic Ocean for more than an hour afterward. There were no survivors. The live television coverage of the spectacular and tragic event, coupled with McAuliffe's winning, dynamic, and (not least) civilian presence onboard, halted shuttle missions for two and a half years, sorely damaged the reputation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and eroded public support for the space program.

Article 3, Source: NASA

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058

Biographical Data

S. CHRISTA CORRIGAN MCAULIFFE
TEACHER IN SPACE PARTICIPANT (DECEASED)

PERSONAL DATA: Born September 2, 1948 in Boston, Massachusetts. She is survived by husband Steven and two children. Her listed recreational interests included jogging, tennis, and volleyball.

EDUCATION: Graduated from Marian High School, Framingham, Massachusetts, in 1966; received a bachelor of arts degree, Framingham State College, 1970; and a masters degree in education, Bowie State College, Bowie, Maryland, 1978.

ORGANIZATIONS: Board member, New Hampshire Council of Social Studies; National Council of Social Studies; Concord Teachers Association; New Hampshire Education Association; and the National Education Association.

AWARDS: Posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES: Member, Junior Service League; teacher, Christian Doctrine Classes, St. Peters Church; host family, A Better Chance Program (ABC), for inner-city students; and fundraiser for Concord Hospital and Concord YMCA.

EXPERIENCE:

- 1970-1971 Benjamin Foulois Junior High School, Morningside, Maryland. Teacher. American history, 8th grade.
- 1971-1978 Thomas Johnson Junior High School, Lanham, Maryland. Teacher. English and American history, 8th grade and civics, 9th grade.
- 1978-1979 Rundlett Junior High School, Concord, New Hampshire. Teacher, 7th grade and American history, 8th grade.
- 1980-1982 Bow Memorial (Middle) School, Bow, New Hampshire. Teacher. Social Studies, 9th grade.
- 1982-1985 Concord High School, Concord, New Hampshire. Teacher. Courses in economics, law, American history, and a course she developed entitled The American Woman, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade.

NASA EXPERIENCE: Christa McAuliffe was selected as the primary candidate for the NASA Teacher in Space Project on July 19, 1985. She was a payload specialist on STS 51-L which was launched from the Kennedy Space Center, Florida, at 11:38:00 EST on January 28, 1986. The crew on board the Orbiter *Challenger* included the spacecraft commander, Mr. F.R. Scobee, the pilot, Commander M.J. Smith (USN), three mission specialists, Dr. R.E. McNair, Lieutenant Colonel E.S. Onizuka (USAF), and Dr. J.A. Resnik, and fellow civilian payload specialist, Mr. G.B. Jarvis. The STS 51-L crew died on January 28, 1986 when *Challenger* exploded after launch.

APRIL 2007

3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric   Name: Draft 8.01.19

Assignment:

Text Type and Purpose	Level 1 - Not at Standard (1 point)	Level 2 – Approaching Standard (2 points)	Level 3 – Meets Standard (3 points)	Level 4 – Exceeds Standard (4 points)
Introduction (Beginning)	Introduction is missing/unclear	Attempts to include an introduction statement or section that identifies the topic	Introduction statement or section identifies the topic	Introduction statement or section clearly identifies the topic and main ideas Includes a lead that engages the reader
Transition Words and Phrases (Temporal Words)	Linking words or phrases are not used	Sometimes uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information	Uses linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information	Uses a variety of linking words and phrases to creatively connect ideas within categories of information
Content (Middle)	Includes limited or no details Ideas and details are not organized or do not stick to the topic.	Attempts to group related information together but some ideas or details feel out of place or incomplete	Groups related information together	Groups related information in paragraphs and sections; may include formatting (e.g. headings, illustrations if useful to aiding comprehension)
Conclusion (Closure/ Ending)	Concluding statement or section is missing/unclear	Attempts to provide a sense of closure by adding a concluding statement or section, but feels incomplete	Provides a sense of closure by adding a concluding statement or section	Provides a creative sense of closure by adding a concluding statement or section that ties the ideas together
Elaboration* *Double weighted category – see explanation below*	Writes an informational piece with help **OR** Writes with minimal/no use of informational techniques **OR** Writes an informational piece that has minimal facts, details, and definitions	Attempts to provide facts, definitions, and details to develop the topic Some details may be incomplete or limited	Develops the topic with facts, definitions, and details	Develops the topic with facts, concrete details, definitions, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic
Style* *Double weighted category – see explanation below*	Words and sentences are simple or repetitive	Writing is basic Words and sentences are used to provide limited meaning and interest	Writing is purposeful Words and sentences are used to provide meaning and interest	Writing is engaging Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic

Elaboration and Style are double-weighted categories. Whatever level (points) a student receives is worth double. For example, if a student 'Meets Standard' for Style, the student will receive 6 points instead of 3.

For further guidance, refer to the Annotated Student Samples.

Text Types and Purposes

Level	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Range	0-8	9-14	15-16	17-22	23-24	25-30	31-32

Lesson 7: Informational Writing Immersion

Defining the Genre

Lesson created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose:

I can immerse myself in the genre of informational articles by reviewing the definition of informational writing and creating a short list of my favorite texts that fit this genre.
Standard(s) • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate informational relevant to a given topic efficiently. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use informational gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Resources Needed:

Wonders Mentor Texts:

Used in this lesson:

- A Natural Beauty, Reading/Writing Workshop, Unit 1
Week 5 Others to use as examples:
- A Mountain of History, Literature Anthology, Unit 1 Week 5
- Every Vote Counts, Reading/Writing Workshop, Unit 2 Week 3
- Earth and Its Neighbors, Reading/Writing Workshop, Unit 3 Week 3
- Earth, by Jeffrey Zuehlke, Literature Anthology, Unit 3 Week 3
- Big Ideas from Nature, Literature Anthology, Unit 3 Week 4
- Forbidden Foods, Time for Kids, Wonders Unit 4

Other Possible Mentor Texts:

- Any National Geographic Kids Books (i.e. Bats)
- Time for Kids Magazine
- National Geographic Magazine
- Nonfiction books within your classroom

Materials:

- Anchor Chart
- Writer's Notebooks

Lesson Introduction:

This year we have written in one of the writing domains: narrative. In the last unit, we took our stories through the writing process from collecting to publishing. Because they were personal narratives the stories were based on true events from our lives, but they were written in a narrative form to tell the readers a story and entertain them as they read.

Now we are going to learn about another genre of writing: informational writing. In this unit we will be writing informational articles that are based on true facts and informational and include research. The purpose of the writing we do in this unit is different from the last as the articles will be written to teach readers.

Today we are going to learn a way to immerse ourselves in the genre of informational writing.

Procedure:

Writers do this by thinking of well-written texts that engaged us as readers about a topic. The fun part about informational texts is that our interests can be so different! You may find spiders really fascinating, but another person might find them scary or disgusting. Whereas, I might be interested in learning more about football or the Seahawks, and to someone else this topic could be boring.

Informational articles can come in many different forms, such as stories in our Wonders books, articles in magazines (TFK) or online, or even an informational book you read on your own. All of us have had an opportunity to enjoy reading and listening to informational texts. Maybe it was read aloud in class or at the library. Perhaps it was someone at home that shared this text with you.

Model: *"Watch me as I think of and list some of my favorite informational texts."* Teacher shares a favorite story and creates an anchor chart, "Our Favorite Informational Texts." (Note: You will add to this chart in Lesson 2, so save space for these additional columns!)

"I love reading, so it's hard to name just one text! But recently we read an article in our Workshop text, called <u>A Natural Beauty</u>. I like this text because it had many details that tell us about why the Grand Canyon is such a popular landmark. Also, there were many interesting pictures, and I visited the Grand Canyon once so I could make connections to some of the facts they included.

Writers, now you try to name a favorite informational text that you've enjoyed. Take the next few minutes to remember the texts you have read. You may also look through our Wonders Text books, as well as the books around our classroom. [Teacher may want to pull out informational texts that have been read aloud to the class to have on display.] *Think about books that have been read aloud. Which texts with true informational have you especially enjoyed? Why? After a few minutes have passed, I will ask you to turn and tell your writing partner one text that you have particularly enjoyed and why.*

Think about informational texts that might have taught you a lot about a topic, surprised you, included fun or interesting facts that caught your attention, or even had engaging text features. Think of some texts that had

text features that caught your attention, such as bright photographs or diagrams.

So today you will be making a list of some of your favorite informational texts. In your writer's notebook,
make two-column notes that shares the title of the text and why it's a favorite.

If you finish early, then list some of the great features that the texts you listed have. You can also think
about books we've read aloud together this year or in past years and the features of those texts.

Now off you go. Create your two-column notes and get started with listing
your favorite informational articles. Remember you can use your Wonders
books to help refresh your memory!

Closing:

Turn and Talk:

"Let's come back together in a partner share. Share with your partner the title of at least one informational text you particularly enjoyed and tell why."

Large Group Share:

"Now let's add a few of your favorite examples to our anchor chart. We'll record the title and tell about a specific feature that was enjoyable or interesting." It is important for the teacher to include several titles that are very familiar to most students, i.e. _____

Charts/Graphic Organizers/Work Samples:

Anchor Chart:

Our Favorite Informational Texts
A National Beauty
A Mountain of History
Bats (National Geographic Kids)

2-Column Notes: (For students to write in their writer's notebooks)

Favorite Informational Articles

Title	Why I like it
"A National Beauty"	• colorful pictures • I've visited there • Great introduction
"Earth"	• Bright, colorful photos • Like learning about planets and space • Lots of facts • Phases of the moon

Lesson 8: Informational Writing Immersion

Analyzing Characteristics

Lesson created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose:

We can immerse ourselves in the genre of informational articles by analyzing the characteristics included.

Standard(s)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate informational relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use informational gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Resources Needed:

Mentor Texts:

A variety of texts should be available for this lesson. See the Resources Needed page for a list of possible texts.

Materials:

- Anchor Chart
- Writer's Notebooks

Lesson Introduction:

Yesterday, we started immersing ourselves in the genre of informational writing. We made a list of our favorite informational articles and why we like them.

Today we are going to learn about the content and characteristics of informational articles.

Procedure:

Writers do this by reading through various informational articles and looking for common features or characteristics that each article has. By reading several articles we are able to find some of the patterns that authors use to write informational texts.

As we read today, we will be asking ourselves questions to help us focus on the patterns we might notice (Feel free to jot these questions and others you come up with for students.)

- *What do you notice in your text?*
- *What is something that is the same among all the articles?*
- *Why did the author write this?*
- *How is informational writing different than narrative?*
- *Why would someone choose to read this article?*

Model (Teacher may want to do this on a chart to have up throughout the unit for students and teacher to reference as they work during this unit.)***:***
"Watch me as I set up my journal to list what I notice about informational articles. Today you will just bullet each of the things you notice as you go through and read different informational texts. We will come back together as a class at the end to discuss the different things you found."

This would be a great opportunity for students to work with table

groups or writing partners. <u>Mid-Workshop Interruption:</u>

Call students together or direct their attention to a new chart – Characteristics of Informational

Articles

"You have been busily listing the different things you noticed about informational articles. I want to stop you for a moment so we can share what you have found so far." Choose students to share and guide them into sharing about the qualities of informational writing. Add key characteristics to the chart as students share. Feel free to choose a couple students that you noticed had great examples on their list. Students may not list all the ideas during this mid-workshop interruption, but this will help focus the ones who might be a little confused.

Key Characteristics to look for:

- True Facts
- Articles teaches about the topic
- Interesting Vocabulary/Specific Vocabulary
- Includes statistics/data (numbers, dates, etc.)
- Text Features like headings, photographs, diagrams
- Focused on one topic

Have students continue looking for characteristics of informational articles. Students can look to see if they also noticed the same ones other people suggested, as well as new ones.

Closing:

Large Group Share:

Go back as a whole class and complete the Characteristics of Informational Articles chart. Add more of the key characteristics listed above, guiding students if they may have missed some. If students have missed certain characteristics, pull an example text and point out specific parts to guide students into noticing the same features.

Charts/Graphic Organizers/Work Samples:

Example Charts (feel free to change, modify or add to)

Things I notice in Informational Articles
• Pictures and photos
•
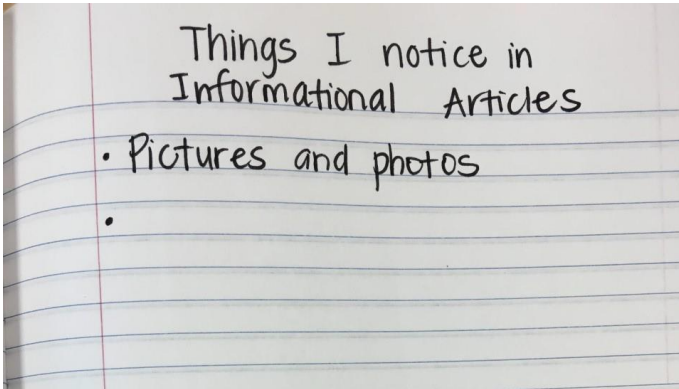
Questions Writers ask when exploring Informational Articles
• What do you notice in your text? • What is something that is the same among all the articles? • Why did the author write this? • How is informational writing different than narrative? • Why would someone choose to read this article?

Example: You will co-create chart with students – listing their ideas.

Characteristics of Informational Articles
• True Facts • Articles teaches about the topic • Interesting Vocabulary/Specific Vocabulary • Includes statistics/data (numbers, dates, etc.) • Text Features like headings, photographs, diagrams • Focused on one topic

Lesson 9: Informational Writing Immersion

Analyzing the Structure

Lesson created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose:

We can immerse ourselves in the genre of Informational articles by analyzing the structure of informational texts.

Standards:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate informational relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use informational gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Resources Needed:

Wonders Mentor Text:

- A Natural Beauty, Reading/Writing Workshop, Unit 1
Week 5 See the Resources Needed page for a list of
possible texts.

Materials:

- Anchor Chart
- Writer's Notebooks

Lesson Introduction:

Yesterday, we started immersing ourselves in the genre of informational writing. We examined various informational texts and listed the common characteristics authors included. We found that all informational articles are focused on a topic, teach the reader, and provide true facts.

Today we are going to look at the flow of how an informational article is organized.

Procedure:

Just like you have learned during narrative writing in our launching unit, informational articles are laid out in a specific way. Now that we know that informational articles all share common characteristics, we are going to look at one informational article as we focus on the flow and organization.

Today we are going to look at the text, "A Natural Beauty" in our Wonders Reading/Writing Workshop book on page 87. We are going to go through the text part by part to how the article is laid out. As we go, we will make a chart to help remind us of what our informational article should look like.

What is the first thing you notice right away on page 87? Turn and tell a partner what you notice. *(Students should notice the title).* **Now at the top of our chart, I will write "title". This will help me remember that my informational article will need a title.**

Let's read on after the title, <u>A Natural Beauty.</u> What do you notice the author did here? (Help students to notice this is a paragraph, the author indented.) *Why do you think the author wrote this paragraph?* (To draw the reader in/hooks reader, introduce the topic – introduction sentence.)

Let's read the rest of page 87. After the introduction paragraph, what does the author do? (Discuss the heading and the fact that it is bold.) *On the chart we will write "heading" after the introduction paragraph.*

After the heading we have two paragraphs. Do these have anything in common? Are they related to the heading? Have students turn and share with a partner. (Students should notice that the paragraphs give details that go with the heading, "Exploring the Canyon".) *When we write our informational articles, we will call these paragraphs reasons. We call them reason paragraphs because they give reasons to support our main idea. Each of these paragraphs gave reasons to support why the Grand*

Canyon is a famous landmark and natural beauty. On my chart I will write "Reason paragraph" under
heading.

Continue reading together as a class, focusing on the sections: "History of the Canyon" and "It's a Landmark". Help guide students to see how the paragraphs included below the heading all are focused on the heading topic. Continue adding to the chart.

Now I want to re-read this last sentence because it has a very important job. "The Grand Canyon is a place all Americans can enjoy." Why do you think the author chose to include this sentence? Have students turn and talk with their partner. (Help guide students to discover that this is a concluding paragraph. It helps summarize what the article was mostly about.) *Writers sometimes choose to include their concluding sentence with their last paragraph, and sometimes they make a concluding paragraph. This paragraph is very similar to the introduction, and helps remind the reader of what they just read. When we write our informational articles, we will have a separate paragraph that we will call our conclusion.*

Closing:

Writers, you have just analyzed the structure of an informational article. We have learned how authors organize their articles to make sure they flow and make sense to their readers. Very soon you will be writing articles that include all the parts we listed on our chart today. They will have a title, introduction, headings, reason paragraphs related to the heading, and will end with a conclusion.

Charts/Graphic Organizers/Work Samples:

Lesson 10: Informational Writing Immersion

Identifying Text Features

Lesson created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose:

We can immerse ourselves in the genre of informational articles by identifying, naming, and locating features of the genre of informational within a mentor text.

Standards: Informational

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate informational relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use informational gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline- specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Resources Needed:

Wonders Mentor Text:

- <u>A Natural Beauty,</u> Reading/Writing Workshop, Unit 1 Week 5

A variety of additional texts should be available for this lesson. See the Resources Needed page for a list of possible texts, or pull informational texts from your classroom library.

Materials:

- Anchor Chart
- Writer's Notebooks
- Post It Notes (to mark text features in books)

Lesson Introduction:

Yesterday, we were immersing ourselves in the genre of informational writing by analyzing the flow of an informational article. Earlier we examined various informational texts and listed the common characteristics authors included. Many of you noticed that authors use special features like photographs to help draw in the reader and teach them more about their topic.

Today we are going to identify, locate and name features that authors use in informational articles.

Procedure:

Writers use many different features to help readers learn more about their topic. In the articles we read over the last few days, you may have noticed several different kinds of text features. Today you are going to get a chance to explore your books to look for text features the author used and mark them with a sticky note.

Since we have already talked a little about photographs, I will model this one and you will get a chance
to look for other features we haven't discussed yet. Watch me as I open my book and mark the

photograph listed on page 86 of "A Natural Beauty" in my Wonders Reading/Writing book. Since I know what this feature is called, I will jot it down on my post-it note. I also could abbreviate or initial the word to save on time by writing just a "P" or "photo". If I didn't know what it was, I could still mark the feature with my post-it note but I would just leave it blank.

Looking on this page I am on, is there any other feature that you see? Turn and tell your partner one feature you notice. (Examples: Bold title (shortened example: B.T.), vocabulary, heading)

Now it is your chance to try it out. When you go back to your seat I want you to continue looking through this piece for other text features. When you are done you may look at another text from (Wonders books, small reader, specific chosen informational text, or bin of books at their desk). Remember to mark each feature with a post-it, and if you know the name write it down or abbreviate the name to save on time.

If you notice that you are moving quickly, go back through your post-its and see if you can tell what each text feature is used for – we will talk more about this later today.

Walk around as students are marking features with post-its. Help guide students who are struggling to notice different features throughout their book.

Closing:

Bring students back together with their book to share the features they found. List features on the chart, along with where they are used and why they are used.

"Writers, you have found many text features that authors use to make their informational articles more descriptive and engaging for readers. We will use this chart as a resource as we write our own informational articles. We also can use it when we are reading informational texts to remind us of why the author chose to include specific features. We will continue to add to this chart over the year as we learn about new text features."

Charts/Graphic Organizers/Work Samples:

Co-create chart with students, listing text features they found:

Informational Text Features		
Text Feature	**Where Located**	**Purpose**
Title	Beginning of Text	Tell what the text is about
Headings	At the start of each section/Throughout the text	Tell what the section is about
Photograph	Throughout *(near related section)*	Visual examples
Captions	Throughout, next to photographs	Explain photograph
Diagram	Throughout *(near related section)*	Explain parts of something

** To make this chart even more powerful, pre-make copies of each feature that you can glue to the left of the title from a text the class is familiar with.

Lesson 11: Informational Writing Immersion

Shared Writing

Lesson created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose:

We can immerse ourselves in the genre of informational articles by participating in a shared writing
activity with my teacher in which we use the features of the genre to plan (and draft) a short article.

Standard(s)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate informational relevant to a given topic efficiently.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use informational gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline- specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Resources Needed:

Though no mentor texts are referred to in this lesson, if you would like to have texts available to

reference, see the Teacher's Note for a complete list of possible mentor texts.

Materials:

- Drafting paper for shared writing activity
- Writer's Notebooks or blank paper

Lesson Introduction:

We have been immersing ourselves in the genre of informational writing by examining the characteristics, flow and text features. Yesterday we made a chart of the many text features that authors like to use.

Today we are going to practice writing an informational article by writing one together as a class. This process will be much shorter than when we get into our actual articles, but it will give us a quick idea of what an informational article will really look like.

Procedure:

Writers do this by first deciding on a topic they want to teach people about. Let's brainstorm some ideas together about what our informational article could be about. What are some topics we all know really well? Have students suggest ideas and choose one that would be interesting and engaging for your class.

Model example:

Why don't we write about our classroom? Since we all know so much about this topic, it's a good one for today. To start our informational article, what should we do first? Let's look back at our "Organization of an Informational Article" chart. Students suggest title. Although a title is the first thing you will see, it usually is the last step. We will use the different parts of our article to help us develop a creative title that really helps reads understand our piece. We first need to decide what we could teach people about our

You have many great ideas of what we could teach people about our classroom. Since we are writing a short article today, we will only choose two, however usually we could pick more. Today we will teach people what our classroom looks like and what we do in our classroom. Watch me as I start writing a paragraph about what our classroom looks like. Feel free to raise your hand to share out ideas that I could add.

Model writing two short paragraphs, adding in student ideas as you go through.

Now writers, how do we end our informational article? Yes, we need to add a conclusion. First, I need to summarize what our article was mostly about. "As you can see, our classroom is a great place." Next, I will remind my reader of the two reasons I taught them about in my article. "As you can see, our classroom is a great place because there are many things we can do here and it looks clean and tidy."

Now looking back over our informational article, what could we title it? It is important to create a title that lets the audience know what they will learn in our article. We could write the title, "Our Third Grade Classroom". We also could add more descriptive words to make our title a little more creative. Turn and share a title idea with your partner. Listen in and share a couple creative titles with the class.

Now remember many authors use different text features to add to our article.

If short on time: "Today we did not have time to add text features, but what are some that we could have added if we had time? Which ones would be useful when teaching people about our classroom?"

Have extra time: "On a blank piece of paper (or writer's notebook) at your desk I want you to think of one text feature you would add to our informational article." Have students share out ideas – diagram, illustration, word bank, fun facts, etc. Send students off to draw their feature.

Closing:

Writers, today we immersed ourselves in informational articles by writing a shared one as a class. We were able to teach people about our topic and give reasons to support it. We made sure to include all the important parts of an article.

We even were able to create text features to add to our article. Since you each made such great text features, I want us to have a chance to see everyone's. Please leave your text feature on your desk, and we do a silent gallery walk to see what your classmates came up with. Students could also get with partners to share their text feature and why they chose it to save on time.

Lesson 12: Taking Notes

Lesson Focus: PBL Informational Writing	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS

• Students will read like a researcher to begin taking notes about their chosen topic.	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	  Design and Plan
	  Align to Standards
	  Build the Culture
	  Scaffold Student Learning
	  Assess Student Learning
	  Engage and Coach
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	  Challenging Problem or Question
	  Sustained Inquiry
	  Authenticity
	  Student Voice and Choice
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range

	of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will create a template used to take two column notes.
- Students will read sources about their topic.
- Students will write notes about their topic on two column charts.

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks
- Computers for online research
- Books and articles on students' topics (If possible, collect books from the school library on students' chosen topics prior to this lesson.)
- Completed *Brief Research* sheets from Lesson 4

Environment

Students will participate in whole-class instruction to watch teacher modeling of the creation of a two column notes chart, reading of sources and writing notes. Students will participate in independent work by creating their own two column notes chart, reading sources and taking notes.

Vocabulary

Researcher: A person whose job involves doing careful study to find and report new knowledge about something (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2021).

Assessment Plan

- Teacher observation of students' ability to create a two column note chart, read articles and take notes.
- Lesson 13 involves the teacher collecting students' notes to view them more closely. For Lesson 12 the teacher should intervene and help students if it is noticed that students are having difficulty making a chart, reading their sources, writing notes at all, or writing notes that are brief. If the teacher notices this is the case for some students, during the worktime of Lesson 13, the teacher should meet individually or in a small group with the students who need assistance to help them get on track to be successful with their note taking.

Lesson 12: Taking Notes (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: Last time we worked on our projects we chose a theme for our community. Our next step is to create an informational paper about the topic we chose to inform the city council about what our topic is. Today we are going to learn how to develop our informational paper by reading as a researcher and taking notes about our chosen topic. Writers do this by looking over sources and reading closely to find information they could include in their informational article. You will start with one source and then if you have time, you can move on to another source.

Lesson Core
Say**:** *What do you think it means to be a researcher?*

Take a few thoughts from students and then say*: A researcher is a person whose job involves doing careful study to find and report new knowledge about something. Today we are going to be researchers to find information about our community theme ideas.*

Watch me as I turn to new page in my writer's notebook and begin making two-column notes to list sources on the left side. Then for each source, on the other side of my notes, I am going to list information I have learned from the text about my topic. The topic I have chosen is gardens. I am going to use my Brief Research sheet that we worked on before to go back to the sources I discovered.

Note: See Lesson 7 for an image of two column notes if you need clarification about that notetaking structure.

Doing my brief research, I found an article about gardens on Britannica School. I am going to write Britannica School for the source, and on the other side I will start listing the information from the article.

Model reading the article and writing down information that seems relevant. For this lesson, the Britannica link being used to research gardens is https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/garden/353164.

Say: *I see a heading here called "Types of Gardens." That tells me that there must be more than one kind of garden. I am going to click on that heading and see what it has to say about the different types of gardens.*

Read aloud the informational about types of gardens from the Britannica School site and write notes about the important information, modeling for students how to write down what they learn from an article.

Say: *Notice that as I write, I will make sure to keep my notes short. I do not want to write down every word from the author, so I will put the notes into my own words. Note taking should be quick so I can get all the information I will need to eventually start my draft.*

Provide 2 or 3 examples of notes to take, and then say: *Now it is time for you to get to work. In your writer's notebook create your template for two column notes.*

Wander the room to observe that students create their note sheet correctly.

Say: *The other day, you listed some sources on your Brief Research sheet. Take out your Brief Research sheet, and using your computer, go back to one of those sources and take notes about your chosen topic on your two column note sheet. If you think you are finished with one source, move on to another source to continue taking notes.*

After roughly 15 minutes of work say:
If you have worked on more than one source today, as you have read, you might notice that your source has some information that is the same as your other sources, and some information is new. If you see something come up in several of your sources, that might tell you it is important, and you would want to make sure to include that in your informational article. Does anyone have any information they have found from more than one source for their topic that they would like to share?

Here thoughts from around 3 volunteers if there are any, and then have students get back to work for another 10-15 minutes.

Lesson Conclusion
Say: *Today we spent some time taking notes on our* topics. *We are going to continue this process tomorrow to gather more information and we are also going to add an extra step that can help us know if we are on track with our note taking.*

Teacher Reflection
Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions: • What went well? • How do you know your students achieved the objectives? • From your observations, are there students who were unable to write any notes, or students who wrote notes that were too lengthy? How will you help those students in Lesson 13?

| | • What is your evidence of student learning?
• What were challenges in the lesson?
• What would you change the next time you teach this lesson? |

Lesson 13: More Taking Notes

Lesson Focus: PBL Informational Writing	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS
- Students will read like a researcher to continue taking notes about their chosen topic. - Students will be introduced to a reflection sheet that can help them think about whether they are on track and actually writing down information that will help them create an informational piece of writing.	- PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Build the Culture Scaffold Student Learning Assess Student Learning Engage and Coach - PBL Essential Design Elements: Challenging Problem or Question Sustained Inquiry Authenticity Student Voice and Choice Reflection - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and

digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will continue to read sources and record notes on a two column note chart as they did in Lesson 12.
- Students will record relevant information that will later be used to write their informational paper.
- Students will reflect on their work to determine if they are on the right path for completing the task correctly.

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks
- Computers for online research
- Books and articles on students' topics
- Task Completion Form

Environment

Students will participate in whole-class instruction and independent work.

Vocabulary

Task: A job for someone to do (Merriam-Webster Incorporated, 2021)

	Assessment Plan

	• Students' Task Completion Forms - Look For:
	     ○ Did students answer the questions regarding facts and opinions correctly?
	     ○ Does the quote the student use represent their topic and is it a fact?
	• Students notes taken in their writer's notebooks – Look For:
	     ○ Are students using the two column note format?
	     ○ Are students' notes factual?
	     ○ Do students' notes reflect the topic they have chosen?
	     ○ Are students' notes brief or are the students having the problem of coping too much information directly from the source?
	
	If the answers to the above questions are yes, students are ready to move on to the next lesson. If there are students who did not have the information correct on the Task Completion form, if they are having difficulty organizing their notes, writing facts, or keeping the notes brief, the teacher should meet with those students individually or in a small group to guide students to complete the boxes correctly before moving on to Lesson 14.

Lesson 13: More Taking Notes (continued)

	Lesson Introduction
	Say: Last time we worked on our project we took notes for our informational papers. Today we are going to continue that work. First though, we are going to make sure we are on the right path with the notes we are taking.

	Lesson Core
	Say**:** *Our current goal is to create an informational paper. Let's talk about how we know if the notes we are taking will put us on the right path for creating an informational paper. For an informational paper, should our notes be based on facts or opinions?* Take a student suggestion. Students should say the notes must be based on facts. Say: *I have here a "Task Completion Form." What does the word task mean?* *Take some suggestions and then define task as a job for someone to do.* Say*: Throughout our project, we will occasionally use a Task Completion Form to help us determine if we are on track for completing the task correctly. Let's look at today's*

Task Completion Form and compare it with the notes I took yesterday to see if I am on track for completing my note taking task correctly.

Using the notes about gardening from yesterday's lesson, model how to fill out the Task Completion Form.

Say: *The first question asks what the goal of my work is. Here I am going to write "The goal of my work is to take notes about gardens." The next part asks me to put a quote from my work that shows I am meeting the goal. I quote writing from other authors' work all the time, so it is pretty cool to get to quote my own work! To do that, I am going to look in my notes and find a statement I wrote that proves I am taking notes about my topic, which is gardens. For this part I am going to write, "One kind of garden is a flower garden" because that is a fact I wrote in my notes. The next section asks if my informational paper should use resources that are facts or opinions and I know the answer is facts, so I am going to put a check next to the word facts. Next, I need to think about if the notes I am taking are facts or opinions. I know the one I quoted above is a fact, but I am going to look at my other notes quickly to see what I think about them.*

Skim briefly through the notes you have previously taken.

Say: *It looks like all the notes I have taken so far are facts, so I am going to check the circle next to facts. It looks like so far, I am on track for completing my note taking task the way I am supposed to be. What if I discovered that I wasn't doing it correctly though? What should I do then? Turn and talk with the people around you about what you think should happen if you find you are not completing a task correctly?*

Give students 30 seconds to talk at their tables and then take suggestions from students about what they think should be done if they discover they are not completing a task correctly.

Say: *If you realize you are not completing a task correctly, then it is a perfect opportunity to correct your error and make sure you move forward in the right way. It would be a real bummer to finish a whole task and then figure out you did the entire thing incorrectly! So, as we start today, you are going to do the Task Completion Form. If you discover that you did not do your notes exactly as you should have yesterday, you can go back to the same sources and find better, factual information from those sources. If you determine that you are on track with your task, then move forward and take notes from other sources.*

Give students the Task Completion Form and have them work on it. When students finish the form have them bring it to you so you can glance at it and determine if students seem on track. Then students should get to work continuing the note taking about their topic. Make sure to gather any students who do not seem on track and in

either a small group or guide them one-on-one to fix any misconceptions they had about taking factual notes about their topic (These may include writing opinions, quoting directly from sources instead of paraphrasing or writing information that they clearly don't understand, thus making it unusable for their paper).

After helping the initial group of students who need assistance, as students work, wander the room to support students as needed. Provide roughly 30 minutes of work time for students to take notes.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today we spent some more time taking notes on our* topics. *Tomorrow we are going to focus on seeing if we can find answers to some of the questions we have about our topics. Now I am going to collect your writer's notebooks so I can look over your notes and see what great facts you are finding that can be used for your informational papers.*

Collect students' writer's notebooks and look over them for the content noted in the Notes Assessment below.

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- Do students need more time to take notes on their topic? If so, extend lesson 6 out for another day.
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Name _____

Task Completion Form

What is the goal of your work?

_____

_____

_____

What is one quote from your work that shows you are meeting the goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

The items I have written in my notes should be (check one)

⭘ Facts

⭘ Opinions

The items I have written in my notes are (check one)

⭘ Facts

⭘ Opinions

Lesson 14: Forming Questions & Finding Answers

Lesson Focus: PBL Informational Writing	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS
• Students form questions about their topics to dive deeper into the research process. • Students research and answer the questions they create. • Students cite new sources if any are used.	• PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Build the Culture Scaffold Student Learning Assess Student Learning Engage and Coach • PBL Essential Design Elements: Challenging Problem or Question Sustained Inquiry Authenticity Student Voice and Choice • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY. W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall informational from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.

	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will develop a list of questions they have about their topic. The questions will be questions that cannot be answered with a simple yes or no answer.
- Students will conduct research to find answers to their created questions.
- Students will record the answers to the questions as notes on separate pages in their writer's notebooks.
- Students will create a "Sources Cited" section in their writer's notebooks.
- Students will write down any new sources used on their Sources Cited pages.

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks
- Computers for online research
- A variety of informational texts for students to use as they research
- One sticky note for each student

Environment

Students will participate in whole-class instruction through viewing teacher modeling of question forming, writing a question on a separate page of the writer's notebook for note taking purposes, and creating a Sources Cited page. Students will participate in independent work by creating their own questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no answer about their topic, finding answers to those questions, and listing any new sources on their Sources Cited page.

Assessment Plan

- Teacher observation of, and interaction with, students during independent work to look for whether students are following the directions of creating a list of questions that cannot be answered with a yes or no answer, writing those questions on separate pages in their writer's notebooks, finding answers to those questions and writing any new sources on a Sources Cited page created in their writer's notebook and marked with a sticky note.
- Collection and analysis of students' writer's notebooks at the end of the lesson to look for the following:
  - Did students create a list of questions they have about their topic?
  - Did students create questions that needed more than a yes or no answer?

o Did students write each question on the top of a separate page in their writer's notebooks where they wrote information about the answer to the question?
o Did students find answers to some of their questions?
o Did students create a Sources Cited page?
o Is the Sources Cited page marked with a sticky note?
o Did students write any new sources on their Sources Cited page?

If the answers to the above questions are yes, students are ready to move on to Lesson 15. If students need assistance with any of the above items, the teacher should meet with the students individually or in small groups prior to moving on to Lesson 15. Keep in mind that students may not have needed to find or reference any new sources in this lesson, but that at some point in the future, more sources should be added to the Sources Cited page in their writer's notebooks.

Lesson 14: Questions & Answers (continued)

Lesson Introduction

Say: *Last time we met we were developing our topics for our informational papers by reading as a researcher and taking notes. You each gathered lots of information to support your topic.*

Today we are going to learn a way to develop our writing for an informational piece of writing by forming questions and finding answers about our topic.

Lesson Core

Say: *Writers do this by rereading the information they have collected and brainstorming questions they still wonder about their topic.*

Watch me as I turn to new page in my writer's notebook and set up my writer's notebook with the title and date. Now I am going to start listing all the things I still wonder about gardens. The questions I list will give me ideas for what to research next, so I want to make sure my questions are about new ideas that I have not already answered during my research yesterday. Re-reading through the information I collected over the past two days might make me wonder something else about my topic. I want to create questions that will really make me stop and think. I will try to avoid questions that would result in a "yes" or "no" answer, since my questions should help me gather more information to develop my topic.

Some great words to start my questions off could be, "what, why, or how" because I know those cannot be answered with a "yes" or "no". That does not mean my questions need to start this way, but if you are stuck these words can be helpful.

When I think of a question I am going to write it in a list in my writer's notebook.

Model how to do this by coming up with some questions about gardens such as: How are gardens planted? What does a garden need to grow? What tools are needed to take care of a garden?

Say*: After I have listed many questions, I am going to choose one to start researching first and write that on the next page. Some questions I research might be quick to answer, where others might have a lot more information. Once I find the answer I am going to write it down in my notebook underneath the question.*

One more important note before we begin is about the sources we use in our research today. So far, we have researched using sources we found in our brief research hunt. Those sources were already recorded on our Brief Research worksheet. Today you might branch out into using other resources. That means we need to have a spot to write our resources down so we can cite them when we finish our paper. Flip forward in your writer's notebook about 20 pages from where you are working now and use a sticky note to mark the page. On the top of the page write Sources Cited. This page is where we will keep track of the sources we find that we use to get information for our papers.

Model how to use the sticky note as a page divider and how to write the heading on the top of the page.

Say: *Remember that if you use a website, you should write down the website address and if you use a book, you should write down the title and the author of the book just like we did when we worked on our Brief Research sheets (see Lesson 4).*

Say: *Writers now you try. Reread the information you gathered yesterday on your topic and think of some questions you could research. What do you still wonder about your topic? In about 10 minutes we are going to share some of our ideas with the class.*

Give students work time. Wander amongst the class to observe and check-in with students as needed. Look for whether students are able to come up with questions and if so, are those questions that require more than a yes or no answer. Then gather the students back together and ask if anyone is willing to share a question they thought of.

Say: *If you heard an idea from a classmate that sparks a question you have for your topic, feel free to add it to your list of questions. Now we are going to spend some time taking notes about the answers to our questions. Write a question on the top of the*

next page of your writer's notebook, research to find the answer to that question and then move on to another question. We will work on finding the answers to our questions for about 30 minutes.

Wander amongst students and help as needed during work time by continuing to assess if students are able to write appropriate questions and find answers to those questions.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today we worked on taking notes on answers to questions we wonder about our topics. Tomorrow we are going to start using our notes and newly learned knowledge about our topics to write our informational papers.*

I am going to collect your writer's notebooks so I can look over your work. I am excited to see all your questions and answers. While we work on this project I am getting to learn a lot about gardens as I do my research, but I am also getting to learn a lot about your topics as I read all the factual information you are collecting!

Collect students' writer's notebooks and look over them for the information detailed below in the Notes Assessment section of the lesson.

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- Who in the group is struggling with finding questions, resources, or answers to their questions?
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Lesson 15: Main Idea

Lesson Focus: PBL Informational Writing	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS
Students choose the main idea of their informational paper by creating a main idea sentence that describes the theme of their community.	- PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Build the Culture Scaffold Student Learning Assess Student Learning Engage and Coach - PBL Essential Design Elements: Challenging Problem or Question Sustained Inquiry Authenticity Student Voice and Choice - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a

	single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will create a list of possible main idea sentences for their informational paper.
- Students will choose the one main idea sentence to be used as the foundation to convey the theme of their community in their informational paper.

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks

Environment

- Students will participate in whole-class instruction through viewing teacher modeling of creating a main idea sentence. Students will participate in independent work by looking over their notes, creating possible main idea sentences and choosing the one sentence they will use to begin their paper. Students may participate in small group or partner work if someone at their table needs assistance coming up with main ideas sentences for their paper.

Assessment Plan

- During work time, teacher observations of and interactions with students looking for-
  - Are students looking back over their notes to help develop their sentences?
  - Are students developing sentences that summarize what their information in their notes is mostly about?
  - Are students able to develop a main idea sentence about their topic?
- Written list indicating if students were able to come up with a main idea sentence to fit their community theme or if students are still working to decide upon a main idea sentence. This list will be written as students share their main idea sentences toward the end of the lesson.
- While listening to students' main idea sentences, write down each student's idea on a list next to students' names or write if they reported to still be working. Then consider the following questions:
  - Did students create a main idea sentence?
  - Do you believe the main idea sentences reported by students matches the information gathered about their topic?
  - Which students were not able to create a main idea sentence yet?

If students created a main idea sentence that you believe matches the information collected in their notes, they are ready to move on to lesson 16. If you are unsure

whether students' main idea sentences match their information, collect students' writer's notebooks to compare their research to their idea before determining that students are ready to move on. If students were not able to create a main idea sentence yet, meet with the students individually or in small groups prior to moving on to Lesson 16.

Lesson 15: Main Idea (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say*: Over the last few days, we have developed our informational papers by gathering information from sources to learn more about our topic. Yesterday we formed questions and found answers to add to the information we have gathered.* *Today we are going to learn a way to develop our informational writing by finding the main idea, or the one BIG thing we want our readers to learn about our topic. We call this the main idea sentence.* (Note: You can use different terminology, such as "topic sentence" if your students are familiar with terms other than "main idea.")
Lesson Core
Say: Writers find the main idea by re-reading their notes and thinking about one sentence they could write to summarize the information they have gathered. Writers have to think about what they want their audience to learn about their topic, as well as what the information has in common. Then they list all the possible main idea sentences they could choose. *Watch me as I show you how this works. I am going to start by writing down my topic, gardens at the top of my page. Now I am going to re-read my notes to see what possible main idea sentences I could write. I am going to think about what the informational is mostly about as I read. Gardens are a big topic to teach about, and there are many options I could choose for my main idea. I could focus on growing a garden, specific types of gardens and their purposes, or even the history of gardens. By looking at my notes, it will help me create a specific main idea sentence. As I'm reading, I am noticing I didn't write down a lot about the history of gardens, so that might not be a good main idea sentence. I am also noticing that my notes mainly teach about what a garden is, the types of gardens and some information about how to care for gardens. Now watch me as I list many of the possible main idea sentences I could*

choose. Once I have a pretty good list, I am going to choose one that I think will be best for my informational paper. I am listing any idea that comes to my mind, because it could help push me to an even better idea later. If I do not see one I like yet, I can keep listing until I find the right one.

Example Main Idea Sentences:
There are many different types of gardens.
Gardens can be used for many different purposes.
There is a lot of information people should know before they begin gardening.
People all around the world grow and use gardens.
Gardens can be both fun and useful.
Gardening is a hobby enjoyed by people all around the world.

Say: *After listing all of these ideas, I found that my favorite sentence is, "Gardens can be both fun and useful." But then I wondered if that was more of my opinion than a main idea, so I decided to change it to "Gardens can be used to provide food, beauty, and hobbies." As I chose this sentence, I was also thinking about the purpose of my writing which is going to be to inform the city council about my idea of having gardens all around the community. In order for them to best understand my idea, they need to understand what the types and purposes of the gardens could be.*

Now it's your turn. Look back over your notes and think about one possible main idea sentence you could write about your topic Once you have an idea, put your hand on your head.

Wait until most of the class has their hand on their head. Then say*: Does anyone want to share the main idea sentence they thought of?*

Take several volunteers. Point out to students that they can get good ideas by listening to the sentences other people came up with.

So today you will re-read your notes to see what they are mostly about. You then will list all the possible main idea sentences you can think of, and once you have a long enough list with several options, you will choose your favorite. This sentence will be the focus of your entire informational paper to inform the city council about your community theme.

Have students get to work as students are working, move around the room to check in with students. Some questions you can ask to help students with their main idea lists are:
- *"What is the most important main idea that can connect everything else that you have to say about your topic?"*
- *"Looking at this page of notes, what do you notice most of this information is teaching about your topic?"*

- *"Does this main idea sentence match the information you collected?"*
- *"I notice that this detail is very different than the rest of your information. Should that have an impact on your main idea?"*
- *"I notice that you do not have many ideas listed. Thinking about your topic, what are some things you could teach people about it?"*

If you notice several students are having difficulty coming up with ideas for their list, interrupt the class and say: *If you are having difficulty coming up with many main idea sentences, share the information you collected with someone at your table. See if they can help you come up with sentences to summarize what your information is mostly about.*

Monitor the students to make sure those who are struggling receive some assistance from tablemates.

After 15 or so minutes of work time, gather the class back together.

Say: *Now we are going to share the main idea sentence you have created. If you have not come up with one yet, that is okay. Just say, "I'm still working on mine" when we get to you. If you are still working, listening to other people share can help you to continue to think about what you might want your main idea sentence to be.* Call on each student in the room to share their sentence. This is a good opportunity to write down each student's sentence so you know what they have chosen, or to make a note that a student is still working and might need some assistance.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today we chose the main ideas for our informational papers! This is exciting because it not only means that you have a solid idea about the theme for your community, but that you are now on your way to writing about that theme so you can inform others about your idea. Our next step is to work with something helpful called, Boxes and Bullets to write the information that will make up our paper.*

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- Did students create a main idea sentence?
- Do you believe the main idea sentences reported by students match the information gathered about their topic?
- Which students were not able to meet the objectives and need follow-up support?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Lesson 16: Boxes and Bullets

Lesson Focus: PBL Informational Writing	PBL Teaching Practices and Elements, CCSS

• Students will use their notes to create an organized plan for their piece of informational writing by using the Boxes and Bullets format to identify reasons and details in their writing.
• Students will share their writing work with a partner and provide feedback to a partner.
	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	    Design and Plan
	    Align to Standards
	    Build the Culture
	    Scaffold Student Learning
	    Assess Student Learning
	    Engage and Coach
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	    Challenging Problem or Question
	    Sustained Inquiry
	    Authenticity
	    Student Voice and Choice
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and informational clearly.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related informational together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames

	(time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)

- Students will identify information from their notes that can be grouped together into related ideas.
- Students will use the boxes and bullets format to list the related ideas.
- Students will understand that reasons that support the main idea will go in boxes.
- Students will understand that bulleted details will support the reason in the box.
- Students will share their work with a partner.
- Students will comment on a partner's work.

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks

Environment

- Students will participate in whole-class instruction through viewing teacher modeling of using the Boxes and Bullets organizing tool to group related ideas together.
- Students will participate in independent work by using the Boxes and Bullets format to group their own notes into categories of related ideas.
- Students will participate in partner work by sharing their Boxes and Bullets with a partner and by commenting on a partner's Boxes and Bullets work.

Vocabulary

Bullet: A small dot in a list that shows where a new thought begins (Lakes Washington School District, 2017)

Assessment Plan

• Teacher observation of, and interaction with, students during independent work. Look specifically for the following items:
 	
     o Are students able to find one to three reasons (Boxes) to go with their main idea?
     o Are students able to provide details (Bullets)to elaborate on their sub-topics?
     o Are students using their notes to help guide their Boxes and Bullets?
• Teacher review of students' writer's notebooks following the lesson.
Look specifically for the following items:
 	
     o Were student able to break their topic into three main sub-topics/ reasons (Boxes)?
     o Were students able to provide details to elaborate on their sub-topics (Bullets)?
     o Do students Bullets support the Boxed information?
 	
If students created a main idea sentence that you believe matches the information collected in their notes, they are ready to move on to the next lesson. If you are unsure whether students' main idea sentences match their information, collect students' writer's notebooks to compare their research to their idea before determining that students are ready to move on. If students were not able to create a main idea sentence yet, meet with the students individually or in small groups prior to moving on to the next lesson.

Lesson 16: boxes and Bullets (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Over the last few days, we have developed our informational paper by gathering information from sources to learn more about our topic. Yesterday we developed a main idea sentence to be the focus for our information paper. Today we are ready to move to the next stage of the writing process by developing a plan for our writing. Today we are going to learn a way to develop our informational writing by using the Boxes and Bullets strategy to organize our thinking in a way that groups related ideas together for our body paragraphs. When an architect is building a house, they use blueprints. They don't go right to building the house. They have to make a plan first. Writers are the same, before they create their product they need to make a plan. Boxes and bullets are our plan to help us design a well-organized informational article.*

	Lesson Core
	Say: *One way writers keep their information organized is by grouping similar ideas together. You may have noticed during your research the past few days that many books, magazines and websites are organized this way. When I read about gardens, many sources had headings to help me know how the information was grouped. This also helped me locate information quickly when I was answering the questions I created about what I wondered about gardens. Today we are going to create Boxes and Bullets to help us organize our writing, so similar ideas are grouped together.*
	Watch me as I show you how this works. I'm going to start by writing my main idea sentence at the top of my page. Next, I am going to think about another group of related details that could help support my main idea: <u>Gardens can be used to provide food, beauty, and hobbies</u>. As I'm reading over my notes, I notice I have a lot of information describing the different types of gardens, so I could write, "There are many different types of gardens." for my first reason.
	I'll write this first reason beneath the main idea and draw a box around it. Then, underneath the box, I'll include at least three details, that expand on the reason I gave. We call these "bullets" because we will write each detail next to a little dot called a bullet, that will show where each new thought begins. (Model this with several details/bullets that go along with your first reason/box.)
	Every bulleted detail I'll include will match the reason in the box. So, for my first box/reason, every detail underneath will be about the different types of gardens. To make my writing stronger, I will want to include as many bullets (details) as I can from my notes. My bullets do not need to be complete sentences – it is just the fact that I want to include. Later, when I write my draft I'll get the opportunity to craft full sentences.
	Now I will turn to a new page, and I'll repeat these steps to create my next box and bullets. I will then turn to a third page and list my last box and bullets. Each of these will become a paragraph in my writing. I want a separate page for each of my boxes and bullets to make sure I can leave lots of room so I can add to my bullets over the next few days as we continue developing.
	If I notice that I have a boxed reason, and I'm having a hard time to adding details (or bullets) to match this reason, it might not be the best one to choose. I might want to look to see if there is a better reason that I could teach people about my community theme.
	Writers now you try. Take a look back in your writer's notebook and re-read your main idea and the information you have collected during the developing stage of this unit. Is there any information that could be grouped together to help support

your main idea? Once you are ready, turn and tell the people at your table one reason sentence you could write.

Provide students about 5 minutes to look over their writer's notebooks and talk with the people at their table.

Say: *So today we will be developing our ideas further for our informational writing. As we do this, we will be focusing on organizing our thoughts into related details so that our readers will be able to follow our thinking in a logical way. Just like when I read about gardens and was able to find information easily, this will allow your reader to easily navigate your ideas. Remember you will decide on a REASON sentence that supports your main idea and you will draw a box around it. Then you will bullet ideas that give examples of your REASON box sentence.*

Our goal today is to have 3 boxed reasons that are each supported by some bullets. So that means, you are trying to form 3 reasons that support the main idea sentence of your paper. Each boxed reason should appear on a separate page of your writer's notebook so that you have room to put the bulleted ideas under the box.

Let's get started giving this a try!

Move around the room to check on students. Some questions you might ask as you touch base with individual students are:
- *"What details might you choose to add to your bulleted lists to include in your writing?"*
- *"Tell me this part of your outline. How does this information all go together? Why are they linked to one boxed reason?"*
- *"What else is important for your readers to understand about this topic?"*
- *"I notice that you're having a hard time getting started. Why don't we list all the possible reasons (boxes) we can think about for your topic, and then we will choose the three with the most information from your notes. Then it will be easy to go back and add bulleted details under each of these sentences."*
- *"I notice that you're having a hard time coming up with bulleted details. Is there a different box that you could include instead that would be easier to write about?"*
- *"What makes this topic so special and interesting to you?"*

Provide students 25 minutes of work time and then say:

Now we are going to get with partners and share the boxes and bullets work you did today. Here are some sentence starters for you to use when sharing your work with your partner:

- My main idea is: _____
- My first (second, third) box is: _____

- My bullets for this box are: _____

When you are listening to our partner's work, here are some sentence starters you can use to provide feedback on their work:

- The boxed section I found most interesting in your writing today was: _____
- The part that I want to know more about or that confused me was: _____

If you are having a hard time coming up with ideas for your boxes and bullets, this is a good opportunity to get assistance. You can take this opportunity to tell your partner everything you know about your topic and ask them to help you to organize those ideas into the boxes and bullet format.

Have students sit with a partner and share their boxes and bullets. During partner work, students may assist a partner who is stuck. Then gather students back together and conclude the lesson.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *Today we worked to organize our thoughts and make a plan for our informational writing. Our next step is to add quotes from our research to our Boxes and Bullets plan so that we are ready to put proof of our facts into our piece writing.*

Now I am going to collect your writer's notebooks so I can look at your boxes and bullets to see how you have grouped related information. I am excited to get to look at your work and see your informational papers progress!

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Section 3

Project Milestone:

How Can I Convince the City Council to Adopt My Community Theme Idea?

Students will create an opinion piece of writing in the form of a brochure or PowerPoint presentation to convince people to live in their community.

Estimated Duration of Section 3

Lessons 17-22
7 days (approximately 8 hours combined instruction and worktime)

Assessment(s)

- Student pre-assessment piece of opinion writing about the United States Space Shuttle program assessed using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) (see in Lesson 17)
- Students' completed RACE graphic organizers
- Students' Task Completion forms
- Students' opinion letter body paragraphs

Key Student Question

How can I convince people to live in my community?

Note: The first portion of Section 3, Lesson 17, is a preassessment of students' opinion writing skills. Students will be given a packet of information articles about the United States space shuttle program (see articles in lesson below) and will use the information from the articles to create an opinion paper regarding whether they believe the space shuttle program should have been discontinued. The paper will be written by the students, to the best of their ability, with no instruction in opinion writing or assistance from an adult or their peers. The teacher will use the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019 (see below) to assess students' opinion writing pieces. This is the same assessment and grading rubric that will be used as a summative tool to analyze students' mastery of opinion writing skills at the culmination of the unit. Following the preassessment, Lessons 18 through 20 are an immersion into the text type of opinion writing. These lessons were created by the Lake Washington School District as part of the Lake Washington Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017). The purpose of the immersion was

to familiarize students with the aspects of a piece of opinion writing. The immersion into opinion writing can take up to three days, but teachers may choose to use as few or as many of the three lessons as they see necessary based on their students' level of familiarity with the opinion writing text type. Lessons 21 through 25 are directed at instructing students about how to create their piece of opinion writing and were created by me through the addition of PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020) Seven Essential Design Elements and Seven Project Based Teaching Practices to the already existing Lake Washington School District Writing Units (Lake Washington School District Writing Units, 2017).

Lesson 17: Opinion Writing Pre-Assessment

Lesson Focus	Standard
Students will independently complete a piece of opinion writing to be used as a pre-assessment tool.	• PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Assess Student Learning • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A: Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.c: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.d: Provide a concluding statement or section. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)
• Students will create a piece of opinion writing entirely on their own, on the topic of whether the United States Space Shuttle Program should have been shut down, without instruction in the text type. • Writing will be used as a pre-assessment for the teacher to gauge students' skill levels. • Writing will be used as a baseline assessment on which to compare student progress at the end of the unit (Lesson 27).

Resources and Materials
• Opinion Writing Pre-Assessment Packet that contains a direction sheet, articles pertaining to the space shuttle program, and paper on which to create writing piece (see articles below or print from the following links). **Article 1** https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/space-shuttle/544812 (Britannica School. (2021). https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/space-shuttle/544812.) **Article 2** https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/flyout/index.html. (Loff, S. (2015, March 10). *Space Shuttle Era*. NASA. https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/flyout/index.html.) **Article 3** https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/space-shuttle-program (National Geographic Partners, LLC. (2021, May 3). *NASA's Space Shuttle Program*. Science. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/space-shuttle-program.

Environment
Students will participate in independent work to write an opinion paper to the best of their ability without adult assistance.

Assessment Plan
The teacher will use the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) to assess students' opinion writing skills prior to teaching the opinion writing unit. See rubric below.

Lesson 17: Opinion Writing Pre-Assessment (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Remember that part of our You Are the Mayor project will involve creating a piece of opinion* writing. *The piece of opinion writing we create for our project will take the form of a letter*. Before *we jump into learning all about opinion writing, it is important for me to understand how much you already know about creating a piece of opinion writing. Today you are going to create a piece of opinion writing on your own. Your opinion writing will take the form of a letter and you will start and finish the piece all today. We will work on this for about an hour today and if you do not finish, I will provide you more time later in the day to complete your paper.*
Lesson Core
Say: *Today we are all going to be writing about the same topic for our opinion paper. That topic is the United States Space Shuttle Program. You are going to be given three factual articles about the space shuttle program to help you create your piece of writing.* Provide each student with a packet that contains the direction sheet, factual articles about the topic (see below) and binder paper for students to create their writing piece. Let students know where to turn in their work when they are finished and what to do with the remainder of their work time if they finish before the allotted work time is over. Allow roughly 1 hour for students to work independently to complete their writing piece. Do not provide assistance. If students are stuck or discouraged, remind them that this is just a pre-assessment for you to gather information about what you need to teach them and that it will also help them get to celebrate how much they learn through this unit. Encourage them to just do their best!
Lesson Conclusion
Say: *Today we worked on showing what we already know about opinion writing. If you haven't finished your writing piece yet, you will have a chance to complete it later today.* Make sure to build work time into the day's schedule so students who did not finish have the opportunity to complete their writing.

Teacher Reflection
Upon completion of the lesson, score students' written work using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (see below) (Lake Washington School District, 2019). Then consider the following: • What do the students already know about opinion writing? • Are there students who are significantly advanced in their opinion writing skills? If so, how can you further the learning of those students beyond the basic third grade writing skills? • Are there students who are significantly lacking in their opinion writing skills? If so, how can you add extra scaffolding and supports to the lessons to help those students reach standard during the unit?

Name_____

Opinion Writing Pre-Assessment Packet

Directions: Your task is to create a piece of opinion writing about whether the Unites States Space Shuttle program should have ended. The Space Shuttle program had its first launch in 1981 and the program ended in the United States in the year 2011. Using the resources in this packet for your information, decide whether you believe the space shuttle program should have ended or not. Then write a letter to me explaining why you believe the Space Shuttle Program should have either been ended or been continued.

You will create your opinion writing on the binder paper attached at the back of this packet. You should use the factual articles in this packet to help you create your piece of writing. Do your best and use any and all of the skills you have that involve creating a piece of opinion writing.

Image From: https://www.space.com/11363-nasa-space-shuttle-replacement-30-years-anniversaries.html

Article 1, Source: Britannica School

Introduction

The space shuttle was the first reusable spacecraft. The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) developed the shuttle, which was formally called the Space Transportation System. A fleet of four shuttles were put into service between 1981 and 1985. Their names were *Columbia*, *Challenger*, *Discovery*, and *Atlantis*. A fifth shuttle, *Endeavour*, flew its first mission in 1992.

Shuttle Features

The main section of the space shuttle was called the orbiter. The orbiter carried the crew and cargo. Like an airplane, it had wings and a tail.

Before liftoff, a fuel tank and two booster rockets were attached to the orbiter. The fuel tank provided fuel to the orbiter's three main rocket engines. The booster rockets helped to propel the craft up through Earth's atmosphere. All together, the system weighed 4.4 million pounds (2 million kilograms) and stood 184 feet (56 meters) high.

Shuttle Launch

During a launch, the orbiter's engines and the boosters fired together. Two minutes after liftoff, the boosters fell back to Earth, where they could be recovered. The fuel in the tank was used up just before the shuttle went into orbit around Earth. The orbiter released the tank, and it broke up in Earth's atmosphere.

Shuttle Missions

Shuttles could remain in space for up to about two weeks. Astronauts onboard carried out scientific experiments. They released satellites that the shuttle had brought from Earth. They also repaired broken satellites. The orbiter sometimes linked up with other spacecraft as well. At the end of a mission, the orbiter returned to Earth and landed like an airplane.

History

Columbia was the first shuttle to lift off, on April 12, 1981. In 1983 *Challenger* carried the first U.S. woman to travel into space (Sally Ride) and the first African American (Guion Bluford, Jr.) to do so.

On January 28, 1986, *Challenger* exploded 73 seconds after liftoff. All seven crew members were killed. Among them was Christa McAuliffe, a teacher who had planned to give lessons from space.

Shuttles did not return to space until September 1988. Beginning in 1998, they were used to bring crews, parts, and supplies to and from the International Space Station (ISS).

On February 1, 2003, *Columbia* broke apart as it was returning to Earth. Again, all seven crew members were killed.

After the shuttle program resumed in 2005, space shuttles helped in the ongoing construction of the ISS. However, NASA soon announced that it would end the shuttle program in 2011. *Atlantis* carried out the final shuttle mission, during July 8–21, 2011. Later missions to space would use Russian spacecraft or new spacecraft built by U.S. companies. (*See also* space exploration.)

Article 2, Source: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) (Author: Sarah Loff)

Space Shuttle Era

The Space Shuttle Program 30-year commemorative patch
Credits: NASA

Between the first launch on April 12, 1981, and the final landing on July 21, 2011, NASA's space shuttle fleet -- Columbia, Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour -- flew 135 missions, helped construct the International Space Station and inspired generations. NASA's space shuttle fleet began setting records with its first launch on April 12, 1981 and continued to set high marks of achievement and endurance through 30 years of missions. Starting with Columbia and continuing with Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour, the spacecraft has carried people into orbit repeatedly, launched, recovered and repaired satellites, conducted cutting-edge research and built the largest structure in space, the International Space Station. The final space shuttle mission, STS-135, ended July 21, 2011 when Atlantis rolled to a stop at its home port, NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

As humanity's first reusable spacecraft, the space shuttle pushed the bounds of discovery ever farther, requiring not only advanced technologies but the tremendous effort of a vast workforce. Thousands of civil servants and contractors throughout NASA's field centers and across the nation have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to mission success and the greater goal of space exploration.

On April 12, 2011, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden announced the facilities where four shuttle orbiters will be displayed permanently at the conclusion of the Space Shuttle Program.

Space Shuttle Program

NASA's space shuttle was unlike any other spacecraft built during the 30 years the program was in operation. Unlike the much smaller capsules of the Apollo era, which launched on the tips of rockets and splashed back into the ocean, the jetliner-size shuttle was designed to streak into space using powerful boosters and return to solid ground as a glider. The craft's aerodynamic winged shape allowed it to descend through the atmosphere and touch down on a runway, much like a commercial airplane.

While in orbit, the space shuttle circled the planet at some 17,500 miles (28,000 kilometers) an hour, which means that the crew could see a sunrise or sunset every 45 minutes.

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After liftoff from Florida's John F. Kennedy Space Center, a typical space shuttle mission lasted ten days to two weeks and included a full schedule of scientific experiments and technological maintenance. Astronauts performed a variety of tasks aloft, including satellite repair

and construction of the International Space Station. Each of the shuttles was specially equipped for such functions, most notably with a large cargo bay and a robotic manipulator arm.

Program Liftoff

On April 12, 1981, John Young and Robert Crippen launched the space shuttle program by piloting *Columbia* to space and returning successfully two days later.

In 1983 space shuttle astronaut Sally Ride became the first U.S. woman in space as part of the *Challenger* crew.

The program was a tremendous success for NASA, but it also endured several tragedies. A string of successful missions was broken in 1986 when *Challenger* disintegrated seconds after liftoff, killing its seven-person crew.

The space shuttle program was suspended in the wake of the accident, and no shuttles were launched for nearly three years. The program rebounded in April 1990 with the successful mission of *Discovery*.

Astronauts on this momentous flight placed the Hubble Space Telescope into orbit. This incredible imaging device has subsequently added much to our understanding of the cosmos while returning otherworldly images that bring the universe to life.

In 1995 the space shuttle *Atlantis* successfully docked at the Russian space station Mir, bringing the two great space programs closer together in an era of cooperation that stood in marked contrast to the early days of the space race.

Tragedy struck again in February 2003 when the program lost its second shuttle: *Columbia* disintegrated over Texas just 16 minutes before its scheduled landing, and all seven crew members were lost.

Despite this heartbreaking setback, the space shuttle was flying regularly again by 2006. In February 2008 *Atlantis* delivered the

European Space Agency's Columbus laboratory to the ISS. And in February 2010 *Endeavour* brought up the Cupola, a robotic control station with seven windows that provides the ISS crew with a 360-degree view.

End of an Era

In 2004, U.S. President George W. Bush announced that the space shuttles would be retired. The final flight came to a close when *Atlantis* touched down at Kennedy Space Center on July 21, 2011. The three remaining orbiters and the prototype shuttle, *Enterprise,* are now be housed in museums in California, Florida, New York, and Virginia.

For its next phase of manned space exploration, NASA is designing and building the spacecraft needed to send humans deeper into the solar system, working toward a goal of putting people on Mars. The Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, for example, is being developed to take four astronauts on 21-day missions. NASA is also developing the Space Launch System, an advanced heavy-lift launch vehicle designed for human exploration beyond Earth's orbit.

In addition, the space agency is partnering with private companies such as Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, or SpaceX, to launch commercial vehicles to the ISS-and perhaps beyond.

3ʳᵈ Grade Opinion Writing Rubric   Name: Draft 8.01.19

Assignment:

Text Type and Purpose	Level 1 - Not at Standard (1 point)	Level 2 – Approaching Standard (2 points)	Level 3 – Meets Standard (3 points)	Level 4 – Exceeds Standard (4 points)
Introduction (Beginning)	Introduction is missing/unclear, does not include an opinion	Partially introduces a topic or text and states an opinion	Introduces a topic or text and states an opinion	Hooks the reader by creatively introducing a topic or text and stating an opinion
Transition Words and Phrases (Temporal Words)	Linking words or phrases are not used	Sometimes uses linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons	Uses linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons	Uses a variety of linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons
Content (Middle)	Reasons and details are not organized or do not stick to the topic	Attempts to create an organized structure that lists reasons but some reasons or details feel out of place or incomplete	Creates an organized structure that lists reasons	Creates an organized structure in which related ideas are grouped in paragraphs to support the writer's purpose
Conclusion (Closure/ Ending)	Concluding statement or section is missing/unclear	Attempts to provide a sense of closure by including a concluding statement or section, but feels incomplete	Provides a sense of closure by including a concluding statement or section	Provides a creative sense of closure by including a concluding statement or section that ties the opinion together and leaves the reader something to think about
Elaboration* *Double weighted category – see explanation below*	Writes an opinion piece with help **OR** Writes with minimal/no use of opinion techniques **OR** Writes an opinion piece that has minimal evidence	Attempts to provide reasons that support the opinion Some reasons may be incomplete or limited	Provides reasons that support the opinion	Elaborates using interesting and creative examples or explanations
Style* *Double weighted category – see explanation below*	Writing is missing meaningful vocabulary Sentences are simple or repetitive	Writing is basic Uses specific vocabulary in a limited way	Writing is purposeful Words and sentences are used to provide meaning and interest Uses specific vocabulary to explain or support meaning	Writing is engaging Words and sentence variety enhance meaning and interest Uses specific vocabulary to enhance meaning

*Elaboration and Style are double-weighted categories. Whatever level (points) a student receives is worth double. For example, if a student 'Meets Standard' for Style, the student will receive 6 points instead of 3.

For further guidance, refer to the Annotated Student Samples.

Text Types and Purposes

Level	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Range	0-8	9-14	15-16	17-22	23-24	25-30	31-32

Lesson 18: Opinion Writing Immersion 1

Opinion Writing: Letter to the Editor/Speech Immersion #1:

Exploring the Form & Features of Letters to the Editor

Created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose

We can immerse ourselves in opinion writing by reading several examples of letters to the editor and making a list of what we notice.

Standard:
- W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Resources Needed

Wonders Mentor Texts:

Opinion Letters:

- Let's Lose the Litter; Weekly Assessment Unit 5 Week 4; Pages 277-278 (Weekly Assessment Book)
- Letter to the Mayor; Writers Workspace Blackline Masters; Expert Model; Page 51 (online)

Other Mentor Texts:

Speeches:

- Svitak, Adora. What Adults Can Learn From Kids: TED Talk.
  Retrieved from: http://ted.com/talks/adora_svitak (Link contains video clip and full transcript)
- Kid President: Kid President Needs Your Help to Fight Child Hunger.
  Retrieved from: http://kidpresident.com
- Sherman, Dalton. Dallas ISD Back-to-School Convocation Keynote Address. 23 August 2008. Retrieved from:
  http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/daltonshermandallasisd.htm (see transcript in Appendix)

Other persuasive texts:

- Gibbons, Gail. 1992. *Recycle: A Handbook for Kids.* Boston: Little, Brown.
- Orloff, Karen Kaufman. 2004. *I Wanna Iguana.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Orloff, Karen Kaufman. 2010. *I Wanna New Room*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Website:

- <u>Women on 20s.</u> Retrieved from <u>http://womenon20s.org</u> (Arguments for influential women from history who were considered for representation on the $20 bill)

Lesson Introduction

- ***This year we have studied and written in the writing domains of narrative and informational writing. Now we are going to look at the opinion text type. To examine the opinion writing text type, we are going to think about writing a speech or a letter to the editor. The next 4 days, we will spend time examining this type of opinion writing to help us with writing opinion pieces to convince people to live in our community.***
- ***Today we are going to learn a way to immerse ourselves in the opinion genre of letters to the editor.***

Procedure

Writers do this by reading through various letters to the editor and looking for common features or characteristics that each letter has. By reading several letters we are able to find some of the patterns that authors use to write letters to the editor.

As we read today, we will be asking ourselves questions to help us focus on the patterns we might notice (*Feel free to jot these questions and others you come up with for students).

- ***What do you notice in your text?***
- ***What is something that is the same among all the letters?***
- ***Why did the author write this?***
- ***How is opinion writing different than narrative or informational?***
- ***What is the author hoping that the reader will do as a result of reading this letter?***

Model: ***"Watch me as I set up my journal to list what I notice about letters to the editor. Today you will just bullet each of the things you notice as you go through and read different letters. We will come back together as a class at the end to discuss the different things you found."***

This would be a great opportunity for students to work with table groups or writing

partners. <u>Mid-Workshop Interruption:</u>

Call students together or direct their attention to a new chart – Characteristics of Opinion Writing (Letters to the Editor and Speeches).

"You have been busily listing the different things you noticed about letters to the editor. I want to stop you for a moment, so we can share what you have found so far." Choose students to share and guide them into sharing about the qualities of letters to the editor. Add key characteristics to the chart as students share. Feel free to choose a couple students that you noticed had great examples on their list. Students may not list all the ideas during this mid- workshop interruption, but this will help focus the ones who might be a little confused.

Key Characteristics to look for:

- *It includes the parts of a formal letter. (letters only)*
- *It begins with a strong lead or hook.*
- *The beginning clearly states the writer's opinion about a topic.*
- *It tries to convince the reader to think a certain way or do something.*
- *It supports the opinion with convincing reasons and facts.*
- *It uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas.*
- *It has a conclusion that restates the writer's opinion and asks readers to take action.*

Have students continue looking for characteristics of letters to the editor. Students can look to see if they also noticed the same ones other people suggested, as well as new ones.

Closing

Large Group Share:

Go back as a whole class and complete the Characteristics of Opinion Writing: Letters to the Editor and Speeches chart. Add more of the key characteristics listed above, guiding students if they may have missed some. If students have missed certain characteristics, pull an example text and point out specific parts to guide students into noticing the same features.

Charts/Graphic Organizers/Work Samples

Questions Writers ask when exploring Opinion Writing
- What do you notice in your text?   - What is something that is the same among all the letters?   - Why did the author write this?   - How is opinion writing different than narrative or informational?   - What is the author hoping that the reader will do as a result of reading this letter?

Lesson 19: Opinion Writing Immersion 2

Opinion Writing: Letter to the Editor/Speech Immersion #2:

Shared Writing of a Letter to the Editor

Created by Lake Washington School District

Purpose

We can immerse ourselves in opinion writing by participating in a shared writing activity with my teacher in which we use the features of the genre to plan (and draft) a short letter to the editor.

Standard:

- W.3.1 Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons.

Resources Needed

Wonders Mentor Texts:

Opinion Letters:

- Let's Lose the Litter; Weekly Assessment Unit 5 Week 4; Pages 277-278 (Weekly Assessment Book)
- Letter to the Mayor; Writers Workspace Blackline Masters; Expert Model; Page 51 (online)

Other Mentor Texts:

Speeches:

- Svitak, Adora. What Adults Can Learn From Kids: TED Talk. Retrieved from: http://ted.com/talks/adora_svitak (Link contains video clip and full transcript)
- Kid President: Kid President Needs Your Help to Fight Child Hunger. Retrieved from: http://kidpresident.com
- Sherman, Dalton. Dallas ISD Back-to-School Convocation Keynote Address. 23 August 2008. Retrieved from: http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/daltonshermandallasisd.htm (see transcript in Appendix)

Other persuasive texts**:**

- Gibbons, Gail. 1992. *Recycle: A Handbook for Kids.* Boston: Little, Brown.
- Orloff, Karen Kaufman. 2004. *I Wanna Iguana.* New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
- Orloff, Karen Kaufman. 2010. *I Wanna New Room*. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Website:

- <u>Women on 20s.</u> Retrieved from http://womenon20s.org   (Arguments for influential women from history who were considered for representation on the $20 bill)

Lesson Introduction

We have been immersing ourselves in opinion writing by examining the characteristics, flow and features of letters to the editor. Yesterday we made a chart of the many text features that authors like to use.

Today we are going to practice writing a letter to the editor by writing one together as a class. This process will be much shorter than when we get into our actual letters, but it will give us a quick idea of what a letter to the editor will really look like.

Procedure

Writers do this by first deciding on an issue they know well and that they have an opinion about. Let's brainstorm some ideas together about what our letter to the editor could be about. What are some issues we have seen at school or in our community? What do we think people should do in response to this issue? What are some important facts that could help to convince our readers?
Have students suggest ideas and choose one that would be interesting and engaging for your class.

Model example:

Why don't we write about why it is important to follow the speed limit, especially in school zones? I know that I sometimes see cars drive by our school so quickly, and I would love to see that change!

Let's start by formatting our writing like a letter. We can go back to the mentor text and get an example of how we might do this. We can decide who our letter should be addressed to so we know where to send it. Once our heading is set up like a letter, we can begin with the actual letter where we try to convince readers of our opinion.

Let's brainstorm together some reasons why it's important to follow the speed limit in school zones, and what we want people to do as a result of reading our letter. Remember, it is important that we include a lot of facts and details, as well as persuasive language that

convinces our readers.

Model writing a short letter, adding in student ideas as you go through. You may choose to do some quick research to add facts to support your opinion, or just make notes of where you might add those facts in later. Suggestion: Teacher may want to intentionally think aloud about craft and structure decisions or moves while writing. This gives students a preview into the kind of thinking they'll be doing while writing in this unit.

Now writers, how do we end our letters to the editor? Yes, we need to add a conclusion and a closing. First, I need to summarize our opinion and tell our readers how we want them to respond. Then I'll end by using a closing phrase, such as "Sincerely," and our names.

Closing

Writers, today we immersed ourselves in letters to the editor by writing a shared one as a class. We were able to choose an issue, develop our opinion about the issue, and give details and evidence to support it. We made sure to include all the important parts of a letter to the editor.

Charts/Graphic Organizers/Work Samples

Characteristics of Opinion Writing: Letters to the Editor and Speeches
- It includes the parts of a formal letter. (letters only)
- It begins with a strong lead or hook.
- The beginning clearly states the writer's opinion about a topic.
- It tries to convince the reader to think a certain way or do something.
- It supports the opinion with convincing reasons and facts.
- It uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas.
- It has a conclusion that restates the writer's opinion and asks readers to take action.

Lesson 18 and 19 Resources From Lake Washington School District Writing Units Opinion Writing (2019)

Sherman, Dalton. Dallas ISD Back-to-School Convocation Keynote Address. 23 August 2008. Retrieved from:
http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/daltonshermandallasisd.htm

I believe in me. Do you believe in me?

Do you believe that I can stand up here, fearless, and talk to over twenty thousand of you?

Hey, Charles Rice Learning Center, do you believe in me?

C'mon, I can't hear you.

 That's right, they do. Because here's the deal: I can do anything, be anything, create anything, dream anything, become anything -- because you believe in me, and it rubs off on me.

Let me ask you a question, Dallas ISD: Do you believe in my classmates? Do you believe that every single one of us can graduate ready for college or the workplace? You better -- because next week, we're all showing up in your schools

-- all one 150,000 of us.

And, what we need from you is to believe that we can reach our highest potential. No matter where we come from. Whether it's Sunnyside, Dallas, whether it's Pleasant Grove, whether it's Oak Cliff, or North Dallas, or West Dallas, or wherever. You better not give up on us. No, you better not. Because as you know,

in some cases, you're all we've got. You're the ones who feed us, who wipe our tears, who hold our hands, or hug us when we need it. You're the ones who love us when sometimes it feels like no one else does, and when we need it the most. Don't give up on my classmates.

Do you believe in your colleagues? Do you? I hope so because they came to your school because they wanted to make a difference, too. Believe in them, trust them, and lean on them when times get tough. We all know, we kids can sometimes make it tough. Am I right? Can I get a amen?! So whether you're a counselor, or a librarian, a teacher assistant, or work in the front office, whether you serve up meals in the cafeteria -- my favorite -- or help keep the halls clean, or whether you're a teacher, or a principal, we need you! Please believe in your colleagues, and they'll believe in you.

Do you believe in yourself? Do you believe that what you're doing is shaping, not just my generation, but that of my children and my children's children?

There's probably easier ways to make a living, but I want to tell you, on behalf of all the students in Dallas, we need you. We need you now more than ever. Believe in yourself.

Finally, do you believe that every child in Dallas needs to be ready for college or the workplace? Do you believe that Dallas students can achieve? We need you, ladies and gentlemen. We need you to know that what you're doing is the most important job in the city today. We need you to believe in us, in your colleagues, in yourself, and in our goals. If you don't believe, well, I'm not goin' there. I want to thank you for what you do for me and for so many others.

Do you believe in me?

Because, I believe in me.

And you've helped me get to where

I am today.

...Thank you.

...Thank you.

...Thank you.

Read the letter to the editor "Let's Lose the Litter" before answering Numbers 1 through 10.

Let's Lose the Litter

Dear Editor:

Take one look around our city. You will see fine buildings, lovely parks, and busy streets. You will also see papers, cans, plastic bags, and other sorts of trash. Litter blows about in the breeze. It collects in gutters, and it gets snared by branches and bushes. Last week I saw fast-food wrappers floating on the duck pond in Central Park. This is what happens when trash is improperly thrown away. Our city has a litter problem, and we must do something about it.

We need to start a program to clean up the litter. People have joined together in other places to pick up litter. One group is called the Trash Masters. They pick up trash along their island's roads. In many areas company workers or members of social groups promise to be cleanup volunteers. They regularly pick up and bag litter along sections of highways. These cleanup programs have been successful elsewhere. One can be successful in our city as well.

Litter is ugly. That is enough to make it unacceptable. But it has far worse effects than just ugliness. Litter can dirty our water. It can harm wildlife and the places where animals live. It can cause health problems. It also costs time and money to clean up.
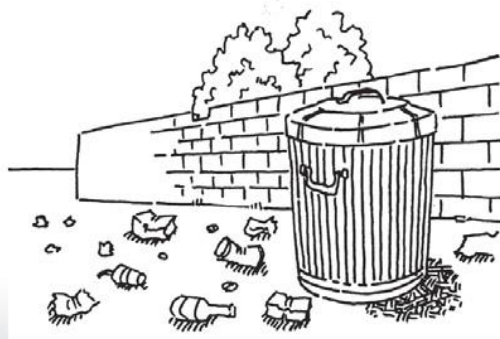
GO ON →

That is why we should not just clean up litter. We should also keep people from littering in the first place. It can start with each of us. We can set an example by throwing our trash away properly. The city must provide enough trash cans along streets and in parks.

The next step is to teach people not to litter. Cities around the country have "Don't Litter" programs. In Austin, Texas, it is called "Let's Can It." In Philadelphia, they say "UnLitter Us." Posters around these cities tell people not to litter. They show the ugly effects of littering. In Missouri, school kids won a trash can decorating contest. They decorated their trash can like a spaceship. Then they added the sign "Blast Trash Out of This World." Our city can start a "Don't Litter" program too. It can teach people not to litter and it can also be fun.

We must begin today. Stopping litter is not an unreachable goal. If we are unsuccessful in stopping litter, our city will no longer be a great place to live. It will no longer be a beautiful place for people to visit.

A concerned citizen,

Devin Jones

GO ON →

Expert Model • Opinion Letter • 51

Letter to the Mayor

By Emily K.

Emily Klein

8657 Pine Lane

Killeen, Texas 76541

July 30, 2014

Mayor David Williams

Killeen City Hall

Killeen, Texas 76541

Dear Mr. Mayor:

I attend Clifton Park Elementary School in Killeen. For as long as I can remember, I have been learning about a brave and determined woman named Oveta Culp Hobby. Because Hobby was born here in Killeen, I think we should erect a statue in her honor.

Culp Hobby proudly served her state and country throughout her entire life. For example, she joined the Texas House of Representatives as a parliamentarian at the young age of 21. A few years later, she married the publisher of the *Houston Post* and took a position as a research editor at the newspaper. She soon rose through the ranks to become the executive vice president, president, and publisher of the *Post*.

Expert Model • Opinion Letter

When World War II began, Culp Hobby was named the director of Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. This corps was created to populate the army after so many men had gone overseas to fight. Besides Army nurses, this group of women was the first to join the Army. Culp Hobby was the first woman in the army to receive the Distinguished Service Medal for her work during the war.

Even when war was over, Culp Hobby continued to serve her country. In 1953, she became the first female secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, which is the Department of Health and Human Services today.

I hope I have persuaded you to consider erecting a statue of Oveta Culp Hobby in our town square for her years of service. I have already put together some ideas for city-wide fundraisers that could help towards the cost of the statue. Please contact me if you are interested in hearing about them.

Sincerely,

Emily Klein

TED

< Watch the talk

Subtitles and Transcript

Select language

English

Adora Svitak
What adults can learn from kids
Posted Apr 2010
Rated Inspiring, Jaw-dropping

0:11
Now, I want to start with a question: When was the last time you were called "childish"? For kids like me, being called childish can be a frequent occurrence. Every time we make irrational demands, exhibit irresponsible behavior, or display any other signs of being normal American citizens, we are called childish. Which really bothers me. After all, take a look at these events: Imperialism and colonization, world wars, George W. Bush. Ask yourself, who's responsible? Adults.

0:45
Now, what have kids done? Well, Anne Frank touched millions with her powerful account of the Holocaust. Ruby Bridges helped to end segregation in the United States. And, most recently, Charlie Simpson helped to raise 120,000 pounds for Haiti, on his little bike. So as you can see evidenced by such examples, age has absolutely nothing to do with it. The traits the word "childish" addresses are seen so often in adults, that we should abolish this age-discriminatory word, when it comes to criticizing behavior associated with irresponsibility and irrational thinking.

1:21
(Applause)

1:27
Thank you.

1:29
Then again, who's to say that certain types of irrational thinking aren't exactly what the world needs? Maybe you've had grand plans before, but stopped yourself, thinking, "That's impossible," or "That costs too much," or "That won't benefit me." For better or worse, we kids aren't hampered as much when it comes to thinking about reasons why not to do things. Kids can be full of inspiring aspirations and hopeful thinking, like my wish that no one went hungry, or that everything were free, a kind of utopia. How many of you still dream like that, and believe in the possibilities? Sometimes a knowledge of history and the past failures of Utopian ideals can be a burden, because you know that if everything were free, then the food stocks would become depleted and scarce and lead to chaos. On the other hand, we kids still dream about perfection. And that's a good thing, because in order to make anything a reality, you have to dream about it first.

2:26
In many ways, our audacity to imagine helps push the boundaries of possibility. For instance, the Museum of Glass in Tacoma, Washington, my home state -- yoohoo, Washington!

2:37
(Applause)

2:40
has a program called Kids Design Glass, and kids draw their own ideas for glass art. The resident artist said they got some of their best ideas from the program, because kids don't think about the limitations of how hard it can be to blow glass into certain shapes, they just think of good ideas. Now, when you think of glass, you might think of colorful Chihuly designs, or maybe Italian vases, but kids challenge glass artists to go beyond that, into the realm of brokenhearted snakes and bacon boys, who you can see has meat vision.

3:09
(Laughter)

3:11
Now, our inherent wisdom doesn't have to be insider's knowledge. Kids already do a lot of learning from adults, and we have a lot to share. I think that adults should start learning from kids. Now, I do most of my

speaking in front of an education crowd -- teachers and students, and I like this analogy: It shouldn't be a teacher at the head of the class, telling students, "Do this, do that." The students should teach their teachers. Learning between grown-ups and kids should be reciprocal. The reality, unfortunately, is a little different, and it has a lot to do with trust, or a lack of it.

3:47
Now, if you don't trust someone, you place restrictions on them, right? If I doubt my older sister's ability to pay back the 10 percent interest I established on her last loan, I'm going to withhold her ability to get more money from me, until she pays it back.

4:00
(Laughter)

4:01
True story, by the way. Now, adults seem to have a prevalently restrictive attitude towards kids, from every "Don't do that, don't do this" in the school handbook, to restrictions on school Internet use. As history points out, regimes become oppressive when they're fearful about keeping control. And although adults may not be quite at the level of totalitarian regimes, kids have no or very little say in making the rules, when really, the attitude should be reciprocal, meaning that the adult population should learn and take into account the wishes of the younger population.

4:36
Now, what's even worse than restriction, is that adults often underestimate kids' abilities. We love challenges, but when expectations are low, trust me, we will sink to them. My own parents had anything but low expectations for me and my sister. Okay, so they didn't tell us to become doctors or lawyers or anything like that, but my dad did read to us about Aristotle and pioneer germ-fighters, when lots of other kids were hearing "The Wheels on the Bus Go Round and Round." Well, we heard that one too, but "Pioneer Germ Fighters" totally rules.

5:10
(Laughter)

5:12
I loved to write from the age of four, and when I was six, my mom bought me my own laptop equipped with Microsoft Word. Thank you, Bill Gates, and thank you, Ma. I wrote over 300 short stories on that little laptop, and I wanted to get published. Instead of just scoffing at this heresy that a kid wanted to get published, or saying wait until you're older, my parents were really supportive. Many publishers were not quite so encouraging. One large children's publisher ironically said that they didn't work with children. Children's publisher not working with children? I don't know, you're kind of alienating a large client there.

5:51
(Laughter)

5:53
One publisher, Action Publishing, was willing to take that leap and trust me, and to listen to what I had to

say. They published my first book, "Flying Fingers," you see it here. And from there on, it's gone to speaking at hundreds of schools, keynoting to thousands of educators, and finally, today, speaking to you.

6:12
I appreciate your attention today, because to show that you truly care, you listen. But there's a problem with this rosy picture of kids being so much better than adults. Kids grow up and become adults just like you.

6:27
(Laughter)

6:29
Or just like you? Really? The goal is not to turn kids into your kind of adult, but rather, better adults than you have been, which may be a little challenging, considering your guys' credentials.

6:40
(Laughter)

6:41
But the way progress happens, is because new generations and new eras grow and develop and become better than the previous ones. It's the reason we're not in the Dark Ages anymore. No matter your position or place in life, it is imperative to create opportunities for children, so that we can grow up to blow you away.

7:01
(Laughter)

7:03
Adults and fellow TEDsters, you need to listen and learn from kids, and trust us and expect more from us. You must lend an ear today, because we are the leaders of tomorrow, which means we're going to take care of you when you're old and senile. No, just kidding.

7:21
(Laughter)

7:22
No, really, we are going to be the next generation, the ones who will bring this world forward. And in case you don't think that this really has meaning for you, remember that cloning is possible, and that involves going through childhood again, in which case you'll want to be heard, just like my generation. Now, the world needs opportunities for new leaders and new ideas. Kids need opportunities to lead and succeed. Are you ready to make the match? Because the world's problems shouldn't be the human family's heirloom.

7:54
Thank you.

7:56
(Applause)

7:59
Thank you. Thank you.

Programs & initiatives

TEDx

TED Prize

TED Fellows

TED Ed

TED Translators

TED Books

TED Institute

Ways to get TED

TED Radio Hour on NPR

More ways to get TED

Follow TED

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Google+

Pinterest

Instagram

YouTube

TED Blog

Our community

TED Speakers

TED Fellows

TED Translators

TEDx Organizers

TED Community

Get TED email updates

Lesson 20: Organize Ideas

Lesson Focus	Standard
Students will organize previously conducted research for use in their opinion paper.	• PBL Teaching Practices: 　Design and Plan 　Align to Standards 　Build the Culture 　Scaffold Student Learning 　Assess Student Learning 　Engage and Coach • PBL Essential Design Elements: 　Challenging Problem or Question 　Sustained Inquiry 　Authenticity 　Student Voice and Choice • CCSS W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Objective(s)	
• Students will use their facts from their informational writing (created in Lessons 12-16), specifically from Boxes and Bullets (Lesson 16) to organize thoughts for their opinion writing by using the RACE graphic organizer.	

Resources and Materials

- Writer's Notebooks
- Poster Paper if Desired

Environment

- Students will participate in whole-class instruction by viewing the teacher model how to use previously created Boxes and Bullets (from Lesson 16) to complete a graphic organizer (RACE) to get information organized for their opinion writing.
- Students will participate in independent work by using their Boxes and Bullets to complete the RACE graphic organizer in their writer's notebooks.

Vocabulary

Graphic Organizer: a chart that can be used to visually represent and organize knowledge and ideas (Morin,2021)

Assessment Plan

- The teacher will evaluate if students were able to complete the RACE graphic organizer by filling in the facts written in the Boxes and Bullets from a previous lesson (Lesson 16). The teacher should look for:
  - Did students complete the RACE graphic organizer for Paragraphs 1-3?
  - Do the students facts in the RACE graphic organizer match the facts listed in their Boxes and Bullets?

If the answer is yes to both questions, students are ready to move on to Lesson 21. If the answer is no to either question, the teacher should meet independently or in small groups with the students who did not fully or correctly complete the graphic organizer prior to moving on to Lesson 21.

Lesson 20: Organize Ideas (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *We spent a lot of time conducting research for our informational papers. Now we are jumping into doing some opinion writing that you will use to help you persuade the city council that they should adopt your community theme idea. An important idea to note is that in opinion writing, just your opinion isn't enough to convince someone of something. You need to have facts to back up what you are saying. Lucky for us, each of us already has a lot of facts about our topic. Now we just need to work to combine those facts with our opinions that the city council should adopt our community theme idea.* *Our opinion writing is going to take the form of a letter. The letter will be addressed to the city council and will be focused on convincing the city council that they should adopt your community theme idea.* *Today we are going to learn a way to develop our ideas and support them with researched facts by making a plan for each of the body paragraphs that will be in our letter.*
Lesson Core
When we include research in our writing, it's important that we use it in an organized way and in a way that supports the purpose of our writing. By using organized research, it makes our opinion more credible and more clearly understood by others. One way that writers do this is by using what we call the RACE strategy – R stands for restate the topic, A for answer the question, C for cite text evidence (or research) and E for explain our thinking. As we think about how we can best use the ideas from our research, we can use this strategy to keep ourselves organized. *Watch me as I show you how this works. First, I'm going to create the RACE chart which is a type of graphic organizer. A graphic organizer is a chart that can be used to visually represent and organize knowledge and ideas (Morin, 2021).*

Draw the following chart on poster paper or in your writer's notebook:

Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3
R:	R:	R:
A: C:	A: C:	A: C:
E:	E:	E:

Underneath the chart, write that R stands for "Restate the topic", A stands for "Answer the question", C stands for "Cite ideas found in research" and E stands for "Explain by starting to wrap it up in your own words."

Say: *Next, I am going to turn back to my writer's notebook and find the page where I made my Boxes and Bullets charts for my information paper. The Boxes are going to become the topics in my RACE graphic organizer. My first Box in my notes is about the different types of gardens. I'm going to put a question in my mind: "What are the different types of gardens?" I'm going to use the RACE graphic organizer to answer this question. The Bullets under the boxes can help me answer the question. This will become the plan for my first body paragraph.*

Model using the graphic organizer (see RACE Example below) by writing information on either the poster paper or in your writer's notebook to organize research into a coherent plan for a paragraph. This does NOT need to be in complete sentences at this stage, as writing in complete sentences will happen later in the drafting stage. You may find it helpful to have students write the "R" and "E" portions in complete sentences now to help organize their thinking and to get them closer to being ready to draft, but their researched details can be written in shorthand.

After modeling how to complete the RACE chart for the first Box from your informational paper research, have students draw their own RACE chart in their writer's notebooks. Give students 4 or so minutes to get their charts drawn. Mingle throughout

the room to help students who need assistance drawing their chart and also check on students to make sure they are creating the chart correctly.

Say: *Now that we all have our charts created, it is time to give this a try. Use your first Box from your informational writing to fill out the spot on your chart that is labeled "Paragraph 1." This is helping us to get our information put together for paragraph 1 of the body of our opinion letters.*

Provide students about 10 minutes to get the information from their first Box and Bullets (Lesson 16) onto the RACE graphic organizer in their writer's notebooks.

Say: *Would anyone like to come up to the document camera and show us how you completed your Paragraph 1 column on your RACE graphic organizer?*

Have two volunteers show their work and use the opportunity to point out ways in which the students used the graphic organizer correctly.

Say: *Now let's get to work completing the rest of our RACE organizers by using the next two Boxes and Bullets in our writer's notebooks to get the information into the graphic organizer.*

Provide students 15 to 20 minutes to complete their graphic organizers. Then say: *I am going to collect your writer's notebooks today so I can look over your graphic organizers and see that you are getting the important factual information you need to support your opinion written down.*

Lesson Conclusion

Today we began the exciting work of organizing our factual information so we can write opinion letters to the city council about our community ideas. Next time we write, we will begin creating the drafts of our letters.

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

RACE Example

Restate the topic:	**R**estate the topic	**R**estate the topic
There are many different types of gardens.	*Gardens can be used for many different purposes.*	*There is a lot to know before planting a garden.*
Answer the question (*What are the different types of gardens?*) **and** **C**ite ideas found in research • Flower • Vegetable • Herb • Botanical • Topiary • Butterfly • conservatory "An indoor garden is called a conservatory" Britannica School, 2021 https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/garden/353164	**A**nswer the question (*What are the different purposes for gardens?*)**and** **C**ite ideas found in research • Provide food • Provide products to make things (such as cotton for clothing) • Entertainment (people visit them) • Hobbies • Produce seeds to grow more plants "Most of the food we eat comes from plants." Pebble Go, 2021 https://site.pebblego.com/modules/2/categories/2986/articles/2127	**A**nswer the question *(What are some things you should know before planting a garden?)* **and** **C**ite ideas found in research • Plants need different amounts of water and light. • There are many different types of plants that can be grown in gardens. • Compost can be used in a garden to help the soil provide nutrients for plants. "All plants need water, but the amount needed varies." Britannica School, 2021 https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/garden-and-gardening/274495

Lesson 21: Body Paragraphs

Lesson Focus	Standard
Students develop their opinion writing by considering features of the opinion writing text type (form of writing) and consulting their RACE graphic organizer to create body paragraphs.	- PBL Teaching Practices: Design and Plan Align to Standards Build the Culture Scaffold Student Learning Assess Student Learning Engage and Coach - PBL Essential Design Elements: Challenging Problem or Question Sustained Inquiry Authenticity Student Voice and Choice - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons - CCSS.ELS-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
Objective(s)	
- Students will use their previously created RACE graphic organizer (from Lesson 20) to create 3 body paragraphs of an opinion letter. - Students' opinion letters will be focused on persuading the city council to adopt their community idea. - Students' letters will incorporate the following previously identified (see Lessons 18 and 19) components of an opinion letter: - Tries to convince audience do think a certain way or do something - Supports opinion with convincing reasons and facts	

Resources and Materials
• Writer's Notebooks
• RACE graphic organizer (from Lesson 20)
Environment
• Students will participate in whole-class instruction through viewing the teacher model how to use the RACE graphic organizer to draft paragraphs.
• Students will participate in independent work as they use opinion letter text features to inform the writing of their draft.
Assessment Plan
The teacher will collect students' writer's notebooks and look over students' writing for the following:
• Did the student create 3 body paragraphs?
• Do the students' body paragraphs focus on persuading the city council that they should adopt their community theme idea?
• Does each paragraph contain reasons and facts that support the opinion?

Lesson 21: Body Paragraphs (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *We have been developing our opinion writing by looking at the facts we collected for our informational writing. Today we are going to learn a way to create our opinion writing by considering the features of an opinion letter and turning our RACE graphic organizer into paragraphs.*
Lesson Core
Before we begin writing, let's look back at the features of opinion letters. It will be important to have these features in our mind as we are writing today. Remember, our writing is opinion writing, so we will need to make sure that our writing clearly communicates our opinion about the topic we researched for our community theme and why it should be the theme adopted by the city council. The opinion letter features will help us to do that. *Remember, the features of an opinion letter are:* • *Begins with a strong lead or hook* • *The beginning clearly states the writer's opinion about the topic* • *Tries to convince the audience to think a certain way or to do something* • *Supports the opinion with convincing reasons and facts* • *Uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas* • *Has a conclusion that restates the writer's opinion and asks the audience to*

take action
- *Includes the parts of a formal letter*

Now that we've reviewed the features, let's look back at our RACE graphic organizer. We'll focus on adding our introduction and conclusion during the revising stage of the writing process, so for today we'll spend our time creating our body paragraphs based off our RACE graphic organizer. That means that we won't yet include all of the features of an opinion letter. The features we will focus on today are:
- *Tries to convince the audience to think a certain way or to do something*
- *Supports the opinion with convincing reasons and facts*

Say: *Watch me as I show you how this works. I have my RACE graphic organizer in front of me and I'll start by looking at the Restate the Topic box for paragraph 1. When we were working on our graphic organizers, I wrote this in a complete sentence. That will help me now because that will be my main idea, or topic sentence, for my first body paragraph. If your Restate is not yet in a complete sentence, you'll need to make that change before you start writing your paragraphs.*

Next, I'll look at the spot for Answering the question and Citing the source. I notice that I have jotted down some of the facts from my research in this spot, but I haven't included any of my own ideas I have not written in complete sentences here. As I write, I'll focus on including the details I have in this box with my own words that show how these details support my opinion.

Model turning your RACE graphic organizer bullets and cited phrases into a complete body paragraph (see teacher sample).

Next, I'll include my Explain, and wrap up these ideas in my own words. I can start by using the sentence I wrote in the Explain box and then I'll develop it further by really justifying WHY these details support my opinion that gardens should be the community theme.

Model turning the Explain box of the RACE graphic organizer into an opinion paragraph (see teacher sample).

Next, I'll go back and do this same process for my next two body paragraphs.

Say: *Writers, now you are going to try. Turn to someone sitting next to you and show them what you have in the Restate spots of your graphic organizer. Together, decide if you have already written your Restates in complete sentences or if you need to make some changes to turn them into complete sentences.*

Provide students 1 to 2 minutes to share at their table group and decide if they what they have written in their Restate spots on the graphic organizer is in complete sentences.

Say: *Today, to create the three body paragraphs of your opinion letter, you will use your RACE graphic organizer and the opinion letter features of:*

- *Tries to convince the audience to think a certain way of thinking or doing something (You are trying to convince the city council to adopt your community idea.)*
- *Supports the opinion with convincing reasons and facts*

Remember to keep your audience and purpose in mind: you are sharing your OPINION about why your community theme should be adopted. You are supporting your opinion with facts, but the main goal is to convince the city council that your community theme is the best one. Keep this in your mind as you write today.

Have students get to work. Wander among the students to check-in or assist those who need help. Some possible discussion points with students are:
- *"Show me your graphic organizer. I notice that you wrote_____. How can you turn this into more developed drafting language that includes sentences?"*
- *"When you wrote_____ , I learned a lot! However, I didn't hear your opinion coming through. How can we change this just a little bit to make your opinion shine through?"*
- *"I notice that you copied your research notes just how you wrote them in your graphic organizer. Let's work together on changing those into a complete sentence that cites the source and sounds natural."*

Provide students with 30 minutes of worktime and then bring them back together as a class.

Say: *Today everyone worked really hard at turning the information in their RACE graphic organizer into paragraphs. Is there anyone who would like to use the document camera to show us the graphic organizer they used for a paragraph and then read the paragraph to us?*

Have 2 volunteers share their work with the class and use the opportunity to point out positive elements of the students' work.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: Today we worked on using a graphic organizer with facts that support our opinion to help create the body paragraphs of our opinion letter. Tomorrow we are going to check to see if we are actually meeting the goal of our task of using researched facts to support our opinion and convince the city council to adopt our community theme idea.

| **Teacher Reflection** |
| Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
• Are students having success creating paragraphs from their RACE graphic organizer?
• Have students created all 3 body paragraphs for their opinion letter, or do they need more time?
• Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
• What were challenges in the lesson?
• What would you change the next time you teach this lesson? |

Teacher Example

Paragraph 1	Paragraph 2	Paragraph 3
Restate the topic: *There are many different types of gardens.*	**R**estate the topic *Gardens can be used for many different purposes.*	**R**estate the topic *There is a lot to know before planting a garden.*
Answer the question *(What are the different types of gardens?)* **and** **C**ite ideas found in research • Flower • Vegetable • Herb • Botanical • Topiary • Butterfly • conservatory "An indoor garden is called a conservatory" Britannica School, 2021 https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/garden/353164	**A**nswer the question *(What are the different purposes for gardens?)* **and** **C**ite ideas found in research • Provide food • Provide products to make things (such as cotton for clothing) • Entertainment (people visit them) • Hobbies • Produce seeds to grow more plants "Most of the food we eat comes from plants." Pebble Go, 2021 https://site.pebblego.com/modules/2/categories/2986/articles/2127	**A**nswer the question *(What are some things you should know before planting a garden?)* **and** **C**ite ideas found in research • Plants need different amounts of water and light. • There are many different types of plants that can be grown in gardens. • There are a lot of tools that can be used for gardening. • Compost can be used in a garden to help the soil provide nutrients for plants. "All plants need water, but the amount needed varies." Britannica School, 2021 https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/garden-and-gardening/274495
Explain by starting to wrap it up in your own words Gardens come in many different forms and the type of garden determines the plants that will be found there.	**E**xplain by starting to wrap it up in your own words There are a lot of different uses for gardens which means they can be used and enjoyed by a lot of people.	**E**xplain by starting to wrap it up in your own words There is a lot to learn about gardens, so they can be great for people who like to learn!

One of the great things about gardens is that there are many different types of them. One type of garden is a flower garden. Flower gardens are usually grown for their beauty, so including them in a community as a regular feature is a great idea. Having gardens all around the community will provide a beautiful space for people to live. Another type of garden is a vegetable garden. Vegetable gardens provide food for people to eat. Having a community based upon the theme of

gardens could help provide food for the community and could solve the problem of food insecurity for some of the community's population. A third type of garden is a conservatory. According to Britannica School, a conservatory is an indoor garden. Having conservatories in our community could be a great way to include the theme of gardens because then flower and vegetable gardens could be available year-round for members of the community. To sum up, gardens come in many different forms, and the different types of gardens determine the types of plants that grow there. The fact that there are so many types of gardens mean that the community could use gardens in a variety of ways including to feed and beautify the community.

A second wonderful idea about gardens is that they can be used by a lot of different people for a lot of different reasons. First, gardens can be used as hobbies to keep people busy. Many people enjoy gardening and having community gardens to take care of would give people who enjoy gardening something fun to do. As was mentioned earlier, another use for gardens is to grow food. According to Pebble Go, "Most of the food we eat comes from plants," so growing gardens in our community could provide food for people. Another important use of gardens is that they can be used to produce seeds for more plants. Plants are important to our world, and if our community grew plants and then harvested the seeds, we could not only create more plants for our community but could possibly sell the seeds to other places and make money for our community. As you can see, there are a lot of uses for gardens that could benefit our community.

For a community to grow and thrive, people in the community need to be constantly learning and innovating. The good news about gardens is that there is a lot to know about them before someone decides to garden. One item to know about gardens is that all plants need different amounts of water and light. According to Britannica School, "All plants need water, but the amount needed varies." Another important fact gardeners need to know about plants is that compost is helpful to plants. Compost helps provide nutrients plants need to grow. This is great because many members of our community already participate in creating compost through their garbage, so that compost could be used in our community gardens. A third thing people need to know about gardens is that there are a lot of special tools that are used in gardening. Gardeners use tools such as shovels, rakes and hoes to plant and work in gardens.   Having a community garden would give community members a lot of things to learn about and could keep people who like to learn interested in being part of the community.

Lesson 22: Task Completion Opinion Writing

Lesson Focus	Standard

Students will fill out a Task Completion form and work with a partner to reflect upon whether their opinion letter is meeting the criteria of using opinions supported with facts.	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	     Design and Plan
	     Align to Standards
	     Build the Culture
	     Scaffold Student Learning
	     Assess Student Learning
	     Engage and Coach
	 • PBL Essential Design Elements:
	     Challenging Problem or Question
	     Sustained Inquiry
	     Authenticity
	     Student Voice and Choice
	     Reflection
	     Critique and Revision
	 • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons
	 • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion
	 • W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)	
• Students will fill out a Task Completion form to evaluate if they are on track with writing both an opinion and supporting facts into the body paragraphs of their opinion letters. • Students work with a partner to share their Task Completion forms and confirm that their opinion letter body paragraphs contain opinions supported by facts.	
Resources and Materials	
• Writer's Notebooks • Task Completion Form (see below)	

Environment
Students will participate in whole-class instruction as they watch the teacher model the use of the Task Completion form and in individual work as they do the task completion form for their own opinion writing.
Assessment Plan
• The teacher will collect students' finished Task Completion forms and writer's notebooks to evaluate if students are writing the body paragraphs of their opinion letters correctly and also if students are reflecting correctly on their own writing process.

Lesson 22: Task Completion Opinion Writing (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Yesterday we worked on creating the body paragraphs of our opinion letters. Today we are going to take a break from writing our opinion letters to reflect on whether we are meeting the goal of writing an opinion supported with facts.*
Lesson Core
Say: *When we were creating our informational writing, we did a Task Completion form to reflect on our work and determine if we were doing our research correctly. Today we are going to do a Task Completion form to reflect on whether the body paragraphs of our opinion letters are being written so that they state our opinion and support our opinion with facts. If you determine that you are writing your opinion and supporting it with facts, great! If not, then this is a great time for us to figure out what you can revise to make sure that you are creating your opinion writing correctly.* *Watch me as I compare my opinion letter body paragraphs to the Task Completion form.* Model using your paragraphs from Lesson 21 (see Teacher Sample, Lesson 21) and answering the questions on the Task Completion form (see both blank form and sample completed form below). Pass out blank Task Completion forms to students. Say: *Now it's your turn. Open your writer's notebooks to your opinion letter body paragraphs and look at what you have written to fill out the Task Completion form.* Provide students 10 or so minutes to do the Task Completion form. Say: *Now we are going to work with a partner to double-check that our thoughts about our opinion letter body paragraphs are correct. I am going to put you with a partner.*

When you get with your partner, one of you will read your body paragraphs out loud to the other partner and then together you are going to look over the Task Completion form the reader completed about their writing. As a team, determine if you agree about what the reader put on their Task Completion form. If you don't agree, talk about what you think is missing. Does the writing not have an opinion, or is the opinion not supported by facts?

Put students with partners and give them roughly 15 minutes to meet to listen to each other's writing and evaluate if the Task Completion forms accurately reflect what is going on in the writing.

Say: When you are finished, slide your Task Completion form into the pages of your writer's notebook where your opinion letter body paragraphs are and turn it in. I am going to look at your work to determine how we are doing so far with writing opinions that are supported by facts in our opinion letters.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: *That's it for our writing time today! I just wanted us to take a brief pause to reflect on how we think our opinion writing is going. I am going to look at the body paragraphs you have created for your opinion letter determine if we need to do some more work with supporting our opinions with facts or if we are ready to move on to creating the opening paragraphs for our opinion letters.*

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Name _____

Task Completion Form

What is the goal of your work?

_____

_____

_____

What is one quote from your work that shows you are meeting the goal?

_____

_____

_____

_____

What I have written in my opinion letter in body paragraph 1 is (check one)

      ○ Only facts

      ○ Only opinions

      ○ Opinions supported by facts

What I have written in my opinion letter in body paragraph 2 is (check one)

○ Only facts

○ Only opinions

○ Opinions supported by facts

What I have written in my opinion letter in body paragraph 3 is (check one)

○ Only facts

○ Only opinions

○ Opinions supported by facts

Name _____

Task Completion Form

Answer Sample

What is the goal of your work?

The goal of my work is to create 3 body paragraphs for an opinion letter that show that my opinion is that the city council should adopt my idea of community gardens as the community theme.

What is one quote from your work that shows you are meeting the goal?

My work says, "Many people enjoy gardening and having community gardens to take care of would give people who enjoy gardening something fun to do."

What I have written in my opinion letter in body paragraph 1 is (check one)

       O Only facts

       O Only opinions

       O Opinions supported by facts

Your answer should be, "Opinions supported by facts."

What I have written in my opinion letter in body paragraph 2 is (check one)

       O Only facts

       O Only opinions

       O Opinions supported by facts

Your answer should be, "Opinions supported by facts."

What I have written in my opinion letter in body paragraph 3 is (check one)

○ Only facts

○ Only opinions

○ Opinions supported by facts

Your answer should be, "Opinions supported by facts."

Section 4
How Can I Present My Community Theme Idea to the City Council?

Students will begin work to develop a presentation to be given at a community "fair" at which members of the school community in attendance will represent a mock city council.

Estimated Duration
Lesson 23
1 day, approximately 1 hour

Assessment(s)

Note: This portion of the project is where students use their creativity and choice to decide how to present their informational paper and opinion paper to the community. No writing skills will be evaluated for this section of the project.

Key Student Question

How can I present my community idea to members of the city council?

Lesson 23: Public Product

Lesson Focus	Standard

Students will begin the work to create their presentations for the Community Development Fair.	• PBL Teaching Practices:
	    Design and Plan
	    Align to Standards
	    Build the Culture
	    Manage Activities
	    Scaffold Student Learning
	    Assess Student Learning
	    Engage and Coach
	• PBL Essential Design Elements:
	    Challenging Problem or Question
	    Sustained Inquiry
	    Authenticity
	    Student Voice and Choice
	    Reflection
	    Critique and Revision
	    Public Product
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Objective(s)	
• Students will decide upon a format for their public product for the Community Development Fair. • Students will begin the creation of their presentation by using their previously created Boxes and Bullets (see Lesson 16) as an outline for their information.	

Resources and Materials	
	• Writer's Notebooks • Computers for creation of the presentation (either PowerPoint or Word documents to be printed) • Printer for students who have chosen a paper presentation format
Environment	
	Students will participate in whole-class instruction in which they receive information about possible presentation formats. Students will participate in small group discussion to share the planned format for their presentation. Students will participate in individual work by deciding on their presentation format and working on the creation of their presentation.
Assessment Plan	
	• The presentations themselves will not receive a grade. The teacher's assessment job for this task falls under the PBL Works (PBL Works, 2020) Project Based Teaching Practice of "Manage Activities." As the teacher guides and monitors students to make sure they are creating a public product and are ready to present at the Community Development Fair. • For this lesson, the teacher will monitor whether students have chosen a format for their presentation. If the teacher sees that there are students who are struggling to choose a presentation format, the teacher should meet with those students independently or in a small group during independent work time to guide students to make a decision. • Teachers will monitor if students are able to use their Boxes and Bullets to begin to lay out their presentations. • At the end of the lesson, determine if students need more time to complete the transfer of their Boxes and Bullets information onto their presentation format, or if the class is ready to move on to the next lesson.

Lesson 23: Public Product (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *We have been working really hard to create our community theme ideas and writing about those ideas in the form of informational and opinion papers. Now it is time for us to share our work with the community!*

	Lesson Core
	Say: *We have talked about the fact that our work will be shared with a mock city council who will actually be a group of our school community members including students, teachers and parents invited to our Community Development Fair. Today we are going to get started creating our presentations that will be shared at the fair.*
	For the fair we will all be in one big room together and will each have our own presentation station set up on a table. Community members will walk through the fair and stop at presentation stations to hear each presentation. That means you will give your presentation multiple times as different community members stop by your station during the fair. You have some choices about how to present. You can create a presentation that is electronic by using PowerPoint or you can create a presentation that is all paper by using a tri-fold board with writing and pictures attached to the board to show the main details of your community theme.
	Your presentation will be both informational and persuasive. It will cover the information about your community theme that was included in your informational paper and the points from your opinion paper to convince people your community would be the best one to live in. When community members enter the fair, they will each be given 3 tickets that they will use to cast their vote about which 3 communities they feel they would be most likely to live in. Each of you will have a small box with a slit in the top at your fair station for community members to put their ticket in to cast their votes. At the end of the fair, you will get to open your box and see how many people you were able to convince that your theme idea would create a community people would like to live in.
	Today you have 2 goals. Goal 1 is to decide whether you are going to use a paper or PowerPoint format for your presentation. Goal 2 is to begin the creation of your presentation by looking back at your Boxes and Bullets pages in your writer's notebook to help you lay out the information about your community theme.
	Let's talk about goal number 1, the format of your presentation. There is no better or worse way to create your presentation. The presentation format is all about personal preference. You just need to think about which presentation format you like best and what you like about it. Right now, we are going to talk with our tablemates to discuss which format you plan to use and why you like that format. If you aren't yet sure, listening to the people at your table and their reasons for choosing one format over the other may help you decide.
	Note: It would be helpful to have a tri-fold board with some form of presentation displayed on it as well as a PowerPoint example to show students to inform their decision*.*
	Provide the class 4 or so minutes to talk with their tablemates about which format they plan to use and why they prefer that format.

Say: *Now that we have had a chance to talk a bit, raise your hand if you plan to create your presentation using PowerPoint.*

Get a visual idea, based on number of hands raised, about how many students plan to use PowerPoint. Then do the same by asking about a paper presentation and then asking about students who have not yet decided. During independent work time, be sure to check in with the students who say they haven't decided to see if you can guide them to choose a format.

Say: *Next it is time for us to tackle Goal 2, getting started on the information portion of our presentation. Just like when we wrote our papers, in order to be able to convince someone they should live in your community, they first need to understand the concept your community is based upon. For example, since my community theme is based on gardens, I need to make sure that people viewing my presentation understand what a garden is. So, I am going to use the facts from my informational paper for the first part of my presentation. Luckily, we have all that information really well organized for us already. Remember when we created our Boxes and Bullets to help us get organized to write our informational paper? Those boxes and bullets can now work as an outline for us to use to create our presentations.*

Turn in your writer's notebook to the page where you started the Boxes and Bullets for your informational paper. Now instead of using the Boxes and Bullets to write complete sentences formed into paragraphs, you will use those Boxes and Bullets as either a slide in your PowerPoint or as a piece of paper attached to your tri-fold board. These Boxes and Bullets will help you know what you want to tell the community members when they come to your presentation, but they won't be all the exact words you are going to say.

Watch me as I create my first PowerPoint slide using the Box on my first page of notes as the heading for my slide. Then I am going to use the bullets underneath the box as supporting points on my slide under the title. Demonstrate using the information from the Boxes and Bullets you created for Lesson 16.

Say: If you are going to do the visuals for your presentation on paper, you have two options. You can create your papers to print for your board on PowerPoint and then print them, or you can create your papers in Microsoft Word. Once we get started working, I can meet with anyone who would like to create their papers on Microsoft Word to show you how to format them if you need.

So, that is how we will work to create the visuals for our presentations. Every Box from you Boxes and Bullets will be a new slide or piece of paper and every Box will have the supporting Bullets listed under it. Once you have all that work done, you can begin to fancy the slides up in PowerPoint or print them and decorate them by hand.

Just like when we made our Community Population Posters way back at the beginning of our project (Lesson 2) *we need to remember that a presentation is about conveying information to people. Any fancying up of your presentation should add meaning to your content and relate to what you are talking about. Pictures should help the viewer better understand your presentation.*

So now we are going to get to work using our Boxes and Bullets to create the framework for our presentations. There will be a lot more for us to do later, but this is our first step.

Provide students roughly 30 minutes of work time to get the Boxes and Bullets from their informational papers that are written in their writer's notebooks into their chosen presentation format.

Lesson Conclusion

Say: We are off to a good start on our presentations! Tomorrow we are going to learn how to take the Boxes and Bullets that we put on our presentations and write details in our writer's notebooks about what we want to tell community members who attend the Community Development Fair about those items.

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, reflect on these questions:
- Were all students able to transfer their Boxes and Bullets information into their presentations?
- What went well?
- How do you know your students achieved the objectives?
- What is your evidence of student learning?
- Does the evidence of student learning support moving on to the next lesson in the unit, or is more in-depth teaching needed?
- What were challenges in the lesson?
- What would you change the next time you teach this lesson?

Section 5
How Can I Demonstrate the Growth in My Informational and Opinion Writing Skills?

Students will complete two summative writing assessments that mirror the pre-assessments completed in Lesson 6 for informational writing and Lesson 17 for opinion writing.

Estimated Duration
Lessons 24 and 25
2 days, approximately 1 hour per day

Assessment(s)

- Informational paper about astronaut, Christa McAuliffe scored using the Lake Washington School District 3rd grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019).
- Opinion paper about space shuttles scored using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019).

Key Student Question

How can I demonstrate the growth in my informational and opinion writing skills?

Lesson 24: Informational Writing Summative Assessment

Lesson Focus: Informational Writing	CCSS
Students will independently complete a piece of informational writing to be used as a summative assessment tool.	• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A: Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B: Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.D: Provide a concluding statement or section. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4: With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.7: Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5: Use text features and search tools (e.g., key

	words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.7: Use information gained from illustrations (e.g., maps, photographs) and the words in a text to demonstrate understanding of the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur). • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. the text (e.g., where, when, why, and how key events occur).

Objective(s)

- Students will create a piece of informational writing entirely on their own.
- Writing will be used as a summative assessment of students' informational writing skills.

Resources and Materials

- Informational Writing Summative Assessment Packet that contains a direction sheet, articles pertaining to Christa McAuliffe, and paper on which to create writing piece (see articles below or print from the following links).

Article 1

https://www.biography.com/astronaut/christa-mcauliffe (A&E Networks Television. (2020, September 16). *Christa McAuliffe*. Biography.com. https://www.biography.com/astronaut/christa-mcauliffe.)

Article 2

https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Christa-Corrigan-McAuliffe/312405 (Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. (2014). *Christa Corrigan McAuliffe*. Britannica School. https://school.eb.com/levels/middle/article/Christa-Corrigan-McAuliffe/312405.)

Article 3

https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mcauliffe.pdf National Aeronautics and Space Administration. (2007, April). *Biographical Data S. Christa Corrigan McAuliffe*. https://www.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/atoms/files/mcauliffe.pdf.

Environment	
Students will participate in independent work to write an informational paper to the best of their ability without adult assistance.	
Assessment Plan	
• The teacher will use the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) to assess students' informational writing skills. See rubric below.	

Lesson 24: Informational Writing Summative Assessment (continued)

Lesson Introduction
Say: *Remember towards the start of our project we completed a pre-assessment of informational writing about Christa McAuliffe? Today we are going to do that same activity as a summative assessment. This summative assessment will show how much you have learned and grown as an informational writer over the course of our You Are the Mayor project. We will work on this for about an hour today and if you do not finish, I will provide you more time later in the day to complete your paper.*
Lesson Core
Say: *Just like when we did the pre-assessment, we are all going to be writing about the astronaut, Christa McAuliffe. You are going to be given the same three factual articles about Christa McAuliffe to help you create your piece of writing, but I am guessing that after all your learning about informational writing over the past few weeks, the piece of writing you create about Christa McAuliffe today will be much different than the piece of writing you created as the pre-assessment.* Provide each student with a packet that contains the direction sheet, factual articles about the topic (see below) and binder paper for students to create their writing piece. Let students know where to turn in their work and what to do with the remainder of their work time if they finish before the allotted work time is over. Allow roughly 1 hour for students to work independently to complete their writing piece. Do not provide assistance.

	Lesson Conclusion
	Say: *Today we worked on showing what we have learned about informational writing. If you haven't finished your writing piece yet, you will have a chance to complete it later today.* Make sure to build work time into the day's schedule so students who did not finish have the opportunity to complete their writing.

	Teacher Reflection
	Upon completion of the lesson, score students' written work using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric (see below) (Lake Washington School District, 2019). Then consider the following: • Did students master the hoped for CCSS for informational writing? • If students did not master the skills, how can you help them continue to progress in their informational writing skills?

Name_____

Informational Summative Assessment Packet

Directions: Your task is to create a piece of informational writing about the astronaut, Christa McAuliffe. You will create your informational writing on the binder paper attached at the back of this packet. You should use the factual articles in this packet to help you create your piece of writing. Do your best and use any and all of the skills you have that involve creating a piece of informational writing.

Image from: https://forumhome.org/remembering-christa-mcauliffe-p24915-1.htm

Article 1, Source: A&E Television Biography.com

BIOGRAPHY™

Photo: NASA

NAME
Christa McAuliffe

BIRTH DATE
September 2, 1948

DEATH DATE
January 28, 1986

EDUCATION
Marian High School, Framingham State College, Bowie State College

PLACE OF BIRTH
Boston, Massachusetts

PLACE OF DEATH
Cape Canaveral, Florida

ORIGINALLY
Sharon Christa Corrigan

FULL NAME
Sharon Christa McAuliffe

Christa McAuliffe

Biography
(1948–1986)

UPDATED: SEP 14, 2020 · ORIGINAL: APR 27, 2017

High school teacher Christa McAuliffe was the first American civilian selected to go into space. She died in the explosion of the space shuttle 'Challenger' in 1986.

Who Was Christa McAuliffe?

A high school teacher, Christa McAuliffe made history when she became the first American civilian selected to go into space in 1985. On January 28, 1986, McAuliffe boarded the Challenger space shuttle in Cape Canaveral, Florida.
The shuttle exploded shortly after lift-off, killing everyone on board.

Early Life

Born Sharon Christa Corrigan on September 2, 1948, in Boston, Massachusetts, Christa McAuliffe was the first of five children born to Edward and Grace Corrigan. When she was 5, she and her family moved to Framingham, Massachusetts. An adventurous child, McAuliffe grew up in a quiet, suburban neighborhood during the space age.

McAuliffe graduated from Marian High School in 1966 and enrolled at Framingham State College, where she studied American history and education. She received a bachelor's degree in 1970 and married Steven McAuliffe soon after. The couple had met and fallen in love during their high school days.

After NASA announced the selection of McAuliffe, her whole community rallied behind her, treating her as a hometown hero when she returned from the White House. As for McAuliffe, she saw the space mission as a chance to go on the ultimate field trip. She believed that by participating in the mission she could help students better understand space and how NASA works.

One of the more difficult aspects of the program was leaving her family for extensive training. She headed to the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, in September 1985, returning only for the holidays. More than any other year, 1986 was to be the year of the space shuttle, with 15 flights scheduled. McAuliffe's mission, STS-51L, was to be the first to depart for space.

Selected for Space Mission

McAuliffe was an extraordinary teacher with a dream of being a passenger on the space shuttle, so when NASA announced a contest to take a teacher into space, she jumped at the chance and applied. McAuliffe won the contest, beating out more than 11,000 other applicants. Vice President George H.W. Bush delivered the good news at a special ceremony at the White House, stating that McAuliffe was going to be the "first private citizen passenger in the history of space flight."

The shuttle was originally scheduled for lift-off on January 22, but there were multiple delays. The first one was a routine scheduling delay. The second was because of a dust storm at an emergency landing site. The third delay was because of inclement weather at the launch site. One final delay was due to a technical problem with a door latch mechanism.

Challenger Tragedy

On January 28, 1986, McAuliffe's friends and family, including her two children, anxiously watched and waited for the Challenger space shuttle to take off from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida. Her students in Concord also tuned in with the rest of the country to watch the history-making space expedition. However, less than two minutes after lift-off, the shuttle exploded, and everyone aboard died.

"The crew of the space shuttle Challenger honored us by the manner in which they lived their lives. We will never forget them, nor the last time we saw them, this morning, as they prepared for their journey and waved goodbye and 'slipped the surly bonds of earth' to 'touch the face of God.' " - Ronald Reagan, January 28, 1986

A shocked nation mourned the passing of the seven crew members of the Challenger. President Reagan spoke of the crew as heroes shortly after the accident: "This America, which Abraham Lincoln called the last, best hope of man on Earth, was built on heroism and noble sacrifice," he stated. "It was built by men and women like our seven-star voyagers, who answered a call beyond duty, who gave more than was expected or required and who gave it little thought of worldly reward."

NASA spent months analyzing the incident, later determining that problems with the right solid rocket booster had been the primary cause of the disaster. The findings revealed a gasket had failed on the rocket booster, the cold had affected the O-rings and a leak caused fuel to ignite.

Lasting Legacy

After her death, this courageous educator received the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. As a tribute to her memory, a planetarium in Concord was named after her, as well as an asteroid and a crater on the moon. In addition, the Christa Corrigan McAuliffe Center at Framingham State College was established to carry on her legacy and support the advancement of educational practices throughout the region.

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Article 2, Source: Britannica School

Christa Corrigan McAuliffe

(1948–86). An American teacher, Christa Corrigan McAuliffe was chosen to be the first private citizen in space. The death of McAuliffe and her fellow crew members in the 1986 space shuttle Challenger disaster was deeply felt by the country and had a strong effect on the U.S. space program.

Sharon Christa Corrigan was born on September 2, 1948, in Boston, Massachusetts. She earned her B.A. from Framingham (Massachusetts) State College in 1970 and the same year married Steve McAuliffe. She received her master's degree in education from Bowie (Maryland) State College (now University) in 1978. In 1970 she began a teaching career that impressed both her colleagues and her students with her energy and dedication.

When in 1984 some 10,000 applications were processed to determine who would be the first nonscientist in space, McAuliffe was selected. In her application she proposed keeping a three-part journal of her experiences: the first part describing the training she would go through, the second chronicling the details of the actual flight, and the third relating her feelings and experiences back on Earth. She also planned to keep a video record of her activities. McAuliffe was to conduct at least two lessons while onboard the space shuttle to be simulcast to students around the world, and she was to spend the nine months following her return home lecturing to students across the United States.

Problems dogged the ill-fated Challenger mission from the start. The launch had been postponed for several days, and the night before the launch, central Florida was hit by a severe cold front that left ice on the launchpad. The shuttle finally was launched at 11:38 am on January 28, 1986. Just 73 seconds after liftoff the craft exploded, sending debris cascading into the Atlantic Ocean for more than an hour afterward. There were no survivors. The live television coverage of the spectacular and tragic event, coupled with McAuliffe's winning, dynamic, and (not least) civilian presence onboard, halted shuttle missions for two and a half years, sorely damaged the reputation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, and eroded public support for the space program.

Article 3, Source: NASA

National Aeronautics and Space Administration

Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
Houston, Texas 77058

Biographical Data

S. CHRISTA CORRIGAN MCAULIFFE
TEACHER IN SPACE PARTICIPANT (DECEASED)

PERSONAL DATA: Born September 2, 1948 in Boston, Massachusetts. She is survived by husband Steven and two children. Her listed recreational interests included jogging, tennis, and volleyball.

EDUCATION: Graduated from Marian High School, Framingham, Massachusetts, in 1966; received a bachelor of arts degree, Framingham State College, 1970; and a masters degree in education, Bowie State College, Bowie, Maryland, 1978.

ORGANIZATIONS: Board member, New Hampshire Council of Social Studies; National Council of Social Studies; Concord Teachers Association; New Hampshire Education Association; and the National Education Association.

AWARDS: Posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES: Member, Junior Service League; teacher, Christian Doctrine Classes, St. Peters Church; host family, A Better Chance Program (ABC), for inner-city students; and fundraiser for Concord Hospital and Concord YMCA.

EXPERIENCE:

- 1970-1971 Benjamin Foulois Junior High School, Morningside, Maryland. Teacher. American history, 8th grade.
- 1971-1978 Thomas Johnson Junior High School, Lanham, Maryland. Teacher. English and American history, 8th grade and civics, 9th grade.
- 1978-1979 Rundlett Junior High School, Concord, New Hampshire. Teacher, 7th grade and American history, 8th grade.
- 1980-1982 Bow Memorial (Middle) School, Bow, New Hampshire. Teacher. Social Studies, 9th grade.
- 1982-1985 Concord High School, Concord, New Hampshire. Teacher. Courses in economics, law, American history, and a course she developed entitled The American Woman, 10th, 11th, and 12th grade.

NASA EXPERIENCE: Christa McAuliffe was selected as the primary candidate for the NASA Teacher in Space Project on July 19, 1985. She was a payload specialist on STS 51-L which was launched from the Kennedy Space Center, Florida, at 11:38:00 EST on January 28, 1986. The crew on board the Orbiter *Challenger* included the spacecraft commander, Mr. F.R. Scobee, the pilot, Commander M.J. Smith (USN), three mission specialists, Dr. R.E. McNair, Lieutenant Colonel E.S. Onizuka (USAF), and Dr. J.A. Resnik, and fellow civilian payload specialist, Mr. G.B. Jarvis. The STS 51-L crew died on January 28, 1986 when *Challenger* exploded after launch.

APRIL 2007

3rd Grade Informational Writing Rubric   Name: Draft 8.01.19

Assignment:

Text Type and Purpose	Level 1 - Not at Standard (1 point)	Level 2 – Approaching Standard (2 points)	Level 3 – Meets Standard (3 points)	Level 4 – Exceeds Standard (4 points)
Introduction (Beginning)	Introduction is missing/unclear	Attempts to include an introduction statement or section that identifies the topic	Introduction statement or section identifies the topic	Introduction statement or section clearly identifies the topic and main ideas Includes a lead that engages the reader
Transition Words and Phrases (Temporal Words)	Linking words or phrases are not used	Sometimes uses linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information	Uses linking words and phrases (e.g., also, another, and, more, but) to connect ideas within categories of information	Uses a variety of linking words and phrases to creatively connect ideas within categories of information
Content (Middle)	Includes limited or no details Ideas and details are not organized or do not stick to the topic.	Attempts to group related information together but some ideas or details feel out of place or incomplete	Groups related information together	Groups related information in paragraphs and sections; may include formatting (e.g. headings, illustrations if useful to aiding comprehension)
Conclusion (Closure/ Ending)	Concluding statement or section is missing/unclear	Attempts to provide a sense of closure by adding a concluding statement or section, but feels incomplete	Provides a sense of closure by adding a concluding statement or section	Provides a creative sense of closure by adding a concluding statement or section that ties the ideas together
Elaboration* *Double weighted category – see explanation below	Writes an informational piece with help OR Writes with minimal/no use of informational techniques OR Writes an informational piece that has minimal facts, details, and definitions	Attempts to provide facts, definitions, and details to develop the topic Some details may be incomplete or limited	Develops the topic with facts, definitions, and details	Develops the topic with facts, concrete details, definitions, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic
Style* *Double weighted category – see explanation below	Words and sentences are simple or repetitive	Writing is basic Words and sentences are used to provide limited meaning and interest	Writing is purposeful Words and sentences are used to provide meaning and interest	Writing is engaging Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic

*Elaboration and Style are double-weighted categories. Whatever level (points) a student receives is worth double. For example, if a student 'Meets Standard' for Style, the student will receive 6 points instead of 3.

For further guidance, refer to the Annotated Student Samples.

Text Types and Purposes

Level	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Range	0-8	9-14	15-16	17-22	23-24	25-30	31-32

Lesson 25: Opinion Writing Summative Assessment

Lesson Focus	Standard
Students will independently complete a piece of opinion writing to be used as a summative assessment tool.	• PBL Teaching Practices: 　　Design and Plan 　　Align to Standards 　　Assess Student Learning • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.A: Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.b: Provide reasons that support the opinion • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.c: Use linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.1.d: Provide a concluding statement or section. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. • CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.10: Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Objective(s)
• Students will create a piece of opinion writing entirely on their own. • Writing will be used as a summative assessment of students' opinion writing skills.

Resources and Materials
• Opinion Writing Summative Assessment Packet that contains a direction sheet, articles pertaining to the space shuttle program, and paper on which to create writing piece (see articles below or print from the following links). **Article 1** https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/space-shuttle/544812 (Britannica School. (2021). https://school.eb.com/levels/elementary/article/space-shuttle/544812.) **Article 2** https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/flyout/index.html. (Loff, S. (2015, March 10). *Space Shuttle Era*. NASA. https://www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/shuttle/flyout/index.html.) **Article 3** https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/space-shuttle-program (National Geographic Partners, LLC. (2021, May 3). *NASA's Space Shuttle Program*. Science. https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/space-shuttle-program.

Environment
Students will participate in independent work to write an opinion paper to the best of their ability without adult assistance.

Assessment Plan
The teacher will use the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (Lake Washington School District, 2019) to assess students' opinion writing skills as a summative assessment. See rubric below.

Lesson 25: Opinion Writing Summative Assessment (continued)

Lesson Introduction	
Say: *Remember when we started the opinion writing portion of our project we completed a pre-assessment of opinion writing about the Space Shuttle program? Today we are going to do that same activity as a summative assessment. This summative assessment will show how much you have learned and grown as an opinion writer over the course of our You Are the Mayor project. We will work on this for about an hour today and if you do not finish, I will provide you more time later in the day to complete your paper.*	
Lesson Core	
Say: Say: *Just like when we did the pre-assessment, we are all going to be writing about whether we believe the United States Space Shuttle program should have been ended. You are going to be given the same three factual articles about the Space Shuttle program to help you create your piece of writing, but I am guessing that after all your learning about opinion writing over the past few weeks, the piece of writing you create about your opinion on the Space Shuttle program today will be much different than the piece of writing you created as the pre-assessment. Your opinion may not have changed at all, but your opinion writing skills probably have!* Provide each student with a packet that contains the direction sheet, factual articles about the topic (see below) and binder paper for students to create their writing piece. Let students know where to turn in their work and what to do with the remainder of their work time if they finish before the allotted work time is over. Allow roughly 1 hour for students to work independently to complete their writing piece. Do not provide assistance.	
Lesson Conclusion	
Say: *Today we worked on showing what we already know about opinion writing. If you haven't finished your writing piece yet, you will have a chance to complete it later today.* Make sure to build work time into the day's schedule so students who did not finish have the opportunity to complete their writing.	

Teacher Reflection

Upon completion of the lesson, score students' written work using the Lake Washington School District 3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric (see below) (Lake Washington School District, 2019). Then consider the following:
    • Did students master the hoped for CCSS for opinion writing?
    • If students did not master the skills, how can you help them continue to progress in their opinion writing skills?

Name_____

Opinion Writing Summative Assessment Packet

Directions: Your task is to create a piece of opinion writing about whether the Unites States Space Shuttle program should have ended. The Space Shuttle program had its first launch in 1981 and the program ended in the United States in the year 2011. Using the resources in this packet for your information, decide whether you believe the space shuttle program should have ended or not. Then write a letter to me explaining why you believe the Space Shuttle Program should have either been ended or been continued.

You will create your opinion writing on the binder paper attached at the back of this packet. You should use the factual articles in this packet to help you create your piece of writing. Do your best and use any and all of the skills you have that involve creating a piece of opinion writing.

Image From: https://www.space.com/11363-nasa-space-shuttle-replacement-30-years-anniversaries.html

Article 1, Source: Britannica School

Introduction

The space shuttle was the first reusable spacecraft. The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) developed the shuttle, which was formally called the Space Transportation System. A fleet of four shuttles were put into service between 1981 and 1985. Their names were *Columbia*, *Challenger*, *Discovery*, and *Atlantis*. A fifth shuttle, *Endeavour*, flew its first mission in 1992.

Shuttle Features

The main section of the space shuttle was called the orbiter. The orbiter carried the crew and cargo. Like an airplane, it had wings and a tail.

Before liftoff, a fuel tank and two booster rockets were attached to the orbiter. The fuel tank provided fuel to the orbiter's three main rocket engines. The booster rockets helped to propel the craft up through Earth's atmosphere. All together, the system weighed 4.4 million pounds (2 million kilograms) and stood 184 feet (56 meters) high.

Shuttle Launch

During a launch, the orbiter's engines and the boosters fired together. Two minutes after liftoff, the boosters fell back to Earth, where they could be recovered. The fuel in the tank was used up just before the shuttle went into orbit around Earth. The orbiter released the tank, and it broke up in Earth's atmosphere.

Shuttle Missions

Shuttles could remain in space for up to about two weeks. Astronauts onboard carried out scientific experiments. They released satellites that the shuttle had brought from Earth. They also repaired broken satellites. The orbiter sometimes linked up with other spacecraft as well. At the end of a mission, the orbiter returned to Earth and landed like an airplane.

History

Columbia was the first shuttle to lift off, on April 12, 1981. In 1983 *Challenger* carried the first U.S. woman to travel into space (Sally Ride) and the first African American (Guion Bluford, Jr.) to do so.

On January 28, 1986, *Challenger* exploded 73 seconds after liftoff. All seven crew members were killed. Among them was Christa McAuliffe, a teacher who had planned to give lessons from space.

Shuttles did not return to space until September 1988. Beginning in 1998, they were used to bring crews, parts, and supplies to and from the International Space Station (ISS).

On February 1, 2003, *Columbia* broke apart as it was returning to Earth. Again, all seven crew members were killed.

After the shuttle program resumed in 2005, space shuttles helped in the ongoing construction of the ISS. However, NASA soon announced that it would end the shuttle program in 2011. *Atlantis* carried out the final shuttle mission, during July 8–21, 2011. Later missions to space would use Russian spacecraft or new spacecraft built by U.S. companies. (*See also* space exploration.)

Article 2, Source: National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) (Author: Sarah Loff)

Space Shuttle Era

The Space Shuttle Program 30-year commemorative patch
Credits: NASA

Between the first launch on April 12, 1981, and the final landing on July 21, 2011, NASA's space shuttle fleet -- Columbia, Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour -- flew 135 missions, helped construct the International Space Station and inspired generations. NASA's space shuttle fleet began setting records with its first launch on April 12, 1981 and continued to set high marks of achievement and endurance through 30 years of missions. Starting with Columbia and continuing with Challenger, Discovery, Atlantis and Endeavour, the spacecraft has carried people into orbit repeatedly, launched, recovered and repaired satellites, conducted cutting-edge research and built the largest structure in space, the International Space Station. The final space shuttle mission, STS-135, ended July 21, 2011 when Atlantis rolled to a stop at its home port, NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

As humanity's first reusable spacecraft, the space shuttle pushed the bounds of discovery ever farther, requiring not only advanced technologies but the tremendous effort of a vast workforce. Thousands of civil servants and contractors throughout NASA's field centers and across the nation have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to mission success and the greater goal of space exploration.

On April 12, 2011, NASA Administrator Charles Bolden announced the facilities where four shuttle orbiters will be displayed permanently at the conclusion of the Space Shuttle Program.

Article 3, Source: National Geographic

Space Shuttle Program

NASA's space shuttle was unlike any other spacecraft built during the 30 years the program was in operation. Unlike the much smaller capsules of the Apollo era, which launched on the tips of rockets and splashed back into the ocean, the jetliner-size shuttle was designed to streak into space using powerful boosters and return to solid ground as a glider. The craft's aerodynamic winged shape allowed it to descend through the atmosphere and touch down on a runway, much like a commercial airplane.

While in orbit, the space shuttle circled the planet at some 17,500 miles (28,000 kilometers) an hour, which means that the crew could see a sunrise or sunset every 45 minutes.

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While in orbit, the space shuttle circled the planet at some 17,500 miles (28,000 kilometers) an hour, which means that the crew could see a sunrise or sunset every 45 minutes.

After liftoff from Florida's John F. Kennedy Space Center, a typical space shuttle mission lasted ten days to two weeks and included a full schedule of scientific experiments and technological maintenance. Astronauts performed a variety of tasks aloft, including satellite repair

and construction of the **International Space Station**. Each of the shuttles was specially equipped for such functions, most notably with a large cargo bay and a robotic manipulator arm.

Program Liftoff

On April 12, 1981, John Young and Robert Crippen launched the space shuttle program by piloting *Columbia* to space and returning successfully two days later.

In 1983 space shuttle astronaut Sally Ride became the first U.S. woman in space as part of the *Challenger* crew.

The program was a tremendous success for NASA, but it also endured several tragedies. A string of successful missions was broken in 1986 when *Challenger* disintegrated seconds after liftoff, killing its seven-person crew.

The space shuttle program was suspended in the wake of the accident, and no shuttles were launched for nearly three years. The program rebounded in April 1990 with the successful mission of *Discovery*.

Astronauts on this momentous flight placed the **Hubble Space Telescope** into orbit. This incredible imaging device has subsequently added much to our understanding of the cosmos while returning otherworldly images that bring the universe to life.

In 1995 the space shuttle *Atlantis* successfully docked at the Russian space station Mir, bringing the two great space programs closer together in an era of cooperation that stood in marked contrast to the early days of the space race.

Tragedy struck again in February 2003 when the program lost its second shuttle: *Columbia* disintegrated over Texas just 16 minutes before its scheduled landing, and all seven crew members were lost.

Despite this heartbreaking setback, the space shuttle was flying regularly again by 2006. In February 2008 *Atlantis* delivered the

European Space Agency's Columbus laboratory to the ISS. And in February 2010 *Endeavour* brought up the Cupola, a robotic control station with seven windows that provides the ISS crew with a 360-degree view.

End of an Era

In 2004, U.S. President George W. Bush announced that the space shuttles would be retired. The final flight came to a close when *Atlantis* touched down at Kennedy Space Center on July 21, 2011. The three remaining orbiters and the prototype shuttle, *Enterprise,* are now be housed in museums in California, Florida, New York, and Virginia.

For its next phase of manned space exploration, NASA is designing and building the spacecraft needed to send humans deeper into the solar system, working toward a goal of putting people on Mars. The Multi-Purpose Crew Vehicle, for example, is being developed to take four astronauts on 21-day missions. NASA is also developing the Space Launch System, an advanced heavy-lift launch vehicle designed for human exploration beyond Earth's orbit.

In addition, the space agency is partnering with private companies such as Space Exploration Technologies Corporation, or SpaceX, to launch commercial vehicles to the ISS-and perhaps beyond.

3rd Grade Opinion Writing Rubric   Name: Draft 8.01.19

Assignment:

Text Type and Purpose	Level 1 - Not at Standard (1 point)	Level 2 – Approaching Standard (2 points)	Level 3 – Meets Standard (3 points)	Level 4 – Exceeds Standard (4 points)
Introduction (Beginning)	Introduction is missing/unclear, does not include an opinion	Partially introduces a topic or text and states an opinion	Introduces a topic or text and states an opinion	Hooks the reader by creatively introducing a topic or text and stating an opinion
Transition Words and Phrases (Temporal Words)	Linking words or phrases are not used	Sometimes uses linking words and phrases to connect opinion and reasons	Uses linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons	Uses a variety of linking words and phrases (e.g., because, therefore, since, for example) to connect opinion and reasons
Content (Middle)	Reasons and details are not organized or do not stick to the topic	Attempts to create an organized structure that lists reasons but some reasons or details feel out of place or incomplete	Creates an organized structure that lists reasons	Creates an organized structure in which related ideas are grouped in paragraphs to support the writer's purpose
Conclusion (Closure/ Ending)	Concluding statement or section is missing/unclear	Attempts to provide a sense of closure by including a concluding statement or section, but feels incomplete	Provides a sense of closure by including a concluding statement or section	Provides a creative sense of closure by including a concluding statement or section that ties the opinion together and leaves the reader something to think about
Elaboration* *Double weighted category – see explanation below*	Writes an opinion piece with help **OR** Writes with minimal/no use of opinion techniques **OR** Writes an opinion piece that has minimal evidence	Attempts to provide reasons that support the opinion Some reasons may be incomplete or limited	Provides reasons that support the opinion	Elaborates using interesting and creative examples or explanations
Style* *Double weighted category – see explanation below*	Writing is missing meaningful vocabulary Sentences are simple or repetitive	Writing is basic Uses specific vocabulary in a limited way	Writing is purposeful Words and sentences are used to provide meaning and interest Uses specific vocabulary to explain or support meaning	Writing is engaging Words and sentence variety enhance meaning and interest Uses specific vocabulary to enhance meaning

*Elaboration and Style are double-weighted categories. Whatever level (points) a student receives is worth double. For example, if a student 'Meets Standard' for Style, the student will receive 6 points instead of 3.

For further guidance, refer to the Annotated Student Samples.

Text Types and Purposes

Level	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	3.5	4
Range	0-8	9-14	15-16	17-22	23-24	25-30	31-32

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