

Lesson 3: Writing Informational Texts: Pre-Assessment



CCS Standards

- **W.3.2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- **W.3.2a:** Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension.
- **W.3.2b:** Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details.
- **W.3.2c:** Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *also*, *another*, *and*, *more*, *but*) to connect ideas within categories of information.
- **W.3.2d:** Provide a concluding statement or section.
- **W.3.4:** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- **SL.3.1:** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 3 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- **SL.3.1a:** Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
- **SL.3.1b:** Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion).
- **SL.3.1c:** Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
- **SL.3.1d:** Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can follow our class norms when I participate in a conversation. (SL.3.1b)
- I can write an informational paragraph that describes the learning challenges children face in Kenya and explains how children overcome them. (W.3.2, W.3.4)

Ongoing Assessment

- Paragraph Pre-assessment: Overcoming Learning Challenges in Kenya (W.3.2)

Agenda

1. Opening

- A. Engaging the Writer: Overcoming Learning Challenges in Kenya (15 minutes)
- B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

2. Work Time

- A. Baseline Assessment: Paragraph Writing (35 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)

4. Homework

A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt and respond in the front of your independent reading journal.

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- In this lesson, minimal instruction is given on paragraph writing before students write. This is purposeful, as it is designed to be a baseline assessment to inform instruction on paragraph writing throughout the rest of this module. (W.3.2, W.3.4)
- In Opening A, students participate in the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol. Consider how familiar students are with this protocol and reallocate class time spent introducing it as necessary.
- The research reading that students complete for homework will help build both their vocabulary and knowledge pertaining to overcoming challenges in access to education, books, and reading near and far. By participating in this volume of reading over a span of time, students will develop a wide base of knowledge about the world and the words that help describe and make sense of it.

How it builds on previous work:

- In Lesson 2, students closely read pages 18–19 of *My Librarian Is a Camel*. In this lesson, they will use what they learned to write about how some people overcome learning challenges in Kenya.
- Throughout Unit 1, students were introduced to various total participation techniques (e.g., cold calling, equity sticks, Turn and Talk, Think-Pair-Share, etc.). When following the directive “Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group,” use one of these techniques or another familiar technique to encourage all students to participate.
- Continue to use Goal 1 Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

Areas where students may need additional support:

- Students are continuing to build their writing stamina and may need some additional support during Work Time C. Consider providing a stretch break as needed.
- If students receive accommodations for assessments, communicate with the cooperating service providers regarding the practices of instruction in use during this study as well as the goals of the assessment.
- Some students may need more than the 35 minutes allocated for this baseline assessment.

Assessment guidance:

- Use the Grade 3 Informative Writing Rubric, specifically rows A–F, to assess work and provide students with feedback (see Grade 3 Writing Rubrics in the Module 1 Appendix).

Consider any patterns in student errors and modify instruction as needed when formally teaching informational writing in the second half of this unit and in Unit 3.

Down the road:

- Students will be formally introduced to informational paragraph structure and practice writing informational paragraphs in the second half of this unit.

In advance:

- Review the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face and Red Light, Green Light protocols. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Post: Learning targets.

Technology & Multimedia

- Work Time A: Students write their paragraphs in a word-processing document, such as a Google Doc, using speech-to-text facilities activated on devices or using an app or software like Dictation.io (<https://dictation.io/speech>)

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided in part by CA ELD Standards 3.I.A.1, 3.I.A.4, and 3.I.C.10

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with opportunities to practice using oral language within a structured and supportive environment and to participate in a pre-assessment that will provide helpful data to support writing in future lessons.
- ELLs may find it challenging and stressful to attempt to write a paragraph without any prior instruction. If students seem frustrated, remind them that this is only an exercise to see what they need to learn. Encourage them to do their best and compliment any English they are writing successfully.

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- Before providing sentence frames or additional time during the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol, observe student interaction and allow them to grapple.

Provide supportive frames and more time only after students have grappled with the task. Observe the areas in which they have trouble to target appropriate support.

- During the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol, observe any verb tense errors that are impeding communication. Briefly review the verb tense for the whole class. Encourage the group to identify the verb that communicates the message clearly and accurately.

For heavier support:

- Before the Opening, briefly reread pages 18–19. This will refresh students’ memories in preparation for the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol and discussion.
- During the Opening, partner students with a peer who speaks the same home language. Encourage students to respond to the prompts in their home language before sharing in English.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation:** Since the paragraph writing in this lesson is a pre-assessment, some students may need additional support with visualizing the expectations for this assignment. This can be stressful for students who may need extra scaffolds with writing. Before the assessment, consider doing a quick model of how to write a paragraph so that students have a visual and auditory model of the pre-assessment expectations. This will also provide richer data to use in planning the rest of the unit.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression:** Because this is an assessment, all students need to complete the writing assignment. However, consider flexible technologies to support the writing process. Examples: Allow students to use high-tech options (e.g., word processor to type their narrative text or a dictation device) or low-tech options (e.g., pencil grips or slanted desks to help with fine motor needs).
- **Multiple Means of Engagement:** Some students may need additional support in building writing stamina. Consider offering built-in breaks, during which students can choose an activity such as getting water or stretching. Reduce the number of these breaks over time as students increase their stamina.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- informational paragraph (L)
- access, challenge, desert, librarian, nomads (W)

Materials

- ✓ Facsimiles of pages 18–19 from *My Librarian Is a Camel* (from Lesson 1; one per student)
- ✓ Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19 (from Lesson 2; one per student)

- ✓ Paragraph Baseline Assessment: Overcoming Learning Challenges in Kenya (one per student)
- ✓ Domain-Specific Word Wall (begun in Lesson 1)
- ✓ Red, yellow, and green objects (one of each per student)

Opening

A. Engaging the Writer: Overcoming Learning Challenges in Kenya (15 minutes)

- Invite students to take out their **facsimiles of pages 18–19 from *My Librarian Is a Camel*** and their **Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19**.
- Tell students they are going to discuss how some people in Kenya overcame the challenge of access to books, using the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol.
- Have students find a partner, label themselves A and B, and stand back-to-back with each other, being respectful of space.
- Ask students the following question and give them 30 seconds to consider how they will respond:

“Who faced the challenge described on pages 18–19? Where did they live?” (students living in nomadic villages in Bulla Iftin)
- Invite students to turn face-to-face to share their responses.
- Have students repeat Steps 3–5 with a new partner for the following questions:

“What challenge did they face? Why was this a challenge?” (access to books; sand covers the roads, making it hard for cars to travel)

“How did they overcome this challenge?” (Librarians travel on camels that carry books to these hard-to-reach villages.)

“Why are these libraries important?” (Children in these areas really want books and treasure the books they receive when the library caravan comes.)
- Ask students to return to their seats.
- Invite students to Think-Pair-Share, leaving adequate time for each partner to think, ask the question to their partner, and partner share:

“What are some challenges people in Kenya face when learning? Did the people overcome the challenges? How?” (The challenge some people faced was accessing books. Librarians travel on camels that carry books to these people living in hard-to-reach villages.)
- If productive, cue students to expand the conversation by saying more:

“Can you say more about that?” (Responses will vary.)

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with memory: During the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol, allow students an additional 30 seconds to review pages 18–19 before turning to their partners. Ask the questions twice, one at a time, to afford more manageable opportunities to process and produce language. (MMAE)
- Encourage students to review and use their Close Read note-catcher to facilitate their discussion with their partner. (MMAE)

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with memory: Encourage students to refer to the Overcoming Learning Challenges anchor chart as they participate in the protocol. (MMR, MMAE)

Opening

B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Direct students' attention to the posted learning targets and select a volunteer to read them aloud:
"I can follow our class norms when I participate in a conversation."
"I can write an informational paragraph that describes the learning challenges children face in Kenya and explains how children overcome them."
- Point to the first learning target and explain that students just practiced this when participating in the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol. Invite them to show a thumbs-up, -down, or -sideways to indicate how they think they did in working toward this target.
- Underline the words *informational paragraph* in the second target. Remind students that informational texts are writing that gives facts or information about a topic. Tell students that today they will write a paragraph that gives facts or information about the learning challenge faced by some children in Kenya.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: Check for comprehension by asking students to summarize and then to personalize the learning targets. Ask them to paraphrase them and then to say how they feel about them. (Example: "Can you put the first learning target in your own words?" (I follow our rules for having a discussion.) "How do you feel about that target?" (I like talking, but sometimes it is hard to wait my turn.) (MMR)
- Create a supportive classroom culture by reminding students that they may be at different levels when they start to write their informational paragraph, and that is okay. Remind them that they will be learning more throughout the unit so that everybody can grow as a writer. (MME)

Work Time

A. Baseline Assessment: Paragraph Writing (35 minutes)

- Remind students that when authors of informational texts write about a topic, they have a main idea they want to explain to their reader. Direct students' attention to the research question at the top of their Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19 and select a volunteer to read it aloud:
"What are the challenges people face when learning, and how are they overcome?"
- Post the following question and explain that students will write a paragraph about people living in Kenya:
"What are some challenges people in Kenya face when learning, and how are they overcome?"

- Point out that the purpose of the paragraph is to teach the reader about challenges people in Kenya face when learning and how they overcome these challenges. Answer clarifying questions.
- Encourage students to try their best and tell them that looking at this piece of writing will help you learn how to best teach them to write strong paragraphs this year.
- Distribute the **Paragraph Baseline Assessment: Overcoming Learning Challenges in Kenya** and tell students that they may refer to their facsimiles of pages 18–19 from *My Librarian Is a Camel*, their Close Read note-catcher, and the **domain-specific word wall** as they write.
- Invite students to begin writing.
- As students finish, encourage them to reread their paragraphs and do all they can to make them better.
- Distribute **red, yellow, and green objects**.
- After 30 minutes, collect students' paragraphs.
- Tell students they are now going to use the Red Light, Green Light protocol to reflect on their learning. Remind them that they used this protocol in Unit 1 and review as necessary. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Focus students on the first learning target and read it aloud.
- Invite students to place the color on their desks that best describes their comfort level or readiness with that target. Remind students what each color means as necessary. (Red = stuck or not ready; yellow = need support soon; green = ready to start) Scan the room to identify students who may need additional support moving forward.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support with fine motor skills: Consider offering alternative tools for writing (e.g., pencil grip, slanted desk, or word processor). (MMAE)
- To minimize distractions during the assessment, vary the level of sensory stimulation as appropriate for individual students (e.g., offering sound-canceling headphones or dividing workspaces). Some students may also need flexibility with the pace of work and length of work sessions. (MME)

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)

- Redirect students' attention to the learning targets and read them aloud.
- Invite students to silently reflect:
 - “Which of these learning targets do you think you were the most successful with in this lesson?”
 - “Which of these learning targets do you think you need more work on?”
- Consider having students share in pairs, triads, or whole group.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Pair students with a partner who has more advanced or native language proficiency. The partner with greater English language proficiency can serve as a model in the pair, initiating discussions and providing implicit sentence frames.
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: Students who struggled to write a paragraph may feel unsuccessful. Offer specific praise to those who are struggling to think of an area in which they succeeded. Say: "Wow, Daphne did a wonderful job speaking in complete sentences during our conversation!"
- Provide feedback that focuses on student growth rather than relative performance. (Example: "I noticed Oscar was frustrated, but then he looked back at the text to help him think of what to write.") (MME)

Homework

A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt and respond in the front of your independent reading journal.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: Discuss and respond to your prompts orally, either with a partner, family member, or student from grades 1 or 2, or record a response. (MMAE)