

Lesson 4: Reading Informational Texts: Launching Expert Groups



CCS Standards

- **RI.3.4:** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 3 topic or subject area*.
- **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.
- **L.3.4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning word and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
- **L.3.4a:** Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- **L.3.4b:** Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., *agreeable/disagreeable*, *comfortable/uncomfortable*, *care/careless*, *heat/preheat*).
- **L.3.4c:** Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., *company*, *companion*).
- **L.3.4d:** Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can find the gist of an informational text. (RI.3.1)
- I can find the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. (RI.3.4, L.3.4)

Ongoing Assessment

- Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher (RI.3.4, L.3.4)

Agenda

1. Opening

- A. Engaging the Reader: Choosing Expert Groups (15 minutes)
- B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

2. Work Time

- A. Generating Group Norms (15 minutes)
- B. Expert Group Work: Reading for Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary (20 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, students form expert groups and read a section from *My Librarian Is a Camel* for the gist. (RI.3.4, L.3.4) Students work in expert groups to research and write about Finland, Thailand, or Zimbabwe. Students choose their country in order to feel more ownership of the work that they will complete; however, the corresponding sections from *My Librarian Is a Camel* are at varying levels, so it is recommended that you guide students toward the appropriate group for their reading level. Finland is recommended for English language learners and those who require additional support, and Thailand or Zimbabwe are recommended for students reading on grade level or above grade level.
- Group sizes need not be completely even. It is more important for students to feel excited about the country they will be learning about and to have some choice.
- In Work Time A, students generate team norms for effective collaboration. They refer to these norms to ensure effective collaboration throughout the unit. (SL.3.1)
- Throughout this unit, students learn about countries around the world and how some people in these countries access books. Consider researching students' countries of origin and help all students make connections between their country of origin and how books are accessed, if they are. Example: During the lesson, tell students: "I searched online and found an organization called the People's Action for Learning Network (PAL Network) at <http://palnetwork.org/country-teams/#uwezo-kenya>. It is an example of local people solving a local problem. I learned that Kenya, where ____ (name of student) is from, is part of this successful learning network. The network is run in part by Kenyans for Kenyans. They assess literacy and provide students with resources to improve." Share the information you found and invite the student to share his or her experience with the class. Consider whether it might be more appropriate to privately discuss what you found with the student before the lesson.
- Continue to reinforce the habits of character introduced in Unit 1, particularly as students generate group norms and work in expert groups.
- Students practice their fluency in this lesson by reading their expert group's excerpt from *My Librarian Is a Camel* in Opening A and Work Time B.
- 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:

- Lessons 4–5 follow a similar pattern of instruction as Lessons 1–2: Students read an excerpt from *My Librarian Is a Camel* for the gist, then reread the excerpt closely to determine the main idea.
- 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:

- Some students may require additional support coming up with group norms. Consider preparing a list of norms from which students can choose.

Assessment guidance:

- Consider using the Speaking and Listening Informal Assessment: Collaborative Discussion Checklist during students’ small group discussions in Work Times A and B.
- Consider using the Reading: Foundational Skills Informal Assessment: Reading Fluency Checklist to gather baseline reading fluency data when students read for gist during Work Time B.

Down the road:

- In the next lesson, students will closely reread the excerpt from *My Librarian Is a Camel* that is read in this lesson.
- Students will write about what they have learned about how people around the world have overcome the challenge of access to books in the second half of this unit.

In advance:

- Prepare:
 - Facsimiles of the expert group pages from *My Librarian Is a Camel*: pages 14–15, 28–29, and 30–31. Note that each student needs a copy only of his or her expert group’s pages.
 - Expert Group Country signs by writing the name of each expert group country on a piece of paper: Finland, Thailand, and Zimbabwe. Post in separate areas of the room.
 - Small label for each expert group country, with the book title and author, to pin on the world map. This needs to be large enough to see, but not too large to cover up too much of the map.
- Review the Think-Pair-Share protocol. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Post: Learning targets, Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart, and Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart.

- Work Time B: For students who will benefit from hearing the text read aloud multiple times, consider using a text-to-speech tool like Natural Reader (<http://www.naturalreaders.com>), SpeakIt! for Google Chrome (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/speakit/pgeolalilifpodheeocdmbhehgnkkbak?hl=en-US>), or the Safari reader. Note that to use a web-based text-to-speech tool like SpeakIt! or Safari reader, you will need to create an online doc, such as a Google Doc, containing the text.
- Work Time B: Students complete their note-catchers 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.B.6, and 3.I.B.8

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with further opportunities to find the gist of informational text, supported by a group, using graphic organizers similar to those in Lesson 1. This will allow students to apply their prior knowledge and gain deeper understanding and practice with English language skills such as summarizing and learning vocabulary in context.
- ELLs may find it challenging to work in their groups, especially if their group mates are more comfortable with the language and materials. It may help to define group roles to ensure that students work together. (Examples of roles: reader, recorder, summarizer, timekeeper, etc.)

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- Provide shorter sentence frames during Work Time B. (Examples: “Finland ____.” “We live ____.”) This will prompt language while requiring students to generate more of their own syntax and content.
- Before providing additional support throughout the lesson, observe student interaction and allow them to grapple. Provide supportive materials and suggestions only after students have grappled with the task and the language. Observe the areas in which they have trouble to target appropriate support in future lessons.

For heavier support:

- During Work Time B, distribute a partially filled-in copy of the Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher. This will provide students with models of the kind of information they should enter and reduce the volume of writing required. Refer to the Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher (answers, for teacher reference) to determine which sections of the note-catcher to provide for students.

- Group ELLs together in the Finland group and work with them closely during Work Time B. Read the chapter aloud to the group as they follow along. Read the chapter more than once if helpful. Facilitate student thinking and discussion to determine the gist of each part of the text.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation:** In this lesson, students follow specific steps and/or questions to master the learning targets (for example, when they analyze informational texts or in the Closing, when they engage in a conversation with a partner about specific questions). Represent directions and/or questions both verbally and visually (e.g., on an anchor chart, checklist, etc.). This is particularly important for students who may need additional support with memory and comprehension during multistep tasks.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression:** In Opening A, students read materials to determine which expert group they would like to be in. Ensure that all students have sufficient opportunity to review the materials so that they can make an empowered decision. Consider limiting the complexity of the task for some students by providing sticky notes for them to indicate when they find something interesting about one of the countries. This way, students can reference the sticky notes when making their final decision.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement:** This lesson includes several opportunities to engage students. Consider using multimedia to introduce them to the expert group countries. Get students excited by showing them art, dance, video, etc., from the countries and/or by emphasizing that students will work in teams rather than by themselves.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- gist, collaboration, effective (L)
- Finland (pages 14–15): assistant, communities, consists, region, scrambling, supply (T)
- Thailand (pages 28–29): includes, materials, paneling, program, providing, region, transformed, transportation, varies (T)
- Zimbabwe (pages 30–31): capabilities, communications, communities, future, literature, native, plateau, schedule, skills, vehicles, volunteer, within (T)

Materials

- ✓ *My Librarian Is a Camel* (book; from Lesson 1; one to display; for teacher read-aloud)
- ✓ Expert Group Country signs (three; to display; see Teaching Notes)
- ✓ Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart (from Unit 1, Lesson 3)
- ✓ Affix list (from Unit 1, Lesson 6; one per student)

- ✓ Vocabulary logs (from Unit 1, Lesson 5; one per student)
- ✓ Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 2)
- ✓ Lined paper (one piece per student)
- ✓ Chart paper (one piece per expert group)
- ✓ Facsimiles of expert group pages from *My Librarian Is a Camel* (one per student; see Teaching Notes)
- ✓ Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher (one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher (answers, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Academic Word Wall (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Domain-Specific Word Wall (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ World map (from Unit 1, Lesson 3; one to display)
- ✓ Labeled pin (one per expert group)
- ✓ Compass points (one to display)

Opening

A. Engaging the Reader: Choosing Expert Groups (15 minutes)

- Tell students that today they will begin learning about a new country of their choice and how some people in that country access books.
- Explain that they will get to choose from three countries: Finland, Thailand, and Zimbabwe.
- Display the world map on page 4 of **My Librarian Is a Camel**. Give students several minutes to skim the map and find these three countries.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “What experiences do you have with Finland? Thailand? Zimbabwe?” (Responses will vary.)*
 - “Are any of these countries anyone’s home country?” (Responses will vary.)*
 - “Does anyone see a different country on the map that they know?” (Responses will vary.)*
- Direct students’ attention to the posted **Expert Group Country signs** around the room.
- Describe the process students will use for choosing their country. Point out that you have designated part of the room for each country:
 - “Move to the part of the room labeled for the country you would like to study.”*
 - “Once there, share with the group why you chose that country.”*
- Invite students to quietly and safely move and make their choices. Support them as they make their decisions.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with memory: Engage prior knowledge by asking about pages 18–19 of *My Librarian Is a Camel*. Examples:
 - “What did we learn about in this book yesterday?”*
 - “What do you think we are going to learn about today?” (MMR)*

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: Display an illustrated list of step-by-step instructions for students to refer to as they preview the texts, or talk through each step so that students can follow along. (Example: "First let's look at the photographs. Think about what you notice. Now let's all look at the map. Put your finger on the map so I know that you found it.") (MMR)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: Provide sticky notes so students can indicate the page they would prefer to study. If they are confused about which group to go to, another student or teacher can help them find it based on the location of their sticky note. (MMAE)
- Build engagement by showing students multimedia from each country, such as videos, music, or art. (MME)

Opening

B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Direct students' attention to the learning targets:
 - "I can find the gist of an informational text."*
 - "I can find the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary."*
- Ask students to discuss with an elbow partner in their expert group and select volunteers to share their responses with the whole group:
 - "What is the gist? Why do we find the gist of new texts?" (The gist is what the text is mostly about, compared to the main idea, which is the main point or message the author wants the reader to take away. We find the gist first so that we can get an idea of what the text is mostly about and to begin to understand the structure of the text—what is discussed where.)*
- Ask students to discuss with their expert group and cold call students to share their responses with the whole group:
 - "How can you find the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary? What did you learn in Unit 1?" (I can use context, use common affixes and roots, or look in a dictionary.)*

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 can tell what a text is mostly about.) "How do you feel about that target?" (I am excited to read a new text.) (MMR)
- Build excitement about working together in groups and build a supportive classroom culture by saying how great it will be to work as a team to achieve their learning goals. (MME)

Work Time

A. Generating Group Norms (15 minutes)

- Tell students that before they begin working with their expert groups, they will generate norms for effective collaboration with their group.
- Write the word *collaboration* on the board. Invite students to clap the syllables of the word with you as you say them. Write the syllables on the board: col-lab-or-a-tion.
- Focus students on the vocabulary strategies listed on the **Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart** and use a total participation technique to invite responses from the group:
“We have probably seen parts of this word before, so which strategies could we use to determine the meaning of this word?” (Student responses may vary, but could include using known affixes or root words.)
- Cover the ‘tion.’ Invite students to tell you in chorus what word is left (collaborate).
- Tell students collaborate means to cooperate or work with someone else.
- Point to the suffix –tion and ask students to popcorn out any other words with this prefix (attention, definition, transition). record the words on the board.
- Ask and use a total participation technique to invite responses from the group. Invite students to retrieve their **affix lists** if they need to:

“What do you think –tion means based on how it is used in each of these words?” (act of, state of, result of)

- Record on a table drawn on the board as follows:

Root	Suffix
collaborate (to cooperate or work with someone else)	-tion (act of, state of, result of)

- Invite students to say in their own words what they think this means to their elbow partner and cold call students to share with the group (the act of cooperating or working with someone else)
- Invite students to add collaboration to their **vocabulary logs**.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“What does effective mean? So what is effective collaboration?” (Effective means successful in achieving the desired outcome, and effective collaboration is successful collaboration that results in achieving the desired outcome.)
“So knowing what the rest of the learning target means now, what do you think norms might be?” (Norms are a list of rules that will guide us in how to interact with one another as we work in our expert groups.)
- Add any new academic vocabulary to the Academic Word Wall.
- Focus students on the **Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart** and remind them that ethical people treat others well and stand up for what is right. Direct students’ attention to the following bullet points on the anchor chart:
 - “I show empathy.”
 - “I behave with integrity.”

- “I show respect.”
- “I show compassion.”
- Tell students that to effectively work in groups, they will need to remember these habits of character.
- Inform students that before they begin working, they are going to generate a set of norms. Remind them that norms are a list of rules that guide them in how to interact with one another as they work.
- Explain that when we think about norms for a group, it is a good idea to consider these questions:
 - “What do you need from everyone else to do your best work?”*
 - “How should the group resolve conflict or disagreements?”*
 - “How can we listen to and include everyone’s ideas in our group?”*
- Consider writing these questions on the board and suggesting some norms that would go with each one. (Example: Everyone in the group has a chance to speak during discussions. When a disagreement arises, someone else in the group should say back both points of view, and the group should discuss.)
- Distribute **lined paper**.
- Invite students to write down two norms they might suggest to their group.
- After 5 minutes, use a total participation technique to select students to share their norms with the whole group. Help students make adjustments to make their norms more effective for the group.
- Distribute **chart paper** to each expert group.
- Post the following directions and review them with students. Answer clarifying questions:
 1. Select one person in your expert group to be the recorder.
 2. The recorder writes the expert group’s country and group members’ names at the top of the piece of paper.
 3. Each group member shares his or her norms with the group.
 4. When the group agrees on a norm, the recorder writes it on the chart paper.
- Invite students to begin working.
- Circulate to support groups in choosing and recording norms.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with new vocabulary: Review each item on the Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart. Ask:
 - “Empathy is when you can understand the way somebody else is feeling. How do you show empathy?” (when you see that a friend is sad and you tell him or her it will be okay.) (MMR)*
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: As students write norms on chart paper, invite them to think of a line of dialogue they can write next to it to illustrate what each norm “sounds like.” Encourage students to practice using this dialogue as they work in their groups. (Example: “So what does taking turns sound like? What is something you might say if you are taking turns?” (I’ve been writing for a long time. Would you like to try?) (MMR, MMAE)

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: If 5 minutes is not enough time to write down a norm, allow them to sketch and label an illustration of the norm they are thinking of. Say: "If you need more than 5 minutes to write, you can draw a picture of the norm or write one or two words that help you remember what it is." (MMAE)

Work Time

B. Expert Group Work: Reading for Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary (20 minutes)

- Tell students that over the next two lessons, they will read sections from *My Librarian Is a Camel* to learn more about how some people access books in other parts of the world. Tell them that today they will read a section for the gist, and in the next lesson they will reread these pages more closely.
- Display the table of contents in *My Librarian Is a Camel* and invite students to find the page with information about their expert group's country.
- Distribute **facsimiles of expert group pages from *My Librarian Is a Camel***.
- Invite students to work as a group to read their group's excerpt aloud, for example with each student reading a different paragraph or chorally reading the excerpt, and briefly discuss what the text is about.
- Direct students' attention to the Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart and review quickly.
- Tell students that the text they will read is challenging and may have unfamiliar words. Reassure them that just like when they read other texts this year, they are not expected to understand all of it the first time they read it. Remind them that one key to being a strong reader of difficult text is being willing to struggle.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
"How did we find the gist when reading about Kenya in Lesson 1?" (We read sections of the text and thought about what the text was mostly about.)
"How did we determine the meaning of unfamiliar words when reading about Kenya in Lesson 1?" (We used the strategies on the Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart.)
- Reassure students that what they think is the gist of a text might be a little inaccurate or incomplete after reading a text for the first time. Explain that this is why we need to read texts more than once. Reading for the gist gives the reader a "big picture" frame that will make it easier to go back and more carefully identify the main idea and key details in the text.
- Distribute and display the **Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher**. Tell students that they can draw or write in the Gist column. These are just notes to help them remember what the excerpt is mostly about.
- Point out the Source at the top of the note-catcher and invite students to circle the pages they will read for gist.
- Invite students to work with their expert groups to reread the text and find the gist and the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.
- Circulate to support students in reading their sections of the text. Refer to the **Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher (answers, for teacher reference)** as necessary. Remind students to record new vocabulary in their vocabulary logs.

- After 15 minutes, refocus whole group and invite students to share any unfamiliar words and their definitions. Add any new words to the **academic word wall** and **domain-specific word wall**.
- Invite students to find the part of the text that shows the location of their expert group country. (the box in the upper right corner of the page) Invite students to silently read the text in the box.
- Focus students on the **world map**. Ask if any of them know roughly where their expert group country is on the map. Invite students who think they know to go to the map to point it out.
- Place a **labeled pin** on Finland, Thailand, and Zimbabwe. Show students each of the continents on the map.
- Display the **compass points**. Remind students that they can use compass points to explain where places are. Read through each of the compass points.
- Point to the pin marking your location. Invite students to discuss in expert groups:
 - “Which continent do we live in?” (Responses will vary.)*
 - “Where are we in relation to your expert group’s country?” (Responses will vary, but students should use the compass points.)*
 - “In what language do people read and write in your expert group’s country?” (Responses will vary based on the country.)*
- Focus students again on the box in the upper right corner of their expert group’s pages. Invite them to discuss in expert groups:
 - “What is the climate and geography like in your expert group’s country?” (Responses will vary.)*
 - “Do all people in your expert group’s country need a special method to get books? Why or why not?” (No; reasons will vary.)*
 - How else might people in your expert group’s country get books?” (Responses will vary.)*
- Tell students they will have a chance to reread this section more closely in the next lesson.
- Refocus students on the learning targets. Read them aloud, pausing after each to use a checking for understanding protocol for students to reflect on their comfort level with or show how close they are to meeting each target. Scan the room to identify students who may need additional support moving forward. Repeat, inviting students to self-assess against how well they showed respect, empathy, integrity, and compassion in this lesson.
- Invite students to return to their seats.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs: Encourage students to discuss the gist in their native languages to support comprehension. Example: “This task may be very difficult. To make it easier, you can take 2 minutes to talk about this with a partner who shares your home language. Then we can share in English. ____ (student’s name), since you are the only student who is able to speak in wonderful ____ (e.g., Urdu), feel free to think quietly or write in ____ (e.g., Urdu).”
- For ELLs: Provide sentence frames to support students’ group participation. Examples:
 - “We live in ____.”
 - “We are __(N/S/E/W) of __(country).”

- For students who may need additional support with fine motor skills: Offer choice with the Expert Group Finding the Gist and Unfamiliar Vocabulary note-catcher by providing a template that includes lines. (MMR, MME)

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)

- Invite students to Think-Pair-Share with someone not in their expert group:
“What is one important fact you learned about your expert group’s country?” (Responses will vary.)
“What is one way some people in your expert group’s country get books?” (Responses will vary.)
“How was reading an informational text different from reading narrative stories like in Unit 1?” (Responses will vary.)
“What strategies did you use today to help you read this text? How did these strategies help you to better understand the text?” (Responses will vary.)
- Post sentence frames on the board, as necessary:
 - “One fact I learned about my expert group’s country is ____.”
 - “One way some people in my expert group’s country get books is ____.”
 - “Reading an informational text is different because ____.”

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with memory: Post the questions for the Think-Pair-Share for students to reference during the conversation. (MMR)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with expressive language: Provide dialogue to help students decide who would like to share first. (MMAE)
Example:
 - “Would you like to share first?”
 - “Yes, I would” or “No, thanks, I would prefer to go second.”

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.