

Lesson 8: Writing Informative Texts: Drafting a Paragraph about My Expert Group's Country



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.
- **W.3.5:** With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
- **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.
- **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 identify the characteristics of the body and conclusion sentences in an informative paragraph. (W.3.2a, W.3.2b, W.3.2d)
- I can draft an informative paragraph that has a clearly stated focus and uses facts, definitions, and details from the text to explain my ideas. (W.3.2a,b,d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.8)

Ongoing Assessment

- Annotated Close Read Note-catcher: Expert Group *My Librarian Is a Camel* (W.3.2a, W.3.2b, W.3.2d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.8)
- Informative paragraph draft (W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.8)

Agenda

1. **Opening**
 - A. Engaging the Writer (5 minutes)
 - B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)
2. **Work Time**
 - A. Analyzing a Model (25 minutes)
 - B. Guided Practice: Drafting an Informative Paragraph (20 minutes)
3. **Closing and Assessment**
 - A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)
4. **Homework**
 - A. Respond to an informative writing prompt in your Unit 2 homework.
 - B. 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 continue to analyze the model paragraph about Kenya, specifically focusing on the body and conclusion sentences. They use these observations to plan their paragraph. (W.3.2b, W.3.2d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.8)
- Students then use their annotated Close Read Note-catcher: Expert Group *My Librarian Is a Camel* to write a draft of their paragraph. (W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.5)
- Students will practice their fluency by following along and reading silently as the teacher reads the Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model aloud in Work Time A.
- 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 the first half of the unit, students closely read excerpts from *My Librarian Is a Camel*. In this half, they use the information from those readings to plan their paragraphs.
- 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 may have difficulty determining the most important and relevant notes to use as they develop their plans. Consider flagging important pages of students' research notebooks or having them use sticky notes to mark key pages or notes.

Assessment guidance:

- Compare students' drafts to the paragraphs they wrote for the baseline assessment in Lesson 3 to identify specific areas of growth and areas to focus on in the revision and editing stage.
- Consider using the Reading: Foundational Skills Informal Assessment: Reading Fluency Checklist when students reread their expert group's excerpt in Opening B.
- Consider using the Writing Informal Assessment: Observational Checklist for Writing and Language Skills (grade 3) to informally assess the writing process in Work Time B.

Down the road:

- In the next two lessons, students will use peer critique to revise and edit their paragraphs.
- Students will plan, draft, revise, and edit a new informative paragraph for the End of Unit 2 Assessment in Lesson 11.
- Students use yellow, blue, and green markers to identify the body and conclusion sentences and information related to these sentences on their Close Read: Expert Group *My Librarian Is a Camel* note-catcher. These colors correspond to the colors used when introducing the Painted Essay® format in Unit 3.

In advance:

- Review the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face and Thumb-O-Meter protocols. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Post: Learning targets.

Technology & Multimedia

- Work Time B: Students write their paragraphs on a word-processing document, such as a Google Doc, 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.5, 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 unpack an example of the work they are expected to complete during the remainder of the unit. By now, they will be very familiar with the Kenya chapter of the book. Using familiar content to scaffold writing skills will ensure comprehensibility and support their success.
- ELLs may find it challenging to finish their first drafts within the allotted time because they may have trouble grasping the language itself in addition to the paragraph structure. Encourage students to try their best and not to get stuck thinking about spelling and mechanics. During Work Time B, partner beginning proficiency students with advanced or native-speaking students.

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- During the Mini Language Dive, challenge students to generate questions about the sentence before asking the prepared questions. Example: “What questions can we ask about this sentence? Let’s see if we can answer them together.” (Who is the sentence about? What details does it use to support the main idea?)
- 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:

- Distribute a double-spaced copy of the Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model with larger type and wider margins. Encourage students to use this copy to add any helpful notes and illustrations in the margins.
- Create a cloze version of an informational paragraph with key words missing. Invite students to work with it to complete the paragraph based on the information they learned in their expert groups. If students finish early, invite them to rewrite it themselves.
- Create a puzzle of the Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model using sentence strips. Use one strip for each sentence and color-code the text according to the established colors for each part. Challenge students to put the paragraph together in the correct order without looking at their papers. Illustrate key words on the paragraph for extra support.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation:** In this lesson, students analyze, plan, and draft an informative paragraph. This requires them to synthesize and use several skills. Whenever possible, use think-alouds and/or peer models to make this thought process explicit. (Example: Think aloud about how you decide what to underline on the Close Read note-catcher or how to take that information and use

it in the paragraph.) Not only does this provide students with a visual model, but also the thought processes behind it.

- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression:** In this lesson, students write their informative paragraph. For those who may need additional support with writing, one lesson may not be sufficient time to complete this task. Consider chunking this task into two separate lessons so that students can focus on the specific elements of the sentences and have ample processing time.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement:** In the Closing, students reflect on their successes and challenges. This can be intimidating for those who may need additional support with writing. Foster an inclusive and supportive classroom environment by reminding students that writing is a lot of work and everyone experiences challenges. It is how students strive toward overcoming those challenges to become better writers that is the important part of this unit.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- analyze, body, clearly stated focus, conclusion sentence, definitions, details, facts, (L)
- challenge, librarians, overcome (W)

Materials

- ✓ Facsimiles of expert group pages from *My Librarian Is a Camel* (from Lesson 4; one per student)
- ✓ Expert Group Norms (from Lesson 4; one per expert group)
- ✓ Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model (from Lesson 7; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Yellow, blue, and green objects (one of each per student)
- ✓ Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19 (from Lesson 2; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Informational Texts handout (from Lesson 1; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Close Read Note-catcher: Expert Group *My Librarian Is a Camel* (from Lesson 5; one per student)
- ✓ Lined paper (several pieces per student)
- ✓ Domain-Specific Word Wall (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)

Opening

A. Engaging the Writer (5 minutes)

- Tell students they are going to discuss their expert group's country with other students in the classroom using the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol. Remind them that they used

this protocol in the first half of the unit and review as necessary. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)

- Guide students through the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol using the following questions:
 - “*What learning challenge do some people in your expert group’s country face?*”
 - “*How do people in your expert group’s country overcome this challenge?*”
- Ask students to return to their seats.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: Repeat the Back-to-Back and Face-to-Face protocol questions more than once so students have ample processing time. (MMR)
- Allow students to refer to their note-catcher from the previous lesson to activate their prior knowledge. (MMR)

Opening

B. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Invite students to take out their **facsimiles of expert group pages from *My Librarian Is a Camel*** and move to sit with their expert groups.
- Invite students to spend a few minutes reviewing their **Expert Group Norms**.
- Invite students to work as a group to reread their group’s excerpt aloud, for example with each student reading a different paragraph or chorally reading the excerpt.
- Direct students’ attention to the posted learning targets and select a volunteer to read them aloud:
 - “*I can identify the characteristics of the body and conclusion sentences in an informative paragraph.*”
 - “*I can draft an informative paragraph that has a clearly stated focus and uses facts, definitions, and details from the text to explain my ideas.*”
- Point to the first target and tell students that similar to the previous lesson, they will *analyze* the Kenya model paragraph to learn more about strong informative paragraphs before they write their own.
- Point to the second target and underline the phrases *clearly stated focus* and *facts, definitions, and details*. Remind students that they drafted a focus statement that tells the main idea of their paragraphs in the previous lesson. Tell students that as they plan and draft their paragraphs, they will explain their main idea using information from *My Librarian Is a Camel*.
- Remind students that when authors write, they always consider the task, or the writing to be done, and the purpose, or the reason for writing.
- Invite students to turn and talk with their expert groups, then select volunteers to share with the whole group:
 - “*What is our task?*” (to write about a challenge some people face in our expert group’s country)

“What is the purpose of the paragraphs we will be writing?” (to teach or explain to the reader about a challenge some people face in our expert group’s country)

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 about the body and conclusion of a paragraph.) “How do you feel about that target?” (I am a little confused, so I might need help.) (MMR)
- To activate students’ prior knowledge, display and discuss the Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model from the previous lesson. (MMR)

Work Time

A. Analyzing a Model (25 minutes)

- Display and invite students to take out their copy of the **Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model**. Remind students that this is a paragraph that answers the research question: “What are the challenges people face when learning, and how are they overcome?”
- Remind students that using this model will help them determine what to include in their own paragraphs and how to organize them. Invite students to follow along, reading silently in their heads as you read the text aloud.
- Direct students’ attention to sentences 3–7 in the Kenya paragraph.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“What is the purpose of these sentences?” (They explain the challenge and how it is overcome.)
- Remind students that the paragraph has information grouped together into sentences so related information is together: The first sentence introduces the reader to the country by describing the geography and climate, the second sentence tells the focus of the paragraph by explaining the challenge, and the rest of the paragraph builds on that focus by explaining how people in that part of the country have overcome the challenge.
- Distribute **yellow, blue, and green objects** and invite students to take out their **Close Read Note-catcher: My Librarian Is a Camel, Pages 18–19**.
- Point to the third sentence of the Kenya paragraph and invite students to underline it in yellow on their copy. Tell students this sentence is part of the *body* of the paragraph. The body of the paragraph develops the topic with facts and details.
- Invite students to Think-Pair-Share, leaving adequate time for each partner to think, ask the question to their partner, and partner share:
“Reread the third sentence in the Kenya paragraph to yourself. What important information is included in this sentence?” (an explanation of the challenge)
- If productive, cue students to expand the conversation by saying more:
“Can you say more about that?” (Responses will vary.)

- Invite students to skim their Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19 and underline this information (an explanation of the challenge) in yellow on their note-catcher.
- Repeat this process with the remaining sentences:
 - Point to sentences 4–7 in the Kenya paragraph and invite students to underline them in blue. Tell students these sentences are also part of the body of the paragraph.
 - Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“Reread these sentences in the Kenya paragraph to yourself. What important information is included in these sentences?” (an explanation of how the challenge is overcome)
 - Invite students to skim their Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19 and underline this information (an explanation of how the challenge is overcome) in blue on their note-catcher.
 - Point to the last sentence of the Kenya paragraph. Tell students this is the conclusion sentence. Explain that a conclusion sentence is a sentence at the end that wraps up or ends their writing and reminds the reader of the focus of the piece.
 - Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“Reread this sentence in the Kenya model to yourself. What important information is included in this sentence?” (the importance of the library; gives reflection on the value of overcoming the challenge)
 - Invite students to skim their Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19 and underline this information in green on their note-catcher.
- Display and invite students to take out their **Informational Texts handout** and point out the following bullets:
 - Informational texts are clearly presented and easy to understand.
 - Informational texts introduce the topic with a focus statement, develop the topic with evidence such as facts and details, and end with a concluding statement or section.
 - Informational texts group related information together to explain a main idea.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

“What makes the Kenya model easy to understand?” (Related information is grouped together; it stays on topic; it tells a main idea and gives details from the text to support the main idea.)
- Tell them that they should keep these criteria in mind as they draft their paragraphs.
- Point out the seventh bullet point on the handout. Invite students to double-underline the words “develop the topic with evidence such as facts and details” in yellow and in blue and to underline the words “concluding statement or section” in green.
- Invite students to take out their **Close Read Note-catcher: Expert Group *My Librarian Is a Camel***. Remind them that they are also going to use this note-catcher to help them plan their informational paragraphs.
- Direct students’ attention to the research question and the words “focus statement” at the top of the note-catcher and invite them to independently read the focus statement they drafted in the previous lesson.
- Select a volunteer to read the headings of the table on the note-catcher. Remind students that they will use the evidence recorded on this note-catcher to support, or explain, their focus statement.

- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “What kind of information will we include in our body sentences?” (an explanation of the challenge and how it was overcome)*
 - “What parts of our note-catcher have this information?” (Challenge and How the Challenge Is Overcome boxes)*
 - “What kind of information will we include in our conclusion sentence?” (the importance of the library; a reflection on the value of overcoming the challenge)*
 - “What part of our note-catcher has this information?” (the Importance of the Library box)*
- Tell students they will now work with a partner or by themselves to underline in yellow, blue, and green the information on their note-catchers that they will include in their body and conclusion sentences. Remind them to refer to the Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model; Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19; and the Informational Texts handout as they work.
- Allow time for students to move if necessary.
- Invite students to begin underlining, circulating to support them as they work.
- Tell students they are going to use the Thumb-O-Meter protocol to think about their ability to identify information that could be included in the body and conclusion sentences of their paragraph. Remind them that they participated in this protocol in the previous lesson and review as necessary. (Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.)
- Guide students through the Thumb-O-Meter protocol using the first learning target. Note those showing a thumb-sideways or thumb-down, so you can check in with them throughout the writing process.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension or writing: Color-code each sentence of the Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model. Use the colors that students will later use to underline their own copies: red (introductory sentence), green (focus statement), yellow (stating the challenge), blue (body sentences), and green (conclusion). Using the respective color for notes corresponding to each part, annotate, illustrate, and label the model paragraph. Invite students to make similar notes in the margins of their own copies. (Example: Write “Body: Example 1, Example 2, Example 3” next to each of the body sentences.) (MMR, MMAE)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: Think aloud while reading the model paragraph to highlight the purpose of each component. Say: “I wonder if the author is going to explain the main idea with examples of how the challenge is overcome, because without details, I’m not going to believe it!” (MMR)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension: Repeat and rephrase the question “What information is included in this sentence?” to enhance comprehensibility for all students. (Example: “What does this sentence tell us? What exactly did we learn from this sentence?”) (MMR)

- For ELLs: Mini Language Dive. Ask students about the sixth sentence from the Kenya Model: “The camels can carry heavy loads like the books and a tent used to make a library roof.” Examples:
 - “What is load in our home languages?” (nagruzka in Russian) Invite all students to repeat the translation in a different home language.
 - “What does load mean? You can use your dictionaries.” (weight, cargo)
 - “Do you ever have to carry a heavy load?” (Yes, when I go home and there are lots of books in my backpack.)
 - “What or whom is this sentence about?” (the camels)
 - “What can the camels do?” (They can carry things.)
 - “What does the word like tell us? Does it tell us what the camel likes to do?” (No, like means for example; it is going to give us examples of what kinds of loads the camel can carry.)
 - “What can the camel carry?” (books and a tent)
 - “Where is the camel taking the books?” (to the children to make a library)
 - “What is ‘used to make a library roof’? How do you know? (the tent; tent comes right before that phrase in the sentence, so it is about the tent. You cannot make a library roof with books.)
 - “What is a tent?” Display a picture of a tent. (something that is not permanent that you can build to provide shelter)
 - “The sentence tells us the tent is used, but not who uses it. Who uses the tent? How do you know?” (The librarians use the tent to make the library. I know because I can infer based on the gist and details in the rest of the chapter.)
 - “How does this sentence give details about the main idea?” (The main idea is that librarians can overcome the challenge of getting books to the children. The sentence gives details and examples about how the camel helps overcome the challenge.)

Work Time

B. Guided Practice: Drafting an Informative Paragraph (20 minutes)

- Give students specific, positive feedback regarding their planning. (Example: “I noticed many of you persevering and continuing on with the planning process even when it seemed challenging. You are now ready to begin drafting your paragraph.”)
- Invite students to turn and talk with their expert groups, then select volunteers to share with the whole group:
 - “How will you organize your paragraphs?” (introduction sentence, focus statement, body sentences, conclusion sentence)
- Invite students to move to sit with a partner from their expert group and label themselves A and B.

Overcoming Learning Challenges Near and Far

- Post the following directions and review with students:
 1. Partner A orally rehearses his or her introduction sentence as partner B listens.
 2. Switch roles.
 3. Repeat Steps 1–2 for the body sentences and then again for the concluding sentences.
- Tell students that by rehearsing what they plan to write, they will be better prepared to actually write. Answer clarifying questions and ask them to begin rehearsing.
- Distribute **lined paper** and invite students to begin writing their paragraphs, referring to the following resources as they write:
 - Close Read Note-catcher: Expert Group *My Librarian Is a Camel*
 - Kenya Paragraph: Teacher Model
 - Close Read Note-catcher: *My Librarian Is a Camel*, Pages 18–19
 - Informational Texts handout
 - **domain-specific word wall**
- Tell students they are going to use the Thumb-O-Meter protocol to reflect on their progress toward the second learning target.
- Guide students through the Thumb-O-Meter protocol using the second learning target. Note those showing a thumb-sideways or thumb-down, so you can check in with them during the next lesson.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: Model and think aloud the process of adapting information from a note-catcher to sentences in a paragraph. Use interactive writing, calling on students to offer their ideas and write sentence themselves on a class model. (MMR)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension or writing: Allow students to work on their drafts in colored pencil corresponding to the color-coding system with which they underlined information in their note-catchers. (MMR, MMAE)
- For ELLs: Pair students with a partner who has more advanced or native language proficiency. The partner with greater language proficiency can serve as a model in the pair, initiating discussions and providing implicit sentence frames, for example.
- Provide differentiated mentors by purposefully pre-selecting student partnerships. Consider meeting with the mentors in advance to encourage them to share their thought processes with their partner. (MMAE)

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)

- Invite students to return to their seats and whisper-read their informative paragraph draft.
- Ask:

“Show a thumb-up if your draft is appropriate for the task and purpose or a thumb-down if you are not sure.”

- Note students who show a thumb-down and check in with them during the next lesson.
- Invite students to silently reflect on the process of drafting an informative paragraph:
 - “What challenges did you face as you drafted today?”*
 - “What were your successes?”*
- Select volunteers to share with the whole group.
- If productive, cue students to expand the conversation by giving an example:
 - “Can you give an example?” (Responses will vary.)*

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: As students reflect, provide ELLs with encouraging and specific feedback. (Example: “I love how you wrote three very clear body sentences to support your focus statement!”) (MME)
- Provide feedback that encourages perseverance and the use of specific supports and strategies in the face of challenge. (MME)
- Create a supportive and inclusive classroom by reminding students that everyone is working toward their own goals in writing and they need to support each other to become better writers. (MME)
- Minimize risk by allowing students to choose how to share their challenges. Alternatives include writing them down on a piece of paper to submit to the teacher. (MME, MMAE)

Homework

A. Respond to an informative writing prompt in your Unit 2 homework.

B. 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)