

Lesson 4: Writing Informational Texts: Drafting an Introduction about My Freaky Frog



CCS Standards

- **RI.3.10:** By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades 2-3 text complexity band independently and proficiently.
- **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.3.4:** 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.3.6:** 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.
- **L.3.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **L.3.1d:** Form and use regular and irregular verbs.
- **L.3.1e:** Form and use the simple (e.g., *I walked*; *I walk*; *I will walk*) verb tenses.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can form and use regular and irregular verbs in the simple tenses. (L.3.1d, L.3.1e)
- I can write an introduction paragraph for my informational essay that describes my freaky frog, its habitat, its predators, and its prey. (W.3.2a, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.6)

Ongoing Assessment

- Draft introduction paragraph (W.3.2a, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.6)

Agenda

1. Opening

- A. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

2. Work Time

- A. Mini Lesson: Forming and Using Verbs in the Simple Tenses (15 minutes)
- B. Guided Practice: Drafting an Introduction (20 minutes)
- C. Research Reading Share (15 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment

- A. Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

4. Homework

- A. Complete Verbs I in your Unit 3 homework packet.
- B. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt to respond to in the front of your independent reading journal.

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- In this lesson, students begin to draft their informational essays by writing the introduction paragraph. Students review the introduction of the Poison Dart Frog Model (W.3.2a) and use their observations and planning from Lesson 3 to draft their paragraphs independently using word-processing tools (W.3.2a, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.6).
- Students focus only on drafting the introduction paragraph of their essays in this lesson. They will plan and draft additional paragraphs for their essays in Lessons 5–7.
- This lesson has been designed to address W.3.6. Students may need direct instruction on how to use the computer and the selected word-processing tool to type their drafts.
- If you do not have the facilities for students to use technology to complete their informative writing, students will need lined paper and should leave a blank line between each line of their writing to make revisions later on. Consider extending Work Time B and minimizing the time spent on the Research Reading Share if students are not typing their introductions on a computer.
- Students continue their study of verbs and verb tenses (L.3.1d, L.3.1e). In this lesson, they review forming and using verbs in the simple tenses. They also practice using verbs in the present tense when drafting their introduction paragraphs in Work Time B.
- In Work Time C, students share what they have read and learned from their independent reading texts. This sharing is designed as another measure for holding students accountable for their research reading completed for homework. This volume of reading promotes students' growing ability to read a variety of literary and informational texts independently and proficiently. Refer to the Independent Reading: Sample Plan (standalone document), if you do not already have an independent reading review routine. (RI.3.10, RL.3.10, SL.3.1)
- In this unit, the habit of character focus is contributing to a better world. Students continue to 'collect' characteristics for this aspect on a Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart. The characteristic they collect in this lesson is: taking care of and improving

our shared spaces and the environment as they work to draft on class computers. Students also work to become an ethical person, focusing on integrity, in relation to them completing their research reading homework.

- The research reading that students complete for homework will help build both their vocabulary and knowledge pertaining to frogs and specifically frog adaptations. 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.
- Students who finish quickly or require an extension can begin to consider other ways to present the information they have been researching. Invite students to brainstorm ways to present (i.e., PowerPoint presentation, create a poster, etc.), choose one, and begin planning this presentation.

How it builds on previous work:

- Students refer to the research completed in Lessons 1 and 2 as they plan their informational essays.
- When drafting the introduction paragraph in Work Time B, students refer to the Informative Writing Checklist that was introduced and used in Unit 2. Throughout this unit, students examine each characteristic and consider how it applies to an essay.
- Students are held accountable for their independent reading and homework by sharing with their peers.
- Continue to use Goals 1-3 Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

Areas where students may need additional support:

- Students may need additional support with using their planning organizers to draft sentences and with organizing their writing in an order that is compelling to the reader. They may also need support with elaborating on their ideas. Check in and conference with these students during drafting time in Work Time B.
- Students needing support with drafting their introductions may benefit from using sentence frames. Refer back to the writing lessons in Module 1 and consider providing similar sentence frames if students need this additional support.

Assessment Guidance:

- Refer to the characteristics related to RI.3.1 and W.3.2a of the Informative Writing Checklist when assessing students' work in this lesson. Other characteristics related to the organization and development of their essays will be discussed in-depth in Lessons 5–7. Use the criteria related to RI.3.1 and W.3.2a from the Grade 3 Informational/Explanatory Writing rubric to assess their progress toward the learning targets.
- 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.
- Consider using the Reading: Foundational Skills Informal Assessment: Phonics and Word Recognition Checklist (Grade 3) or the Reading: Foundational Skills Informal Assessment: Reading Fluency Checklist to informally assess students during the research reading share in Work Time C.

Down the road:

- Students will review what they have learned about verb tenses in Lesson 5.
- Students will continue to plan and draft paragraphs for their essays in Lessons 5–7. Lessons 5 and 6 follow a similar pattern as this lesson, with students analyzing a model and adding criteria to the Informative Writing Checklist based on the model, and then planning the proof and conclusion paragraphs.
- Students will revise and edit their writing in the second half of this unit.

In advance:

- Prepare a research reading share using with the Independent Reading: Sample Plan standalone document, or using your own independent reading routine.
- Post: Learning targets.

Technology & Multimedia

- Work Time A: Students are using word-processing tools to write their informative texts. See the Unit 3 Overview for suggested word-processing tools.

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided in part by CA ELD Standards 3.I.A.1, 3.I.A.2, 3.I.B.6, 3.I.C.10, 3.II.A.1, 3.II.B.3.

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with an explicit focus on the multi-draft writing process and verb tense. This approach gives ELLs the opportunity to confirm or correct their language over time and to investigate the way the classroom English grammatical system works—something that native speakers may know innately.
- ELLs may find it challenging to independently draft an introduction. In addition to reviewing the checklist, consider drafting a quick model introduction as an interactive writing/think-aloud piece using the checklist. This can be done for the entire class at the beginning of Work Time B or in a small group of ELLs while the rest of the class is working independently.

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 are readers?)

For heavier support:

- Make sure students understand that a draft is only their first try and that it is important for them to write as much as they can. The draft does not need to be perfect, so they should not be afraid of making spelling mistakes.
- Review the structure of informational essays and the vocabulary used in your instruction: *essay, introduction, focus, purpose*, etc.
- As part of the game in Work Time A, write base forms of verbs on verb strips. Include an illustration of the meaning of the verbs for additional support. As students take their turns completing the sentence frames, they can hold up the correct verb strip and say *will* or the -ed suffix with the verb. Prompt students to use adverbs (*yesterday, long ago, tomorrow, next year*) and hand motions (motioning over shoulder for the past and ahead for the future) to reinforce the verb tenses.
- In preparation for the mid-unit assessment, provide additional practice identifying and explaining simple tenses. Consider using formats similar to the assessment, and inviting students who need lighter support to write similar questions for students who need heavier support.
 - For each sentence, tell whether it is written in the present or past tense. Explain what, in the sentence, makes you think so.
 - Glass frogs come out at night when they are even harder to see.
 - present tense past tense
 - Complete the sentence with the verb in the past tense.
 - The leaf ____ above a stream. (is)

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** In addition to reviewing the checklist, consider drafting a quick model introduction as an interactive writing/think-aloud piece using the checklist. This can be done for the entire class at the beginning of Work Time B or in a small group of students who need writing support while the rest of the class is working independently.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** Continue to support students in building their writing stamina and effort by providing scaffolds that build an environment which is conducive to writing.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** Some students may need additional support in linking the information presented back to the learning targets. Invite students to make this connection by explicitly highlighting the utility and relevance of the text to the learning target.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- purpose, introduction, verb tense, focus statement (L)
- physical adaptations, behavioral adaptations, special, unique, survive, habitat, predator, prey (W)

Materials

- ✓ Irregular Verbs handout (from Unit 2, Lesson 6; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Regular Verbs handout (from Unit 2, Lesson 3; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Informative Writing Checklist (from Lesson 3; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Poison Dart Frog Model (from Lesson 2; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ The Painted Essay® template (from Module 1, Unit 3, Lesson 5; one per student)
- ✓ Computer with word-processing tool (optional; one per student)
- ✓ Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart (from Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Informational Texts handout (from Unit 2, Lesson 1; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Informational Writing Planning graphic organizer (from Lesson 3; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ Domain-Specific Word Wall (started in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart (from Module 1)
- ✓ Independent Reading: Sample Plan (standalone document)
- ✓ Index cards (one per student)

Opening

A. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Remind students that they have been reading texts to learn about their frog and its unique adaptations and have started to put their research together for their essay about their freaky frog.
- Review the purpose of the essays by asking:
“What is the purpose of our informational essays?” (to teach third- and fourth-grade students about our freaky frogs and their adaptations)
- Direct students’ attention to the posted learning targets. Read them aloud as students follow along, reading silently in their heads.
“I can form and use regular and irregular verbs in the simple tenses.”
“I can write an introduction paragraph for my informational essay that describes my freaky frog, its habitat, its predators, and its prey.”
- Explain that, similar to previous lessons, they will continue to study verbs—specifically verbs in the future tense.

- Review the purpose of their essay's introduction:
 - “What is the purpose of an introduction in informational writing?” (to introduce the topic to our readers)*
 - “What is the purpose of the introduction in our freaky frog essays?” (to give readers important information about our frog that they will need to understand what makes it unique)*
- Tell students that after they draft their introductions, they will have a chance to share with a partner what they have been learning about in their independent reading.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who need additional support with vocabulary: Consider allowing them to sketch, act out, or write synonyms for key terms in the learning targets: *form, regular and irregular verbs, simple tenses, introduction paragraph, describes, habitat, predators, prey, and share.* (MMR)
- For ELLs: Remind students that a verb is an action word. Give some examples of verbs.
- For ELLs: Rephrase the purpose of an introduction—to get readers interested; to tell them a little bit about the essay before they read it; to give the most important information first.

Work Time

A. Mini Lesson: Forming and Using Verbs in the Simple Tenses (15 minutes)

- Remind students that they have been learning about verbs. If necessary, review what verbs are (words that describe an action or state of being).
- Display and invite students to retrieve their **Irregular Verbs handout** and their **Regular Verbs handout** from Unit 2. Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “What is verb tense?” (the form of a verb to show when the action happened)*
 - “What are the three main verb tenses?” (past, present, and future)*
 - “When do we use the present tense?” (to show that something is happening now or that a condition exists in the present time)*
 - “When do we use the past tense?” (to show that something happened in the past or that a condition existed in the past)*
 - “When do we use the future tense?” (to show that something is going to happen or that a condition will exist in the future)*
- Review how the base form changes for each tense (add -ed or change the spelling for the past tense; add the word *will* for the future tense).
- Tell students that they will play a game to practice forming and using verbs in different tenses. As a class, brainstorm a list of things that frogs do, recording the list of verbs students share on the board, using the present tense.

- Invite students to form a circle. Explain the rules of the game:
 1. A player chooses a verb from the list on the board of things that frogs do.
 2. The player makes eye contact with another player of his or her choice, saying the selected verb aloud.
 3. The second player chooses a verb tense, either past or future, and responds using the sentence frame: “The verb tense is _____. The frog _____,” filling the blanks with the verb tense and the verb in the correct form.
 4. The second player makes eye contact with another player of his or her choice.
 5. The third player responds using the sentence frame: “The verb tense is _____. The frog _____,” filling the blanks with the remaining verb tense and the verb in the correct form.
 6. Play continues, with the third player choosing a verb from the list and repeating the cycle.
- Continue playing as time allows. For more of a challenge, allow students to use the word in their own sentence instead of using the sentence frame.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For students who may need additional support with comprehension: Consider adding a simple sketch to each of the verbs listed on the board so they can read them easier when their turn comes. (MMR)

Work Time

B. Guided Practice: Drafting an Introduction (20 minutes)

- Display and invite students to take out their copy of the **Informative Writing Checklist** and focus their attention on the following characteristics:
 - **W.3.2a**
- Remind students that they wrote their focus statement and thought about the important information they wanted to include in their introduction when they planned it in Lesson 3.
- Display the **Poison Dart Frog Model** and invite students to take out their copies.
- Invite students to refer to their **Painted Essay® template** to remember the parts of an introductory paragraph:
 - Introduction (background information to engage the reader)
 - Focus statement
 - Two points
- Ask:

“Which sentence is the focus statement?” (“Poison dart frogs have special physical and behavioral adaptations that help them to survive.”)

“What are the rest of the sentences in this paragraph about?” (The sentences hook the reader by saying something interesting about the poison dart frog and then describe the frog, where it lives, its predators, and its prey.)

“How does the focus statement connect with the rest of the sentences in this essay?” (The introduction gives basic information about the poison dart frog, and the focus statement

gives the idea that the poison dart frog looks or acts a certain way to help it survive. The focus statement connects the introduction with the next paragraph, which is about the frog's adaptations.)

“What verb tense is used throughout this model? What verb tense should you use as you write your introduction?” (present tense)

- Point out the first criterion on the checklist: “My piece shows that I understand the topic or text. Evidence from the text helps the reader to clearly understand my focus.” Ask:

“Are there any specific criteria about the introduction in this essay that you should be aware of and list in that column on the checklist?”

- Record students' suggestions in the Characteristics of My Frog Informative Piece column as needed.
- Invite students to access the word-processing tool on their **computer**. Explain that they will use the computer to draft and publish their writing.
- Focus students on the **Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart**.
- Read aloud the habit of character recorded.
- Invite students to tell an elbow partner what *taking care of shared spaces* means in their own words using the anchor chart as a guide.
- Invite students to discuss with an elbow partner and cold call students to share their responses with the whole group:

“What does taking care of and improving our shared spaces look like? What might you see when someone is taking care of our shared spaces?” (see Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)).

“What does taking care of and improving our shared spaces sound like? What might you hear when someone is taking care of our shared spaces?” (see Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)).

- Record student responses in the appropriate column on the Working to Contribute to a Better World anchor chart.
- Record taking care and improving on the academic word wall. Invite students to add translations of the words in their home languages in a different color next to the target vocabulary.
- Once again, remind students of the habit of character of focus: taking care and improving our shared spaces.
- Remind students that the computers are a shared tool, meant to be used by all students in the classroom, and because of that it is important that they take care of them as they work.
- Invite students to share ways they can be sure to take care of their computers and work space as they draft.
- Invite them to independently draft the introduction paragraph of their essays, referring to their **Informational Texts handout** (from Unit 2) and using the corresponding box on their **Informational Writing Planning graphic organizer** as they work. Circulate to support students as needed, reminding them to work only on drafting the introduction paragraph and to refer to the Informative Writing checklist and **domain-specific word wall** as needed.
- Invite students to record ‘Y’ for ‘Yes’ and the date in the final column of their Informative Writing Checklist if they feel the criteria marked on their checklists have been achieved in their writing in this lesson.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support with writing fluency: Consider continuing to color code informational essays as begun in Lesson 3. Check in and conference with these students throughout Work Time B. (MMR, MMAE)
- For ELLs: Review and rephrase the definition of focus statement: "A focus statement is the main idea of our essay. It is the most important thing that we want to teach our readers."
- For ELLs: Mini Language Dive. Ask students about the meaning of the chunks of a key sentence from their checklist: Write and display student responses next to the chunks. Examples:
 - "Place your finger on *I have an introduction that gives the reader important information needed to understand the piece.*"
 - "What is an introduction? Use your dictionaries. What is *introduction* in our home languages?" (An introduction is the first part of an essay. It tells readers the topic they will read about. It gets them interested in the topic. It's *Bhūmikā* in Bengali.)
 - "What does that refer to in the sentence?" (the introduction)
 - "Who is the *reader*? Is it just one person?" (The reader is the person reading the essay. The reader is the audience. It can be a lot of people. It is anyone who reads the essay. It can be the teacher or another student. For this essay, it is second- and third-graders.)
 - "What is another way of saying the *introduction gives the reader important information*?" (It helps the reader understand facts. It teaches something to the reader. It tells the reader things that are useful to know about frogs.)
 - "When we say information is *needed* to understand something, what does that mean?" (Readers need the facts to understand the rest of what they are reading so they are not confused.)
 - "What is the *piece* in this case?" (another way of saying *the essay*)
 - "Can you put this sentence in your own words?" (The introduction tells the person reading it about things he or she needs to know about frogs; we need to give facts in the introduction that help people understand our essays.)
- For ELLs and students who need writing support: Use sentence frames for ELLs who need heavier support: "The (name of frog) is interesting because it (interesting feature). It has (physical features). It lives in (habitat). It eats (prey). The (name of frog) has special features and adaptations that help it survive."

Work Time

C. Research Reading Share (15 minutes)

- Focus students on the **Working to Become Ethical People anchor chart**. Remind students of: I behave with integrity. This means I am honest and do the right thing, even when it's difficult, because it is the right thing to do.
- Remind them that this includes doing homework even when there may be other things they want to do after school. Remind them that the purpose of research reading is to build

background knowledge and vocabulary on a topic so that they can gradually read more and more complex texts on that topic.

- Refer to the **Independent Reading: Sample Plan** to guide students through a research reading review, or use your own routine.

Meeting Students' Needs

- Because some students may have completed some of the prompts in their independent reading journal orally with a family member or friend, it will be important for these them to have some notes to use for this sharing time. Consider meeting with them in advance to prep them for the research reading share. (MMAE)

Closing and Assessment

A. Exit Ticket (5 minutes)

- Gather students. Ask them to assess themselves on the learning target: "I can write an introduction paragraph for my informational essay that describes my freaky frog, its habitat, its predators, and its prey."
- Distribute **index cards** and have them record their name and respond to the following:
"Did you meet this learning target? What is your evidence?"
- If productive, cue students to think about their thinking:
"How does your self-assessment add to your ability to meet the learning target? I'll give you time to think and discuss with a partner." (Responses will vary.)
- Use a checking for understanding protocol (for example Red Light, Green Light or Thumb-O-Meter) for students to self-assess against how well they took care of shared spaces and showed integrity in this lesson.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Pair ELLs with a partner who has more advanced or native language proficiency. The partners should discuss their responses before writing. Provide sentence frames to bolster participation. Examples:
 - "I (did/did not) meet the learning target."
 - "I described my frog's ____."
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing fluency: Some students may benefit from answering the exit ticket questions as interview questions with the teacher or by highlighting areas of their informative writing that demonstrate the learning target. (MMAE)

Homework

A. Complete Verbs I in your Unit 3 homework packet.

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

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with writing: Refer to the suggested homework support in Lesson 1. (MMAE)