

Lesson 1: Speaking, Listening, and Writing: Exploring Why Trees Are Important to Communities



CCS Standards

- **W.K.8:** With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
- **SL.K.1:** Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- **SL.K.1a:** Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about the topics and texts under discussion).
- **SL.K.4:** Describe familiar people, places, things, and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional detail.
- **SL.K.6:** Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.
- **LK.1:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
- **LK.1b:** Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
- **L.K.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **L.K.2a:** Capitalize the first word in a sentence and the pronoun I.
- **L.K.2b:** Recognize and name end punctuation.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can state an opinion and provide reasons to support it. (SL.K.1a, SL.K.4, SL.K.6)
- I can describe trees and where they are located. (W.K.8, L.K.1b, L.K.2a, L.K.2b)

Ongoing Assessment

- Collect students' Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II and use the Language Checklist to track progress toward W.K.8, L.K.1b, L.K.2a, L.K.2b, and L.K.6 (see Assessment Overview and Resources).

Agenda

1. Opening

- A. Engaging the Learner: Opinions and Reasons (20 minutes)

2. Work Time

- A. Back to Back and Face to Face Protocol: Module 4 Guiding Question (10 minutes)
- B. Independent Writing: Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II (25 minutes)

3. Closing and Assessment

- A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- Recall that nurturing an inquiry-rich classroom environment begins with asking questions and cultivating curiosity. This lesson invites students to ask questions and wonder about how trees are important to a community as students observe photos, engage in an opinion/reasons activity, write to describe photographs of trees, and discuss and share their observations and questions.
- This lesson, which kicks off the second unit of this module, invites students to continue considering the Module 4 guiding question, “How are trees important to us and our community?” with a particular focus on the community aspect of the question.
- In the Opening, students are introduced to the concepts of opinions and reasons that are a focus of this unit. In this lesson, students learn the definition of opinion and reason and practice stating an opinion and providing a reason to support it by responding to questions. Throughout the unit, students read texts in which authors state opinions, and students provide reasons and gather information to support writing about their own opinion connected to the Module 4 guiding question.
- During Work Time B, students revisit a familiar writing routine from Unit 1 with a slightly different focus: the Enjoying Trees journal. In this unit, the purpose of the journal is twofold: to introduce students to places in which trees might be planted in a community and to give them practice using prepositions to describe the trees’ locations. This practice serves to support the main writing task in Part II of the Unit 2 Assessment.

How this lesson builds on previous work:

- During Unit 1, students learned how people and characters enjoyed trees. This unit extends these ideas and invites students to learn more specifically about how trees are important to a community: through enjoyment, meeting needs, and enhancing an environment.

Down the road:

- In Lessons 2–5, students will read the text *A Tree Is Nice* to build their understanding of an author making a point and supporting that point with reasons.

In advance:

- Prepare Trees Are Important Word Wall cards for the words opinion, reason, and community.
- Distribute Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II and pencils at student workspaces for Work Time B.
- Preview the Opening to ensure there is space to accommodate the activity. If space does not allow for movement within the classroom, consider letting students indicate opinions by standing (Opinion A), kneeling (Opinion B), or sitting (Opinion C).
- Post: Learning targets and applicable anchor charts (see materials list).

Consider using an interactive whiteboard or document camera to display lesson materials.

- Continue to use the technology tools recommended throughout Modules 1–3 to create anchor charts to share with families; to record students as they participate in discussions and protocols to review with students later and to share with families; and for students to listen to and annotate text, record ideas on note-catchers, and word-process writing.
- Consider having students use word-processing technology to type their journal entries throughout the unit.

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided by in part by CA ELD Standards K.I.A.3, K.I.B.11, and K.II.C.6

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with opportunities to engage with visuals to generate ideas and questions about a new topic of learning, to deconstruct focus words and concepts through peer discussion, and to describe their thoughts in writing.
- ELLs may find it challenging to comprehend, internalize, and use the new words and corresponding concepts of *opinion* and *reasons*. Consider spending additional time previewing and reviewing these concepts as they are presented in the lesson (see levels of support and the Meeting Students’ Needs column).

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- During Work Time B and throughout the unit, encourage students to turn to an elbow partner to describe an opinion they have and their reason, using the frames: “I believe/I think _____ [apples are nice] because _____ [they are sweet].” Ask: “Why do you need to give a reason after you share an opinion or an idea?” Create a space in the classroom to post these opinions and reasons for students to review or contribute more if they finish a task early.

For heavier support:

- During Work Time B, circulate to offer additional support to students who are struggling with putting their thoughts into writing. Repeat the prompt and ask students to identify places in the classroom where there are resources that can help them (e.g., Word Wall, anchor chart, classmate). Consider working closely with a group of students to complete their work as a shared writing experience.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** In this lesson, support comprehension by activating prior knowledge. Consider a brief review of Unit 1 to highlight relevance and scaffold connections for students. Additionally, provide questions visually as well as verbally. For example, display questions on a chart or the board during discussions.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** Recall that appropriate goal-setting supports development of executive skills and strategies. Continue to offer scaffolds for students learning to set appropriate personal goals, such as a checklist with one goal during each learning activity.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** Throughout this unit, sustained engagement and effort is essential for student achievement. Recall that some students will benefit from consistent reminders of learning goals and their value or relevance. Students who may need additional support with sustained effort and concentration are supported when these reminders are built into the learning environment.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

New:

- community, opinion, reason (L)

Review:

- noun, verb, respect (L)

Materials

- ✓ Module 4 Guiding Question anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Trees Are Important Word Wall cards (new; teacher-created; three)
- ✓ Trees Are Important Word Wall (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1; added to during the Opening; see Teaching Notes)
- ✓ Opinion icons (one set to display)
- ✓ Back to Back and Face to Face Protocol anchor chart (begun in Module 2)
- ✓ Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II (page 1; one per student and one for teacher modeling)
- ✓ Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Pencils (one per student)
- ✓ Language Checklist (for teacher reference; see Assessment Overview and Resources)
- ✓ Respect anchor chart (begun in Module 3)

Opening

A. Engaging the Learner: Opinions and Reasons (20 minutes)

- Gather students whole group.
- Tell students that today is an exciting day because you are going to share a new activity with them that will help them express ideas and share information about the Module 4 guiding question.
- Direct students' attention to the **Module 4 Guiding Question anchor chart** and read it aloud:

“How are trees important to us and our community?”
- Tell students that throughout the unit, they will read texts that help them gather more information to help them answer the part of the question that is about communities.
- Tell them that in some of the texts they will read, the author will share an *opinion* about trees and provide *reasons* to support that opinion.
- Show students the **Trees Are Important Word Wall cards** for *opinion* (what you think about something) and *reason* (why you have your opinion; what makes you think so) and follow the same process established in Modules 1 and 2: Provide each word's definition, clap out its syllables, use it in a sentence, and place the Word Wall card and picture for it on the **Trees Are Important Word Wall**.
- Tell students that throughout the unit they will learn about how authors support their opinions with reasons because soon students will write their own opinions related to the Module 4 guiding question and use reasons to support those opinions!
- Direct students' attention to the posted learning targets and read the first one aloud:

“I can state an opinion and provide reasons to support it.”
- Tell students that, in just a minute, they are going to have the opportunity to think about a question that you pose, choose an opinion, move to a place in the room to show that opinion, and then share with a partner why they have that opinion.
- Share that during this activity, you will ask a question and they have to think about their answer to the question, or their opinion on the question. Tell them that depending on what their opinion is, they will move to a different part of the room. Point out where students whose opinion is “A” will go, where students whose opinion is “B” will go, and where students whose opinion is “C” will go. Tell students that if they don't have an opinion about the question, they should remain in their spot.
- Model what students will do as they engage in the activity:
 - Pose the question and invite students to think about their answer:

“What should we have for a snack?”
 - Using the displayed **opinion icons**, point out the different parts of the room where students will go once they decide upon their opinion.
 - Model thinking aloud about your opinion and moving to the corresponding part of the room.
 - Using a student volunteer, model sharing the reason you have that opinion with a partner. (Example: “I think we should have apples for snacks because they are healthy.”)
 - Model returning to the whole group area safely and respectfully.

- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“What did you notice about how I explained why I have the opinion that I have about snacks?” (Responses will vary, but may include: You used a complete sentence, your reason was connected to your opinion, and you used the word because in your sentence.)
- Guide students through the above process to state their opinions and share their reasons for the question:
 - “What should we have for a snack?”
- As time permits, repeat the process for the question:
 - “What should we play at recess?”
- Refocus whole group and ask:
“What did you notice about the opinions you and your classmates had?” (Responses will vary, but many include: They were not all the same. A lot of people had one opinion, and only a few people had a different opinion, etc.)
“What did you notice about the reason your partner gave for his or her opinion?” (Responses will vary, but may include: We did not have the same reason for our opinion. The reason matched the opinion. The reason did not make sense to me, etc.)
- Tell students they will have many more opportunities throughout the unit to state opinions and provide reasons to support those opinions.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with organizing ideas for verbal expression: (Sentence Frames: Opinion and Reasons) Post a sentence frame to help students recognize and express opinions and reasons throughout the unit. (Example: “I believe/think _____ because _____.”) Add icons above the words believe/think that match those on the Word Wall. (MMAE)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with comprehension (Visual Cues: Color-Coding) Color-code the posted sentence frame so that the opinion (I believe/think _____) is in red, and the reason (because _____) is in blue. Continue to color-code throughout the unit, bringing students' attention to this visual cue and encouraging them to color-code text as well. (MMR)
- For ELLs (Discussion Gestures) Invite students to create a discussion gesture for *opinion* and *reason* to signal when they hear one or would like to share one. Examples:
 - Hands shaped like an “o” for opinion
 - Two hands cupped as if holding or supporting an opinion for reasons

Work Time

A. Back to Back and Face to Face Protocol: Module 4 Guiding Question (10 minutes)

- Refocus whole group.
- Remind students that in the previous unit they learned about ways in which people, animals, and characters in stories can enjoy trees.

- Tell students that in this unit they will continue to consider ways in which trees can be enjoyed, but they will also think about how trees are important to a community.
- Direct students' attention back to the Module 4 Guiding Question anchor chart and reread the question aloud:

“How are trees important to us and our community?”
- Focus students on the word *community* in the question and Turn and Talk:

“What does the word community mean? When we say the word community, what does it mean to you?” (Responses will vary, but may include: a group of people, my neighborhood, our school community, being together, and getting along, etc.)

Conversation cue: “Who can add on to what your classmate said? I’ll give you time to think.” (Responses will vary.)
- Refocus whole group and invite a few students to share out.
- Show students the **Trees Are Important Word Wall card** for *community* (a group of people who share interests or living space) and follow the same process established in Modules 1 and 2: Provide its definition, clap out its syllables, use it in a sentence, and place the Word Wall card and picture for it on the **Trees Are Important Word Wall**.
- Tell students they are going to use the Back to Back and Face to Face protocol to discuss their ideas about the Module 4 guiding question. Remind them that they used this protocol in Unit 1, and review as necessary using the **Back to Back and Face to Face Protocol anchor chart**. Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.
- Guide students through two rounds of the protocol with different partners using the Module 4 guiding question:

“How are trees important to us and our community?”
- After students have completed two rounds of the protocol, refocus whole group and invite volunteers to share out.
- Give students specific, positive feedback on their discussions about the Module 4 guiding question.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with making connections: (Word Meaning: Making Meaning Concrete) To help contextualize and make the word meaning concrete, invite students to consider who comprises their community and what activities they enjoy with their community. Ask:

“Who are the people in your community?”

“What do you do with people in your community?”
- Provide frames and model an example:
 - “My community is my _____ [friends/family/soccer team/neighborhood].”
 - “I like to _____ [play/listen to music/have parties] with my community.” (MMR, MME)
- For ELLs (Home language connection) Invite students to share translations of the words *important* and *community* in their home languages. If students do not know, help them look up the words in a bilingual dictionary or use an online translation tool.

Work Time

B. Independent Writing: Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II (25 minutes)

- Tell students that trees are important to communities in a lot of different ways and that throughout the unit they will read texts, observe pictures, and write and draw about how and why trees are important to communities.
- Tell students that communities plant trees in a lot of different places for a lot of different reasons. Preview for them that in the books they will read in this unit they will learn about some of the reasons communities plant trees.
- Direct students' attention to the posted learning targets and read the second one aloud:

“I can describe trees and where they are located.”

- With excitement, display the **Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II**. Remind students that this journal is similar to the one they wrote and sketched in during the previous unit, but there are a few differences. Briefly flip through the pages, giving students a sneak peek of what they will be writing about.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“What do you notice is different between this Enjoying Trees journal and the one from the previous unit?” (This one has pictures already in it. This one has more lines for writing.)
- Tell students that in the Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II they will see pictures of some of the places where communities plant trees. Just like with the journal in the previous unit, they will write descriptions of what they observe in the images.
- With excitement, tell students that this observation and writing will be good practice because eventually they will write their own opinion about where they think a tree should be planted in the community.
- Remind students that they will write their name on the front cover and model by writing your name on the copy for teacher modeling.
- Tell students that in this journal they will describe the trees and where in the community the tree has been planted.
- Display page 1 of the journal and point to the image on the page. Consider using the routine from Module 3 to closely observe all parts of the picture.
- Turn and Talk:
“What do you notice about this picture?” (There is a tree. There is a house.)
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“How would you describe where the trees are in this picture?” (Responses will vary, depending on which tree the students describe: The tree is next to the house; the tree is beside the house; the tree is behind the house.)
- Direct students' attention back to page 1 of the displayed Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II and read the prompt at the top of the page:

“Look at the picture. Write a sentence to describe where the tree is.”

- Point out that students will look closely at the picture and then, using a complete sentence, describe what they see and where the tree is in the picture.
- Tell students that their writing should include a *noun* (a person, place, or thing) and a *verb* (which says what the person, place, or thing is doing). Remind them that all complete sentences use a noun and a verb. Provide examples as needed.
- Turn and Talk:

“What is a sentence you could write to describe what you see and where the tree is in this picture?” (Responses will vary, but may include: The tree is next to the house.)
- Direct students’ attention back to page 1 of the displayed Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II and model completing the descriptive writing with your own sentence(s). (Example: “The tall tree is next to the brown house.”) Refer to the **Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II (example, for teacher reference)** as needed:
 - Model capitalizing the first word in the sentence.
 - Model using a period as end punctuation.
 - Reread the sentence and emphasize the noun(s) and verb(s).
- Invite students to safely transition to their workspaces and point out the journals and **pencils** already there.
- Invite students to turn to page 1 and begin writing to describe the picture and to describe where the tree is. Remind them to use the Trees Are Important Word Wall words as needed.
- Circulate to support students as they write.
- Collect students’ Enjoying Trees Journals, Part II to track progress toward W.K.8, L.K.1b, L.K.2a, L.K.2b, and L.K.6 on the Language Checklist.
- Provide specific, positive feedback on students’ ability to observe closely and describe what they see.
- Tell students that they will continue describing trees and where they are planted in different communities as they complete the Enjoying Trees Journal, Part II in future lessons.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with motivation: Check for comprehension by asking students to summarize and then to personalize the learning targets. Ask:

“Can you put the first learning target in your own words?” (I can tell you about trees and where they are planted.)

“How do you feel about that target?” (It might be a little hard, but it is interesting). (MME)

Closing and Assessment

A. Reflecting on Learning (5 minutes)

- Invite students back to the whole group area.
- Direct students' attention to the **Respect anchor chart and briefly** review the definition of *respect*. (Respect means I treat myself with care, I treat others with care, and I treat the environment with care.)
- Tell students that respect is an important habit of character to practice at all times, but it is especially important during this unit because they are practicing sharing their opinions and respecting one another's opinions so they will be ready to share an opinion on the best place to plant a tree!
- Remind students that people have different opinions and that it is important to listen to the opinions of others and respect that those opinions might be different from their own. People may have different opinions and disagree, but it is important to disagree respectfully by using the sentence frame: "I respectfully disagree because I think ____."
- Invite students to think of hand gestures to help them remember the different ways they can show respect.
- Invite students to reread the anchor chart with you while using the hand gestures.
- Turn and Talk:
"How did you show respect to yourself and others today when sharing opinions?" (Responses will vary, but may include: I listened to my classmates; I let my friends make their own choices and opinions; etc.)
Conversation Cue: "Who can add on to what your classmate said? I'll give you time to think." (Responses will vary.)
- Tell students that they will have many opportunities to continue practicing respect as they learn more about other people's opinions and how trees benefit their community.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: (Celebrating Learning) Consider giving feedback on what an ELL did well. This will help the student build his or her self-confidence and to identify and repeat his or her success next time.
- For students who may need additional support with auditory processing: Display sentence frames on the board or chart paper for visual support. (MMR)