



SAMPLE MATERIAL

Second-Grade Units of Study for Reading Workshop

Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration, New York

Topic: Increased Learning Time: Beyond the Regular School Day

Practice: Structure Time

Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration (YSADE) has piloted an expanded learning time model developed by The After School Corporation. The blended staffing model has community educators who are students from local colleges and high schools working in classrooms beside teachers during the traditional day, then helping lead enrichment activities in the expanded day.

By integrating community educators into regular and after-school instruction, YSADE provides teachers with an important asset to take into consideration when planning lessons. This plan for a nonfiction writer workshop assumes that classes will be divided into small, need-based groups that afford students more individualized instructional attention tailored to their needs. Each group receives an educator's guidance and feedback.

This sample material includes possible teacher and student objectives, descriptions of concepts, and strategies for planning for instruction. Additionally, it includes a completed lesson template and a blank form which can be filled out by the literacy coach or classroom teacher.

Young Scholars' Academy for Discovery and Exploration Second Grade Units of Study for Reading Workshop Focus: Nonfiction Writing Workshop Focus: Expert Writing February 1-26, 2010

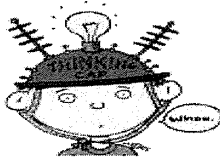
What is nonfiction?

Nonfiction books present facts about subjects, like real people, places, and events. Biographies, autobiographies, newspaper and magazine articles, personal and persuasive essays, histories, and textbooks are just a few examples of nonfiction writing. Many of the reading our students will engage in during their education will be nonfiction. Nonfiction is an important genre because the state exams are designed, using nonfiction genre. Therefore, it is important that students learn “how” to read nonfiction text in a constructive manner.

This unit of study will familiarize you with the nonfiction reading and writing genre of study. In this genre of study, students will go through the following process: unit immersion, the development of a definition of nonfiction, creation of a chart identifying the components of a nonfiction book, students will select a topic to research, and students will draft, revise, edit, publish, and reflect on their process.

It’s important that the strategies taught in reading **transfer** into the writing component. As we continue to think about planning and making attempts to “*fit it all in*” it’s important to note that we cannot teach in isolation. We have to “plan smart” our planning should be across all content areas. When educators plan across contents areas it helps to create a seamless transition. Students need to understand that every skill and strategy learned applies throughout all content subjects. Our ultimate goal is to develop lifelong independent learners who know how to apply the information learned.

Thinking about Nonfiction:



I would like to reiterate that the purpose of this nonfiction unit of study is to teach students **how** to read and write in the informational genre. In an effort to ensure that any unit of study is successful, planning is essential. Educators should sift through their libraries to select nonfiction texts that are of high interest to students prior to beginning the unit. When thinking about teaching points, educators should make an assessment of their students’ readiness levels to plan effective instruction. Utilize running records, conference notes, and classroom observations to get a baseline of where and how to begin this and any unit of study.

By learning how to use informational text presented in various types of nonfiction material, students will be prepared to use an array of expository texts that readers of all ages encounter daily such as newspapers, brochures, magazines, instruction manuals, recipes, and maps. It is important to understand that while we are focusing on a genre of study embedded within the genre are reading strategies that our students need to learn. The reading strategies are geared toward enhancing comprehension. Readers need to understand that reading involves comprehension. Comprehension is the key ingredient toward advancing as a reader.

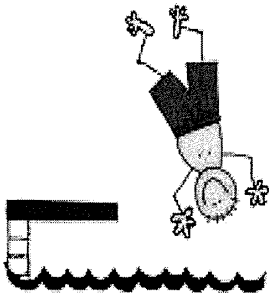
Possible teaching objectives may be as follows:

- An understanding of nonfiction text texts versus narrative texts
- An understanding of the research process
- An understanding of the use of craft and revision strategies to improve their writing

Possible student objectives, by the end of this unit students' will be:

- Exposed to a variety of nonfiction texts
- Able to develop a definition of nonfiction
- Learn how to research a topic through the reading of informational materials, observations, and interviews
- Make writing decisions as they choose a topic for their individual expert book determine a structure to follow, use illustrations, and text to inform their audience.

Immersion



When we begin any unit of study, we must first immerse our students into the unit of study. **How do you immerse your students into a unit of study?** You begin by exposing them. For example, collect all nonfiction texts in your classroom and spread them throughout the classroom, place some nonfiction books into their book baggies, begin to develop "child friendly" anchor charts **with** the students, and conduct an informal or formal survey focused on gathering information about their understanding of the current unit of study. We want to immerse our students in nonfiction by exposing them to the unit in an organic manner. As educators, we want our students to ask lots of questions to help them develop an understanding of their own learning. When students ask questions, it clearly indicates that they're thinking. We want to capitalize on our students' curiosity at all times. Therefore, let's welcome all their inquiries. You may want to survey their knowledge of nonfiction during conferring session and/or during a whole class discussion. The point is to know where the students are as learners to therefore, prepare lessons that promote their understanding.

Getting ready

- Gather all of your nonfiction texts.
- Pair books together to show similarities.
- Select nonfiction big books that highlight the nonfiction structures.
- Select books that showcase the "type" of writing you want them to be able to produce.
- Visit the library to select books based on their interests.
- Gather Shared Reading pieces from high interest books, pull excerpts, and jot onto chart paper.

As you think about planning for the nonfiction unit of study, below are some suggested **student objectives** to keep in mind throughout the unit of study.

By the end of the unit students should be able to:

- Learn text features associated with types of nonfiction
- Learn about different text structures used in nonfiction and identify the text structure of a specific passage
- Check their comprehension skills and apply what they've learned to their own writing
- Get an introduction to nonfiction texts and identify what they already know about this genre
- Prepare to read a nonfiction article/text by building background knowledge and learning key vocabulary

Successful readers of nonfiction follow the same basic pattern every time they face a new text. This is a learned strategy, and it's one that you can implement in your classroom by emphasizing the five keys to reading nonfiction--text features, text structure, background knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension--every time you introduce a new passage, textbook chapter, or nonfiction book to your students.

FIVE KEYS TO READING NONFICTION

1. Identify Text Features

Different types of nonfiction text contain common features that readers can recognize and use to help them understand the information being presented. For example, maps usually feature a legend, a compass rose, and a coordinate grid. So, whenever you present a new type of nonfiction, discuss the text's typical features with your students, and explain how they can use them to find and understand information.

2. Teach Text Structure

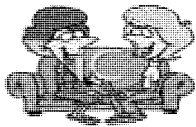
To comprehend a text, students need to recognize how ideas are organized, or the structure of the text. One effective way to help students identify nonfiction structures is

to teach words and phrases that frequently signal organization. For example, if students know that words, such as like, unlike, and in contrast, are often used when one thing is being compared to another, they can readily spot the author's intention and they'll be better equipped to understand the text as a whole. Your students' own informational writing will also benefit when their knowledge of various text structures increases.

3. Activate Background Knowledge

Perhaps the most important habit of reading nonfiction is connecting new information to what we already know. One way to get students to start making these key connections is to use a Smart Chart. A Smart Chart is similar to a three-column KWL chart that has the three headings: "What We Think We Know," "What We Want to Know" and "What We Learned." The difference is that a Smart Chart features a fourth column, labeled "Background." After completing the "What We Think We Know" column as a class, share facts that your students did not list but which will be useful for them to keep in mind while reading the text. Explain where you got the additional information and discuss where students might look for this background material if they were approaching the text on their own. The new information is what goes in the "Background" column. This addition to the TKWL chart puts new knowledge in context which is the first step toward achieving success as a nonfiction reader.

Sidebar Conversation



You may have noticed that I prefer the TKWL chart v. the KWL chart; I learned that students sometimes only "think" they know something. I recall a second grade student who told me while completing a KWL chart that he knew the moon was made of cheese. Therefore, working on a "Think we Know" column may be better than a "Know" column.

4. Pre-Teach Vocabulary

One of the biggest challenges facing beginning nonfiction readers can be the specialized vocabulary it often requires. Many teachers find it useful to pre-teach a set of key vocabulary words that students will need to know in order to understand a text and that they most likely won't be able to determine from context alone. However, it may be tricky to determine the "just right" words to teach. I suggest reading Isabel Beck's *Bringing Words to Life*. It's a great resource to assist with vocabulary instruction. I also suggested the Frayer Model of teaching vocabulary. **For example:**

Vocabulary word/phrase/concept: Table of Contents	Definition of Table of Contents: Table of Contents provides a structure for what the reader will read. It helps the reader find information relevant to what they're interested in
Sentence using the word: My nonfiction book will have a table of contents so that readers can find topics that interest them.	Illustration of the word/phrase/concept <p style="text-align: center;">Table of Contents</p> What do cats eat? Pages 1-2 Where do cats live? Pages 3-4 What do cats look like? Pages 5-6

5. Emphasize Comprehension

The final key for helping students to read nonfiction is teaching them to self-check for understanding. Strong nonfiction readers do continually ask themselves whether they have really understood the main ideas of what they have read. For an after-reading activity that works as a comprehension check for all grades, give students the main idea of a text and ask them to write down the details that support it. This strategy mirrors the thought process that more advanced readers find automatic. Remember that Differentiation of Instruction is crucial when addressing mixed ability groups.



As adult nonfiction readers, we instinctively bring our background knowledge of the topic, of text features and structure, and of vocabulary to whatever kind of expository text we encounter even with something as simple as driving directions. We also repeatedly ask ourselves if we "get it." As an early childhood teacher, I often asked my students, "Does this make sense?" It's important that your students recognize when something doesn't make sense. You can help your students gain this kind of intuition by teaching explicitly the skills readers use to understand nonfiction. As a result, your students will draw on these skills throughout their lives.





While reading nonfiction text students will be required to identify the differences between fact and opinion. In addition, they will look at graphs and possibly include them in their nonfiction expert writing pieces. The table of contents is a nonfiction concept they'll be required to understand when reading nonfiction books. I suggest you begin the unit by introducing the table of contents because it will help them understand how to research information for their expert writing.

If students are going to write nonfiction books you may want to consider differentiating the table of contents by setting a "standard" requirement and adding more challenging components to the table of contents for more advanced students. We




want our students who need the challenge to extend their critical thinking to obtain a deeper understanding of their nonfiction study. Moreover, teachers may want to implement technology by allowing a group of students to develop a PowerPoint presentation that may serve as a presentation of their nonfiction topic. It's ultimately up to the teacher to assess his/her students' interests and capabilities to therefore modify the instruction and the product.

The suggested student objectives may help to create a bigger picture of what the students should be able to do by the end of this unit of study. It's important to start with the end in mind because it helps guide each lesson. When you think about your students' diverse needs as learners and you think about the purpose behind the unit of study then the planning makes more sense. As you plan make an attempt to tie in the reading and writing teaching points. In this unit of study students are asked to engage in expert (informational) writing therefore, creating a direct link with the reading will make writing a lot easier. Below are suggested teaching/focal points you may want to consider throughout this unit of study. Please note it's important to MODEL and make connections to each lesson. We want to build upon the learning their engaged in each day. In addition, attached is a blank lesson plan template to help you adjust the teaching points as per your student's individual needs.

Unit of Study	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reading Workshop 	Introduction to nonfiction: Establish a child friendly definition with your students. You may want to have nonfiction and fiction text in hand as a comparison when developing the definition.	Why do readers read nonfiction text? As a whole class ask student select just right nonfiction texts.	What text features are found in nonfiction text? Discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Table of Contents Bold print Graphic organizers Index *Think about how a reader navigates through a nonfiction text.	Reading nonfiction: As a shared reading activity, read a nonfiction article together. Students should have a copy of the article with a highlighter and pencil. We want to show them how to dissect information to obtain a deeper understanding.	Continuation of previous lesson. *Remember that the goal is to support our students and gradually release support so that they become lifelong independent learners. Incorporate the To-With-By method.
Writing Workshop 	Introduction to Nonfiction Expert Writing: Establish a child friendly definition with the students. Have a sample of a personal narrative and an information piece to highlight the differences in the writing styles	Students should begin brainstorming possible expert topics. Make an attempt to guide them toward selecting topics that are easily found in your classroom library. You can also use the internet to obtain information that interests them.	Select a topic. Students should think critically about their topic. They should begin to develop an action plan explaining how they will become an expert about the topic.	Now that they have their topic and they've been exposed to the text features during reading workshop you may want to establish an understanding of how writers use text features to write nonfiction. How does nonfiction text look different from fiction? Possible answers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There may be chapter titles and section headers that preview information. Each page has words in a variety of fonts and type sizes. Bold or italic fonts may be used to signal important words or phrases. 	How does a writer use a graphic organizer to help his/her reader understand the information?

Reading Workshop 	Focus on teaching students how to monitor for their own understanding. Students should use their readers' notebook to document a section of the nonfiction book that they understood very well.	Continuation of previous lesson	Students should use their readers' notebooks to document a section of the nonfiction book that they did not understand.	Continuation of previous lesson	
Writing Workshop 	3-day teaching point focus Writers will be gathering information for the next 3 days about their selected topics. Teacher should MODEL what that looks like. Students should understand that they should only include important facts. In addition, to adding their interpretations to the facts. Students should use their nonfiction books or articles to pull important facts that they want to share with their audience.			2-day teaching point focus Organizing the information gathered to begin writing their expert essays/books. The product may be differentiated to meet each student's interest and readiness level.	
Winter Break 2/15-2/19					
Reading Workshop 	Great readers asks questions to better understand the text Students should jot down questions that come up as they're reading their nonfiction text. During conferring sessions teachers should help them find the answers to their questions. Modeling how to find the answers to questions is a great skill.			Making text-to-world connections Students are reading nonfiction therefore making text-to-world connections will be an easier concept to grasp.	
Writing Workshop 	Expert Writing Week Students should engage in writing their expert pieces using the information they gathered and organized previously. They should revise and edit their pieces to publish by Friday.				Publishing Party

Planning Template

Unit of Study	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Reading Workshop 					
Writing Workshop 					
Reading Workshop 					
Writing Workshop 