



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 4: Module 1B: Unit 3: Overview



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Unit 3: Researching a Selected Poet and Writing a Biographical Essay

In this unit, students are introduced to biographies with the text *A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams*, by Jen Bryant. Students read this narrative nonfiction text closely to build understanding about how William Carlos Williams became inspired to write poetry. Students then closely read portions of the text to gather additional information about Williams' life. Next, students closely read biographies about the poet they selected to study for part of the performance task. Students are also introduced to biographical timelines and use these as an additional source of information about their poet's life. For the mid-unit assessment, students will read a biography of another poet, answering text-dependent questions to demonstrate their progress toward standards RI.4.1, RI.4.2, and RI.4.3.

In the second half of this unit, students prepare for the performance task for this module, the Poet's Performance. In this three-part performance task, students focus on a single poet, presenting a poem by that poet, writing a short essay about the poet, and reading aloud an original poem inspired by their poet. The class learns to write an essay by planning and writing a shared essay about poet William Carlos Williams. Then students plan for their essays using notes gathered from the first half of the unit, and complete a draft of the essay for the first part of the end of unit assessment (RI.4.9 and W.4.2). Next, students engage in a round of critique and feedback to improve their work and complete a revised draft for the second part of the end of unit assessment (W.4.5). Finally, students read aloud their poems and essay for the Poet's Performance.

Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- **What inspires writers to write poetry?**
- *Writers draw inspiration from many places, including the work of other writers and their own lives.*

Mid-Unit 3 Assessment

Reading and Answering Questions about Informational Text

This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS standards RI.4.1, RI.4.2, and RI.4.3. For this assessment, students will read a new biography about another poet. Students will answer text-dependent questions and write a short response to a focusing question.

End of Unit 3 Assessment

Part 1: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph;

This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS standards RI.4.9 and W.4.2 e. In this first part of the two-part assessment, students complete a concluding paragraph for their poet essay.

Part 2: Revising Poet Essays Based on Feedback

This assessment centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS standards W.4.2 c and d, W.4.5, and L.4.2 a and d. In this part of the two-part assessment, students revise their essay based on feedback from their peers and teacher on linking words, precise vocabulary, and conventions.



Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards as students read literature and informational texts about poets' lives and what inspired their writing. This module does not tie to New York State Social Studies or Science standards.

Texts

1. Sharon Creech, *Love That Dog* (New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers, 2001), ISBN: 0-06-029287-3.
2. Jen Bryant, *A River of Words: The Story of William Carlos Williams* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2008), ISBN: 978-0-8028-5302-8 (teacher copy only).
3. Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," "The Pasture," and "A Patch of Old Snow" (no purchase necessary).
4. Valerie Worth, "Dog" and "safety pin" (no purchase necessary).
5. Walter Dean Myers, "Love That Boy" and "Lawrence Hamm, 19, Student Athlete" (no purchase necessary).
6. Dara Sharif, "Finding Your Voice," in *Scholastic News*, April 4, 2005 (no purchase necessary).
7. "Robert Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963)." (American Reading Company, 2014) (no purchase necessary).
8. "Valerie Worth (October 29, 1933 – July 31, 1994)." (American Reading Company, 2014) (no purchase necessary).
9. "Nikki Giovanni (June 7, 1943 – present)." (American Reading Company, 2014) (no purchase necessary).



This unit is approximately 3 weeks or 15 sessions of instruction.

Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 1	Introducing Biographies: <i>A River of Words</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain what a text says using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can make inferences using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can determine the main idea using specific details from the text. (RI.4.2) I can summarize informational or persuasive text. (RI.4.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify the text features of <i>A River of Words</i>. I can define the word “biography.” I can determine the gist of <i>A River of Words</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gist recording form Exit ticket 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guiding Questions anchor chart William Carlos Williams anchor chart
Lesson 2	Reading Closely: Author’s Note, Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain what a text says using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can make inferences using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can determine the main idea using specific details from the text. (RI.4.2) I can summarize informational or persuasive text. (RI.4.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can determine the gist of the first paragraph of the Author’s Note in <i>A River of Words</i>. I can answer questions about the text in order to gain a deeper understanding of the life of William Carlos Williams. I can determine the main idea of the first paragraph of the Author’s Note in <i>A River of Words</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close Reading Questions and Notes: Author’s Note (answers for close reading of paragraph 1 only)) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> William Carlos Williams anchor chart
Lesson 3	Reading Closely: Author’s Note, Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain what a text says using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can make inferences using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can determine the main idea using specific details from the text. (RI.4.2) I can summarize informational or persuasive text. (RI.4.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can determine the gist of the second and third paragraphs of the Author’s Note in <i>A River of Words</i>. I can answer questions about the text in order to gain a deeper understanding of the life of William Carlos Williams. I can determine the main idea of the second paragraph of the Author’s Note in <i>A River of Words</i>. I can identify words specific to poetry and biographies about poets in the second and third paragraph of the Author’s Note in <i>A River of Words</i>. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close Reading Questions and Notes: Author’s Note Word Wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> William Carlos Williams anchor chart What Makes a Poem a Poem? anchor chart



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 4	Reading Selected Biographies of Poets, Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain what a text says using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can make inferences using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can determine the main idea using specific details from the text. (RI.4.2) I can explain the main points in a historical, scientific, or technical text, using specific details in the text. (RI.4.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can determine the gist of my poet's biography. I can use evidence from my poet's biography to answer questions. I can determine the main idea of an excerpt of text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Biography of Poet Gist recording form Biography of Poet text-dependent questions Exit ticket 	
Lesson 5	Reading Selected Biographies of Poets, Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can determine the main idea using specific details from the text. (RI.4.2) I can summarize informational or persuasive text. (RI.4.2) I can explain the main points in a historical, scientific, or technical text, using specific details in the text. (RI.4.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can identify important events and ideas about the life of my poet. I can identify words specific to poetry and biographies about poets)in my selected poet's biography). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homework: Further Questions (from Lesson 4) Important Events and Information note-catcher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> William Carlos Williams anchor chart
Lesson 6	Mid-Unit Assessment: Answering Questions about a Biography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can explain what a text says using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can make inferences using specific details from the text. (RI.4.1) I can determine the main idea using specific details from the text. (RI.4.2) I can explain the main points in a historical, scientific, or technical text, using specific details in the text. (RI.4.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use evidence from the Nikki Giovanni biography to answer questions. I can determine the main idea of an excerpt of the Nikki Giovanni biography. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Unit 3 Assessment: Answering Questions about a Biography 	



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 7	Revisiting the Performance Task: Analyzing a Model Essay and Reading with Expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2) I can speak clearly and at an understandable pace. (L.4.4) I can read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. (RF.4.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can analyze a model essay to identify characteristics of a strong essay. I can read a poem aloud clearly and with expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' annotations on the model essay Observations of students reading their inspired poems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Task anchor chart Guiding Questions anchor chart
Lesson 8	Planning the Essay: Introduction and Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can introduce a topic clearly. I can develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, and quotations. I can construct a concluding statement or section of an informative/explanatory text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can collaborate with my peers to plan an introduction for an essay about William Carlos Williams that introduces the topic. I can collaborate with my peers to plan a conclusion for an essay about William Carlos Williams that describes how he has inspired me. I can plan an introduction for an essay about my poet that introduces the topic. I can plan a conclusion for an essay about my poet that describes how she or he has inspired me. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Essay Prompt/Planner graphic organizer (Introduction and Conclusion Plan completed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Task anchor chart William Carlos Williams anchor chart
Lesson 9	Planning the Essay: Body Paragraph	<p>I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can group supporting facts together about a topic in an informative/explanatory text. I can develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, and quotations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can collaborate with my peers to plan the biographical body paragraph for an essay about William Carlos Williams that uses facts and details. I can plan the biographical body paragraph for an essay about my poet that uses facts and details. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's annotations on the model essay Poet Essay Prompt/Planner graphic organizer (Body Paragraph Plan completed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Task anchor chart William Carlos Williams anchor chart Concentric Circles protocol



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 10	Writing the Essay: Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I can introduce a topic clearly. I can develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, and quotations. I can speak clearly and at an understandable pace. (L.4.4) I can read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. (RF.4.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can collaborate with my peers to write an introduction for an essay about William Carlos Williams that introduces the topic. I can write an introduction for an essay about my poet that introduces the topic. I can read a poem aloud clearly and with expression. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student's annotations on the model essay Introduction to essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Task anchor chart
Lesson 11	Writing the Essay: Body Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I can group supporting facts together about a topic in an informative/explanatory text. I can develop the topic with facts, definitions, details, and quotations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can collaborate with my peers to write the biographical body paragraph for an essay about William Carlos Williams that uses facts and details. I can write the biographical body paragraph for an essay about my poet that uses facts and details. I can be sure that my sentences are written in my own words and not copied from the biographies I read. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Body paragraph of essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Task anchor chart Quality Paragraphs anchor chart
Lesson 12	End of Unit Assessment, Part 1: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I can construct a concluding statement or section of an informative/explanatory text. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can collaborate with my peers to write the concluding paragraph for an essay about William Carlos Williams that revisits the topic and “wraps up the essay.” I can write the concluding paragraph for an essay about my poet that revisits the topic and “wraps up the essay.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Unit 3 Assessment, Part 1: Writing a Conclusion Paragraph 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance Task anchor chart



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 13	Revising for Linking Words and Vocabulary: Revising and Critiquing to Improve Our Poet Essays	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2)• I can use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information (e.g., another, for example, also, because).• I can use precise, content-specific language/vocabulary to inform or explain about a topic.• I can use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.4.3)<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. I can choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I can use linking words to connect ideas in my essay.• I can give kind, helpful, and specific feedback to my peers.• I can use words specific to poetry and biographies to inform my reader about my poet's life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students' annotated drafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peer Critique Protocol anchor chart• Peer Critique protocol



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 14	End of Unit Assessment, Part 2: Revising Poet Essays Based on Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.4.2) I can use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information (e.g., another, for example, also, because). I can use precise, content-specific language/vocabulary to inform or explain about a topic. I can develop and strengthen my writing by planning, revising, and editing with guidance and support from peers and adults. (W.4.5) I can use conventions to send a clear message to my reader. (L.4.2) I can use correct capitalization in my writing. I can spell grade-appropriate words correctly. I can use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. (L.4.3) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use feedback from my teacher and peers to revise my essay for conventions, linking words, and words specific to poetry and biographies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' annotated poet essay drafts from End of Unit 3 Assessment, Part 1. End of Unit 3 Assessment, Part 2: Revising Poet Essays Based on Feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back-to-Back, Face-to-Face protocol
Lesson 15	Performance Task: Practicing and Participating in a Poet's Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can speak clearly and at an understandable pace. (SL.4.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I speak clearly, with expression, and at an understandable pace when presenting my work. I can give a positive comment after listening to a classmate's presentation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students' poems and essays Students' read-aloud of their poems and essays 	



Optional: Experts, Fieldwork, and Service

Experts:

- Invite a local poet to visit the classroom. Ask the poet to present her or his poetry and give students feedback on presenting their own poems.

Fieldwork:

- Arrange for students to visit a family-friendly poetry reading or performance.

Service:

- Have students present their poems and essays for younger students in the school or at a local community center or nursing home.

Optional: Extensions

- Consider collaborating with your school's art specialist to have students create their own artwork inspired by the poem they select to read for the performance task. This artwork could be added to students' presentation of their poems and essay during the performance task, the Poet's Performance, at the end of Unit 3 and could be an additional assessment of NYS ELA CCLS standard RL.4.11.



Preparation and Materials

Reader's Notebook and Poetry Journal

In this unit, students will receive various graphic organizers and additional texts. They will also reference their reader's notebook and poetry journal from Units 1 and 2. Consider having students keep these materials organized together in a folder.

Independent Reading and Volume of Reading

Students are encouraged to continue independent reading; see the Unit 3 Recommended Texts list and the stand-alone document "Foundational Reading and Language Standards: Grades 3–5 Resources Package" overview. See also Lesson 1 Teaching Notes.

Fluency Resource

In this unit, students continue to practice reading a poem from their selected poet aloud to prepare for part of their performance task—see Fluency Resource in the stand-alone document "Foundational Reading and Language Standards: Grades 3–5 Resources Package."