

**WR.2****Unit Overview****Informative Writing**

<b>Text</b>	<p>“Cave Painting” (informative writing model)</p> <p>“A Brief History of Photography” (informative writing model)</p> <p>*“The New Deal”</p> <p>*“Digging In” by Robert J. Hastings</p> <p>“Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes</p>
<b>Number of Lessons in Unit</b>	20 (includes 7 Supplemental Skills Lessons)

\*From *In Common: Effective Writing for All Students*, Collection of All Student Work Samples, K–12, by The Vermont Writing Collaborative with Student Achievement Partners, [http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Big\\_1\\_DR8.12.pdf](http://achievethecore.org/content/upload/Big_1_DR8.12.pdf). Copyright (2013) by The Vermont Writing Collaborative and Student Achievement Partners. Used with permission.

**Introduction**

In this unit, students are introduced to the skills, practices, and routines of informative writing by working collaboratively with their peers to examine informative writing models, plan for their writing, and gather evidence. Students independently practice writing and revising and also engage in peer review to revise their work. Throughout the unit, the class will construct an Informative Writing Checklist, which students will use to guide their drafting, review, and finalization. By the end of the unit, students will have produced fully developed informative papers.

Students begin the unit by reading two model informative writing texts, “Cave Painting” and “A Brief History of Photography,” exploring how each writer organizes and conveys information clearly. Using the models as examples, students learn the purpose of informative writing, the key components of informative writing, and the importance of considering one’s audience.

Students then analyze the prompt for this unit’s informative writing assignment, which asks them to explain the effects of the Great Depression on the people who lived through it. In order to build their knowledge on the informative writing topic and practice the skill of gathering evidence to support a

claim and develop subtopics, students read and analyze two articles and an excerpt from a memoir that discuss the Great Depression and how it affected people during that time.

After gathering evidence and deciding on a claim, students learn how to plan their informative papers and begin drafting. Students draft their informative papers in a nonlinear process, focusing first on developing the subtopics and evidence in their body paragraphs before composing a clear, engaging introduction and powerful, logical conclusion.

To continue to strengthen their drafts, students engage in peer review and teacher conferences, incorporating constructive feedback into their revisions. Finally, students learn and apply the conventions of the editing process to finalize their informative papers. To close the unit, students engage in a brief activity in which they reflect on the writing process, identifying strategies that helped them succeed as well as areas for improvement.

This unit contains a set of supplemental skills lessons, which provide direct instruction on discrete writing skills. Teachers can choose to implement all of these lessons or only those that address the needs of their students. Teachers also have the option of implementing activities from the module’s vocabulary lesson throughout the unit to support students’ comprehension.

Student learning is assessed based on demonstrated planning, drafting, revising, and editing throughout the writing process. At the end of the unit, students are assessed on the effectiveness of their finalized drafts according to the class-generated Informative Writing Checklist.

## Literacy Skills and Habits

- Read closely for textual details
- Annotate texts to support comprehension and analysis
- Independently read and annotate text in preparation for evidence-based discussion
- Engage in productive evidence-based discussions about text
- Use vocabulary strategies to define unknown words
- Collect and organize evidence from texts to support claims and develop subtopics in writing
- Plan for writing
- Produce writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience
- Introduce a clear topic and subtopics
- Develop the topic with relevant and sufficient evidence
- Clarify the relationships among the topic, claim, subtopics, and evidence
- Use domain-specific vocabulary in writing

- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone
- Write an effective introduction to an informative paper
- Write an effective conclusion to an informative paper
- Independently revise writing
- Independently practice the writing process outside of class
- Engage in constructive peer review
- Use editing conventions to finalize writing
- Use a checklist for self-assessment and peer review of writing

## Standards for This Unit

College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Reading	
None.	
CCS Standards: Reading — Literature	
None.	
CCS Standards: Reading — Informational Text	
<b>RI.9-10.3</b>	<b>Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.</b>
CCS Standards: Writing	
<b>W.9-10.2.a, b, c, d, e, f</b>	<p><b>Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.</b></p> <p><b>a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information to make important connections and distinctions; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.</b></p> <p><b>b. Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic.</b></p> <p><b>c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.</b></p> <p><b>d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity</b></p>

	<p><b>of the topic.</b></p> <p>e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.</p> <p>f. <b>Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).</b></p>
<b>W.9-10.4</b>	<b>Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</b>
<b>W.9-10.5</b>	<b>Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.</b>
W.9-10.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
<b>W.9-10.8</b>	<b>Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.</b>
W.9-10.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).</p>
W.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.
<b>CCS Standards: Speaking &amp; Listening</b>	
<b>SL.9-10.1.c, d</b>	<p><b>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</b></p> <p>c. <b>Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate</b></p>

	<p><b>others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</b></p> <p>d. <b>Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.</b></p>
<b>CCS Standards: Language</b>	
<b>L.9-10.1.a, b</b>	<p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.</b></p> <p>a. <b>Use parallel structure.</b></p> <p>b. <b>Use various types of phrases (noun, verb, adjectival, adverbial, participial, prepositional, absolute) and clauses (independent, dependent; noun, relative, adverbial) to convey specific meanings and add variety and interest to writing or presentations.</b></p>
<b>L.9-10.2.a-c</b>	<p><b>Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.</b></p> <p>a. <b>Use a semicolon (and perhaps a conjunctive adverb) to link two or more closely related independent clauses.</b></p> <p>b. <b>Use a colon to introduce a list or quotation.</b></p> <p>c. <b>Spell correctly.</b></p>
<b>L.9-10.3.a</b>	<p><b>Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.</b></p> <p>a. <b>Write and edit work so that it conforms to the guidelines in a style manual (e.g., <i>MLA Handbook</i>, <i>Turabian's Manual for Writers</i>) appropriate for the discipline and writing type.</b></p>

**Note:** Bold text indicates targeted standards that will be assessed in the unit.

## Unit Assessments

Ongoing Assessment	
Standards Assessed	RI.9-10.3, W.9-10.2.a, b, c, d, f, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, W.9-10.8, SL.9-10.1.c, d, L.9-10.1.a, b, L.9-10.2.a-c, L.9-10.3.a
Description of	Student learning is assessed based on demonstrated planning, drafting, revising,

Assessment	and editing throughout the writing process. At the end of the unit, students are assessed on the effectiveness of their finalized drafts according to the class-generated Informative Writing Checklist.
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Culminating Assessment	
Standards Assessed	W.9-10.2.a, b, c, d, f, W.9-10.4, W.9-10.5, L.9-10.1.a, b, L.9-10.2.a-c, L.9-10.3.a
Description of Assessment	Students write a formal, multi-paragraph informative paper in response to the following prompt:  <b>*According to the texts provided, what effects did the Great Depression have on people who lived through it?</b>

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## Unit-at-a-Glance Calendar

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
1	“Cave Painting” (informative writing model)	In this first lesson, students are introduced to informative writing. Students examine an informative writing model, discussing what they notice about how the writer organizes his ideas and conveys information. Through direct instruction, students explore the components of effective informative writing using the model as an example. Student learning is assessed via participation in a pair or small group activity in which students brainstorm items for the class’s Informative Writing Checklist.
2	“A Brief History of Photography” (informative writing model)	In this lesson, students examine a second informative writing model and continue discussing what makes an informative paper effective, focusing in particular on purpose and audience. Student learning is assessed via participation in a pair or small group activity in which students brainstorm items for the class’s Informative Writing Checklist.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
3	“The New Deal”	In this lesson, students analyze this unit’s informative writing prompt to determine the writing task. Students also discuss how the purpose and audience influence their understanding of the task. Students then begin to build their knowledge of the informative writing topic by reading and analyzing the article “The New Deal” by the Public Broadcasting Corporation. Student learning is assessed via completion of the WR.2 Lesson 3 Prompt Analysis Exit Slip in which students explain in their own words what the prompt requires of them.
4	“The New Deal”	In this lesson, students deepen their analysis of “The New Deal” by the Public Broadcasting Corporation by charting the claim, subtopics, and evidence in the article and discussing the relative importance of each subtopic. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Choose the subtopic that you think is best supported in the article. What evidence is used to develop the subtopic? Explain whether the evidence is relevant and sufficient to develop the subtopic.
5	“Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes	In this lesson, students read and analyze “Firing, Not Hiring” by Nancy Hayes. Students use their analysis to continue charting subtopics and evidence and to write a brief evaluation of one subtopic from the article. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Choose the subtopic that you think is best supported in the article. What evidence is used to develop the subtopic? Explain whether the evidence is relevant and sufficient to develop the subtopic.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
6	None.	In this lesson, students first continue to refine their understanding of their task, purpose, and audience by reviewing their statements of purpose from WR.2 Lesson 3. Students spend the remainder of the lesson completing a prewrite in order to generate thoughts and ideas for their informative papers. Student learning is assessed via participation in a prewriting activity on this unit’s informative writing prompt.
7	None.	In this lesson, students review the format of a standard outline and draft their own outlines for their individual informative papers. Students who need additional support with articulating or organizing their ideas in their outlines will have an opportunity to meet with the teacher for one-on-one conferences. Student learning is self-assessed via annotations to their outlines, corresponding to the applicable items on the Informative Writing Checklist.
8	None.	In this lesson, students identify elements of effective body paragraphs in the informative writing models. Students then draft their own body paragraph to introduce a subtopic and support it with relevant and sufficient evidence that develops the topic and claim of their informative papers. Student learning is self-assessed via annotations to their drafts, corresponding to the applicable items on the Informative Writing Checklist.
9	None.	In this lesson, students learn to craft an introduction that engages the reader’s attention and establishes the topic and claim of their informative papers. Students examine effective introductions from the informative writing models. Then, students work individually to draft the introductions for their informative papers. Student learning is self-assessed via annotations to their drafts, corresponding to the applicable items on the Informative Writing Checklist.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
10	None.	In this lesson, students learn to craft a conclusion that follows from and further supports their informative papers. Students examine effective conclusions from the informative writing models. Then, students work individually to draft the conclusions for their informative papers. Student learning is self-assessed via annotations to their drafts, corresponding to the applicable items on the Informative Writing Checklist.
A	None.	In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on how to paraphrase text from a source, effectively integrate quotations, punctuate integrated quotations, or include proper in-text citations to avoid plagiarism. Students revise their own informative drafts for well-integrated evidence or proper citations before transitioning to a peer discussion of revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Integrating Evidence.
B	None.	In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on how to think through and address the audience’s knowledge level or how to identify and use formal style and objective tone. Students revise their own informative drafts considering audience or style and tone before transitioning to a peer discussion of revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Audience, Style, and Tone.
C	None.	In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on how to implement effective word choice or work with dictionaries and thesauruses to help students convey more thoughtful and complex ideas. Students revise their own informative drafts for word choice before transitioning to a peer discussion of revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Working with Words.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
D	None.	In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on identifying and using transitional words and phrases or varied syntax. Students revise their own informative drafts for transitional words and phrases or varied syntax before transitioning to a peer discussion of revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Cohesion and Flow.
E	None.	In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on how to combine sentences using colons and semicolons or how to split sentences. Students revise their own informative drafts, combining sentences with colons and semicolons or splitting sentences. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Varying Sentence Length.
F	None.	In this lesson, the teacher provides direct instruction on how to effectively use commas in writing. Instruction also includes work with repairing run-on sentences and sentence fragments. Students focus on revising their own informative drafts for commas, run-ons, and fragments before transitioning a peer discussion of revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Ensuring Sentence Accuracy.
G	None.	In this lesson, students learn how to effectively incorporate parallel structure or varied phrases into their writing. Students revise their own informative drafts before participating in a peer discussion of their individual revisions. Student learning is assessed via the completion of the WR.2 Revision Exit Slip: Adding Variety and Interest.
11	None.	In this lesson, students participate in a peer review activity during which they offer constructive feedback to their classmates about their informative drafts. Students use the Informative Writing Checklist to guide feedback and revisions. Students may also meet in one-on-one teacher conferences to receive feedback on their drafts. Student learning is assessed via completion of the WR.2 Lesson 11 Peer Review Exit Slip.

Lesson	Text	Learning Outcomes/Goals
12	None.	In this lesson, students review common editing symbols and then edit their drafts individually. Students then review the proper formatting for a Works Cited page in a class discussion in order to finalize their informative papers.
13	None.	In this brief activity, students reflect on the writing process, identifying strategies that helped them succeed as well as areas for improvement.

## Preparation, Materials, and Resources

### Preparation

- Read and annotate the informative writing models (see page 1).
- Read and annotate source articles (see page 1).
- Review the Short Response Rubric and Checklist.
- Review all unit standards.

### Materials and Resources

- Copies of informative writing models (see page 1)
- Copies of source articles (see page 1)
- Chart paper
- Writing utensils including pencils, pens, markers, and highlighters
- Methods for collecting student work: student notebooks, folders, etc.
- Access to technology (if possible): interactive whiteboard, document camera, and LCD projector
- Copies of handouts and tools for each student: see materials list in individual lesson plans
- Copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist