

WR.2 INFORMATIVE

Lesson 1 Informative Writing Model

Introduction

Over the course of this unit, students learn how to write formal informative papers by working collaboratively with their peers to examine informative writing models, plan for their writing, and gather evidence. Students will practice writing independently and engage in peer review to revise their work. By the end of the unit, each student will have written a fully developed informative paper.

In this first lesson, students are introduced to informative writing. The lesson begins with an introduction to the writing process and to annotation. Then, student pairs or small groups examine an informative writing model and discuss what they notice about the way the writer organizes the model and conveys information clearly. The teacher then provides direct instruction on 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.

For homework, students respond briefly in writing to the following question: What might have been the prompt for the informative writing model “Cave Painting”? Give three reasons to support your answer.

① Based on students’ familiarity with informational texts and informative writing, this lesson may extend beyond one class period.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
SL.9-10.1.c, d	<p>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.</p> <p>c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.</p> <p>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and</p>

	understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.2	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.
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>

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>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.</p> <p>❶ If individual accountability is desired, consider having each student use a different colored marker when adding an item to the pair’s or group’s chart paper.</p>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate participation in brainstorming for the pair’s or group’s Informative Writing Checklist (e.g., the student recorded an item on the pair’s or group’s chart paper). • Record an item that is concise, specific, and actionable (e.g., Does my response use relevant and sufficient evidence to develop my subtopics?).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • depicting (v.) – representing by painting • pigment (n.) – a substance that gives color to something else

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> literal (adj.) – true to fact; not exaggerated; actual or factual shamans (n.) – people who are healers and spiritual counselors for their communities
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> impression (n.) – something (such as a design or footprint) made by pressing or stamping a surface erosion (n.) – the gradual destruction of something by natural forces (such as water, wind, or ice) archeologists (n.) – scientists who deal with past human life and activities by studying the bones, tools, etc., of ancient people predatory (adj.) – living by killing and eating other animals hallucinations (n.) – experiences (such as images, sounds, or smells) that seem real but do not really exist rituals (n.) – formal ceremonies or series of acts that are always performed in the same way underscore (v.) – to emphasize (something) or show the importance of (something)

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: SL.9-10.1.c, d, W.9-10.2, W.9-10.9.b Text: “Cave Painting” (informative writing model) 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Introduction to Annotation Reading and Discussion Components of Effective Informative Writing Group Assessment: Informative Writing Checklist Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 40% 25% 15% 5%

Materials

- Copies of informative writing model “Cave Painting” for each student
- Chart paper for pairs or student groups
- Markers of various colors (optional)

① Consider numbering the paragraphs of “Cave Painting” before the lesson.

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
①	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the goal of this unit. Explain that over the course of this unit, students will compose a formal informative paper. Explain that students will participate in focused informative writing instruction and practice, which will help them develop and strengthen the skills required to craft informative papers that examine and convey complex ideas clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of a topic.

Explain to students that the writing process is iterative, which means that students frequently reassess their work or their thinking in order to make it more precise. Explain that writing is a process that takes many forms and students can accomplish it through a variety of methods. Though there are many different ways to approach the writing process, they all involve multiple drafts and revisions. Inform students that they will draft, revise, peer review, and edit throughout this unit to create a well-crafted informative paper.

Review the agenda for this lesson. In this lesson, students read an informative writing model, discussing what they notice about how the writer organizes the model and conveys information clearly. Through direct instruction and discussion, students explore the components of effective informative writing using the model as an example. Students then begin to brainstorm items for a class-wide Informative Writing Checklist.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Introduction to Annotation

10%

- ① If students have completed WR.1 or WR.3, then this activity should be either skipped or reviewed as necessary.
- ① The following activity addresses the expectations of W.9-10.9.b.

Explain to students that they will mark texts throughout the unit as they read, beginning with their reading and discussion of the informative writing model “Cave Painting.” Discuss the importance of marking the text by asking students to Think, Pair, Share about the following question:

What are some purposes for marking the text?

- 💬 Student responses may include:

Marking the text helps readers:

- Focus on and remember what they are reading by recording their thoughts about the text
- Keep track of important ideas or observations about the text
- Mark sections that are surprising or illuminating
- Keep track of unfamiliar words and/or familiar words used in an unfamiliar way
- Keep a record of their thoughts about the text, including thoughts on content and style
- See how the writer organized his or her thoughts on a topic
- Question the text or make connections between ideas
- Interpret the ideas in the text
- Identify specific components of effective writing (e.g., an engaging introduction, a clear claim, etc.) that readers may want to use in their own writing

Explain to students that marking the text, or *annotation*, is a skill for reading closely. Explain that it is important for students to include short notes or labels about their thinking along with any underlining, circling, or boxing when they annotate the text. Annotation provides an opportunity for students to keep a record of their thinking, and short notes or labels help students remember their thinking when they revisit a text. Explain to students that their annotations may focus on different elements of a text depending on the purpose of their reading. Explain that annotating the informative writing models in this lesson and Lesson 2 will help them identify and analyze the components of effective informative writing, preparing them to purposefully use these components in their own writing.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to form pairs or small groups. Distribute a copy of the informative writing model “Cave Painting” to each student. Explain to students that the goal of reading and discussing this model is to identify the effective elements of the paper.

Explain to students that in this unit, they will learn new vocabulary specific to the writing process and to the texts they read. Instruct students to keep track of new vocabulary by recording it in a vocabulary journal. Students should divide the vocabulary journal into three sections, one for each of the following categories: “informative writing terms,” “writing terms,” and “academic vocabulary.”

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider informing students that “informative writing terms” refer to the words they will encounter in this unit that describe aspects of an informative writing assignment or the process of writing it, including “topics,” “subtopics,” “claims,” etc. (Students encounter and define these words later in this lesson.) “Writing terms” are words that refer to writing in general and may include techniques, grammatical features, and elements of writing. “Academic vocabulary” refers to the words that students may encounter in their reading and research that frequently appear in academic texts and dialogues. If students struggle to determine the appropriate category for the vocabulary provided in this lesson, consider explaining to students which words should be added to which category.

Provide students with the following definitions: *depicting* means “representing by painting,” *pigment* means “a substance that gives color to something else,” *literal* means “true to fact; not exaggerated; actual or factual,” and *shamans* means “people who are healers and spiritual counselors for their communities.”

- ① Students may be familiar with these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the class.
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *depicting*, *pigment*, *literal*, and *shamans* on their copies of the text or in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *impression* means “something (such as a design or footprint) made by pressing or stamping a surface,” *erosion* means “the gradual destruction of something by natural forces (such as water, wind, or ice),” *archeologists* means “scientists who deal with past human life and activities by studying the bones, tools, etc., of ancient people,” *predatory* means “living by killing and eating other animals,” *hallucinations* means “experiences (such as images, sounds, or smells) that seem real but do not really exist,” *rituals* means “formal ceremonies or series of acts that are always performed in the same way,” and *underscore* means “to emphasize (something) or show the importance of (something).”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *impression*, *erosion*, *archeologists*, *predatory*, *hallucinations*, *rituals*, and *underscore* on their copies of the text or in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the model for the lesson.

Instruct students to read the informative writing model in their pairs or groups. Instruct students to annotate the model for items they find interesting and engaging, such as an unusual word choice, beautiful phrase, illuminating analysis, or surprising fact.

After students read and annotate the model, post or project the following set of questions for students to discuss before sharing out with the class. Instruct students to annotate the model for how the writer organizes the paper as they discuss each question, remembering to include short notes or labels to record their thinking.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If the skill of annotation is new or challenging to students, consider posting or projecting the text and asking student volunteers to share their annotations for how the writer organizes the paper. Consider posting or projecting the volunteered annotations.

What is the topic of this informative paper?

💬 The topic of this informative paper is the art form of ancient cave paintings.

① Consider informing students that the writer of the model is male, so during discussion, they may refer to the writer as “he.”

What is the writer’s claim?

💬 The writer claims that cave paintings can teach people in the present about people in the past and that there is a lot more to learn about cave painting.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to identify the claim, provide students with the following definition: a *claim* is “a statement about a topic or text.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *claim* in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

Describe how the writer organizes the ideas in his paper.

💬 The writer first introduces the topic of cave paintings and then expresses the claim that cave paintings allow people in the present to learn about “human history,” and there is a lot more to learn about cave painting (par. 1). Then, the writer describes different subtopics about cave paintings, and each subtopic has its own paragraph. At the end, the writer emphasizes the importance of studying cave paintings and repeats his claim that people have a lot to learn about “human history” from cave paintings (par. 8).

- ① Consider identifying for students that the first paragraph is the *introduction*, the last paragraph is the *conclusion*, and the paragraphs in the middle are *body paragraphs*.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to describe how the writer arranges his ideas, explain to students that the topics of each paragraph are called *subtopics*. Provide students with the following definition: a *subtopic* is “one of the parts or divisions of the main topic.” It develops the topic of informative writing.
- ▶ Students write the definition of *subtopic* in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

What is the subtopic of each body paragraph? Underline the sentence that introduces the subtopic in each body paragraph.

💬 Student responses should include:

- Paragraph 2 describes the images that are typically depicted in cave paintings. Underline “The Metropolitan Museum of Art describes the subjects of prehistoric art as ‘hundreds of sculptures and engravings depicting humans, animals, and fantastic creatures’ (Tedesco).”
- Paragraph 3 is about how old cave paintings are. Underline “Scholar Laura Tedesco suggests that ‘the first human artistic representations, markings with ground red ocher, seem to have occurred about 100,000 B.C. in African rock art’ (Tedesco).”
- Paragraph 4 is about the difficulties scientists face in accurately dating cave paintings. Underline “Correctly identifying the origin and exact date of cave paintings has been a challenge for archeologists.”
- Paragraph 5 describes the varying opinions scholars have about the meanings of cave paintings. Underline “Determining the meaning of cave art is as challenging as identifying the age.”
- Paragraph 6 explains that cave paintings are in danger of damage and should be protected. Underline “Researchers do agree, however, that the cave paintings of the world are important and must be protected.”
- Paragraph 7 is about the steps countries are taking to preserve cave paintings. Underline “Preservation of this art is an ongoing project, with many nations attempting to protect or repair these vital links to human history.”

How does the information in each body paragraph connect to the topic and claim from the introduction?

- 💬 Although the writer presents a different subtopic in each body paragraph, the subtopics are all about a different aspect of the same topic of cave painting expressed in the introduction. The information in each body paragraph supports the claim from the introduction that cave

paintings can give insight into “human history” and that there is a lot more scholars can learn about humankind by studying cave paintings (par. 1).

Describe how the writer uses each body paragraph to deepen the reader’s understanding of the topic.

- ☛ In each body paragraph, the writer deepens the reader’s understanding of cave paintings by giving relevant facts about different aspects of the art form. In each body paragraph, the writer thoroughly develops each subtopic about cave painting by including concrete details and quotes from sources.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Components of Effective Informative Writing

25%

- ① The following activity addresses the expectations of W.9-10.2.

Remind students that in this unit, they learn how to plan, draft, and revise their own informative papers. Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the following question:

Considering what you have written in the past and your exploration of the model in this lesson, how would you describe the purpose of informative writing?

- ☛ The purpose of informative writing is to deepen someone’s knowledge of a topic.

Explain to students that the purpose of informative writing is to provide readers with a better understanding of an idea or topic by conveying information accurately. Explain that an informative paper is a logically organized composition of accurate statements about a topic. Informative writing differs from both argument writing, which seeks to persuade readers of a particular point or side of an issue, and narrative writing, which tells a story, either real or imagined.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary, provide students with the following definition: *purpose* means “an author’s reason for writing.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *purpose* in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.

- ① For clarity, it may be helpful to refer to the explanation of the difference between argument and informational writing in the Common Core State Standards Appendix A (p. 23): “Although information is provided in both arguments and explanations, the two types of writing have different aims. Arguments seek to make people believe that something is true or to persuade people to change their beliefs or behavior. Explanations, on the other hand, start with the assumption of truthfulness and answer questions about why or how. Their aim is to make the reader understand rather than to persuade him or her to accept a certain point of view. In short, arguments are used for persuasion and explanations for clarification.”

Post or project the questions below. Remind students to draw on their work with the model in this lesson as well as their previous experiences with informative writing. Instruct students to Turn-and-Talk about the following questions:

What is the writer’s purpose in the model?

- 🗨️ The writer’s purpose in the model is to help the reader understand cave paintings.

What are the components of informative writing?

- 🗨️ Student responses should include:
 - Informative writing includes a claim about a topic.
 - Informative writing includes subtopics that develop the topic.
 - Informative writing includes evidence to develop the subtopics and to support the claim.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to name the components of informative writing, consider asking students the following support questions. If students continue to struggle, consider identifying an example for each term:

What is a *topic*?

- 🗨️ A *topic* is the subject of a conversation or formal discussion.

What is a *claim*?

- 🗨️ A *claim* is a statement about an issue or topic.

Describe what a *subtopic* is. Give an example from the model.

- 🗨️ A *subtopic* is a topic that is one of the parts or divisions of the main topic. It develops the topic of the informative paper. In the model, one of the writer’s subtopics is about the different images represented in cave paintings.

What do writers use to develop their topics and subtopics and support their claims? Give an example from the model.

- 🗨️ Writers develop their topics and subtopics and support their claims by using *evidence*, like facts and examples that are clearly related to the subtopic. Evidence is necessary for informing readers because it gives readers proof that the claims and subtopics are supported with facts. An example of evidence in the model is the information from a scholar who describes cave painting as “literal depictions of hallucinations experienced by tribal shamans’ painted on the wall during various rituals (Curry)” (par. 5).

- ① Consider informing students that they will explore these terms and definitions further in Lessons 2–5.

Explain to students that when writing an informative paper, the writer first engages the reader, introduces a topic, and makes a claim about the topic. The writer then develops the topic and supports the claim with subtopics. The writer includes relevant and sufficient evidence to develop each subtopic and support the claim. Finally, the writer concludes with a statement or section that follows from and supports the information presented.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary to support comprehension, provide students with the following definitions: *relevant* means “relating to a subject in an appropriate way” and *sufficient* means “adequate for the purpose; enough.”
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *relevant* and *sufficient* in the appropriate section of their vocabulary journals.
- ① Students will learn how to develop their own informative papers with a claim, subtopics, and evidence in Lessons 8–10.

Activity 5: Group Assessment: Informative Writing Checklist

15%

- ① The following activity addresses the expectations of W.9-10.2.

Explain that in this unit, students will work together as a class to build the elements of an Informative Writing Checklist. As students learn more about informative writing, they continue adding items to the class’s Informative Writing Checklist. Students will use this checklist as a guide while drafting, revising, and finalizing their informative papers. In this lesson, students begin brainstorming ideas for items for the checklist. In the next lesson, the class will come to a consensus on what items to add to the Informative Writing Checklist.

Explain that the Informative Writing Checklist is structured with yes-or-no questions that begin with “Does my response ...” Items on the checklist should be concise, specific, and actionable. Post or project the following examples:

- **Example 1:** Does my response express to the reader what my informative paper topic is about?
- **Example 2:** Does my response clearly introduce a topic?

Explain that the first example is too long and unclear. The phrase “what my informative paper topic is about” can be communicated with fewer words. The phrase “express to the reader” is not actionable, because it is not clear what the student should do to fulfill this item. The second example is precise and tells the student exactly what he or she needs to do to be able to check this item off the list.

Explain that the assessment for this lesson requires students first to individually brainstorm items that they believe should be included on the class's Informative Writing Checklist, and then collaborate in pairs or small groups to record their items on a piece of chart paper that will remain in the classroom for the next lesson. Remind students to use this lesson's discussions about the model and the components of effective informative writing (i.e., informative writing terms) to inform their thinking as they brainstorm items.

Instruct students to individually brainstorm items for the class's Informative Writing Checklist using a piece of paper to record their ideas.

- ▶ Students individually brainstorm items for the class's Informative Writing Checklist.

Instruct students to form pairs or small groups to discuss their individual ideas and decide what items to add to their chart paper. Remind students to focus on developing checklist items that directly address the components of effective informative writing.

- ▶ Students work in pairs or small groups to discuss and decide on items for the class's Informative Writing Checklist. Each student records an item on the chart paper.

💬 Student responses may include:

- Clearly introduce a topic?
- Develop a precise claim about the topic?
- Include subtopics that develop the topic and support the claim?
- Use relevant and sufficient evidence to develop my subtopics?

① Chart paper is not necessary for this activity. Groups may brainstorm on loose leaf paper. If students use loose leaf paper, consider collecting each group's list at the end of the activity in order to re-distribute them to each group again in the next lesson.

① If individual accountability is desired, consider having each student use a different colored marker when adding an item to the pair's or group's chart paper.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following question:

What might have been the prompt for the informative writing model “Cave Painting”? Give three reasons to support your answer.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Respond briefly in writing to the following question:

What might have been the prompt for the informative writing model “Cave Painting”? Give three reasons to support your answer.