



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 3: Module 2B: Unit 3: Overview



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### Unit 3: Culminating Project: Writing a Letter to Mary Pope Osborne

In this final unit, students continue to explore the question: “How do authors learn and share their knowledge on a topic?” as they share their growing knowledge of the culture of a country with the author of the *Magic Tree House* books, Mary Pope Osborne. Students also expand their expertise as writers by crafting a research-based letter. The specific literacy focus of this unit is on writing a research-based letter to Ms. Osborne using text-based facts, as well as learning to revise. Each student will create a letter to Ms. Osborne to inform her about aspects of culture that have remained from the past to the present in several countries where her books are set. This writing serves as a synthesis of the research students did in Unit 2. Students receive scaffolded writing support from adults and peers by crafting a

letter to Ms. Osborne about the country of Japan, the shared research experience in Unit 1. In the mid-unit assessment, students craft an on-demand first draft of their research-based letter to Ms. Osborne based on the country they researched with small groups in Unit 2. Students then practice revising and editing their Japan letters based on support and critique from peers and the teacher. In the on-demand end of unit assessment, they revise and edit their letter about the specific country they researched in their expert groups. After finishing the letter during the assessment, students publish the letter and celebrate through an Author’s Chair celebration.

#### Guiding Questions And Big Ideas

- **What defines culture?**
- **How do authors learn and share their knowledge on a topic?**
- *Culture is the way of life that has been passed from one generation to the next.*
- *Authors review, examine, and discuss multiple sources to gather information and build knowledge on a topic.*
- *Authors share knowledge on a topic through literary or informational texts.*



Mid-Unit 3 Assessment	<b>Drafting a Research-Based Letter to Mary Pope Osborne about Expert Country</b> This task addresses NYSP12 ELA CCLS RI.3.5, RI.3.3, W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.7, W.3.8., and W.3.10. After conducting research in Unit 2, students use the information they have gathered to write the first draft of a letter to Mary Pope Osborne, urging her to write a new book, set in the present day, about the country they have researched. In an informative/explanatory letter, students present their research about the culture of the country and suggest ideas for the plot of the new book.
End of Unit 3 Assessment	<b>Using the Writing Process: Revising and Editing the Letter to Mary Pope Osborne about Expert Country</b> This task addresses NYSP12 ELA CCLS W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.5, L.3.1, L.3.2, and L.3.3. After receiving feedback from peers and teachers, students identify three things they will do to revise (W.3.2, W.3.4, L.3.3) and edit (L.3.1, L.3.2, W.3.5) their letters. They highlight the changes they incorporated into their final drafts and discuss the thinking behind them with a peer.

### Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards as students read literature and informational text about the cultures of various countries. However, the module intentionally incorporates Social Studies Practices and Themes to support potential interdisciplinary connections to this compelling content. These intentional connections are described below.

**Big ideas and guiding questions are informed by the New York State Common Core K-8 Social Studies Framework:**

#### **Unifying Themes (pages 7–8)**

- Theme 2: Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures: Aspects of culture such as belief systems, religious faith, or political ideals as influences on other parts of a culture such as its institutions or literature, music, and art.

#### **Social Studies Practices, Gathering, Using, and Interpreting Evidence, Grades K–4:**

- Descriptor 1: Form questions about the world in which we live (page 16 of 29).

#### **Key Ideas and Conceptual Understandings, Grade 3, Communities around the World—Learning about People and Places:**

- Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures: 3.1b Communities around the world can be diverse in terms of their members, languages spoken, customs and traditions, and religious beliefs and practices. People in world communities celebrate various holidays and festivals.



Texts
1. Mary Pope Osborne, <i>Magic Tree House #37: Dragon of the Red Dawn</i> (New York: A Stepping Stone Book by Random House, 2007), ISBN: 978-0-375-83727-2.
2. Colleen Sexton, <i>Exploring Countries: Japan</i> (Minneapolis: Bellwether Media, 2012), ISBN: 978-1-60014-674-9.
3. Mary Pope Osborne, <i>Magic Tree House #33: Carnival at Candlelight</i> (New York: A Stepping Stone Book by Random House, 2007), 978-0-375-83034-1. (Enough texts for one-third of the class.)
4. Mary Pope Osborne, <i>Magic Tree House #34: Season of the Sandstorms</i> (New York: A Stepping Stone Book by Random House, 2007), 978-0-375-83032-7. (Enough texts for one-third of the class.)
5. Mary Pope Osborne <i>Magic Tree House #45: A Crazy Day with Cobras</i> (New York: A Stepping Stone Book by Random House, 2007), 978-0-375-86795-8. (Enough texts for one-third of the class.)
6. Walter Simmons, <i>Exploring Countries: Italy</i> (Minneapolis: Bellwether Media, 2012), 978-1600146732. (Enough texts for one-third of the class.)
7. Jim Bartell, <i>Exploring Countries: India</i> (Minneapolis: Bellwether Media, 2011), 978-1600145551. (Enough texts for one-third of the class.)
8. Lisa Owings, <i>Exploring Countries: Iraq</i> (Minneapolis: Bellwether Media, 2011), 978-1600145926. (Enough texts for one-third of the class.)
9. “CultureGrams Republic of Iraq” ProQuest, 2013.
10. Cynthia Hatch, “Soccer Mania,” in <i>Faces</i> (Vol. 22, No. 2), Oct. 2005, 40–41.
11. Shruti Priya and Katherine Darrow, “The Ancient Art of Rangoli,” in <i>Calliope</i> (Vol. 23, No. 6), March 2013, 34–36.



**This unit is approximately 2.5 weeks or 12 sessions of instruction.**

Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 1</b>	Writing a Research-Based Letter: Launching the Performance Task	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose (with support). (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can compare how people use language when they write versus when they talk. (L.3.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can examine and analyze a model of a research-based informative letter.</li> <li>I can contribute ideas for the creation of an anchor chart about a quality research-based informative letter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examining and Analyzing a Model for Writing discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 1: Opening</li> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 2: Informative Body Paragraphs</li> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 3: Closing</li> <li>Conventions of Letter Writing anchor chart</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 2</b>	Writing the Letter's Opening: Connecting to Mary Pope Osborne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose (with support). (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can compare how people use language when they write versus when they talk. (L.3.3b)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can practice for the performance task by writing about Japan (with support).</li> <li>I can plan and draft my writing for my opening paragraph using the model provided.</li> <li>I can identify criteria for completing a research-based informative letter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partner drafts of opening paragraph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 1: Opening</li> <li>Criteria for a Quality Research-Based Letter anchor chart</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 3</b>	Reviewing the Research on Japan: Determining Topics for Informative Paragraphs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose (with support). (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can sort evidence into provided categories. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can use conventions to send a clear message to my reader. (L.3.2)</li> <li>I can compare how people use language when they write versus when they talk. (L.3.3b)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can capitalize appropriate words, such as names and titles.</li> <li>I can review information gathered from my research on Japan.</li> <li>I can use the Topic Decision recording form to identify the topics of my two informative paragraphs for my Japan practice letter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letters to a family member or friend</li> <li>Topic Decision recording form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words We Capitalize in Writing anchor chart</li> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 2: Informative Body Paragraphs</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 4</b>	Writing the Informative Paragraphs: Incorporating Research into Our Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose (with support). (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can write an informative/explanatory text. (W.3.2)</li> <li>I can group supporting facts together about a topic in an informative/explanatory text using both text and illustrations. (W.3.2a)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can sort evidence into provided categories. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can compare how people use language when they write versus when they talk. (L.3.3b)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can practice for the performance task by writing about Japan (with support).</li> <li>I can plan my writing for my informative paragraphs by completing a Paragraph Writing graphic organizer.</li> <li>I can identify additional criteria for a strong research-based letter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France Model: Informative Paragraphs recording form</li> <li>Students' informative draft paragraphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 2: Informative Body Paragraphs</li> <li>Criteria for a Quality Research-Based Letter anchor chart</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 5</b>	Continuing Writing the Informative Paragraphs: Incorporating Research into Our Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose (with support). (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can write an informative/explanatory text. (W.3.2)</li> <li>I can group supporting facts together about a topic in an informative/explanatory text using both text and illustrations. (W.3.2a)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can sort evidence into provided categories. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can compare how people use language when they write versus when they talk. (L.3.3b)</li> <li>I can effectively participate in a conversation with my peers and adults. (SL.3.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can use descriptive words in my writing to show details.</li> <li>I can practice for the performance task by writing about Japan (with support).</li> <li>I can draft my informative paragraphs using a Paragraph Writing graphic organizer.</li> <li>I can give kind, helpful, and specific feedback to my writing partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France Model: Informative Paragraphs recording form</li> <li>Students' informative draft paragraphs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words That Work: Descriptive Words anchor chart</li> <li>Criteria for a Quality Research-Based Letter anchor chart</li> <li>Peer Critique Protocol anchor chart</li> <li>Peer Critique protocol</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 6</b>	Writing the Letter's Closing: Concluding Thoughts for Mary Pope Osborne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose (with support). (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can write an informative/explanatory text. (W.3.2)</li> <li>I can group supporting facts together about a topic in an informative/explanatory text using both text and illustrations. (W.3.2a)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can sort evidence into provided categories. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can compare how people use language when they write versus when they talk. (L.3.3b)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can practice for the performance task by writing about Japan (with support).</li> <li>I can draft my closing paragraph by using the model provided.</li> <li>I can identify additional criteria for a strong research-based letter.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>France Model: Closing Paragraph recording form</li> <li>Completed closing paragraph organizers</li> <li>Partner drafts of closing paragraph</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criteria for a Quality Research –Based Letter anchor chart</li> <li>Analyzing the Model Letter anchor chart 3: Closing</li> <li>Structure of the Closing Paragraph anchor chart</li> <li>Peer Critique protocol</li> </ul>





Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 7</b>	MidUnit Assessment: Writing a First Draft of Research-Based Letter to Mary Pope Osborne about Expert Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can use text features to locate information efficiently. (RI.3.5)</li> <li>I can determine the main idea of an informational text. (RI.3.3)</li> <li>I can retell key ideas from an informational text. (RI.3.3)</li> <li>I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.3.2)</li> <li>With support from adults, I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose. (W.3.4)</li> <li>With support from peers and adults, I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing. (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can conduct a research project to become knowledgeable about a topic. (W.3.7)</li> <li>I can document what I learn about a topic by taking notes. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can sort evidence into provided categories. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can adjust my writing practices for different time frames, tasks, purposes, and audiences. (W.3.10)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write a first draft of my research-based letter to Mary Pope Osborne using research from my Magic Tree House and Exploring Countries texts.</li> <li>I can use the criteria for a high-quality letter in my writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Unit 3 Assessment: Writing a First Draft</li> <li>Exit Ticket: Success and Challenge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Criteria for a Quality Research-Based Letter anchor chart</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 8</b>	Revising: Using Simple and Compound Sentences in Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write simple, complex, and compound sentences. (L.3.1i)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can revise my Japan letter to Ms. Osborne to include simple and compound sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student revisions of sentences in Japan letter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Simple and Compound Sentences anchor chart</li> </ul>



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 9</b>	Revising: Using Vivid and Precise Adjectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can express ideas using carefully chosen words. (L.3.3)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can revise my Japan letter to Ms. Osborne to include vivid and precise adjectives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student revisions of word choice in Japan letters</li> <li>Exit tickets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words That Work anchor chart</li> <li>Back-to-Back, Face-to-Face protocol</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 10</b>	Reviewing Conventions and Editing Peers' Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can use grammar conventions to send a clear message to a reader or listener. (L.3.1)</li> <li>I can use conventions to send a clear message to my reader. (L.3.2)</li> <li>I can express ideas using carefully chosen words. (L.3.3)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can check my peers' work for correct capitalization.</li> <li>I can check my peers' work for correct spelling.</li> <li>I can check my peers' work for correct punctuation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conventions anchor charts</li> <li>Letter to Ms. Osborne about Japan (drafts annotated for edits)</li> <li>Exit ticket</li> <li>Things I Need to Remember for Writing recording form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spelling Conventions anchor chart</li> <li>Punctuations Conventions anchor chart</li> <li>Capitalization Conventions anchor chart</li> <li>Chalk Talk protocol</li> </ul>
<b>Lesson 11</b>	End of Unit Assessment: On-Demand Revising and Editing Research-Based Letter to Mary Pope Osborne about Expert Country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.3.2)</li> <li>With support from adults, I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose. (W.3.4)</li> <li>With support from peers and adults, I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing. (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can use grammar conventions to send a clear message to a reader or listener. (L.3.1)</li> <li>I can use conventions to send a clear message to my reader. (L.3.2)</li> <li>I can express ideas using carefully chosen words. (L.3.3)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can revise and edit a first draft of my research-based letter to Mary Pope Osborne.</li> <li>I can use feedback from peers to improve my writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mid-Unit 3 Assessment: Writing a First Draft about Expert Country (with annotations for revising and editing)</li> </ul>	



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long-Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
<b>Lesson 12</b>	Publishing Performance Task: Creating a Polished Letter and Celebrating with Author's Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and information clearly. (W.3.2)</li> <li>With support from adults, I can produce writing that is appropriate to task and purpose. (W.3.4)</li> <li>I can use the writing process to plan, revise, and edit my writing (with support). (W.3.5)</li> <li>I can conduct a research project to become knowledgeable about a topic. (W.3.7)</li> <li>I can document what I learn about a topic by taking notes. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can sort evidence into provided categories. (W.3.8)</li> <li>I can use grammar conventions to send a clear message to a reader or listener. (L.3.1)</li> <li>I can use conventions to send a clear message to my reader. (L.3.2)</li> <li>I can express ideas using carefully chosen words. (L.3.3)</li> <li>I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about third-grade topics and texts. (SL.3.1)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I can write a research-based letter to Mary Pope Osborne informing her of the evidence of culture that she could use in her new book.</li> <li>I can listen as my peers share their writing and can give specific praise for my peers' work.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Task: Final Research-based Letter to Mary Pope Osborne</li> <li>Tracking My Progress, End of Unit 3 recording form</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Author's Chair Celebration anchor chart</li> </ul>



Optional: Experts, Fieldwork, And Service

**Experts:**

- Invite a local author to share how he/she uses the writing process.

**Fieldwork:**

- If there is a local newspaper or publishing company, plan a trip to the site to see how published works are created.

**Service:**

- Use students' letter-writing skills to write thank-you letters to members of the school community, such as the office staff, administration, or custodial staff.
- Use students' letter-writing skills to support a local organization through a letter-writing campaign.

Optional: Extensions

- Library/media specialist: Research how authors started. Research how Mary Pope Osborne became a published author.
- Technology/media specialist: Support students in typing final copies of letters.
- Geography: Research the location where these letters would be sent if they were to go to the country that was researched. What is the capital of India? Iraq? Italy? How is mail delivered in these countries?



### Preparation and Materials

In this unit, there is a gradual release of responsibility of the writing tasks from teacher to students.

- In Lessons 1-6, the class will work together to examine a model letter (about France) in order to build an understanding of the criteria for quality writing. This work is heavily supported by the teacher.
- Next, students will be supported through a guided writing experience to draft and revise a similar letter about Japan. During this guided practice, you will do “live” writing demonstrations to model the thinking and writer’s craft for students. All students will independently create a letter about Japan, but with heavy support by you and students’ peers.
- Finally, students practice true independent writing through crafting the research-based letter to Mary Pope Osborne about their researched country (from Unit 2). They do this independent application during Mid-Unit 3 Assessment (Lesson 7) and End-Unit 3 Assessment (Lesson 11).

In Lesson 12, all students celebrate their independent accomplishments through sharing of the letters they crafted during the Mid and End Unit 3 assessments.

Preview all teaching notes (Lessons 1-12) before launching to this unit, in order to more fully understand when, how, and why students will write when students will be about each of the three countries (France, Japan, and their “research group” country from their work in Unit 2).

Throughout this unit, students will work on Words the Work routine to build word power for writing. Students will need small whiteboards and markers for this activity. If whiteboards are not available, consider laminating a blank sheet of paper and having students use them with overhead markers. Old socks make wonderful erasers for the small whiteboards instead of tissues.



As noted in the Module overview, released along with this module is a stand-alone document titled **Foundational Reading and Language Standards Resources Package for Grades 3–5**. This resource package is designed to give teachers resources and guidance for addressing the CCSS foundational reading and language ELA standards. The package cites example lessons within the modules in which these standards are addressed. It also includes resources for literacy instruction that occurs alongside the modules.

These resources will be referenced throughout Module 2B, when opportunities exist for connecting and differentiating instruction in the lessons. Before launching this module, review the Foundational Reading and Language Standards Resources Package for Grades 3–5 and determine how your current GRAIR time aligns with these resources.

For grade 3 specifically, review the Show the Rule™ Strategy (aligned with CCLS L.5.1, 2, and 3), which should be introduced before Lesson 9. This unit provides opportunities for language work with students. See the specific Show the Rule™ example lesson, which describes a week-long instructional sequence for teaching students about conjunctions. This lesson sequence, and similar lessons designed by teachers, would happen alongside Unit 3, during the Additional Literacy Block, and preferably should be completed before Lesson 9.

Review the Unit 3 Recommended Texts list. Students are asked to choose a book from the Recommended Texts list and read it for homework throughout this unit. It is imperative that they read many texts at their reading level so that they can continue to build the academic vocabulary and fluency demanded by the CCLS. Review the Recommended Texts list with students and support them in choosing an appropriate text to read at home for homework. In class, co-create with students a routine for reading at home and reporting back in class. A possible routine could involve asking students to track the number of pages read each night and writing a short summary about what they read. This routine could also support students and teachers in working to set personalized reading goals and reflecting on progress.