Text-Based Writing Nonfiction

Grades 2–6

• Sample unit for each grade level with a home-school connection activity
• Leveled selections: science, social studies, health, biography
• Writing prompts include argument, opinion, compare & contrast, cause & effect, sequence

Sampler
# Text-Based Writing Nonfiction

**Grades 2–6**

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</table>
Owl Facts

**Lesson Objectives**

**Writing**
Students use information from the science article to write a compare-and-contrast paragraph.

**Vocabulary**
Students learn content vocabulary words and use those words to write about how owls are alike and different.

**Content Knowledge**
Students understand the unique characteristics of snowy owls and barn owls.

**Essential Understanding**
Students understand what owls look like and how they live and act in nature.

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**Prepare**

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student.

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**Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist**

Distribute one unit to each student and direct students’ attention to the Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist. Tell them they will be able to refer to the focus of the unit as needed while working on the lessons. Instruct students to check off each task on the checklist after they complete it.

Read aloud the focus statements, and verify that students understand their purpose for reading. Ask:

- **What are we going to read about?** (snowy owls and barn owls)
- **What are you going to learn about them?** (how they are alike and different)
- **What are you going to write based on this article?** (a compare-and-contrast paragraph)

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**CCSS:** W.2.2, W.2.7, W.2.8  
RIT.2.4, RIT.2.5, RIT.2.10
2 Learn Vocabulary
Direct students’ attention to the picture dictionary. Read aloud each content vocabulary word and have students repeat. Point out that the words are related to owls and that students will have a better understanding of the words after they read the science article. Have students write the vocabulary words on the provided lines. Then review the Words to Know, and encourage students to ask questions about any words they do not understand.

3 Read the Science Article: Owl Facts
Read aloud the science article as students follow along silently. Then have students reread the article independently or in small groups.

4 Answer Questions About the Science Article
To ensure reading comprehension, have students answer the text-dependent questions. Review the answers together.

5 Organize Information
Explain to students that they will use a compare-and-contrast graphic organizer to help them plan their paragraphs. Guide students in using the text to complete the organizer, rereading the article if needed.

Remind students that a compare-and-contrast paragraph:
• tells how two or more things are alike, and
• tells how two or more things are different.

6 Write a Compare-and-Contrast Paragraph
Instruct students to complete the writing assignment independently, with a partner, or in small groups.

If needed, review the structure of a compare-and-contrast paragraph:
• The topic sentence tells about the two subjects.
• Details support the topic sentence and tell how the subjects are alike and different.
UNIT 2

Owl Facts

Unit Focus

You are going to read a science article about snowy owls and barn owls.

As You Read:
Think about how these owls are alike and different.

After You Read:
Use information from the article to write a compare-and-contrast paragraph about the owls.

Lesson Checklist

Check off each task after you complete it.

☐ Learn Vocabulary

☐ Read the Science Article: Owl Facts

☐ Answer Questions About the Science Article

☐ Organize Information

☐ Write a Compare-and-Contrast Paragraph
Owl Facts

Learn Vocabulary

Look at the picture. Read the words.

Read the word and write it on the line. Then read the Words to Know.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content Words</th>
<th>Words to Know</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>claws</td>
<td>Arctic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>feathers</td>
<td>hiss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nest</td>
<td>eyes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>owls</td>
<td>hoot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wing</td>
<td>habits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>interesting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>screech</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Owl Facts

Owls are large, interesting birds. In some ways, all owls are alike. All owls have large heads. They have circles of feathers around each of their eyes. Owls can’t move their eyes like we can. They have to move their whole head to look around! All owls have sharp claws on their feet. The claws help them catch food and sit on tree limbs.

In some ways, owls are different from each other. Snowy owls and barn owls have features and habits that make them different from each other.

Snowy owls are white. They have more feathers on their legs than other owls. Their feet have extra padding for walking on snow. Snowy owls make low hooting sounds. Most of these large owls live in the Arctic. The Arctic land is very flat. Snowy owls make their nests right on the ground. They hunt for food during the day and the night.

Barn owls have white faces that look like hearts. Their bodies are small, but their wings are large. Barn owls are usually light gray with some spots. Barn owls do not hoot. Instead, they make a hissing or screeching sound. Barn owls hunt for food only at night. They live all over the world. They make their nests in tree holes, buildings, or barns.
Owl Facts

Answer Questions

1. One way owls are alike is that they all ___.
   A have extra feathers on their legs
   B make their nests in barns
   C have sharp claws on their feet

2. Barn owls are different from snowy owls because barn owls ___.
   A have faces that are shaped like hearts
   B have extra padding on their feet
   C can’t move their eyes like humans can

3. Draw a picture of a snowy owl in its nest. Then draw a barn owl in its nest. Label each part of your pictures.
Owl Facts

Organize Information

Read the science article again. Then write information in the graphic organizer that tells how snowy owls and barn owls are alike and different.
Compare and Contrast

Write a compare-and-contrast paragraph that explains how snowy owls and barn owls are alike and different.

• Use information from your graphic organizer and the science article.

Title
Pine Cone Barn Owl

Owls are interesting creatures. Each owl has unique features. A barn owl, for example, has a white heart-shaped face. You and your child can see a barn owl up close and personal by making your own barn owl.

What You Need

- pine cone
- brown, gray, and white feathers
- small square of white felt
- black buttons or beads
- 1 brown pipe cleaner
- glue and scissors

How Long It Will Take

15 minutes
What You Do Together

1. The pine cone will form the owl’s body. Use the narrow end as the top of the owl. Glue feathers on the pine cone.

2. Cut out a heart shape from the white felt, big enough to form the owl’s face.

3. Glue on buttons or beads for the eyes. Let the glue set.

4. Glue the face onto the pine cone.

5. Cut the pipe cleaner in half. Fashion each piece into owl claws. Glue the claws onto the bottom of the pine cone body.
Lesson Objectives

Writing
Students use information from the health article to write an opinion paragraph.

Vocabulary
Students learn content vocabulary words and use those words to write about blueberries.

Content Knowledge
Students understand that blueberries contain important vitamins and antioxidants.

Essential Understanding
Students understand that people can eat foods such as blueberries to stay healthy and alert.

Prepare
Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student.

UNIT 13
Little Berry, Big Benefit

Lesson Objectives

Writing
Students use information from the health article to write an opinion paragraph.

Vocabulary
Students learn content vocabulary words and use those words to write about blueberries.

Content Knowledge
Students understand that blueberries contain important vitamins and antioxidants.

Essential Understanding
Students understand that people can eat foods such as blueberries to stay healthy and alert.

Prepare
Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student.

LESSON PAGE

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4. Answer Questions About the Health Article 111
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6. Write an Opinion Paragraph 113

Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist
Distribute one unit to each student and direct students’ attention to the Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist. Tell them they will be able to refer to the focus of the unit as needed while working on the lessons. Instruct students to check off each task on the checklist after they complete it.

Read aloud the focus statements, and verify that students understand their purpose for reading. Ask:

• What are we going to read about? (blueberries)
• What are you going to learn about them? (how they affect the body)
• What are you going to write based on this article? (an opinion paragraph)

CCSS: W 3.1, 3.8 RIT 3.3, 3.4, 3.5, 3.10

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Learn Vocabulary
Read aloud each content vocabulary word and have students repeat. Then read aloud and discuss the definitions. Point out that the words are related to blueberries and that students will have a better understanding of the words after they read the health article. Have students write the vocabulary words on the provided lines. Then review the Words to Know, and encourage students to ask questions about any words they do not understand.

Read the Health Article: Little Berry, Big Benefit
Read aloud the health article as students follow along silently. Then have students reread the article independently or in small groups.

Answer Questions About the Health Article
To ensure reading comprehension, have students answer the text-dependent questions. Review the answers together.

Organize Information
Explain to students that they will use an opinion graphic organizer to help them plan their paragraphs. Guide students in using the text to complete the organizer, rereading the article if needed.

Remind students that an opinion paragraph:
• tells how you feel about something, and
• tells why you feel that way.

Write an Opinion Paragraph
Instruct students to complete the writing assignment independently, with a partner, or in small groups.

If needed, review the structure of an opinion paragraph:
• The topic sentence tells your opinion about the subject.
• Details give reasons why you feel that way.
Little Berry, Big Benefit

Unit Focus
You are going to read a health article about blueberries.

As You Read:
Think about how blueberries affect the human body.

After You Read:
Use information from the article to write an opinion paragraph about blueberries.

Lesson Checklist
Check off each task after you complete it.

☐ Learn Vocabulary
☐ Read the Health Article: Little Berry, Big Benefit
☐ Answer Questions About the Health Article
☐ Organize Information
☐ Write an Opinion Paragraph
Learn Vocabulary

Read the word and its definition. Then write the vocabulary word on the line.

1. antioxidants  things found in or added to food that stop dangerous reactions in your body

2. contain  to have within

3. immune system  the part of your body that fights infections and keeps you healthy

4. prevent  to stop or to keep from happening

5. sodium  a mineral found in table salt

Words to Know

blueberry  calories  memory loss  vitamins
Little Berry, Big Benefit

Some foods are better for us than others. Even though blueberries are tiny, they can have a big effect on your body. Blueberries contain important vitamins such as C, A, B-complex, and E. Even a blueberry’s color is healthy. The blue comes from antioxidants that are good for you. There are three things blueberries do not have a lot of: fat, sodium, and calories.

Your brain needs antioxidants to help you stay sharp. Antioxidants can also help prevent your brain from having memory loss when you are much older. Your heart needs antioxidants, too. Your eyes need vitamin A to help you see. Your immune system needs vitamin C and antioxidants to keep you from getting sick. When you have a strong immune system, it’s easier for your entire body to stay healthy. Feeling hungry? Eat some blueberries!
Little Berry, Big Benefit

Answer Questions

Read each question. Fill in the circle next to the correct answer.

1. Blueberries contain a lot of ____.
   - A. calories
   - B. vitamins
   - C. fat

2. What gives blueberries their blue color?
   - A. antioxidants
   - B. sodium
   - C. fat

Draw two parts of the body that can be helped by eating blueberries.
Organize Information

Read the health article again. Then write information in the graphic organizer that tells your opinion about **why people should or should not eat blueberries**. Support your opinion with reasons.
Opinion

Write a paragraph that tells your opinion about blueberries. Should everyone eat blueberries? Why or why not?

- Use information from your graphic organizer and the health article.

Title
Blueberry Muffins

Blueberries have a lot of health benefits! They contain important vitamins and antioxidants. These berries are also delicious, especially in this recipe for blueberry muffins!

**What You Need**

**Ingredients**
- ¼ cup softened butter
- ¾ cup white sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 tbsp lemon extract
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- zest of one lemon
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- 1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup cornmeal
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- pinch of salt

**How Long It Will Take**

30 minutes
**What You Do Together**

**Directions**

1. Preheat the oven to 350º. Spray muffin cups or use paper muffin liners.
2. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar.
3. Mix in the eggs, extracts, lemon zest, and buttermilk.
4. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.
5. Stir the flour mixture into the milk mixture until just blended.
6. Gently fold in the blueberries.
7. Scoop batter into prepared muffin cups.
8. Bake about 20 minutes or until golden brown.

*Makes 12 muffins.*
The Study of Garbage

Lesson Objectives

Writing
Students use information from the social studies article to write an argument essay.

Vocabulary
Students learn content vocabulary words and use those words to write about whether it is or is not important to study garbage.

Content Knowledge
Students learn what people are throwing away and how they can help to control garbage levels in the future.

Essential Understanding
Students understand that we all benefit from recycling items and creating less trash.

Prepare the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student.

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<td>118</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>119</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

1  Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist
Distribute one unit to each student and direct students’ attention to the Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist. Tell them they will be able to refer to the focus of the unit as needed while working on the lessons. Instruct students to check off each task on the checklist after they complete it.

Read aloud the focus statements, and verify that students understand their purpose for reading. Ask:

• What are we going to read about? (people who study trash)
• What are you going to learn about them? (what they learn from studying garbage)
• What are you going to write based on this article? (an argument essay)

CCSS: W.4.1, 4.7, 4.8  RIT 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.10
The Study of Garbage

EMC

Detail 3

Writing: something that is used once

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Text-Based

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EMC

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Writing: 6034

Text-Based

Nonfiction

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groups of people who live and civilizations

Today, most trash consists of food

In 1973, Dr. Rathje’s class did a project about garbage. The subject

Writing:

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Answer Questions

2. Which of the following was found the most often by Dr. Rathje and

3. Why is it better to repair an old pair of shoes than it is to buy

4. How much garbage is created by only buying

Answer Questions About the Social Studies Article

To ensure reading comprehension, have students answer the text-dependent questions. Review the answers together.

Organize Information

Explain to students that they will use an argument graphic organizer to help them plan their essays. Guide students in using the text to complete the organizer.

Write an Argument Essay

Have students complete the writing assignment independently, with a partner, or in small groups. Remind students that an argument essay:

• makes an argument for or against something,
• gives reasons or facts to support the argument, and
• includes an introductory topic sentence and a conclusion sentence at the end.

Evaluate Your Writing

Explain that students will evaluate their writing to ensure that they have produced well-written essays that follow the argument structure.
The Study of Garbage

Unit Focus

You are going to read a social studies article about people who study trash.

As You Read:
Think about what people learn from studying garbage.

After You Read:
Use information from the article to write an argument essay about whether it is or is not useful to study garbage.

Lesson Checklist

Check off each task after you complete it.

- Learn Vocabulary
- Read the Social Studies Article: The Study of Garbage
- Answer Questions About the Social Studies Article
- Organize Information
- Write an Argument Essay
- Evaluate Your Writing
## Learn Vocabulary

Read the word and its definition. Then write the vocabulary word on the line.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocabulary</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>archaeologist</td>
<td>a person who studies the art, remains, and structures of people from the past</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civilizations</td>
<td>groups of people who live and work together</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disposable</td>
<td>something that is used once and then thrown away</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garbology</td>
<td>the study of what people use and what they throw away</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>landfills</td>
<td>large, special areas for the long-term storage of garbage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>modern</td>
<td>relating to the present time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recycling</td>
<td>using an item multiple times or in new ways</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stone tools</td>
<td>tools made out of stone, such as hammers, knives, or scrapers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Study of Garbage

As long as there have been people, there has been garbage. Today, most trash consists of food wrappers and newspapers, but hundreds of years ago, garbage included chips from stone tools and broken clay pots. About 40 years ago, an archaeologist named Dr. William Rathje was teaching at the University of Arizona. He knew garbage was used to learn about past civilizations, so why not study modern garbage to learn about life in the present?

In 1973, Dr. Rathje’s class did a project about garbage. The subject of garbology turned out to be really interesting. Over the years, Dr. Rathje and other garbologists have sorted through over 250,000 pounds (113,400 kg) of garbage. The assorted trash came from landfills, garbage trucks, and people’s homes.

Garbologists thought they’d find the landfills overflowing with modern fast-food packages. They also thought there would be a lot of disposable diapers and plastics. But there was much less than they expected. They found a lot of garbage from construction projects, and over 50 percent of the trash was paper. The team found newspapers dating back to the 1930s.

Garbologists also discovered a lot of food waste. There were several 15-year-old hot dogs and 20-year-old bread rolls! The researchers determined that families were wasting 10 to 15 percent of their food. Garbologists concluded that most people were doing a good job of recycling plastics and soda cans, but they weren’t recycling as much paper. People also weren’t recycling old clothes and cleaning supplies.
The Study of Garbage, continued

Whether it is a broken clay pot or a candy wrapper, garbage has helped scientists learn a lot about how people live. Archaeologists use garbage to peek into the past, and garbologists use garbage to paint a picture of the present. Dr. Rathje doesn’t think our present picture is too bad. He recognizes that there are more people in the world today, which means there is also more trash. But he does believe we can make a difference by continuing to recycle and by paying more attention to what we buy.

You can help control how much garbage is created by only buying the amount of food you know you will eat. It also helps to choose things with less paper and plastic packaging. And it is better to repair old items than to buy new ones. All of these actions make less waste and use fewer resources. By controlling how much garbage you make today, you can create a better world for people in the future. Next time you take out the garbage, stop for a moment. Ask yourself this question: Is this really garbage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trash Timeline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>10,000 B.C.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>500 B.C.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The first landfill is built near Athens, Greece.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.D. 1850</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pioneers leave wagon wheels, furniture, and other items along the way to the West.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.D. 1916</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coal is used to heat homes and to power trains and factories. About 80% of waste in cities is coal ash.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>A.D. 1986</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A landfill in New York becomes the largest city landfill in the world. It is big enough to be seen from space.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TODAY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The average American throws away 4 pounds of garbage every day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Study of Garbage

Answer Questions

Read and answer each question.

1. Garbage from ancient civilizations has included ___.
   - A food wrappers
   - B clay pots
   - C plastics

2. Dr. William Rathje and his students studied trash found in ___.
   - A archaeological digs
   - B the University of Arizona
   - C landfills

3. Which of the following was found the most often by Dr. Rathje and the garbologists?
   - A paper
   - B disposable diapers
   - C cleaning supplies

4. Which of these do people recycle the most?
   - A old clothes
   - B soda cans
   - C paper

5. Why is it better to repair an old pair of shoes than it is to buy a new pair? Explain.

6. What might happen if everyone stopped recycling today?
The Study of Garbage

Organize Information

Read the social studies article again. Think about whether it is or is not useful to study garbage. Write your argument in the first box. Then write three details from the article that support your argument.

Argument

Detail 1

Detail 2

Detail 3
The Study of Garbage

Argument

Write an argument essay about whether it is or is not a good idea to spend time and resources studying what we throw away. Use information from your graphic organizer and the social studies article.

Title
Evaluate Your Writing

Read about the argument structure. Then use your essay to complete the activity below.

A text that argues makes an argument for or against something. It also includes facts or reasons that support the argument.

The reason for writing is clear.

My essay argued that:

I introduced the subject in this topic sentence:

I provided facts or reasons that support my argument.

I included these facts or reasons:

1. 

2. 

My paragraphs have a clear focus.

My first paragraph explains that:

My last paragraph includes this conclusion sentence:

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**Smart Art**

You and your child will give new purpose to garbage by creating a sculpture from items found in recycle bins and the trash can.

**What You Need**

Examples of types of recyclables and trash
- cardboard
- cereal boxes
- egg cartons
- margarine tubs
- newspapers and junk mail
- paper or plastic cups
- paper towel and toilet paper tubes
- plastic bottles and caps
- yogurt cups

Examples of types of materials and tools
- aluminum foil
- glue: white glue, glue stick, hot glue
- hot glue gun
- markers
- papier-mâché
- poster paints or watercolors
- string
- tape: cellophane, duct, masking
- toothpicks
- wire
- yarn

Examples of types of sculptures
Choose a theme or use your imagination as you go.

**How Long It Will Take**

approximately one week
What You Do Together

1. **Keep track of the trash.**
   Monitor the recyclable bins and/or trash cans in your home for three or more days. Notice what types of objects your family throws away and/or saves for recycling. Also note if you think improvements could be made in your family’s efforts to recycle.

2. **Select the trash.**
   Each day, go through your recycle bins and/or trash cans and select objects that would be useful in making a sculpture. Make sure they are clean. Avoid containers that were used for cleaning products. Set the objects aside until you are ready to use them.

3. **Design your sculpture.**
   If you have an idea for a design, you may want to sketch it first.

4. **Create your sculpture.**
   Place the items on a table or work surface. Have your materials and tools handy. If there are more than two people in your group, take turns adding something to the sculpture.

5. **Talk about it.**
   As a family, talk about what you think you are doing well in your efforts to recycle. Also come up with a plan to expand your efforts, whether it involves your household, the neighborhood, or the community.

6. **Show off your sculpture.**
   Fill out a card that describes your artwork. Include your name, the title of the work, and the main materials used. Share your artwork with your class and what you have learned about garbage and recycling.
Transportation Over Time

Lesson Objectives

**Writing**
Students use information from the social studies article to write a compare-and-contrast essay.

**Vocabulary**
Students learn content vocabulary words and use those words to compare and contrast modes of transportation throughout history.

**Content Knowledge**
Students learn the designs and functions of the basic wheel, the bicycle, and the car.

**Essential Understanding**
Students understand that transportation has come a long way, but it could still change dramatically in the future.

Prepare the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student.

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<td>Evaluate Your Writing</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist

Distribute one unit to each student and direct students’ attention to the Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist. Tell them they will be able to refer to the focus of the unit as needed while working on the lessons. Instruct students to check off each task on the checklist after they complete it.

Read aloud the focus statements, and verify that students understand their purpose for reading. Ask:

- *What are we going to read about?* (transportation)
- *What are you going to learn about it?* (how it has changed or stayed the same)
- *What are you going to write based on this article?* (a compare-and-contrast essay)

CCSS: 5.2, 5.4, 5.8

RIT: 5.3, 5.4, 5.10

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2 Learn Vocabulary
Read aloud each content vocabulary word and have students repeat. Then read aloud and discuss the definitions. Explain that students will have a better understanding of the words after they read the social studies article. Have students write the vocabulary words on the provided lines.

3 Read the Social Studies Article: Transportation Over Time
Read aloud the social studies article as students follow along silently. Then have students reread the article independently or in small groups.

4 Answer Questions About the Social Studies Article
To ensure reading comprehension, have students answer the text-dependent questions. Review the answers together.

5 Organize Information
Explain to students that they will use a compare-and-contrast graphic organizer to help them plan their essays. Guide students in using the text to complete the organizer.

6 Write a Compare-and-Contrast Essay
Have students complete the writing assignment independently, with a partner, or in small groups. Review the structure of a compare-and-contrast essay and the related signal words:

- Explains similarities and differences between two or more things
- Signal words: same, alike, also, as well, both; different, however, but, while, instead of

7 Evaluate Your Writing
Explain that students will evaluate their writing to ensure that they have produced well-written essays that follow the compare-and-contrast text structure.
Transportation Over Time

Unit Focus

You are going to read a social studies article about transportation.

As You Read:
Think about how transportation has changed or stayed the same throughout the years.

After You Read:
Use information from the article to write a compare-and-contrast essay about the types of transportation that were mentioned in the article.

Lesson Checklist

Check off each task after you complete it.

☐ Learn Vocabulary

☐ Read the Social Studies Article: Transportation Over Time

☐ Answer Questions About the Social Studies Article

☐ Organize Information

☐ Write a Compare-and-Contrast Essay

☐ Evaluate Your Writing
Learn Vocabulary

Read the word and its definition. Then write the vocabulary word on the line.

1. **assembly line** an arrangement where each worker in a line adds one piece to an object until it is complete

2. **innovations** new ideas or ways of doing something

3. **manually** done by hand

4. **mechanical** including or using machine parts

5. **primitive** relating to the earliest form of something

6. **rechargeable** able to hold an electric charge multiple times and still work

7. **self-propelled** able to move under its own weight or power
Transportation Over Time

You might not think that you have much in common with prehistoric humans, but there’s one similarity we know about for sure: the need for transportation. From the earliest times until now, humans have needed to move themselves, their animals, or their belongings from one place to another. Finding the quickest way to do these things has been quite challenging. But bit by bit, we’ve figured out better, safer, and faster ways to get from point A to point B.

The earliest humans began experimenting with transportation by inventing the wheel. The materials and tools people used were primitive, but they were able to make steady progress. By placing logs under objects, people were able to roll those objects along the ground or up a hill. Loads of goods were able to be self-propelled rather than manually carried. Eventually, wooden discs or wheels replaced the log rollers. With time, the wheels were attached to wooden carts. Basic carts and horse-pulled carriages helped people move around more easily for hundreds of years.

Many other forms of transportation were developed over the centuries, but the bicycle was by far one of the most popular. Versions of the bicycle started appearing in the early 1800s. One of the first models was known as the “running machine.” It was made of wood and had no pedals. The rider sat on the seat, held on to the handlebars, and “ran” along the ground to turn the front wheel.
Over time, bicycles became more mechanical. Designers included pedals, gears, and rubber tires. Today, bicycles are still one of the most popular forms of transportation for both children and adults.

The automobile was one of the most important innovations in transportation. Various models were created and tested, but the industry didn’t have a lot of success until the 1830s. At that time, the first “electric carriage” was created. It had a nonrechargeable battery that powered a small electric motor. This led to the creation of cars that used rechargeable batteries. One of the best-selling vehicles could go 40 miles on a single charge and run at speeds up to 15 miles per hour. Although it was a “clean” form of transportation, people wanted to travel farther than the electric car batteries would allow.

By the early 1900s, gasoline-powered cars started to outsell all other types of motor vehicles. Henry Ford invented an improved assembly line and installed the first conveyor belt in his car factory around 1913. The assembly line lowered production costs and allowed Ford’s famous Model T to be completely assembled in just 93 minutes.

It’s interesting to imagine what kinds of transportation will be available in the future. As long as humans need to travel, you can bet we’ll continue to strive for even better and faster ways to move around the planet!
UNIT 6
Transportation Over Time

Answer Questions

Read and answer each question.

1. What form of transportation did the earliest humans experiment with?
   A running machine  
   B wheel  
   C electric carriage

2. The “running machine” was different from a modern bicycle because it didn’t have ___.
   A pedals  
   B handlebars  
   C a seat

3. How long did it take to build one of Henry Ford’s Model T cars?
   A 15 minutes  
   B 40 minutes  
   C 93 minutes

4. American society rejected battery-powered cars because they ___.
   A had not been tested  
   B already had gasoline-powered cars  
   C wanted to be able to take longer road trips

5. Visualize that you are riding in one of the first gasoline-powered cars. How would you feel? Why?

6. How would life probably be different today if we had kept using battery-powered cars?
**Organize Information**

Read the social studies article again. Then write information in the graphic organizer that tells about the different forms of transportation mentioned in the article. Write characteristics in the chart (the first one has been done for you). Then make an X to show which type of transportation had those characteristics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Log roller or Cart</th>
<th>Bicycle</th>
<th>Car or Automobile</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Used gasoline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Transportation Over Time

Compare and Contrast

Write a compare-and-contrast essay about transportation from the past and the present.

- Explain how these types of transportation are alike and different.

Title

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Evaluate Your Writing

Read about the compare-and-contrast text structure. Then use your essay to complete the activity below.

A text that has a compare-and-contrast structure makes comparisons, or describes similarities between two or more things. It also contrasts, or describes how these things are different.

The reason for writing is clear.

My essay compared and contrasted:

I used these compare-and-contrast signal words:

I provided details that support the topic.

I included these detail sentences:

1. 

2. 

My paragraphs have a clear focus.

My opening sentence for the first paragraph is:

My closing sentence for the first paragraph is:
Let It Fly!

Making paper airplanes is a fun activity; making paper airplanes that fly can take a bit of innovation. The great thing is that there are unlimited ways to make paper planes. Encourage your child to experiment with different designs—from the most basic to models that have landing gear.

What You Need

- paper
- masking tape or ruler for a starting line
- Optional: colored pencils, crayons, stamps and ink to decorate planes

How Long It Will Take

approximately 30 to 45 minutes

Photo credit: ©Hung Chung Chih/Shutterstock.com
What You Do Together

1. Ask your child what he or she knows about different types of transportation.

2. Give each person a sheet of paper.

3. Each person makes a paper airplane. (Decorating the plane is optional.) You can refer to the diagram below or make up your own design.

4. After all the planes are made, each person stands at the starting line.

5. Everyone flies their planes. The plane that flies the highest and/or the farthest wins.
The Benefits of Laughter

Lesson Objectives

Writing
Students use information from the health article to write a cause-and-effect essay.

Vocabulary
Students learn content vocabulary words and use those words to write about laughter.

Content Knowledge
Students learn about the mental and physical benefits of laughter.

Essential Understanding
Students understand that laughing regularly can help them improve their mental health, physical health, and social lives.

Prepare the Unit

Reproduce and distribute one copy for each student.

LESSON PAGE

1 Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist 32
2 Learn Vocabulary 33
3 Read the Health Article: The Benefits of Laughter 34
4 Answer Questions About the Health Article 36
5 Organize Information 37
6 Write a Cause-and-Effect Essay 38
7 Evaluate Your Writing 39

Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist

Distribute one unit to each student and direct students’ attention to the Unit Focus and Lesson Checklist. Tell them they will be able to refer to the focus of the unit as needed while working on the lessons. Instruct students to check off each task on the checklist after they complete it.

Read aloud the focus statements, and verify that students understand their purpose for reading. Ask:

- What are we going to read about? (laughter)
- What are you going to learn about it? (the mental and physical benefits)
- What are you going to write based on this article? (a cause-and-effect essay)

CCSS:  W 6.1, 6.4, 6.9  RIT 6.1, 6.4, 6.10

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2 **Learn Vocabulary**
Read aloud each content vocabulary word and have students repeat. Then read aloud and discuss the definitions. Explain that students will have a better understanding of the words after they read the health article. Have students write the vocabulary words on the provided lines.

3 **Read the Health Article: The Benefits of Laughter**
Read aloud the health article as students follow along silently. Then have students reread the article independently or in small groups.

4 **Answer Questions About the Health Article**
To ensure reading comprehension, have students answer the text-dependent questions. Review the answers together.

5 **Organize Information**
Explain to students that they will use a cause-and-effect graphic organizer to help them plan their essays. Guide students in using the text to complete the organizer.

6 **Write a Cause-and-Effect Essay**
Have students complete the writing assignment independently, with a partner, or in small groups. Review the structure of a cause-and-effect essay and the related signal words:
- Explains what happens (effect) and why it happens (cause)
- Signal words: because, therefore, so, since, as a result

7 **Evaluate Your Writing**
Explain that students will evaluate their writing to ensure that they have produced well-written essays that follow the cause-and-effect text structure.

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UNIT 3

The Benefits of Laughter

Unit Focus

You are going to read a health article about laughter.

As You Read:
Think about the mental and physical benefits of laughter.

After You Read:
Use information from the article to write a cause-and-effect essay about the benefits of laughter.

Lesson Checklist

Check off each task after you complete it.

☐ Learn Vocabulary

☐ Read the Health Article: The Benefits of Laughter

☐ Answer Questions About the Health Article

☐ Organize Information

☐ Write a Cause-and-Effect Essay

☐ Evaluate Your Writing
The Benefits of Laughter

Learn Vocabulary

Read the word and its definition. Then write the vocabulary word on the line.

1. **blood pressure**  the pressure that is put on the blood vessels in one’s body when the heart beats

2. **contort**  to move in an odd or unnatural way

3. **defuse**  to make less dangerous or uncomfortable

4. **endorphins**  natural chemicals in the brain that make humans feel good or happy

5. **immunity**  the body’s ability to resist disease

6. **larynx**  the part of the upper throat that allows humans to speak or make sounds

7. **psychological**  relating to the mind or thoughts

8. **resilience**  the ability to stay strong or brave during hard times
The Benefits of Laughter

What makes you laugh? Does a funny joke crack you up? Do you burst out giggling when you’re nervous? You know that you laugh because something is funny, but did you know that laughing can be good for your health? There are many researchers and scientists who study laughter and can confirm that the health benefits are real.

Laughter is good for our physical and psychological well-being, but there are still a lot of questions about why humans laugh. It might seem that we laugh to make ourselves feel good, but many researchers say that the main purpose for human laughter is to bring people together. They say that by connecting with each other through laughter, both our physical health and psychological health improve. The health benefits are the positive side effects.

The act of laughing can cause a number of things to happen to our brains and bodies. When we laugh, our brains release endorphins. Endorphins make us better able to handle stressful situations or to feel relaxed in group settings. By sharing laughter with others, we feel that we are part of the group—that we belong.

Depending on how we are laughing, there are some physical changes we go through as well. We make sounds, such as hiccuping or coughing noises. We might even laugh so hard that we cry. Our faces change—we use about 15 of our face muscles when we laugh. Our bodies move, twist, or contort. The larynx might half close, making it hard for us to catch our breath or to speak because air can’t get into and out of the body as well as it normally can.
Despite the odd things that happen to our bodies as we laugh, scientific studies have shown that laughter can have many positive effects on health. One of those effects is providing a good workout. Laughter works stomach, facial, leg, and back muscles. Studies show that laughing 100 times has the same effect as being on a rowing machine for 10 minutes or an exercise bike for 15 minutes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Health Benefits</th>
<th>Mental Health Benefits</th>
<th>Social Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boosts immunity</td>
<td>Adds joy and zest to life</td>
<td>Strengthens relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduces the effects of stress</td>
<td>Improves memory and learning</td>
<td>Builds confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases pain</td>
<td>Relieves stress</td>
<td>Enhances teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxes muscles</td>
<td>Improves mood</td>
<td>Helps defuse conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lowsers blood pressure</td>
<td>Enhances resilience</td>
<td>Promotes group bonding</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even if nothing seems funny to you right now, you can create opportunities to laugh in the near future. Try some of these activities, and you’ll be laughing in no time:

- Watch a funny movie or TV show.
- Read cartoons or comics.
- Share a good joke or a funny story.
- Check out a book from the humor section at the library.
- Play with a pet.
- Do something silly.
- Plan a fun outing with friends.

Now that you’ve read about the health benefits of laughter and activities that can make you laugh, you are better prepared to improve your health and the health of those around you with a simple giggle.
Answer Questions

Read and answer each question.

1. Many researchers believe that humans laugh in order to ___.
   A make themselves feel better
   B bond with other humans
   C exercise their stomachs

2. When endorphins are released, a person’s ___ is lowered.
   A stress level
   B ability to laugh
   C immune system

3. Which of the following is a social benefit of laughter?
   A enhanced teamwork
   B improved memory
   C fewer infections

4. Laughter is good for your body’s overall health because it ___.
   A moves your facial muscles
   B half closes your larynx
   C is a form of physical exercise

5. Why do you think humans enjoy being “part of the group”?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6. Describe the last time you laughed really hard. What made you laugh and why?
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
The Benefits of Laughter

Organize Information

Read the health article again. Then write information in the graphic organizer that tells the causes and effects of laughter.
The Benefits of Laughter

Cause and Effect

Write a cause-and-effect essay about the benefits of laughter. Use information from your graphic organizer and the health article.

Title

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
UNIT 3

The Benefits of Laughter

Evaluate Your Writing

Read about the cause-and-effect text structure. Then use your essay to complete the activity below.

A text that has a **cause-and-effect** structure tells what happens (effect) and why it happens (cause). It also tells if a cause has multiple effects.

**The reason for writing is clear.**

My essay described the cause-and-effect relationship(s) between: ________________________________

I used these cause-and-effect signal words:

_________________________  __________________________  __________________________

**I provided details that support the topic.**

I included these detail sentences:

1. ________________________________

2. ________________________________

**My paragraphs have a clear focus.**

My first paragraph explains that ________________________________

caused (or causes) ________________________________

My last paragraph summarizes the cause-and-effect relationship(s) with this sentence:

_________________________
Have a Laugh!

This activity is a combination of clapping, chanting, deep breathing, stretching, dancing, acting playful, and laughing.

What You Need
- two or more people
- hands for clapping
- a voice for chanting
- a sense of playfulness

How Long It Will Take
approximately 10 to 15 minutes (depending on how long the laughter lasts)
What You Do Together

1. Begin clapping: Start slowly and get faster.

   Then swing your arms up as you clap.

   Then swing your arms up as you clap and chant.

4. Clap while walking in a circle: Look at each other.
   Add dance moves.

5. Breathe in deeply as you reach upward with both arms:
   Stretch and hold. Laugh as you bring your arms down and bend over.

6. Do an activity as you walk around and laugh:
   Greet each other with a handshake or by bowing.
   Pretend to talk on a cellphone.
   Make funny faces and motions.
   Do an exercise between each activity:
   Chant and clap: ho-ho, ha-ha-ha.
   Chant and clap: very good, very good, YAAAAAAAY!
   Breathe in deeply and reach upward, stretch, and hold.
   Laugh as you bring your arms down and bend over.

7. Close your eyes and breathe in: Say “hmmmm” as you let your breath out.