

ELA Curriculum PT – Grade 4

Lesson 1: What is research?

Standards: W.4.7, W.4.8

Goals:

- to introduce students to the concept of research
- to model for students how to select a good topic
- to guide students to ask open-ended questions
- to provide feedback for students on their research questions

Introduction: This lesson will act as the introduction to the larger unit on research and creating research papers. The students will investigate topics, narrow their topic, and create a list of questions about the topic.

Materials: K-W chart, paper, pencil

Activity 1: Asking questions

Teacher says: If we want to find out about something, what do we do? (Student responses: Read about it, ask questions, ask an adult/professional, etc). For this unit, we are going to find out about, or research, an interesting topic. The first step is to choose a topic. For example, I might want to find out about the Underground Railroad. To start, I would need to think about all the things I already know about the topic and what I want to find out.

Have students brainstorm a topic of interest. Pass out the K-W chart. Have students develop a list of details they already know about the topic on the left side, and a list of questions they have about the topic on the right side. Provide enough time so that students can develop a complete list.

Teacher says: Take a look at your list of questions. Cross out any questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no. For example, if I wrote, “Was the Underground Railroad used by slaves?” that question can be answered with a simple yes. We want to find questions where we have to dig a little deeper to find out more. (Allow students the time to complete the task.) Now, take a look at the remaining questions. In your head, pick out a question that is interesting to you – something you really want to find out more about. Write this question down on your own piece of paper. Once you have your question, think about this: Is the question interesting? Is the question “just right – not too big or too small? (For example, a “too big” might be “What were the stories behind all of the different people who used the Underground Railroad? A “too small” question might be “Why was it called the Underground Railroad?”) If you feel like your question is not quite right, go back to the list and select a different question. (Allow students the time to complete the task. Teacher should do a spot check to guide students who need assistance.)

Teacher says: Once you feel like you have a good question, please write your name on your paper and I will collect your questions. These are the questions that we are going to be working with over the

course of this unit and that you will be turning into a research paper. (Use Rubric 1 to provide feedback on research questions)

Lesson 2: Sources

Standards: W.4.7, W.4.8, W.4.9

Goals:

to guide students to appropriate resources for research
to model how to evaluate resources
to provide feedback for students on gathering resources

Introduction: This lesson will allow students to dive deeper into their topics and encourage the use of sound, reliable sources. Students will learn how to begin research by creating keywords and how to evaluate sources for reliability and value.

Materials: computers with Internet access, chart paper/whiteboard/smartboard, paper/pencil, copies of Internet Citation Organizer
(http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson983/organizer-form.pdf)

Activity 1: Finding and evaluating sources

Teacher says: We are going to dig a little deeper into your research questions today. In order to find out more about a topic, we need to figure out the best way to find information about that topic. We start with keywords.

Show students the website (or pull up the site on a projector screen/smartboard):

http://www.kyvl.org/kids/p1_plan/keywords.html

Teacher says: If we are researching the topic of dogs in space, this site shows us a list of keywords that relate to the main topic. Can you think of any other key words or phrases you could use for this topic?

Teacher says: Now we are going to develop a list of keywords for your topics. Let's pretend that my research question is: How did the Underground Railroad work? What are some words or phrases that might help me search for information? (Teacher will construct the list on chart paper, a whiteboard, or on a smartboard, based on student responses.)

Sample responses: underground railroad, fugitive slaves, slaves, escape from slavery, Harriet Tubman, journey to freedom, underground railroad conductor, freedom, Frederick Douglass, guided escape, escape from the south, runaway slaves

Teacher says: Now, it's your turn. On a piece of paper, write down a list of key words that will help you search for information on your topic. (Spot check and offer help as needed.)

Activity 2: Evaluating web sources

Teacher says: One of the most popular ways to find information these days is through the Internet. Searching the web allows us access to an amazing amount of information.

Use the PowerPoint presentation at <http://libraryschool.libguidescms.com/content.php?pid=393403&sid=3222357> to discuss website evaluation.

Teacher says: Let's give it a shot. I'd like you to open two tabs on your browser. In the first tab, go to: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/viewform?formkey=dEp5VnZOZjJTcXYwQXdtV2I0dlU0NkE6MQ>. We will use this short quiz to evaluate some of the sites you find in your key word search. In the second tab, please type in one of the key words or phrases we brainstormed into your search engine. Please make sure that the word or phrase you use relates to your specific question. Choose one of the resulting sites that looks like it might be a good source. I'd like you to browse through the website and, as you do, take the quiz on the first tab. I will come around to take a look at your results and answer any questions that you may have. (Though most schools have excellent blockers in place, teachers should be vigilant about site content and help guide students who are struggling.)

Teacher says: Once you have evaluated 3-4 sites using the quiz, feel free to start exploring your topic some more. If you find a useful site, record the source using the Internet Citation Organizer (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson983/organizer-form.pdf). If you discover that a site is unreliable or does not contain the information that you need, move on to a new site or a new search. Please find and record at least 4 sources that are useful to your topic and are reliable. (Use Rubric 2 to provide feedback on sources)

Lesson 3: Taking Notes

Standards: RI.4.1, RI.4.9, W.4.7, W.4.8, W.4.9

Goals:

- to instruct students on how to record information
- to explain the concept of plagiarism
- to model for students what information is worth writing down
- to provide feedback for students on their note taking

Introduction: This lesson will teach students about plagiarism and how to take notes. Students will use the sources they found from Lesson 2 to investigate their topic and take notes using a note card system.

Materials: computers with Internet access, copies of Plagiarism Scavenger Hunt worksheet, note cards, copies of Taking Notes on a Note Card hand-out

Activity 1: Plagiarism scavenger hunt

Teacher says: When we research, we find out a lot of new information about our topic. But when we want to write about our topic, we have to be careful that we give credit to others for their ideas. We can and should use other people's words and ideas if they are interesting and useful, but we should always make sure that a reader knows who came up with those words or ideas. Otherwise, people might think those ideas are ours, which would be like stealing someone else's ideas.

Use <http://edtech2.boisestate.edu/jenniferharris2/502/scavenger.html> to introduce students to plagiarism. (It would be a good idea to pull the site up on a projector screen if possible.) Pass out the pre-printed worksheet to accompany the lesson and direct students to begin the scavenger hunt. The students may work in pairs, if preferred.

Activity 2: Notecard note-taking

Teacher says: Now that we have found good sources for our topics, we need to write down some of the information that we have learned. It would take a very long time to write down every idea from every source, so we are going to use note cards to write down key ideas from each source. Later, we'll use these note cards to organize our ideas and write our research papers.

Distribute the "Taking Notes on a Notecard" handout and review with students. Pass out notecards and have students begin the process, helping and answering questions as needed. Use Rubric 3 to evaluate notes.

Lesson 4: Using your notes

Standards: RI.4.1, RI.4.9, W.4.2, W.4.9

Goals:

to model for students how to transform ideas from notes into useable material

to model for students an organized outline of ideas

to provide feedback for students on the scaffolded outline

Introduction: This lesson will take the information that students have gathered in note form and transform that information into a more useable research paper scaffold that will direct them towards their final product.

Materials: note cards from previous lesson, copies of Research Paper Scaffold worksheet

Activity 1: Research paper scaffold

Teacher says: So far, you have chosen a research question, found sources about that topic, and gathered information from those sources. Today, we are going to take a closer look at the information you have found and create an outline that will help you to organize your ideas and write your research paper.

Pass out the "Research Paper Scaffold" worksheet. Advise students that they will use their notes to fill out the worksheet. This will also show any holes in the research, so some students may need to conduct additional research. Use Rubric 4 to evaluate student scaffolds.

Lesson 5: Writing a draft

Standards: W.4.2, W.4.9, W.4.9b

Goals:

to model how to move students from an outline to a draft
to provide feedback for students on the first draft

Introduction: In this lesson, students will move from an outline to a draft. They will also learn about creating strong introductions and conclusions.

Materials: paper and pencil, scaffold outline from previous lesson, computer projector for videos, whiteboard or smartboard

Activity 1: Writing a first draft

Teacher says: Today we will finally begin writing our research papers! We will be using the scaffold outline that you have already created to put ideas on paper. But first, let's talk a bit about how we begin and end our papers. A good writer is able to introduce what their paper will be about and hook the reader into wanting to read more. They are also able to summarize their ideas to leave the reader with an understanding of what they read.

Show the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmzhagFzerg>.

With students, practice writing an introduction on the whiteboard/smartboard based on the model topic. See Introduction Sample.

Teacher says: As important as it is to hook readers in with a strong introduction, it is also important to give readers a good summary of the information in the conclusion. Show the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tc0955LI0qs>.

With students, practice writing a conclusion on the whiteboard/smartboard based on the model topic. See Conclusion Sample.

Direct students to begin writing their drafts using their scaffold outline. Use Rubric 5 to evaluate drafts.

Lesson 6: Editing and revising

Standard: W.4.2

Goals:

to model how to move from the first draft to a revised draft
to demonstrate how feedback from educators and peers can improve writing
to revise the first draft of the research paper

Introduction: This lesson will introduce students to the concept of revision, pointing out that getting a draft on paper is not the end of the writing process. They will conduct peer revisions in order to move their research papers from first draft to final draft.

Materials: computer with video projector, copies of Peer Editing Guide, pen or marker

Activity 1: What is revising?

Teacher says: Congratulations! You have completed a draft of your research paper. Even though you have all of your ideas on paper now, good writers do not stop there. Good writers look for ways to make their writing better. This process is called revision.

Show students the video at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBKqgOvmJ8w>.

Activity 2: Peer revisions

Teacher says: Did you notice, in the video, how the two students interacted? What are some things that you noticed about their process? (Sample student responses: They were respectful of each other, they asked questions, the boy asked the girl if she wanted to revise, they worked together, they were positive, the boy made helpful suggestions, etc.) Today, we will work in partners to peer revise your research papers, in the same way the children did in the video.

Pass out and go over together “Peer Editing Guide” from http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson261/peer.pdf. Assign peer review partners and let students begin the process.

Activity 3: Complete revisions

Teacher says: Now that you have feedback from your partner, go through your paper and make the revisions that you discussed.

Evaluate the peer review process using Rubric 6.

Lesson 7: The final draft

Standards: W.4.2, W.4.9, W.4.9b

Goals:

to move students from a revised draft to a final draft

to apply ideas from earlier lessons to craft a completed, revised research paper

Introduction: During this lesson, the students will self-evaluate their research papers and complete a final draft.

Materials: copies of the Editing Checklist

Activity 1: Final check

Teacher says: Your paper is almost there! You have worked with a partner to revise your paper and today we will complete the final check and produce the final draft. (Pass out “Editing Checklist” from <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/printouts/Editing%20Checklist.pdf>) Last time, you and your partner went through your paper to improve the ideas. Today, for the final check, you and your partner are going to check your paper for conventions. You will trade papers and complete the Editing Checklist for your peer. Then, you will read through your own paper and complete the checklist for yourself. Once you have finished the checklist, please make any needed revisions and complete your final draft.

Teacher will use the Final Draft Rubric to evaluate student research papers.