



Grade 3 - Unit 4 Reading - Fascinating Facts: How Nonfiction Authors Engage and Inform Readers

Unit Focus

In *Fascinating Facts: How Nonfiction Authors Engage and Inform Readers*, students read a variety of informational texts to build knowledge about the natural world and strengthen their understanding of how nonfiction texts communicate facts, ideas, and explanations. As students explore topics such as animal adaptations and survival, they learn how authors organize information using main ideas, supporting details, text features, and domain-specific vocabulary. Through reading, discussion, and research, students begin to think like scientists and informational writers, synthesizing information across sources and using evidence to deepen their understanding.

Instruction is grounded in the Science of Reading, integrating systematic instruction in phonics, morphology, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension to support the development of skilled, independent readers and writers. Structured literacy instruction is delivered through Foundations, which provides explicit instruction in phonics, morphology, spelling patterns, and encoding; Bookworms, which builds background knowledge, vocabulary, comprehension, and structured discussion through shared reading and read-aloud experiences; and Geodes, which supports application of taught phonics patterns in connected, decodable texts to strengthen fluency, accuracy, and automaticity.

Students engage with high-quality texts that build knowledge, vocabulary, and comprehension while supporting close reading of grade-level standards, including *Minerals, Rocks, and Soils, Great Migrations: Whales* by Laura Marsh, *Elephants* by Laura Marsh, *Elephants* by Steve Bloom, and *Deadliest Animals* by Melissa Stewart.

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

Standard(s)	Transfer			
Common Core English Language Arts: 3 <ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1)Determine the main idea of a text; recount the key details and explain how they support the main idea. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.3.2)Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases in a text relevant to a grade 3 topic or subject area. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.3.4)Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.5)Distinguish their own point of view from that of the author of a text. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.3.6)Compare and contrast the most important points and key details presented in two texts on the same topic. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.3.9)By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the grades	<i>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</i> T1 Evaluate the author's message, identify the author's purpose, and cite text evidence to support conclusions. T2 Research and identify credible resources to expand knowledge and understanding of a topic or issue. T3 Present information and ideas using appropriate grammar, spelling, and vocabulary to convey the message.			
	Meaning			
	<table><tr><th>Understanding(s)</th><th>Essential Question(s)</th></tr><tr><td><i>Students will understand that...</i> U1 Nonfiction texts are used to learn new information and to understand what the author wants to teach. U2 Sounds, letters, and patterns work together to support decoding and spelling of words. U3 Reading accurately, smoothly, and with expression helps readers focus on meaning and better understand the text.</td><td><i>Students will keep considering...</i> Q1 How do readers use nonfiction books to learn new information and understand what the author wants to teach us? Q2 How do sounds, letters, and patterns work together to help me read and spell words?</td></tr></table>	Understanding(s)	Essential Question(s)	<i>Students will understand that...</i> U1 Nonfiction texts are used to learn new information and to understand what the author wants to teach. U2 Sounds, letters, and patterns work together to support decoding and spelling of words. U3 Reading accurately, smoothly, and with expression helps readers focus on meaning and better understand the text.
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<p>23 text complexity band independently and proficiently. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RI.3.10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.6) • Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.8) • Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2) • Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.4) • Identify and know the meaning of the most common prefixes and derivational suffixes. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.3.A) • Decode words with common Latin suffixes. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF.3.3.B) • Decode multisyllable words. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RF.3.3.C) • Read grade-appropriate irregularly spelled words. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF. 3.3.D) • Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RF. 3.4.A) • Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary. (CCSS.ELALITERACY.RF.3.4.C) • Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.A) • Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.2.B) • Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., gaining the floor in respectful ways, listening to others with care, speaking one at a time about the topics and texts under discussion). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.B) • Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.C) • Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.1.D) • Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.* (CCSS.ELALITERACY.L.3.1.F) • Capitalize appropriate words in titles. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.A) 	<p>U4 Vocabulary knowledge supports making meaning from text and deepening understanding.</p> <p>U5 Writers make intentional choices using language conventions and the writing process to clearly communicate meaning as they grow and develop as authors.</p>	<p>Q3 How does reading with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression support comprehension?</p> <p>Q4 How does learning new vocabulary help readers better understand what they read?</p> <p>Q5 How can I use the writing process to make choices that communicate my ideas clearly?</p>
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Acquisition of Knowledge and Skill</h3>		
	<h4 style="text-align: center;">Knowledge</h4>	<h4 style="text-align: center;">Skill(s)</h4>
	<p><i>Students will know...</i></p> <p>K1 The key differences between fiction and nonfiction genres.</p> <p>K2 The purpose of nonfiction texts (to inform, explain, or teach).</p> <p>K3 Nonfiction texts are intentionally organized by authors to help readers understand information.</p> <p>K4 Nonfiction text features (table of contents, headings, captions, diagrams, glossary, index) and how they support comprehension.</p> <p>K5 Nonfiction text structures (main idea and detail, sequence, cause and effect, compare and contrast, problem and solution).</p> <p>K6 Main idea is what the text is mostly about and the supporting details are the facts, examples, or information in the text that explain, prove, or give more information about the main idea.</p> <p>K7 Authors of nonfiction texts have a point of view about a topic that can be identified through the text.</p> <p>K8 Authors may present information differently, even when writing about the same topic.</p> <p>K9 A RAN chart promotes critical thinking about an author/text</p>	<p><i>Students will be skilled at...</i></p> <p>S1 Distinguishing between fiction and nonfiction texts and explaining how they know.</p> <p>S2 Analyzing how authors organize information and identifying the text structure used in a nonfiction text.</p> <p>S3 Explaining how different text features help them locate information and learn new ideas.</p> <p>S4 Explaining how the organization and structure of a text helps readers understand information.</p> <p>S5 Identifying the main idea of a nonfiction text and selecting key details that support it.</p> <p>S6 Identifying the author's point of view and supporting their thinking with evidence from the text.</p> <p>S7 Distinguishing their own point of view from the author's point of view.</p> <p>S8 Comparing and contrasting key ideas and details from two nonfiction texts on the same topic.</p> <p>S9 Using a RAN chart to record what they know, what they learn, and what they wonder while reading nonfiction.</p>

Stage 1: Desired Results - Key Understandings

- Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., sitting, smiled, cries, happiness). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.2.E)
- Use sentence-level context as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.A)
- Determine the meaning of the new word formed when a known affix is added to a known word (e.g., agreeable/disagreeable, comfortable/uncomfortable, care/ careless, heat/preheat). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.B)
- Use a known root word as a clue to the meaning of an unknown word with the same root (e.g., company, companion). (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.C)
- Use glossaries or beginning dictionaries, both print and digital, to determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases. (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.4.D)

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- Inquiry: Posing, pursuing, and refining significant questions to deepen understanding about a topic or issue. (POG.1.1)
- Analyzing: Examining information/data/ evidence from multiple sources to identify possible underlying assumptions, patterns, and relationships in order to make inferences. (POG.1.2)
- Product Creation: Effectively use a medium to communicate important information. (POG.3.2)

K10 Sounds, letters, and spelling patterns work together to form words, supporting accurate reading and spelling.

K11 Reading with accuracy, fluency, and expression supports understanding of text.

K12 Vocabulary supports understanding of text and builds deeper meaning.

K13 Foundations:

- Pluralizing words ending in y and o
- Y and suffix spelling rule
- Final Stable Syllable
- Consonant-le
- tion/sion
- Consonant-le/exception
- Final syllable with schwa vs. consonant-le
- Consonant-le/adding suffixes

K14 Writers plan, draft, revise, and edit to improve their writing.

K15 Nonfiction writers support their claims and thinking with evidence from reliable sources

S10 Decoding unfamiliar words and spelling words correctly using their knowledge of sounds, letters, and patterns.

S11 Using known words, context clues, and new vocabulary to understand and make meaning from texts.

S12 Reading aloud with accuracy, smoothness, and expression to focus on comprehension.