

# INFORMATIONAL WRITING FEEDBACK AND SUPPORT

## 6<sup>th</sup> - 8th Grade English Language Arts

Challenge	Suggestions for Support
Students are unclear about what to do in this assignment.	<p>Read the prompt with students. Review the R-A-F-T strategy of interpreting writing prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● R = role</li><li>● A = audience</li><li>● F = format</li><li>● T = topic</li></ul> <p>Break down the components and model the strategy.</p>
Students are struggling to get started or are not engaged.	<p>Begin the lesson by brainstorming what students already know about the topic from this unit. Research and discuss the topic together to build interest.</p> <p>Consider using the inquiry method, so that students have agency and choice in their research topics.</p>
Students are struggling to make sense of the research.	<p>Students should annotate or take notes while reading research. Have students circle any “technical” words that they think are essential to understanding this topic. Provide an example if students are struggling with this and explain that authors of informational pieces will often define words for their readers.</p> <p>Read the research in pairs or using I do / we do / you do, depending on the needs of the class.</p> <p>Students should start reading through the articles and annotating for places where authors have provided facts, examples, statistics, and quotations. Set the purpose for reading as gathering evidence.</p> <p>Sometimes students will choose points of evidence that are too similar, and will need feedback and guidance to make choices that are distinct enough to support three separate sub-claims.</p>

<p>For group projects: Students are struggling to work together.</p>	<p>Students of many different abilities will have the opportunity to work together. You may wish to carefully form groups heterogeneously. However, it is imperative that students share the tasks equally. It can be helpful to have students reflect on their group dynamics (as well as productivity) at the end of every class through a written self and group assessment.</p> <p>Students will need to collaborate and choose <a href="#">roles</a>. Students should have a sense of which tasks they are responsible for individually, as well as who they are assisting, and how they are assessing the work. <a href="#">Common Sense Education has a graphic organizer that can help groups plan.</a></p> <p>Students should begin by dividing up the components necessary for the project. Decide who will be responsible for each component. Review the requirements that apply to all team members.</p> <p>Have groups select a collaborative digital presentation tool, like PowerPoint, Google Slides, Padlet, or Coggle. Depending on the needs of the group, provide some overview of basic features of the platforms, particularly in how to include photographs and add notes.</p> <p>Have students use a graphic organizer to keep track of their research and to share with the group.</p>
<p>Presentations are hard to read or visually understand.</p>	<p>Provide an example and non-example for presentations; remember, slides with a lot of text are usually distracting and confusing! Include only the most important information/image/data and then write notes about what you want to say about this information. There should be 35 words maximum per slide, but there is no limit for notes.</p> <p>Review the rubric together. Model how to fix common errors, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Text is copy-and-pasted from the <a href="#">research</a></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The text is cut off on one side</li> <li>• There is too much text on one slide</li> <li>• The colors of the text are too hard to see and are distracting</li> <li>• The font size is too small</li> <li>• The content does not reflect the subtopic</li> <li>• The image is hard to see</li> <li>• There is not enough white space</li> </ul>
<p>Students are struggling to select academic resources in their research.</p>	<p>One option is to scaffold this process, providing resources to students so that they can focus on evaluating and analyzing the content to complete the informational writing project. Have students conduct their own research in addition to the resources provided. Ask students to brainstorm search terms that might help them find useful resources.</p> <p>Once students have an understanding about how to read, analyze, and interpret research, then students can move on to selecting their own sources.</p> <p>Review the characteristics of “reliable” sources, and determine bias within writing. <a href="#">Common Sense Media also has a lesson on evaluating sources and finding credible information on the internet.</a></p> <p>One of the most important parts of research is determining the credibility of the source; this is especially true when performing research on the Internet. There are a number of resources on how to determine the credibility of sources, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">University of Wisconsin</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">University of Maryland</a></li> </ul> <p>You may wish to give students examples and non-examples of credible sources. Suggest that students create a shared document with links to all of their articles so that they can find them easily and start their bibliography.</p> <p>Note: Students may ask whether <i>Wikipedia</i> is an acceptable resource. It is actually a great resource for finding links to sources. Students should not be quoting <i>Wikipedia</i> articles; instead, they should be using <i>Wikipedia's</i> links within articles to find information.</p>

<p>Students only quote research and struggle to paraphrase.</p>	<p>Explicitly model paraphrasing for students. Explain:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As defined by Purdue University Online Writing Lab, paraphrasing is “writing down what an author said in your own words. A paraphrase will have different vocabulary and sentence structure than the original text but still contains the author’s main point or idea. It is important to remember that paraphrasing is NOT a direct copy of the text. If you directly copy from the text without including a citation you are plagiarizing.” (From <a href="#">Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)</a>)</li> <li>● You can use some or all of these steps in any order: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Reread</b> the original passage until you understand its full meaning.</li> <li>○ <b>Similar Words:</b> Try to find synonyms for verbs and adjectives and phrases for the words used in the source or in the simplified copy of the source you have written.</li> <li>○ <b>Change Verbs to Nouns:</b> To shorten and change the original source you can change a noun into a verb that has the same or similar meaning</li> <li>○ <b>Combine Sentences:</b> Combine sentence by using conjunctions, relative clauses or appositives is a great way to change the sentence structure of a source (sometimes adding conjunction into a sentence is also a great way to change the order of clauses)</li> <li>○ <b>Paraphrase by Using Definitions:</b> Identify the keywords in the sentence and replace them with their definitions. For example, replace “verdict” with “final judgment” which is what a verdict is.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Students are struggling to create a bibliography.</p>	<p>Explain at the beginning of the project that students will be required to provide a bibliography of all of the sources and ensure they have proper Internet citation guidelines.</p> <p>This is a useful resource from <a href="#">Purdue University</a>. Make sure students know that there are different expectations for citing photographs, websites, and newspaper articles printed online.</p>
<p>Students simply read from the slides during presentations.</p>	<p>Prompt students to write notes for each slide that describe the information that the presenter should share (they should not just be reading off the slides).</p>

	<p>Make time in class to practice presenting. Have each group to complete a reflection on their own process and performance on the task, as a team and individually -- including the difference between what is orally presented and what is visually presented to the audience.</p> <p><a href="#">Common Sense Education also offers some additional resources on to encourage students to present with confidence.</a></p>
<p>Students struggle to pay attention during other groups' presentations.</p>	<p>The audience should take notes about the salient points of the presentation and provide feedback for the group (either written or spoken).</p> <p>Another strategy is for students to create a note-taking sheet for other students in the class to complete while listening to the presentation. Classmates can complete the notes while students present. The note sheet should help students further understand the genocide. It can include information from the overview as well as some questions for students to ponder.</p> <p>Have each group to complete a reflection on their own process and performance on the task, as a team and individually -- including listening to presentations.</p>
<p>Students are struggling to use transitional words, phrases, or clauses to manage the sequence of events.</p>	<p>Review and model how to use different transitional phrases to manage the sequence of events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Transitional words and phrases can be used to show there is a transition in time. (<i>The next day, after a while, before long, late that afternoon, the next thing I knew, etc.</i>)</li> <li>● Transitional words and phrases can be used to show there is a transition in setting or location. (<i>In our backyard, when we went upstairs, at the post office, behind the trees etc.</i>)</li> <li>● Transitional words and phrases can be used to show a sequence of events, or to show the connection between events. (<i>At the beginning, as a result, it started when, as soon as, in the end, etc.</i>)</li> </ul>