

Unit 2: Reading and Writing to Inform: Overcoming Learning Challenges—Books

Common Core State Standards addressed: RI.3.1, RI.3.2, RI.3.4, RI.3.7, RI.3.10, W.3.2, W.3.10, L.3.4a–d



Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- Why are education, books, and reading important?
- *Education, books, and reading are important because they help us learn about and make sense of the world, and escape into the lives of other people and other worlds.*
- How can I overcome learning challenges?
- *I can overcome learning challenges by being an effective learner: taking initiative and responsibility, persevering, and collaborating.*

Please note: The guiding question and big idea are framed in the context that education, books, and reading are important for college and career readiness.

What will your student be doing at school?

In Unit 2, students move from analyzing challenges others face in accessing schools to analyzing challenges faced in accessing books around the world. Students closely read excerpts from *My Librarian Is a Camel*, which describes ways people living in different countries around the world access books. For a mid-unit assessment, students demonstrate their reading skills by reading a new excerpt from this book and determining its main idea.

In the second half of the unit, students switch gears to writing informative texts. Using what they have learned about reading informational texts in the first half of the unit, they plan, write, revise, and edit an informative paragraph describing how people in a particular country have overcome the challenge of access to books. For the End of Unit 2 Assessment, students write a new informative paragraph describing the challenge and how it has been overcome, using evidence from the excerpt from *My Librarian Is a Camel* read for the mid-unit assessment.

Working to become an ethical person is a habit of character that is emphasized in this unit. These are the specific effective learning skills students will focus on:

- I show empathy. This means I understand and I share or take into account the feelings, situation, or attitude of others.
- I behave with integrity. This means I am honest and do the right thing, even when it's difficult, because it is the right thing to do.
- I show respect. This means I appreciate the abilities, qualities, and achievements of others and treat myself, others, and the environment with care.
- I show compassion. This means I notice when others are sad or upset and try to help them.

Informational Texts Handout

- Informational texts inform or teach a reader about a topic.

- Informational texts often have text features that the author uses to help the reader understand and find information in the text.
- Informational texts are based on research the author does before writing and list sources used in research.
- Informational texts are focused on the same topic throughout the piece.
- Informational texts are clearly presented and easy to understand.
- Informational texts often have illustrations that support the text.
- Informational texts introduce the topic with a focus statement, develop the topic with evidence such as facts and details, and end with a concluding statement or section.
- Informational texts group related information together to explain a main idea.

How can you support your student at home?

- Talk to your student about the challenges people face in accessing books around the world and how these challenges are overcome.
- Talk to your student about his or her informative paragraph and the elements of an effective informative text.
- Read informational books, if possible about people who overcome challenges, and talk to your student about the main idea of these texts.

Unit 2: Homework

In Lessons 1–6 and 11–12, homework focuses on research reading.

In Lessons 7–10, homework focuses on research reading and informational writing in preparation for the end of unit assessment in Lesson 11.

Research reading: Your student is expected to independently research the topic by reading topic-related books of his or her choice for approximately 20 minutes **each day** and responding to a prompt of choice in the **front** of the independent reading journal. These are usually books your student will bring home from school; however, they may be topic-related books chosen by the student at the public or home library. Prompts for independent reading can be found in the homework materials provided.

Choice reading: If your student would also like to independently read and respond to a book of free choice, he or she may use the **back** of the independent reading journal. Prompts for independent reading can be found in the homework materials provided.

Vocabulary logs:

- In the front, students record new **academic vocabulary**: words you might find in informational texts on many different topics. For example, the words *challenges*, *questions*, and *explain* are words that could be found in books on any topic.
- In the back, students record new **topical vocabulary**: words about a particular topic. For example, the words *tadpoles*, *frogspawn*, and *amphibian* are words that would be found on the topic of frogs.

Overcoming Learning Challenges Near and Far

Lesson	Lesson Content	Homework Practice	Due In	Anticipated Date **
1	Students read an excerpt from <i>My Librarian Is a Camel</i> for the gist and to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.	1. Research reading and answering prompt.	1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	
2	Students closely reread an excerpt from <i>My Librarian Is a Camel</i> to determine the main idea and gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced and how they were overcome.	1. Research reading and answering prompt 2. For ELLs: Language Dive Practice I	1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically. 2. Lesson 7	
3	Students write an informative paragraph explaining the learning challenges some people face in Kenya as a pre-assessment of informative writing skills.	1. Research reading and answering prompt	2. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	
4	Students work in expert groups to read an excerpt from <i>My Librarian Is a Camel</i> for the gist and to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.	1. Research reading and answering prompt	1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	
5	1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	1. Research reading and answering prompt 2. For ELLs: Language Dive Practice II	1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically. 2. Lesson 7	
6	Students read a new excerpt from <i>My Librarian Is a Camel</i> and determine its main idea for the mid-unit assessment.	1. Research reading and answering prompt	1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	
7	Students analyze a model, write a focus statement, and plan their informative paragraph about their expert group's country.	1. Respond to an informative writing prompt 2. Research reading and answering prompt	1. Lesson 11 2. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	
8	Students analyze a model and draft their informative paragraph about their expert group's country.	1. Respond to an informative writing prompt 2. Research reading and answering prompt	1. Lesson 11 2. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	
9	Students engage in peer critique to revise their informative paragraphs for organization.	1. Respond to an informative writing prompt 2. Research reading and answering prompt	1. Lesson 11 2. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically.	

*Teacher note: Please complete the Anticipated Date column according to your schedule.

Homework Resources (for Families)

Lesson	Lesson Content	Homework Practice	Due In	Anticipated Date **
10	Students engage in peer critique to revise their informative paragraphs for purpose and for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to an informative writing prompt 2. Research reading and answering prompt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lesson 11 2. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically. 	
11	Students write a new informative paragraph for the end of unit assessment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Research reading and answering prompt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically. 	
12	Students share what they have learned throughout the unit in a small group discussion.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research reading and answering prompt 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Teacher will check independent reading journals strategically. 	

*Teacher note: Please complete the Anticipated Date column according to your schedule.

Independent Reading

Directions: Remember to record responses to research reading in the front of your independent reading journal and responses to choice reading in the back. Try to choose a different prompt each time.

Record any new vocabulary in your vocabulary log. Remember, academic vocabulary is recorded in the front, and domain-specific vocabulary (words about the topic) is recorded in the back. Mark vocabulary found during independent reading with a symbol such as an asterisk (*).

Record:

- Date
- Title and author of your reading book
- Pages you have read
- Prompt
- Response

Example:

Date: 04/08/2015

Book Title and Author: *“My Librarian Is a Camel”* by Margriet Ruurs

Pages Read: *Thailand, pages 28–29*

Prompt: *What is the main idea of the text you read? What are some of the key details and how do they support the main idea?*

Response: The main idea is that elephants help some students in the Omkoi region of Thailand get books and learn. Some of the key details that support this main idea are that more than 20 elephants are being used to carry books, and in each trip the elephants visit seven or eight villages. The elephants carry metal slates on their backs to teach students to read and write.

Consider using the following independent reading prompts*:

- What challenges are faced? How are they overcome?
- What is the main idea of the text? What are some of the key details and how do they support the main idea?
- What do the illustrations (photographs, maps) tell you? How do they help you to understand the words?
- What questions do you now have after reading? What would you like to learn more about? Why?
- What does the text tell you about the importance of reading, books, or education?
- What are the most important facts you learned from reading?
- What is the most interesting fact you learned today? Why?
- How does what you read today connect to something you have learned in lessons?
- Choose one new word from your reading today and analyze it on a vocabulary square:

<p>Definition in your own words</p>	<p>Synonyms (words that mean the same)</p>
<p>Words with the same affix or root</p>	<p>Sketch</p>

*Some of the prompts will not be appropriate for the text students are reading. Invite students to choose a prompt that works for the text they have just read.

Informative Writing Prompts

Directions: In the classroom, you have been reading and writing informational texts.

Choose a prompt to respond to. For each response, be sure to use the informative writing techniques discussed in class and develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details from the text. Try to choose a different prompt each time.

- Read about a new country in *My Librarian Is a Camel*. Describe the geography of that country.
- Read about a new country in *My Librarian Is a Camel*. Explain the challenge some people face in accessing books in that country.
- Read about a new country in *My Librarian Is a Camel*. Explain how some people have overcome the challenge of accessing books in that country.
- Compare and contrast the geography of your expert group's country to the geography of Kenya.
- Compare and contrast how some people in your expert group's country access books and how some people in Kenya access books.

Language Dive (for ELLs)

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. The sentence below is scrambled. Rewrite the sentence in the correct order in the boxes below.

If the boat didn't come,	at all.	they might not be reading
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2. Sketch the meaning of the sentence above.

3. **Circle the correct answer:** Who are *they* in the sentence?

camels children books

4. **Circle the correct answer:** In what country does this sentence take place?

Finland Kenya USA

5. **Circle the correct answer:** What does the sentence tell us about the boat?

Language Dive (for ELLs)

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1. The sentence below is scrambled. Rewrite the sentence in the correct order in the boxes below.

are hungry for books.	But young people	who live in nomadic villages in the area
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2. Sketch the meaning of the sentence above.

3. **Circle the correct answer:** Who lives in nomadic villages?

camels young people books

4. **Circle the correct answer:** In what country does this sentence take place?

Finland Kenya USA

5. **Circle the correct answer:** Young people are *hungry for books*. What does that mean?

They really want to read books.

They like to eat books.

They read about food.

Unit 3: Writing to Inform: Overcoming Learning Challenges—Reading

Common Core State Standards addressed: RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.10, RF.3.4b, W.3.2, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, and SL.3.5



Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- Why are education, books, and reading important?
- *Education, books, and reading are important because they help us learn about and make sense of the world, and escape into the lives of other people and other worlds.*
- How can I overcome learning challenges?
- *I can overcome learning challenges by being an effective learner: taking initiative and responsibility, persevering, and collaborating.*

What will your student be doing at school?

In Unit 3, students read and write about reading challenges and how to overcome those reading challenges. As a class, they read *More Than Anything Else* by Marie Bradby¹ in order to consider a challenge of access to education and reading in a historical context in the United States, and *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco, in order to analyze the reading challenges of the main character and how those challenges were overcome.

They then use The Painted Essay[®] structure to write a reading contract describing two reading challenges they face with strategies they intend to follow to overcome those challenges. At the end of the unit, students create a reading strategies bookmark that lists their reading challenges and strategies to overcome those challenges, for quick reference when reading.

Throughout this unit, students also work on reading fluently in preparation for recording an audiobook in a small group at the end of the unit.

Working to become an effective learner is a habit of character that is emphasized in this unit. These are the specific effective learning skills students will focus on:

- I take initiative. This means I see what needs to be done and take the lead on making responsible decisions.
- I take responsibility. This means I take ownership of my ideas, my work, my goals, and my actions.
- I persevere. This means I challenge myself. When something is difficult or demanding, I keep trying and ask for help if I need it.
- I collaborate. This means I work effectively with others.

¹*More Than Anything Else* by Marie Bradby is a book about the reading challenges Booker T. Washington faced when he was nine years old. In order to provide the context of Booker's lack of access to education, some of the issues of slavery will be carefully and sensitively discussed to give students context as they hear the book read aloud. This may be something you want to speak with your student about at home both before and after reading the book. Raise any concerns with your student's teacher.