

Writing a Plant Biography

Standards

ELACC5W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

- a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
- c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., in contrast, especially).
- d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

ELACC5W4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

ELACC5W5: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.

ELACC5W6: With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

ELACC5W7: Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

ELACC5W8: Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.

ELACC5W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

- b. Apply grade 5 Reading Standards to informational texts (e.g., Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence supports which point[s])

Objectives

Students will learn:

- that each plant has a unique history related to its region of origin and its discovery and use by humans.
- how to use the internet to research a topic.

Central Concepts

- Plants have been used for many different things throughout history -- as food, medicine, shelter, aesthetic ornamentation, and as raw materials for the manufacture of products such as paper and furniture.
- Human life is completely dependent on plants.

Materials

- Paper
- Pencils
- Computer with Internet access, or library/reference books

Discussion Topics

What are some of the ways we use plants? (*For food, shelter, clothing, aesthetics, and so on.*)

Can all plants grow anywhere in the world? (*No, different plants grow in different places and have specific growing conditions.*)

Do different plants come from different places on earth? (*Yes, each plant has a native region, though humans have moved them around the globe.*)

Activity

1. Just like people, each plant species has its own story. To explore this concept, ask students to write biographies of common fruits and vegetables. Here are some questions to help them start their research:

- Where did your plant originate?
- What environmental conditions does it need to grow?
- How have people used it throughout history?
- How do we use this plant today?
- Are there any interesting or unusual stories about this plant?
- What is the plant's scientific name?

These websites are useful references:

[Our Vegetable Travelers](#)

[The Food Timeline](#)

[Plants for a Future](#)

[Food Plant Life Stories](#)

[Plants with a Purpose](#)

2. When students have completed their research, ask them to compose a short book about their plant, complete with illustrations (e.g., drawings, collages, pictures cut from catalogs/magazines).

3. To share their stories with the rest of the class, have students create posters to display in the classroom featuring highlights of each plant's history and uses.

Extensions

Geography: Create an international plant collage. Cut out pictures of common plants from seed catalogs. Research their origins and then attach the pictures to appropriate locations on a large world map. Try to find pictures of plants from all continents. (You may not be able to find all of them in common catalogs, so if necessary, supplement with photos from the Internet.)

<http://www.kidsgardening.org/activity/writing-plant-biography>