



Genre Study Routines for Expository Text

The following procedures are recommended for expository genre study.

Immersion/Planting the Seed (weeks one and two):

1. Teacher differentiates narration and exposition.
2. Teacher introduces expository text structure.
3. Teacher finds, sorts, and reads short expository touchstone texts and examines their structures with the class.
4. Students create an expert list (“What I Know About”) in their writing notebooks OR identify 3–4 guiding questions about a few topics of interest about which they have limited knowledge and a human information source to interview (interview questions can be drafted and responses recorded in the writing notebook).
5. Teacher introduces genre focus—the feature article (for younger students, a how-to book or all-about book may be a more suitable form).
6. Students reads exemplary feature articles from student-relevant materials such as *Ranger Rick*, *Time for Kids*, *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, *Children’s Digest*, and *National Geographic Kids*.
7. Class creates chart listing key elements of a feature article.

Planning/Growing the Seed (weeks three and four):

1. Students identify a seed idea (i.e., something they know well or a topic for investigation) which would permit them to draft a feature article like those examined.
2. Students conduct partner interviews to identify potential readers’ interest and questions about the selected topic, then record notes in their writing notebooks.
3. Students create double-column entries in the writing notebook to record facts on one side and reflections, questions, and opinions about each fact on the other side.
4. Students record responses to key questions in writing notebook:
 - a. How did you learn about this?
 - b. Why is this important to you?
 - c. Why do other people need to learn about this?
 - d. What are special things about this you want to share?
5. Teacher introduces key vocabulary for expository writing (e.g., first, next, then, finally, in conclusion, therefore, so, however, in contrast).

6. Teacher introduces, examines, and demonstrates how to use various leads for a feature article (e.g., question, mini-story, quotation, astonishing fact).
7. Students plan the paper using a planning sheet (see below).

Drafting/Growing the Seed (week five):

1. Students continue to plan using the planning sheet.
2. Students flash-draft (quickly draft) each part of the paper separately to avoid over-investment in the draft and a reluctance to revise (but expectations for a best first draft should be communicated).

Revising/Pruning & Grafting (weeks six and seven):

1. Teacher models and helps students identify and cut irrelevant information.
2. Teacher models and helps students add additional details to “thin” subtopics (using carets or numbered notes).
3. Teacher models and helps students zoom in on a unique or particularly important fact and flesh it out.
4. Students incorporate basic feature article elements such as a title, subtitle, byline, subheadings, and quotations.
5. Students revise a minimum of three times, first independently, then with a peer, and then with the teacher.

Editing/Pruning & Grafting (week eight):

1. Teacher models and then students use an editing checklist.
2. Students edit a minimum of two times, first independently and then with a peer.
3. Students check spelling by reading the text aloud backwards.

Publishing & Celebration/Garden Show (week nine):

1. Teacher models and then students add additional feature article elements such as specialized fonts and colors, zoom-in boxes and flash facts, and photos, illustrations, graphs, or diagrams with captions.
2. Teacher models and then students use templates to format the article.
3. Teacher models and then students cut and paste special effects with a word processor.

Topic: _____ → **Title:** _____
(Make it snappy and fun!)

Subtitle: _____
(In a few words, make it clear what the article is about.)

Lead: _____

(Use a quote, question, or mini-story.)

Subtopics:	→	Subheadings:
1. _____		_____
2. _____		_____
3. _____		_____