



4TH GRADE

VOLUME 4.5

Expository Writing Unit for *Aurore of the Yukon*

Sarah Collinge
with Bethany Robinson



Read Side by Side
9514 180th St. SE
Snohomish, WA 98296
425-412-3724
www.readsidebyside.com

Table of Contents

Welcome	3
Day 1: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan: Introduction.....	5
Day 2: Plan: Body Paragraph 2 & 3	8
Day 3: Plan: Conclusion	9
Day 4: Plan: Title, Subtitles & Illustration	10
Day 5-8: Draft: Introduction, Body Paragraphs, & Conclusion.....	11
Day 9: Revise	13
Day 10: Edit: Capitalize Proper Nouns	15
Day 11: Edit and Revise.....	17
Day 12-15: Publish & Share.....	19
Checklist for Assessing an Expository Essay.....	20

Welcome to the 4.5 Expository Writing Unit for *Aurore of the Yukon!*

If this is your first time using this guide, you will want to read through this introduction carefully, as it provides information that you will find critical to your establishment of a successful language arts block!

This expository writing unit is meant to be taught in conjunction with the *Read Side by Side Reading Program*, Unit 4.5, *Aurore of the Yukon*. The book *Aurore of the Yukon* will be used as a mentor text to build students' background knowledge and expose students to the craft of writing.

This unit takes approximately 15 days to complete, from brainstorming and planning to sharing the published piece! Lessons in this unit give students explicit instruction in the steps of the writing process and the structure of persuasive writing. Some craft and grammar lessons will be incorporated as students revise and edit their writing. You may want to supplement with additional craft, grammar, and spelling lessons between writing units.

Prior to starting the unit, you will want to consider how students will share their writing. Student read their writing aloud to their own classmates, visit another classroom, or make their writing available for others to read in the classroom, library or other public location.

After students have had the opportunity to publish their writing, assess their work using the checklist for grading a narrative story provided at the end of the unit.

Schedule

To complete this unit, you will need to set aside 30-minutes for writing, 2-4 times a week.

Instructional days begin with a whole-class lesson. Lessons will be 10-15 minutes in length, allowing a short time after the lesson for students to work on the assignment. While working, students will access the help of a writing partner as needed. It may be helpful to seat partners next to each other during the work time. The teacher then confers with partnerships as needed.

Working days allow students to get started right away on writing projects. During the work time, students will continue to access a partner or the teacher for help as needed. If it is challenging to find time every day for writing, teachers might assign these work-projects as homework.

Expository schedule:

1. Brainstorm & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a list of writing ideas.• Select a strong idea from the list.• Complete the <i>Quadrant Chart</i>.• Design an illustration, cover or banner.	Day 1-4
2. Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a draft using the 4-quadrant method.	Days 5-8
3. Revise & Edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use transition words.• Use strong language.• Capitalize proper nouns.	Days 9-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit and revise using a checklist.	Day 11
4. Publish & Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a final product that is handwritten, typed, or other.• Share with a real audience.	Days 12-15

Day 1: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan: Introduction

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm ideas for writing in response to the prompt. Begin to plan a piece of writing using the *Quadrant Chart*.

Materials:

Drafting Sheet: Trains in North America: Past, Present, and Future
Notes from Read-Aloud Lesson: Day 25 & 26

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Introduce the expository writing prompt:

Summarize what you have learned about trains: past, present, and future.

An expository piece of writing provides information about a topic using clear and descriptive language. You will use notes you have taken during this unit to inform your piece of writing (Days 25 & 26).

2. *Discuss:*
 - How did people travel from coast to coast before the transcontinental railway system?
 - How do people travel from coast to coast now?
 - What might the future hold for train travel?
3. *Plan:* Use the drafting sheet to model planning the introduction.

Railways are an important transportation system used worldwide to move people and products quickly across continents. Before transcontinental railway systems were engineered, _____
_____.

The advancement of the railway system has given people a faster and safer way to travel. In fact, new advancements in train travel are still being developed. One day we may _____
_____!

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to plan the introduction for their own expository essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

Vocabulary: Making Connections

Target Word:

widowed

Context:

“I should have been more thoughtful about Maman’s feelings. After all, Papa had just died.”
(widowed is inferred on p. 2)

What it is...

What it is not...

I’d probably find this word in these contexts (places, events, people, situations):

Text to World

I’ll remember this word by connecting it to:

(word, phrase, sketch)

Vocabulary: Making Connections

Target Word:

irreversible

Context:

“I think Papa took care of the money. Before he died, that is. I guess Papa had a good job at the Railway and got paid well every week. But now that would stop.” (irreversible is inferred on p. 2)

What it is...

What it is not...

I'd probably find this word in these contexts (places, events, people, situations):

Text to World

I'll remember this word by connecting it to:

(word, phrase, sketch)

Day 2: Plan: Body Paragraph 2 & 3

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Quadrant Chart*. Plan the second body paragraph and the conclusion.

Materials:

Drafting Sheet: Trains in North America: Past, Present, and Future
Notes from Read-Aloud Lesson: Day 25 & 26

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will continue to plan their expository writing piece. Today they will be planning body paragraph 1.
2. *Plan:* Model planning body paragraph 1. Include details to support the topic.

Example: Box 2 –

Trains of the PAST

- Early trains were very slow.
 - In the 1800's steam engines pulled trains.
 - The transcontinental railway in the US was completed May 10, 1869 and connected the east and west coast.
 - The transcontinental railway in Canada was completed sixteen years later.
 - With the transcontinental railway, people could cross the continent in just 9 days.
3. *Plan:* Model planning body paragraph 3 (Box 3 *Quadrant Chart*). List details to support the topic.

Example: Box 3 –

Trains of the PRESENT & FUTURE

- Today trains travel much faster.
- Trains are powered by diesel engines.
- Some trains are powered by electric lines.
- Japan and France have high speed trains called bullet trains.
- Trains can now travel in tunnels under the sea!
- Maglev trains of the future will be powered by electro-magnets.
- Maglev trains will be able to travel at a speed of 310 mph!

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill out the *Quadrant Chart* (Box 2 & 3) for their own expository essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 3: Plan: Conclusion

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Quadrant Chart*. Plan the conclusion and title.

Materials:

Quadrant Chart

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be planning the conclusion of their expository writing. When writing an expository writing piece, the conclusion will summarize the key points of the piece of writing and may also include a personal response or opinion or a link to modern day events.
2. *Plan:* Model summarizing the key points in the first part of the conclusion paragraph. Use box 4 of the *Quadrant Chart* to record your notes.

Example: It is clear, the advancement of the railway system has made life easier for people by allowing them to travel from one place to another more quickly.

(detail) _____

(detail) _____

3. *Plan:* Model planning a personal response or opinion.
Continue to use box 4 of the *Quadrant Chart* to record your notes.

(personal response/opinion) _____

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to finish filling out the *Quadrant Chart* (box 4) for their own expository essay. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing plan?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 4: Plan: Title, Subtitles & Illustration

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by choosing a title, then making an illustration, cover, or banner.

Materials:

Art materials or illustration software.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will be writing a title and subtitles for their expository essay and creating an illustration, cover, or banner for their writing. Share tips for writing a good title and subtitle:
 - It should provide the main idea.
 - It should be relatively short.
 - It should get the reader interested.
 - It should put a picture in the reader's mind.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to create a title and illustration, cover, or banner for their essay. Then, give time for partners to share their illustrations and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my illustration?
- What might I do to improve my illustration?

Day 5-8: Draft: Introduction, Body Paragraphs, & Conclusion

Lesson Goals: Draft an expository essay.

Materials:

Transition Word List

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be drafting their expository essay.

Expository writing uses transition words to explain and describe the information clearly (see list).

2. *Draft:* Model drafting the body paragraphs of your expository writing piece. Demonstrate how to:
 - Use transition words to start body paragraphs
 - Introduce the big ideas
 - Support the big ideas with reasons and examples

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to draft the introduction, the body paragraphs, and the conclusion. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

TRANSITION WORD LIST

First,	Second,	Third,	In Conclusion,
First of all, To begin with, Initially,	Additionally, Also, Furthermore, Another, Equally Important, In addition, Next,	Last, Lastly, Finally,	In summary, In the end, As you can see, It is clear,

Day 9: Revise

Lesson Goals: Revise a piece of writing to include strong words.

Materials:

Strong Word List

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising their expository essays to make them interesting to the reader. They will be adding strong words to their essays.
2. *Revise:* Model rereading your writing and adding strong language. (*See list*)

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their writing to include strong language. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

STRONG WORD LIST

Some examples of strong words from the article *The Transcontinental Railways Bring Opportunity*.

- Opportunity,
- Advancement,
- Invention,
- Wild,
- Unsettled
- Wide-open,
- Dangerous,
- Treacherous,
- Challenging,
- Isolated,
- Brave,
- Determined,
- Risk-taking,
- Visionary,
- Powerful,
- Important,
- Prosper,
- Unite,
- Join,
- Construct,
- Connect,
- Expand,
- Stretch,
- Prosperous,
- Economic growth,
- Strong,
- Optimistic.

Day 10: Edit: Capitalize Proper Nouns

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make edits to capitalize proper nouns.

Materials:

Proper Nouns Sheet

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be editing their piece of writing to capitalize proper nouns.
2. *Discuss* the *Proper Nouns Sheet* and practice fixing the proper nouns on the sheet.
3. *Model* finding proper nouns in your own writing and correction capitalization errors.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to their edit their writing for capitals. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

PROPER NOUNS SHEET

A **proper noun** names a person, place, or thing. A proper noun begins with a capital letter.

Proper Nouns (Person/People Group):

- Americans,
- Canadians,
- First Nations,
- Native Americans,
- Sir John A. Macdonald.

Example: Sir John A. Macdonald was the first prime minister of elected by the Canadians.

Proper Nouns (Place):

- North America,
- United States,
- St. Louis, Missouri,
- San Francisco, California,
- Dominion of Canada,
- Halifax, Nova Scotia,
- Vancouver, British Columbia.

Example: Before the transcontinental railway was built in the United States, it took twenty-five days to travel by stagecoach from St. Louis, Missouri to San Francisco, California.

Practice Editing: Circle the letters that should be capitalized in each sentence, then write the sentence correctly. Remember to capitalize the first word in a sentence and proper nouns.

1. Before the construction of a transcontinental railway in both the united states and canada, the landscape of north america was wild and unsettled.

2. To lay the railroad, the united states passed laws that would allow railroad companies to take over native american land.

Day 11: Edit and Revise

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make edits and revisions.

Materials:

Editing and Revision Checklist

Instructional Procedures:

3. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be editing and revising their writing pieces to make them easy to read as well as convincing.

4. *Edit:* Model rereading your writing and marking edits as you go:

- Capitals
- Punctuation
- Spelling
- Paragraphing

As you make editing marks, discuss the changes you will make and how they will help the reader understand the piece of writing better. Give students time to reread their writing and record editing marks.

5. *Revise:* Model rereading your writing and marking revisions as you go:

- Complete sentences
- Transition words
- Persuasive/strong language (See list)
- Details and elaboration to help the reader visualize
- Key vocabulary

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to their edit and revise their writing. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my writing?
- What might I do to improve my writing?

Editing Checklist:

- _____ Sentences start with a capital letter.
- _____ I used capital letters for proper nouns.
- _____ I have punctuation at the end of each sentence.
- _____ I checked my words for spelling.
- _____ I indented paragraphs.

Revision Checklist:

- _____ I started with an introduction that is clear.
- _____ I ended with a conclusion that is clear.
- _____ I used transition words at the beginning of paragraphs.
- _____ I used language to show how one event may have caused another event.
- _____ Sentences make sense.
- _____ Sentences stay focused on the topic.
- _____ I added details and elaboration that are important to the topic.
- _____ I used key vocabulary.

Day 12-15: Publish & Share

Lesson Goals: Publish a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be preparing their piece of writing for others to read. This is called publishing.
2. *Discuss* how writing will be published—handwritten, typed, or other. Let them know when and how their essays will be shared with the class.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to publish their writing and share their writing with an audience.

Ideas for sharing:

- read essays aloud to classmates,
- read essays aloud to another class,
- make essays available for others to read (in the classroom, library, hallway bulletin board or other); and
- take essays home to share with family.

An **author's chair** is a fun classroom tradition. It is a decorated chair in which an author sits to share his/her writing. Teachers can paint a wooden chair or have each new class decorate a pillowcase to go over the back of a chair. This quickly transform a standard classroom chair into something special for young authors.

Checklist for Assessing an Expository Essay

Cover/Illustration/Banner _____/4	_____ Has a title that is short. _____ The title puts a picture in the reader's mind. _____ Cover/illustration/banner introduces the main idea. _____ Cover/illustration/banner gets the reader interested.
Introduction Paragraph _____/3	_____ The introduction includes a thesis statement that answers the prompt. _____ The introduction presents two main ideas. _____ The introduction is written clearly to grab the reader.
Body Paragraphs _____/6	Body Paragraph 1 _____ Introduces one main idea. _____ Provides important details/reasons/examples to support the main idea. _____ Provides enough detail to adequately support the main idea. Body Paragraph 2 _____ Introduces one main idea. _____ Provides important details/reasons/examples to support the main idea. _____ Provides enough detail to adequately support the main idea.
Conclusion _____/2	_____ The conclusion restates the answer to the prompt. _____ The conclusion includes a personal response or opinion.
Craft and Structure _____/3	_____ Paragraphs are well organized. _____ Paragraphs include transition words. _____ Strong language is used.
Revision and Editing _____/5	_____ Writing is edited for spelling. _____ Writing is edited for grammar. _____ Writing is edited for punctuation. _____ Writing shows evidence of revision. _____ Published writing is polished.
Collaboration & Effort _____/4	_____ Worked well with a partner. _____ Respectfully gave feedback to a partner. _____ Respectfully received feedback from a partner. _____ Showed good effort and persistence.
Total: _____/27	Comments:



TRAINS

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Railways are an amazing transportation system used worldwide to move people and products quickly across continents. Before the transcontinental railway systems were engineered, people had to travel by foot, horse, or boat. The advancement of the railway system has given people a faster and safer way to travel coast-to-coast. In fact, new advancements in train travel are still being developed. One day we may all be traveling over 300 miles per hour in Maglev trains!

Trains of the Past

Before the transcontinental railroad, the landscape of North America was unsettled. People had built towns and cities on both the east and west coasts, but the prairie land was empty. At that time, people traveled thousands of miles by foot, horse, stagecoach or boat. Making the trip by stagecoach was dangerous and took at least 25 days. The invention of the steam engine led to the expansion of the railway system. The United States completed its first transcontinental railway in 1869. Sixteen years later, Canada completed a railway that connected Nova Scotia to British Columbia. Canada broke a speed record by building the railroad in just five years! It is clear, the railroad made traveling quicker in the United States and Canada.

Trains of the Present & Future

Now, inventions and advancements throughout history have given people more opportunities to make a better life for themselves. Today, trains are powered by diesel fuel and electric lines and are cleaner for the environment. These trains travel much faster than steam powered trains. A new advancement in the railway system is the development of high-speed trains. The Bullet Train in Japan can travel over 300km/h, but Maglev trains can travel even faster! Maglev trains hover off the ground, lifted by the force of electromagnets. Maglev trains travel on magnetic waves. These trains can go over 500km/h. I predict Maglev trains will be the trains of the future. They will make it possible for people to get from one place to another quickly without having to use cars and airplanes.

It is clear, the advancement of the railway system has made life easier for people by allowing them to travel from one place to another more quickly. It is hard to believe that traveling across the country used to take people over seven months! Now, we can travel quickly by train, car, or even air- plane. I can't wait to travel over 300 miles per hour in a Maglev train!