



Informative Writing Performance Task

Teacher Version

Grade	3	Title/Subject	Surviving in the Desert
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The following sections are included in this Teacher Version:

- Overview
- Process: Day 1, 2 and 3
- Teacher Directions for Scoring Rubric and Student Directions and Articles

Overview

On Day 1 students will engage in a video viewing, shared reading and note-taking activity using informative texts to learn about surviving in the desert. After the group activity, they will be directed to plan, and begin to draft an informative writing piece about surviving in the desert utilizing the information they read in the texts as well as notes they took during the shared lesson. On Day 2 students will finish their drafts, and on Day 3 they will have time to revise and edit their writing, and if they choose, produce a final copy.

Process

DAY 1: Video Viewing, Shared Reading, Note-taking and Planning: Up to 60 minutes

Step 1: Connect to Background Knowledge ~ 5 minutes

Provide an introduction to the classroom activity by indicating that after this activity, students will be writing an essay focused on the topic of surviving in deserts. Ask students to share orally what they might know about surviving in deserts. Possible questions could include:

“Have you ever been to a desert? What do deserts look like? Which animals live in deserts? Which plants live in deserts? What is the weather like in deserts? What else do you know about deserts?”

For active engagement encourage pair or group sharing, before sharing out with whole group.

Step 2: Accessing the Information ~ 35 minutes



1. Have the class watch the video:
<http://videos.howstuffworks.com/discovery/28106-assignment-discovery-desert-biomes-video.htm>
2. Explain: *“Now we will read two sources about surviving in deserts.”* Read both sources, pointing out important facts and features (pictures, captions, etc.) Use ONLY the sources provided in this prompt packet.
3. Lead a whole class discussion about the sources, during which students generate a key word list, list the “gist” next to each paragraph, highlight important words/phrases, or participate in pictorial narrative input (large teacher-created drawing with labels).
4. Think-Pair-Share: *“Tell your partner what you learned about surviving in deserts.”* Make sure both partners have time to share with each other.



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Step 3: Clarify Expectations for the Writing Task:

Explain: *“In a few minutes you will have a chance to look at the sources, and plan your writing about deserts. Tomorrow you will write a draft to explain to me what you learned about surviving in deserts. Finally you will have a chance to change and edit your work from day 2 to write a final draft.”*

Review the student directions and checklist for the writing assignment and give each student a sheet of blank paper for planning and lined paper for writing.

Step 4: Planning for Writing: ~ 20 minutes

Tell students to begin planning their writing on the blank sheet of paper. You can remind them of planning strategies you have taught in your classroom such as outlining, lists, webs, or drawing. Don't provide a plan yourself just remind them of the strategies for planning.

Collect all materials from Day 1 after the 60 minutes total is complete.

DAY 2: Writing Up to 45 minutes

1. Allow students to access the sources, their notes, the classroom activity charts/key word lists, and their writing plan.
2. Students read the prompt and then begin their writing.
3. When 5 minutes are left in the writing period, remind students to re-read their writing to see if any information is missing, or if they want to fix any errors.

DAY 3: Revising and Editing Up to 45 minutes

1. Tell students that today they will be revising their writing to see if there is missing information, or if they want to use more precise vocabulary or different kinds of sentences.
2. Students edit and write final revision of essay. Provide additional lined paper for revisions and final copies as needed. Students may have time to create a final copy, or may revise and edit from their draft as time allows.
3. At teacher discretion, students may use word processing for draft or revision as long as spelling and grammar correction tools have been disabled.
4. Inform students when 5 minutes remain.
5. Collect all student writing materials.

Teacher Directions for Scoring Rubric:


Student responses to Part 2 will be scored using the Common Core based Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric. A score will be given in each of the three rubric categories. For grades 3-6, student **revisions** will be scored.

Each student's final scores should indicate a 1, 2, 3, or 4 in each of the three categories (no partial scores such as 2.5, 3+, etc.). A score of 3 or 4 in each category is considered a passing score and a total of 8 points or higher out of 12 total is considered a passing overall score.

The score for each of the three categories will be entered for each student into School City.



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Grade		3		Informative/Explanatory Writing Rubric	
Level	INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY WRITING/PROCESS	LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS		WITH GUIDANCE and SUPPORT FROM ADULTS	
4 Exceeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meets all expectations in level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Provides information well supported by facts and details <input type="checkbox"/> Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform/explain <input type="checkbox"/> Is well planned and organized 	<p>Mostly correct use of language conventions, and some above grade level skills used, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Meets all expectations in level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Uses commas in direct quotations, and apostrophes in possessive case of nouns and in contractions when appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Uses underlining, quotation marks or italics to identify titles of documents 		<p style="text-align: center;">Guidance & Support</p>  <p>Level of guidance and support from adults before writing:</p> <p>Check off what was done before the student wrote the piece being scored.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion <input type="checkbox"/> Read aloud or shared reading <input type="checkbox"/> Drawing <input type="checkbox"/> Vocabulary word bank <input type="checkbox"/> Shared or interactive writing <input type="checkbox"/> Graphic organizer <input type="checkbox"/> Language frames 	
	3 Meets	<p>INFORMATIVE/EXPLANATORY WRITING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduces topic (W2a) <input type="checkbox"/> Groups related information together (W2a) <input type="checkbox"/> Includes illustrations when they will aid comprehension (W2a) <input type="checkbox"/> Develops topic with facts, definitions, and details (W2b) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses linking words/phrases such as <i>also, another, and, more, but</i> to connect ideas within categories of information (W2c) <input type="checkbox"/> Provides a concluding statement or section (W2d) <hr/> <p>WRITING PROCESS (W5 - W8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WGASFA* Has clearly planned writing with organized notes, and shows evidence of revision and editing during writing process (W5) <input type="checkbox"/> WGASFA* Uses technology and keyboarding skills (W6) <input type="checkbox"/> Conducts research (W7) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses sources such as print and internet to gather evidence (W 8) <input type="checkbox"/> Takes brief notes on sources and groups into categories (W8) 	<p>Adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage and spelling for grade level, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses a variation of simple, compound, and complex sentences (L1k) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses subject/verb agreement, pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles correctly <input type="checkbox"/> Uses past, present, and future verb tenses correctly (L1g) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses commas in dates, locations, and addresses, items in a series, and quotations in dialogue correctly (L2 b/c) <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalizes titles correctly (L2a) <input type="checkbox"/> Spells high frequency words and adds suffixes correctly, uses spelling patterns from word families <input type="checkbox"/> Forms and uses possessives correctly (L2d) <input type="checkbox"/> Consults reference materials, as needed, to check/correct spelling (L2) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses grade appropriate academic and domain-specific words and phrases (L6) 		
2 Almost Meets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Has weak introduction <input type="checkbox"/> Information loosely grouped <input type="checkbox"/> Information developed with few facts, definitions, details <input type="checkbox"/> Uses few transition words, or uses the same throughout <input type="checkbox"/> Concluding statement absent or unclear <input type="checkbox"/> Has some evidence of planning, organizing notes, and revision 	<p>Limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage and spelling for grade level, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writes mostly simple sentences with correct punctuation <input type="checkbox"/> Has some correct use of subject/verb agreement, pronouns, adjectives, compound words, and articles <input type="checkbox"/> Uses some correct use of past, present and future verb tenses <input type="checkbox"/> Uses some correct use of punctuation, commas and capitalization <input type="checkbox"/> Has many spelling errors 		
	1 Does Not Meet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> May not introduce topic <input type="checkbox"/> Includes few or no facts or definitions on topic <input type="checkbox"/> Has little evidence of planning, organizing and revision <input type="checkbox"/> Copies sentences directly from text in articles in prompt 	<p>Infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage and spelling for grade level, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Writes incomplete sentences <input type="checkbox"/> Has little or no subject/verb agreement or usage of pronouns, adjectives, compound words and articles <input type="checkbox"/> Uses past, present, and future verb tenses incorrectly <input type="checkbox"/> Uses little or no correct punctuation, commas and capitalization <input type="checkbox"/> Uses poor spelling 		

• **WGASFA:** “with guidance and support from adults”

This rubric was adapted from rubrics at sbusd.org and information from Smarter Balanced Assessments (www.smarterbalanced.org) using the California Common Core Standards at www.cde.ca.gov.



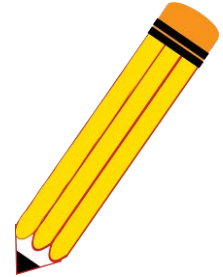


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Student Version			
Grade	3	Title/Subject	Surviving in the Desert

Student Prompt:

As you think about what you just read, write an essay to explain to your teacher what you learned about surviving in deserts.



Writing Tips:

- Be sure to introduce the topic and group related facts together.
- Use facts from the two sources to develop your ideas.
- You may want to include definitions and illustrations to help your teacher clearly understand what you learned.
- End with a conclusion.

Reminders:

- You can look at the sources and your key word list to help you with your writing.
- You might begin by making a plan or drawing a graphic organizer help you with your thinking.
- Do not copy sentences from the sources.

Step 1: Plan

Plan: review the texts and your notes

- Make a plan on the blank paper for your writing.

Step 2: Draft

- Write a topic sentence with your main idea.
- Write sentences with facts, definitions, and details to develop points.
- Group information together as you write.
- Use linking words such as *also*, *another*, *and*, *more*, or *but* to connect ideas.
- Write a concluding sentence or paragraph.



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Student Version			
Grade	3	Title/Subject	Surviving in the Desert

Step 3: Reread and Revise

- Does it make sense?
- Have you used science words from the text?
- Is there missing information you want to add?

Step 4: Edit

- Capitals at the beginning of sentences
- Capitals for proper nouns
- Punctuation: (end points) . ! ?
- Commas , quotation marks " "
- Spelling
- Complete sentences

Step 5: Final Draft

- Recopy and fix your mistakes.
- Use your neatest handwriting or typing.

Good work!





Informative Writing Performance Task

Student Reading Text			
Grade	3	Title/Subject	Surviving in the Desert

Surviving in a Desert

A desert is a biome that gets very little rain. Deserts can be hot during the day and cool at night. Many plants and animals live in the desert.

Cactus plants are adapted for life in the desert. They make food in their stems instead of their leaves. Stems can prevent water from being lost better than leaves can. Cactus stems expand during rainy periods to store water for the times when it's dry. They have a thick covering that helps keep in the water. Cactus leaves are sharp and spiny. They protect the cactus from thirsty animals.



Cactus spines are a special kind of leaf that protects the plant.

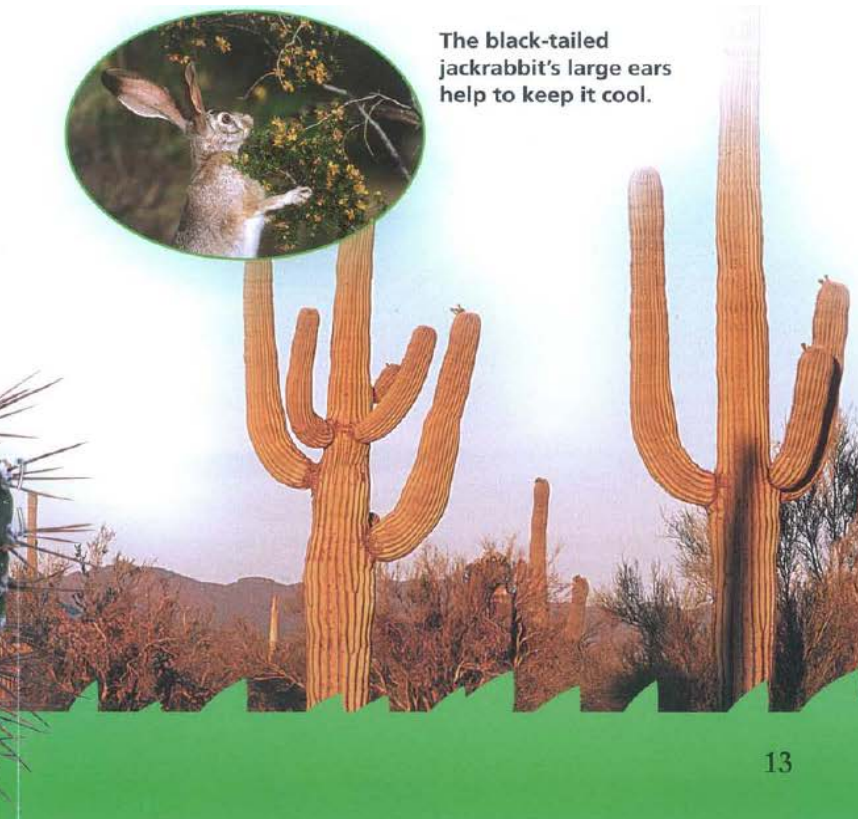
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Many desert animals avoid the heat by resting during the day and feeding at night. The black-tailed jackrabbit spends the daylight hours resting in shady shallow places. In the evening and early morning, the jackrabbit feeds on grasses and small plants, including cactus plants.

The jackrabbit has another special adaptation for surviving hot desert days. Its large ears help heat escape. This helps to keep the jackrabbit cool.



The black-tailed jackrabbit's large ears help to keep it cool.



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Informative Writing Performance Task

Student Reading Text			
Grade	3	Title/Subject	Surviving in the Desert

Many desert animals rest out of sight during the hottest time of the day. For example, the kangaroo rat stays in a cool, moist den. At night, it comes out of its hiding place. The dark night protects it from animals that hunt it. Certain desert snakes, however, can locate it by the heat it gives off.

Like desert plants, desert animals must conserve the small amount of water they had. Kangaroo rats get water from the foods they eat. They almost never have a drink of water. Their wastes are very dry because their bodies absorb as much water as possible.

A cactus is a plant with adaptations for life in a desert. A cactus makes food in its stem, not its leaves. Stems lose less water than leaves do. When it does rain, some cactus stems expand to store water for later use. A waxy covering keeps them from losing water. The leaves of many cactus plants are sharp spines. Instead of making food, the leaves protect the cactus from thirsty animals and direct sunlight.

