Grade Level	Content Area	Course Title (for 9-12 Samples Only)	Unit Title
4th Grade	Explanatory Text:		The Middle Ages
Length of Unit	Time of Year Taught	Expected Prior Knowledge	
5 lessons 6 days	2nd Quarter	In social studies, students have learned about The Middle Ages and the reasons for Spanish and Portuguese exploration. Every student should understand and use all concepts and skills from the previous grade levels with regard to Writing according to Common Core Standards. Students have previously learned the Six Traits of Writing, and have been trained in the use of note taking strategies from a variety of sources, including the Cornell Note Taking template.	

Unit Description	
This unit guides students through the process of choosing and narrowing a writing topic on The Middle Ages. They will take notes from readings and a video, create a multi-paragraph essay, and organize their information with relevant details in a rough draft. The unit is typical of the opportunities they consistently have to collaborate with other class members. However, the summative assessment reflects an independent writing product.	
Standards:	**4.W.2** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; 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 categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another, for example, also, because*). d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
Summative Assessment	Students will demonstrate synthesis of informative/explanatory text by using their notes to write a multi-paragraph essay on a topic related to The Middle Ages.
Scoring for Summative Assessment	Students will be assessed using a 6-point, 6-trait scoring guide/rubric. A score of 80% will show mastery of the standard.
Materials/ Resources Needed	Writer's Notebook, Video: *The Middle Ages* (Discovery Channel-available from Discovery Streaming- http://dsc.discovery.com/videos/), assignment instructions, sample essay, student self-check sheet, and scoring rubric, various books on The Middle Ages, Internet access.

	Lesson 1 (Day 1)	Lesson 2 (Day 2)	Lesson 3 (Day 3)	Lesson 4 (DAY 4&5)	Lesson 5 (Day 7)
Instruction and Timeline	The teacher explains to the students that they will be writing an essay about life in Europe during The Middle Ages. The teacher gives them the assignment instructions, a student self-check sheet, and scoring rubric for their multi-paragraph essay assignment. Students are directed to write the due	Using their notes from yesterday's video and class discussion, tell students to decide on 3 possible ideas for their topic and record these on their Assignment Sheet. The teacher tells them that	Begin the lesson by projecting two or three anonymous student topic sentences and asking students to evaluate how well the statement provides a "road map" to what the essay will be about."	Direct students to the scoring rubric in their assignment. Allow them time to first look over the scoring rubric, then go through each of the traits. Ask clarifying questions for each trait. This	**Summative Assessment** The teacher debriefs the writing process with students, asking them to identify and challenges, obstacles, and successes with the process of brainstorming, focusing, researching, drafting, and editing. Next, the teacher directs the

	date of both the rough draft and final copy of the essay on their assignment instruction sheet. Tell them they may choose a topic regarding The Middle Ages after they have watched a video and taken notes. (note that students have prior knowledge of The Middle Ages from previous learning) Walk the students through the assignment instruction sheet so they can see exactly what they are expected to do. Then explain that this type of essay is an informative/ explanatory essay. Because students are familiar with this type of essay, the teacher will prompt them on explaining what this means. They will record the meaning on the assignment sheet. Teacher: "The best place to begin is by identifying what you already know about The Middle Ages (accessing prior knowledge). The teacher leads a brainstorming session with the class on The Middle Ages to find out what they recall. The teacher records on the board these topics. Typical topics generated by the students will include: castles, knights the Crusades, the desire to find new routes to the Indies, civilizations that existed at that time (the Aztec and Incan Empires, etc.) Then the teacher asks students to pull out their Writer's Notebook and take 3 minutes to write everything they remember about any three	once they decide on a topic (life for a peasant, knight, vassal, or landlord; the Black Death, a particular Crusade, Lady Godiva, etc,) they must narrow their topic. Model for the students many examples of how to take a general topic and narrow it to a more specific topic (ex. broad topic: Life of a Knight; narrow topic: What did knights do all day? Or How does one become a knight?). They may frame their "narrowed" topic in the form of a question to help them focus. After a few minutes allow students to share their ideas with a partner and/or the class. Again direct students to their assignment sheet to look at the example topic sentences. They may record their newly formed topic sentence on the sheet. Ticket out the Door: Have students copy their topic sentence on a strip of paper to hand to the teacher as they exit the classroom. The teacher will look over these and use anonymous examples for tomorrow's lesson.	They may suggest ways for modifying the topic sentence for clarity. For each one, the teacher will ask, "What details might you expect to be in the essay for this topic sentence?" Give students a chance to revise their topic sentences. Provide students with access to the Internet and books on The Middle Ages. As they discover details relevant to their topic, they may record them on their assignment sheet. Allow class time for students to continue researching information on their topic and recording notes in their Writer's Notebook. As the students work, the teacher will provide individual assistance and guidance, especially in regard to their topic sentence and possible details to be looking for in their reading. Closing: The teacher	will not take long because students are very familiar with the form and format of the scoring rubric from previous assignments. Ask students to meet in groups of three to look at all traits. Each group will be assigned one or two of the following descriptors: topic sentence, relevant facts, transitions, formal style, sense of audience, precise language, domain specific vocabulary. In their small group they will clarify their understanding of their assigned descriptors, and then share their understanding with the class. This will be a guided discussion with the teacher providing further clarification and examples. Then ask students to look at the model essay and work in their groups to do the activity at the end of the essay. They will complete the activity and be prepared to share their answers	students to use the scoring rubric to score their own paper. The teacher collects the final copy of their essays, as well as the students' self-scored rubric. Teacher scores the essays using the 6-Traits scoring guide/rubric.

	brainstormed topics regarding The Middle Ages. Encourage students to simply write fragments or phrases, not complete sentences, to make the best use of their time. Call on a few students and ask them to share out with the class. Review with students the strategy of Cornell note taking and ask them to draw the necessary lines on a clean page in their Writer's Notebook. Explain that they will take notes as they view a video on The Middle Ages. Inform students that not everyone will have exactly the same notes because individuals may place importance on different facts. Teacher shows the video. Then move students into groups of 3 and instruct them to take turns sharing their notes and their previous list of topic ideas. Students may continue to take notes from the reporting out by others. Let students know that tomorrow they will select a specific topic for their essay using their ideas from the video and/or from the class brainstorming.		will ask students to reflect and respond to the following questions: *How well is your topic sentence guiding your search for information?* *How successful are you in finding the information you need?* *What part of the research is causing you problems?*	with the class. A copy of this essay will be projected so the students can see the teacher marking parts of it as they discuss the paper's organization. Using the scoring guide/rubric, first ask students to identify the topic sentence/ main idea statement in the sample essay. Move through the rubric and the sample essay to identify examples of and clarify their understanding of each of the rubric descriptors. Provide class time for continuing their research and begin drafting their own essay. Post the **Final Copy Due Date** on the board (due in two days).	

	Lesson 1 (Day 1)	Lesson 2 (Day 2)	Lesson 3 (Day 3)	Lesson 4 (DAY 4&5)	Lesson 5 (Day 7)
Student Activities and Timeline	When prompted by the teacher, students will record the assignment due date on page one of their assignment sheet. With guidance from the teacher,	Using their notes from yesterday's video and prior learning, students will consider 3 possible topics for their essay on The Middle Ages and record	Students will evaluate the clarity and focus of sample topic sentences provided by the teacher. They will process and respond to	Students will review the scoring rubric and respond to the teacher's clarifying questions. In their small groups,	Students will respond to the teacher's questions about their challenges and obstacles during this assignment. Then students use the scoring

	students will recall what they remember from past lessons about The Middle Ages and record possible topics in their Writer's Notebook. Students will share topic ideas with the class when prompted by the teacher. Students will draw lines in their Writer's Notebook to make a Topic/Detail note taking page in Cornell notes template for taking notes on the video about The Middle Ages. They will proceed to take notes during the video. In their small groups, students will share their notes from the video and gather more information from each other for their Writer's Notebook.	these on their assignment sheet. Once they narrow their list to one topic they will formulate a question for which the answer may be revealed through their research. They will share their question with their group, and when prompted, have the opportunity to share with the class. Students will form a topic sentence from their topic question and record this on their assignment sheet. They will rewrite their topic sentence on a slip of paper for the teacher as they leave class.	questions asked by the teacher, specifically "What details might you expect to be in the essay for this topic?" Students will revise their own topic sentence if they feel it is necessary. Students will use the remainder of the class time to read and research information about their topic, taking notes in the Writer's Notebook. At the end of the class, students will reflect and respond to three teacher prompted questions about their research up to this point.	students will discuss their assigned rubric descriptors (criterion) in order to clarify understanding with each other. Students will seek further clarification with the teacher through class discussion and teacher prompting. Students will read the model essay and complete the activity at the end of the essay and share answers with the class. With the teacher's guidance students, will use the rubric/scoring guide, identify the parts of the essay with the class and clarify their understanding of what is required. Students will use the remainder of class time to work on their draft essay.	guide/rubric to score their own paper. They submit both their final essay and self-scored rubric to the teacher.

ASSIGNMENT SHEET: The Middle Ages

You will write a multi-paragraph essay about a topic related to The Middle Ages.

Rough Draft Due: _____ **Final Copy Due:** _____

Informative means: _____

Explanatory means: _____

My Topic Ideas (choose one to use for your paper)"

_____ _____

_____

Form a Question that might be *answered* in your essay about your selected topic:

_____

_____

The main idea of a paragraph is written in a sentence called a **topic sentence:**

A topic sentence —

- tells the reader what you will say about your topic
- is a road map for the paragraph; in other words, it tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paragraph.
- is a single sentence at the beginning of your essay that presents your idea to the reader. The rest of the paper gathers and organizes details to explain or inform your reader about the topic.

Examples: Finding a seat in his own boat was hardly the worst of General Washington's problems
Colonists came to America for freedom and opportunity, but they soon realized Britain had a different idea.
Although men fought the battles of The Revolutionary War on the front line, women played an important role in gaining America's independence.

Write your Main Idea or Topic Sentence: Look at your notes about the Middle Ages topic you have chosen. Write a complete sentence that states the main idea.

_____

_____

_____

List relevant details (facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic) about the topic that you might include in your essay.

_____

_____

_____

_____

SAMPLE ESSAY

Sammy Student
Informational/Explanatory
Nov. 21, 2011

First President or Farmer?

Finding a seat in his own boat was hardly the worst of General Washington's problems. It was cold and wet and icy, and his men were tired and didn't have warm clothes to wear or even enough food to eat. The Revolutionary War was hard on everyone, but it was hard on Washington most of all because he wanted to be home with his wife and children. From 1759, until he was called to fight in 1775, Washington lived with his wife, Martha, and her two children. Washington loved his big farm in Mt. Vernon, Virginia, and although he was one of our country's most brilliant generals, he was really just a farmer at heart.

Washington was our President for the next eight years, but during that time he just wanted to get back home. He would spend weekends there whenever he could, and he made sure he got reports on the condition of his farm. He also liked getting letters from his family. Then, in March of 1797, Washington finally got to go home for good. There were no more wars to fight, and John Adams was going to be President. Washington had been a good President, but he was tired of it. Even his granddaughter noticed how happy he was to be home. In a letter to a friend she wrote, "Grandpa is much pleased with being once more Farmer Washington."

Informative/Explanatory Essay
Student Self-Check

Ideas

____ ☺ I stated the main idea of my paper (the essay's title does not count).
____ ☺ I developed my topic with details (examples, facts, concrete details).
____ ☺ The details in my writing are all about my topic.
____ ☺ My information is engaging and informative.

Organization

____ ☺ I use paragraphs to group my information.
____ ☺ My introduction begins with an interesting fact, opinion, or question.
____ ☺ My paragraphs end with a concluding sentence that makes sense for the rest of my essay.
____ ☺ I use transitional words or phrases to move my ideas along.
____ ☺ I use a heading and title for my essay.

Voice

____ ☺ I used my own words to tell about the topic.
____ ☺ I wrote in a formal voice; not with slang.

Word Choice

____ ☺ I used the best words for describing the details for my topic.
____ ☺ My writing could easily be read aloud.

Sentence Fluency

____ ☺ My sentences present ideas and information smoothly and clearly.

Conventions

____ ☺ I left spaces between words.
____ ☺ I left margins on the sides and at the bottom of my paper.
____ ☺ I have used capital letters correctly.
____ ☺ Periods, commas, exclamation points, question marks, and quotation marks are in the right places.
____ ☺ Words are spelled correctly.
____ ☺ I remembered to indent each paragraph

Scoring Guide/Rubric for 4th Grade Informative/Explanatory Writing

Outcome: Standard 4.W.2. The student will demonstrate synthesis of informative/explanatory texts by writing a multi- paragraph essay.

Writing Trait	Criteria	Score			
		F 1-2	**A 3**	**M 4**	**E 5-6**
Ideas & Content	1. The topic is clearly introduced.				
	2. The topic is developed using relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.				
Organization	3. Related information is grouped in paragraphs and sections				
	4. Uses appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among the ideas and concepts.				
	5. Essay is formatted for easy reading and understanding by using a heading/title, graphics, and (optional) multi-media.				
	6. There is a recognizable concluding statement or paragraph that makes sense for the information provided about the topic.				
Voice	7. Establishes and maintains a formal style.				
Word Choice	8. Uses precise language and domain specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.				
Sentence Fluency	9. Sentences convey ideas and information smoothly and clearly.				
Conventions	10. Uses punctuation and capitalization correctly.				

FINAL SCORE: _____/6_____

A score of 6 = 100%
A score of 5.0-5.9 = 90-98%
A score of 4.0-4.9 = 80=89%
A score of 3.0-3.9 = 70-79%
A score of 2.0-2.9 = 60-69%

(Calculating the Score: Total the score and divide that total by the number of criterion items listed on the Scoring Guide. This number over 6 equals the score for the paper. It can be no higher than 6/6 A score of 80% will show mastery of the standard.)