Grade Level	Content Area	Unit Title
3rd Grade	Writing Standards: Text Types and Purposes	Sonoran Desert Life

Length of Unit	Time of Year Taught	Expected Prior Knowledge
2 Weeks	4th Quarter	Students will have the ability and knowledge of how to read, write (complete sentences), and listen to each other in order to work cooperatively in a group. They will have the ability to utilize and research using 21st Century skills.

Unit Description

This mini-unit is part of an interdisciplinary unit of study on Sonoran Desert Life, reaching Language Arts, Science, and Technology standards. This unit of study begins with identifying plants and animals that live in the Sonoran Desert. Followed by identifying adaptations of plants and animals that allow them to live in this environment. Followed by ways that species adapt when introduced into new environments and how a species' inability to adapt to changing conditions in the ecosystem led to the extinction of that species. The Sonoran Desert is interesting and relevant to this population of students, as they live in the actual environment. Through research, documentation of observational notes, and student collaboration, students will write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly (1. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. 2. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. 3. Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within categories of information. 4. Provide a concluding statement or section.)

Standards: See instructions on page 15.	Strand: Writing Standards Cluster: Text Types and Purposes Standard #2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. a. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., *also*, *another*, *and*, *more*, *but*) to connect ideas within categories of information. d. Provide a concluding statement or section.

Summative Assessment *In addition to the description, include a copy of the summative assessment in the application package.*	The summative assessment consists of a completed Informational Book. Students will be assessed individually, as well as by group. Each Informational Book will be assessed on the introduction of the topic and its related information through use of supportive facts and illustrations. Each book must include a table of contents, chapters with details and facts about the Sonoran Desert, a glossary, index, and a closing comment and supported opinion to the problem proposed. Neatness, quality, and effort will also be used to assess the Informational Book.
Scoring for Summative Assessment *In addition to the description, include a*	Mastery = 19/24 or higher.

copy of the answer key and scoring rubric (if applicable) for the summative assessment in the application package.	A copy of the answer key/scoring rubric is attached. Remediation students given more time.
Materials/Resources Needed *Include all items for the entire unit.*	Desert Giant: The World of the Saguaro Cactus (Text and video) Cactus Hotel The Great Barrier Reef: An Undersea Adventure Books relevant to topic Computer access to Kid Stuff at the Desert Museum www.desertmuseum.org/kids/ Questioning PowerPoint and projector Chart paper, drawing and writing utensils Science Journals Information Book Requirement Rubric Informational Book Templates

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
Instruction and Timeline	Opening Question: What do you think life might be like in the Sonoran Desert? Explain to the students that they will interview another student to find out what that student thinks life might be like in the Sonoran Desert. Inform the students that they will write their buddy's comments on an index card. After student interviews are complete, students will present their findings from the interviews to the class. Post student suggestions on chart paper with the opening question written on the top. Inform students that today they will be identifying animals and plants and their relationships to the Sonoran Desert. Direct students to draw a Saguaro Cactus Lesson	Opening Question: Have these questions projected via PowerPoint and give students opportunities to discuss their answers: What is life like for the plants and animals in the Sonoran Desert? What makes it challenging for plants to grow in the Sonoran Desert? How were the animals dependent on the Saguaro Cactus? If you were an animal, how would you survive? What might happen if a new species (plant or animal) is introduced into the environment of the Sonoran Desert? How would that species adapt to changing conditions in the ecosystem or why would it fail to survive? Read aloud Cactus Hotel. Students discuss the author's purpose for writing Cactus Hotel. Teacher records student suggestions on chart paper labeled "Author's Purpose" from Lesson 1. Explain to the students that in today's lesson they will be working with their group to collect information on Sonoran Desert Life. Instruct them to use ideas from Desert Giant, Cactus Hotel, supplied books about desert life as well as the website Kid Stuff at the Desert	Opening Question: What does informative or explanatory text mean to you? Direct students to find a pyramid buddy and discuss what informative or explanatory text means to them. Have the students share with the class what informative or explanatory text means to their buddy. Record student suggestions on the whiteboard. After student input, write on the whiteboard: Informative or explanatory text names a topic and supplies some facts about the topic. Inform students that they will be creating a informational book that illustrates and explains plants and animals found in the Sonoran Desert, the relationships among the plants and animals in the desert environment, and plant and animal adaptations to the environment of the Sonoran Desert.	Opening Question: What does being an author mean to you? Direct students to find a pyramid buddy and discuss what being an author means to them. Have the students share with the class what being an author means to their buddy. Record student suggestions on chart paper from Lessons 1 and 2 labeled "Author's Purpose." Explain to the students that today they will write and illustrate a book in their groups for the class about the Sonoran Desert. Instruct them to reference the Information Book Requirement Rubric so that their completed book meets all specified criteria. Supply students with the various Information Book templates they may use to create their group book.	What does informative or explanatory text mean to you? Review student suggestions and definition on the whiteboard from Lesson 3. Distribute completed books among the various student groups. Ask the students to reference the Information Book Requirement Rubric. Have the students evaluate the different books using the Information Book Requirement Rubric. Direct students to discuss whether or not the group did a good job meeting the requirements of an informational text.

	Assignment Strip from a basket as their focus for a video and book study. Explain that they are to write facts about their assignment to teach to the class for the Desert Giant Jigsaw. Present *Desert Giant: The World of the Saguaro Cactus*. Afterwards, have students gather and discuss author's purpose for writing Desert Giant. Record student suggestions on chart paper labeled "Author's Purpose".	Museum. The information should include plants and animals found in the Sonoran Desert, the relationships among the plants and animals in the desert environment, and plant and animal adaptations to the environment of the Sonoran Desert.			

	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
Student Activities and Timeline	Students will watch *Desert Giant: The World of the Saguaro Cactus*. During the movie, they will write facts about the assignment on their strip. Afterwards, they will meet together in groups to teach each other about the assignment on their cards.	Students will work together in groups to gather information about plants and animals found in the Sonoran Desert, the relationships among the plants and animals in the desert environment, and plant and animal adaptations to the environment of the Sonoran Desert. They will record their findings in the Science Journal. Students will record ideas from Desert Giant, Cactus Hotel, supplied books about desert life as Kid Stuff at the Desert Museum (website).	Students will reconvene in their groups and resume researching the web and books for relevant facts about life in the Sonoran Desert.	Students will use the information they documented in their Science Journals to write and illustrate a book with their group about life in the Sonoran Desert. The created book must also include a page stating their argument for the problem presented in Lesson 2.	Students will use the Information Book Requirement Rubric to comment about another group's book and reflect on their own book.

Summative Assessment: Informational book using the Sonoran Desert

Instructions:

1. You will create a short informational book describing a topic and its related information through use of supportive facts and illustrations of the story you listened to or read:

    a. Explain in detail how to distinguish between the information provided by the words and the pictures.
    b. Include a glossary and index with at least 4 key words
    c. Include a table of contents with chapters meaningful to the topic.
    d. Include supported opinion to the problems posed in class.
    e. Discuss the purpose of the illustrator and what is so important about the pictures they drew.
    f. Support all of your ideas with excellent supporting ideas.
    g. Use of correct grammar and link your phrases together.

2. Using the rubric, evaluate and score the book you wrote.

Informational Book Rubric					
Criteria	**Expert (4)**	**Practitioner (3)**	**Apprentice (2)**	**Novice (1)**	**Score**
Informational Book Format	Book title, authors' names, table of contents, developed chapters, glossary, and index are included.	Two items are missing from the Informational Book's format.	One item is missing from the Informational Book's format.	More than one item is missing from the Informational Book's format.	
Topic	Topic is clearly explained and includes excellent supporting details.	Topic is explained and includes some supporting details.	Topic is explained and includes few or no supporting details.	Topic is questionable and has no supporting details.	
Illustrations	Shows the book's subject, very neatly colored, and contains many specific details.	Shows the book's subject, neatly colored, and contains some details.	Shows the book's subject, colored, and contains some details.	Doesn't support the book's subject and contains few or no details.	
Closing Comment and Supported Opinion	Your opinion is clearly stated, giving 3 reasons for your preference.	Your opinion is clearly stated, giving 2 reasons for your preference.	Your opinion is clearly stated, giving 1 reason for your preference.	You gave no reasons for your preference.	
Grammar/ Mechanics	Flawless use of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Excellent use of linking words and phrases.	Appropriate use of grammar, spelling and punctuation. Good use of linking words and phrases.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and/or punctuation. Some use of linking words and phrases.	Errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation that inhibit understanding. No use of linking words and phrases.	
Neatness/Effort	Book is exceptionally neat, attractive to the eye and easy to read. Evidence of great effort.	Book is neat overall, and easy to read. Evidence of good effort.	Book is fairly neat, but may be difficult to read at time. Evidence of some effort.	Book is sloppy and illegible. Evidence of little to no effort.	
Name	**Total Score**				

Summative Assessment

Create and complete an informational book that illustrates and explains plants and animals found in the Sonoran Desert, the relationships among the plants and animals in the desert environment, and plant and animal adaptations to the environment of the Sonoran Desert. Each Informational Book will be including the introduction of the topic and its related information through use of supportive facts and illustrations. Each book must include a table of contents, chapters with details and facts about the Sonoran Desert, a glossary, index, and a closing comment and supported opinion to the problem proposed in lesson two. Neatness, quality, and effort will also be used to assess the Informational Book.