

Possible Minilesson Areas/Topics for Informational Writing

Sentence Structure

- Varied Sentence Patterns
Writers vary the way they begin sentences so that their writing is more interesting.
- Punctuation - What does each accomplish?
 - Dash vs comma
Writers sometimes use a dash when they want to emphasize a piece of information. Ex. The spider kills her mate - so he's dead!
 - Ellipsis
 - Makes reader wait
Writers can use an ellipsis to cause the readers to pause before reading a piece of information.
The spider does some really cruel things... like killing her mate!
- Punctuation to indicate how reader's voice should be inflected to convey writer's intended meaning
- Use of typeset:
 - All capital letters
(1) Writers can use capital letters to emphasize certain words.
The spider **KILLS** her mate!
(2) Writers can use capital letters to indicate section headings.
This helps the reader know how the sections are organized.
 - Bold print
Writers can use bold print within their text to call attention to words they will go on to explain.
A spider has a **thorax**, which is -----.
 - Italics
- End with question - but no answer
Would you like to live the life of a spider?

Adding Details at Purposeful Places to emphasize writer's intended meaning

- Sensory images to give full effect of an experience
- Details used to hold the reader at a place the writer wants to emphasize

- Fully describe action or the way animals hunt, move, etc.
- Uses figurative language
 - Similes
 - Metaphors
 - Sound words
- Technical language to emphasize knowledge about a topic

Layout features that Create Interest and Explain Text

- Sketches with labels
- Graphs
- Maps
- Page after piece with "Cool Facts" - this is a way to use information that doesn't really "fit" but is interesting. It could also include jokes, riddles, etc. about the topic.
- Page before or after piece with Informational Poem about the topic and art work.

Create Closeness to the Reader

- Use of I or "In my opinion"

Writers can include their opinions in informational writing so the reader understands the writer's interest in the topic. *A writer uses this sparingly and always lets the reader know it's a personal opinion and not a fact.
- Humor
- Reveal Perspective (How I look at it)
 - My thoughts about the subject

Other Considerations for Adding Voice to Informational Writing

- Action verbs as part of the description
- • Compares statistics (weight, height, etc) to something the reader knows

The tarantula's body is about as big as a man's fist.
- Details about the setting (animal habitat)
- Personalize the animal ('she' or 'he' rather than always using 'the spider')
- Humor in the illustrations
- Sketches of something you've observed
- Help the reader visualize:

- Suppose you were a spider. Would you enjoy your meals?
- End with a question

I believe spiders are the world's most hideous creatures. How do you feel about spiders?