



Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information Writing K-8

Joann Portalupi, Ralph J. Fletcher, Ralph Fletcher

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Writing nonfiction represents a big step for most students. Most young writers are not intimidated by personal narrative, fiction, or even poetry, but when they try to put together a "teaching book," report, or persuasive essay, they often feel anxious and frustrated.

JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher believe that young nonfiction writers supply plenty of passion, keen interest, and wonder. Teachers can provide concrete strategies to help students scaffold their ideas as they write in his challenging genre.

Like the authors' best-selling *Craft Lessons: Teaching Writing K-8*, this book is divided into sections for K-2, 3-4, and middle school (grades 5-8) students. These divisions reflect various differences between emerging, competent, and fluent writers. In each section you'll find a generous collection of craft lessons directed at the genre that's most appropriate for that particular age. In the K-2 section, for example, a number of craft lessons focus on the all-about or concept book. In the 3-4 section there are several lessons on biography. In the 5-8 section a series of lessons addresses expository writing. Throughout the book each of the 80 lessons is presented on a single page in an easy-to-read format.

Every lesson features three teaching guidelines:**Discussion**--A brief look at the reasons for teaching the particular element of craft specifically in a nonfiction context.**How to Teach It**--Concrete language showing exactly how a teacher might bring this craft element to students in writing conferences or a small-group setting.**Resource Material**--Specific book or text referred to in the craft lesson including trade books, or a piece of student writing in the Appendixes.

This book will help students breathe voice into lifeless "dump-truck" writing and improve their nonfiction writing by making it clearer, more authoritative, and more organized. *Nonfiction Craft Lessons* gives teachers a wealth of practical strategies to help students grow into strong writers as they explore and explain the world around them.

Be sure to look at the When Students Write videotapes too.

Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information Writing K-8 Details

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From Reader Review Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information Writing K-8 for online ebook

Kari says

This book is chock full of great ideas. Not only does it explain the importance of teaching non-fiction writing and reading it offers sample lessons for teaching it. The lessons are grouped by grade, K-2, 3-4, etc. It therefore, makes it very simple to read what you need, and skip what you don't. The author also nicely ties into writers workshop.

I would recommend this to any teacher looking for ideas on how to teach non-fiction writing in meaningful ways.

Richard says

Love this book with activities to teach informational writing.

My favorite-teaching with anecdotes.

The Reading Countess says

Step by step mini lessons complete with text samples (conveniently printed for teacher use in the back of the book), lists of titles and sectioned off for grades K-2, 3-4 and 5-8. This is a wonderful resource for teachers wishing to push their students further in informational writing. With Texas' new TEKS, this book will be cracked open often...

Koko Nata says

if you want teach nonfiction writing, you must read this book first

Erin says

Practical and well organized! I'm looking forward to using this as a resource in my classroom.

Jessica says

A great mini-lesson book that you can keep on your shelf and reference quickly!

Gina says

Although I'm a big fan of Ralph Fletcher, so much has changed now with core curriculum standards that I find this difficult to incorporate into what is now expected in the ELA classroom.

Rebecca says

A good book for general informational/academic writing. The authors do a nice job breaking down various workshop ideas for students of all ages. The resources in the appendix are nice for teachers who are just getting started.

The organization of the book is smart and lends itself as a resource book that can be used during lesson planning and reflection. The "how to" examples and sample work are also nice scaffolds.

Not a lot of original ideas or approaches for instructors of writing who have been exposed to extensive research and popular instruction in academic writing. Once you've read a lot on writing most instructors find that there are a few basic frameworks for expository and argumentative writing. They may include a different angle on an approach, but if you look under the hood, the engine is pretty much the same in most of the vehicles. I found myself reminded of Nancy Atwell's writing workshops, Jeff Wilhelm's inquiry based units, exploratory approaches found in many science academies and the inclusion of the CORI model (just to name a few).

I did appreciate the authors discussion of the writing teacher's dilemma of giving structure and strategies to new writers without stifling their writing voice. In other word, what are the advantages (if any) to teaching the traditional 5 paragraph essay?

I agree with the authors thesis that there are times and places for highly structured writing approach. I have gone back and forth on this issue for the past four years. I have found that writers who struggle with organization of ideas and are uncertain of where to begin need a very basic structure. I think that the traditional (albeit highly templated) 5 paragraph essay is useful. It is found EVERYWHERE in academics and struggling writers can take the information and transfer it to various content areas.

Amber Gregg -Judging More Than Just the Cover says

"The best nonfiction writing begins with a writer's passionate curiosity about a subject."

Genre: Education and Teaching.

Number of Pages: 148.

This book is meant to teach information writing in elementary and middle school, but I think that it can also be useful for high school and college English courses. I think that the instructor would just have to take some of the ideas and alter it to fit the age of the student. However, there are many older students that still struggle with the foundations of writing nonfiction, so these lessons are very helpful. They do not feel intimidating.

This book is amazing for detailed writing lessons. They break it down by each specific writing skill, and include a discussion of the lesson, how to teach it, and a list of resources to use in the lesson. It contains ways to set up your classroom's framework to be prepared for nonfiction writing to be seen positively. Then it splits into sections of lessons (K-2, 3-4, and 5-8). But, like I said before, a lot of these lessons can still be made applicable to older learners who struggle with the basics. The best part of this book is that it offers many examples of texts to use with lessons. I think that can be the hardest part about making lessons since it can be very time-consuming to search for a book that matches the lesson.

I think it is helpful to give this book a full read through, and then bookmark each lesson that can be used for your particular course. Then you can go back to specific sections as you need it. In the appendix, there are coordinating organizers, booklets, and short texts for some of the lessons.

To read the rest of my review, go here: <http://judgingmorethanjustthecover.bl...>

Karen says

Great help for getting your students to become non fiction writers. It gave me lots of ideas, I was able to springboard into other areas.

Kris Patrick says

I am not lending this book to anyone. Unless that person's name is Emily C.

Christine says

If you teach nonfiction, informational writing this is a great resource. It's written for the elementary/middle grades but the material and lessons are universal. In the first part of the book, the authors set up the nonfiction writing process. Lots of useful step by step instructions with great descriptions and suggestions for teachers. Even if you consider yourself sufficiently schooled in the art of teaching nonfiction writing, this book is a solid reminder of the process and how it should be done. The second half of the book consists of mini-lessons that you can use in the classroom to scaffold kids writing and help them become successful writers of nonfiction. This part is divided into two parts, K-4 and 5-8. I only read the 5-8 section and found the information to be very relevant to me on a professional (teacher of 11th graders) and personal (writer of nonfiction) level.
