

## **Informational Genre: Endangered animals**

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### **Overview**

This curriculum unit, Informational Genre, is designed for middle school students. It may be taught at any grade level as all of its components are part of the Pittsburgh Public Schools Communications curriculum. However, my target audience is sixth grade students. The purpose of this unit is to help middle school children respond to an informational genre. Writing a research report should be exciting. Students should have a sense of discovery as they seek to answer the questions they have about a subject. This unit will enable the student to make sense of all the information and to personalize it. It will give them new vocabulary that will help them to become more proficient writers. Sometimes the writing of reports is the written transfer of research information from one person to another. Students seem to be passing along facts and are not interested in how the reader of the report will react or not react to the report. These reports will grab the reader's interest and hold it by using descriptive language and using an authoritative tone. The unit will help my students and me to become a community of researchers as we gain new knowledge, share the information and then respond to it in writing a report.

### **Rationale**

According to Chip Wood in his book, Yardsticks-Children in the Classroom Ages 4-14, "Eleven Year Olds-Cognitive growth-enjoy scientific

study, mathematical problem solving, invention, debate that accentuates new abilities in deductive reasoning, learns well in cooperative groups, likes work that feels grown-up such as research, bibliography, interviews, footnotes, and math skills.” The eleven year olds that I teach typify this profile. They embrace the idea of learning new information. It is the joy of discovery that creates an atmosphere where students want to share this information with others. Students at this level can be experts on topics on a sixth grade level. Instead of a restating of facts, they can develop an authoritative tone in their writing. Self-esteem is enhanced when a child becomes an authority on a subject. According to the Report on The National Commission of Writing, in the article, “The Neglected “R””,

“Writing is not simply a way for students to demonstrate what they know. It is a way to help them understand what they know. At its best, writing is learning. Writing competence builds confidence, which readily turns into creativity and fun, ....Facility with writing opens students up to the pleasure of exercising their minds in ways that drilling on facts, details, and information never will. More than a way of knowing, writing is an act of discovery.”

Students need to write with an awareness of the reader’s interest. The use of descriptive writing that is factually correct can be a part of the information. They do need to cite information that is learned, but, they can create a descriptive setting by using this information. Grasping the reader’s interest can be achieved by placing the topic in a scene that intrigues the reader. Instead of beginning the report with, “This report is on wild mustangs”, or, “Do you want to know about wild mustangs?” Why not use-

*“Mustangs, beautiful wild horses roaming free.  
They’ve never tasted a bit or felt the weight of a  
saddle. You may see a Buckskin, Palomino, Pinto,  
Jet-black, Blue Roan or many other colors whipping  
by you on a hot summer’s day in the west.”*

The beginning of this report on wild mustangs, while, admittedly poetic and descriptive, contains many facts on wild mustangs. The information given in this opening paragraph tells the reader that these wild horses roam free in the west. It gives the names of the various colors of the wild mustangs. It grasps the reader’s attention and encourages her to read the whole report. This report was written by a sixth grader at Pittsburgh Classical Academy.

*“Mustangs, beautiful wild horses roaming free. They’ve never*

*tasted a bit or felt the weight of a saddle. You may see a Buckskin, Palomino, Pinto, Jet-Black, Blue Roan or many other colors whipping by you on a hot summer's day in the west. The most common is Sorrel and Bay. They are about 14 hands tall. It is not uncommon to see one as short as 13 hands or as tall as 16. Spaniards named them Mustang Equus, the true horses.*

*Mustangs can be found in the western part of the U.S. Mustangs mostly live in herds or bands. Sometimes a colt will be kicked out by the head stallion. They either live with another band or live alone. There are also bachelor bands. These are bands of bachelors that have been kicked out of their band.*

*Mustangs mostly eat grass. They are vegetarians or grazing animals. The climate in the west is very hot and has very little humidity. In the summer the desert is devastating. Very little water can be found anywhere. In this dry season, little grass can be found. Mustangs will resort to eating brush and weeds. They will only eat tree bark if brush and weeds cannot be found.*

*Mares have a new foal every year. Hope Ryden states in her book, Wild Horses I Have Known, that the gestation period is 11-months. Mares take care of their young like domestic horses. The foal nurses for the first year. After a year they start to eat grass. When the mare has another foal, it first stays close but doesn't rely on its mother for its every need. After two years, the foal stays on its own in the herd. A foal is mature and ready to mate at the age of three.*

*Mustangs are endangered for many reasons. Some are sent to Mexican slaughterhouses and some are killed by farmers. However, these beautiful mammals are killed, it should be stopped. Congress passed the Free Roaming Horse and Burro act in 1971 to stop farmers from killing them. In 1971, there were 303 herds, but today, only 186 of the herds survived. All together 41,000 roam in public range today. Even after laws have been passed these mammals are still being killed. Hopefully, we can bring this animal off the endangered list soon."*

Students who are taught to write this type of report are able to write proficiently on Standards-Based Classroom Achievement Assessments. The following is a written response after reading "Land of the Giants" by George Laycock. A sixth grade student at the Pittsburgh Classical Academy wrote this

response as part of her sixth grade end of year assessment. The writing prompt was: **“If you were an animal living during the Ice Age, what would life be like for you? Use at least three important facts from this article to create your description.”**

*“If I were an animal living in the Ice Age, I would be a saber tooth tiger. I would have long dagger-like teeth. When they hung out of my mouth, they would be seven inches long. I would use them like stabbing tools. I, also, have long claws. I am short, but I can be very fast in short distances.*

*I hunt by ambush or surprise attack. I would hide and wait for my food to pass. Then, I would jump out and catch my food using my long teeth and sharp claws. Some of the animals that I would eat would be horse, antelope, camel, and the giant ground sloth. The sloth may be 18 feet long, and weigh three tons but it is very slow. It won't even run away. It would be a great big bag of meat and bones. It would be very good to eat, even though I would have to eat it raw. Cold, raw food doesn't that sound yummy?”*

I developed this unit to use as a teaching tool. Students at the end of this unit will have met many of the requirements needed for completion of their writing portfolios. The unit meets many of the Communication Standards of the Pittsburgh Public Schools.

The Communications curriculum of the Pittsburgh Public Schools requires each student to keep a reading and writing portfolio. This portfolio is separated into three categories: Reading, Writing, and Speaking. The Reading part of the portfolio contains a Response to Literature, a Response to Informational texts, and a log of books that have been read to achieve the 25 book requirement. The Writing part of the portfolio contains a Personal Narrative, a Problem-Solution essay, a Narrative Procedure, a Report of Information, a Free Pick and a Reflective essay. The Speaking part of the portfolio contains oral reports that the student has given throughout the year. The unit that I will write with the help of the seminar will include all three sections of the Communications Portfolio.

It will include a Response to Informational text, A Problem-Solution essay, a Report, and an Oral report. The Response to Informational texts teaches the students to read accurately, summarize the article, accurately name their source, make connections to information that they already know, and then to make a personal statement on the topic. The Report teaches the class to write a research paper. The research part of the project helps students to do research in a variety of informational texts, encyclopedias, and on-line. They will learn to write a

bibliography, share their research with the class, write an outline, a rough draft, conference with the teacher and peers when editing, and then to publish their report using the computer. The technology aspect of the report will include using Microsoft Word to type the report and to create a cover sheet for the report. Students will also be able to import pictures and/or charts from Encarta and the internet to place in the report. Writing a Problem-solution essay will encompass group discussion using accountable talk, and an Oral presentation(Speaking section). The Speaking presentation teaches the students to have self-confidence and an air of authority when presenting their research. Students will be given criteria checklists and rubrics for all assignments. These will enable the students to include required information and a view of how all assignments will be graded.

One of the collections of stories in the required text for sixth graders, Elements of Literature, All Creatures Great and Small, is on the topic of animals: domesticated animals, farm animals, animals in the zoo and in the wild. The beginning of the unit will start with the reading of the collection. This collection includes fiction, poetry, and informational articles about animals. The Response to Information will be written on an article from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette on the sighting of Siberian tigers in China. Students will write a summary of the article, make connections to what they have learned about other endangered animals, and make a personal statement about the article. The use of this article will help students to connect to other endangered animals. The following is a Response to Information written by a sixth grader at the Pittsburgh Classical Academy.

*“Have you ever seen a Siberian tiger anywhere other than a zoo or the Russian Far East? Well, a camera trap in China caught a Siberian tiger eating a carcass of a mule. This means that the Siberian tiger is crossing the border from Russia to China where they roamed many years ago. 400 Siberian tigers are believed to be living in the wild. 20 of the 400 are believed to be living in China. The Chinese government placed all breeds of tigers under "Key State protection" in 2001. The article I used was called Siberian tiger caught on camera in China from the Pittsburgh Post Gazette Sunday, February 9, 2003. Poachers are killing these tigers because of Folk beliefs. This photograph means a new beginning for the Siberian tiger.*

*Another endangered animal that can only been seen at zoos or only in certain places in the world is the Lar*

*Gibbon. I am researching this animal for a report. It can only be seen in certain rain forests in the world. It, too, shares the same problems of the Siberian tiger. I hope that they find the Lar Gibbon somewhere in the world on one of these camera traps because this animal is also endangered. Hopefully, someday we will live in a world that ensures a good habitat for all animals."*

Brainstorming of other endangered animals, a visit to the school library, and on-line browsing of endangered animals will help students to choose the particular animal that each student will research. The students will, also, learn to write a bibliography at this time. Classes will be divided into groups to share information that they have gathered on note cards. The information that they will look for and share with classmates is the classification of the animal, what it looks like, its habitat, social habits, the food it eats, how it raises its young, why it is on the endangered list. Students will give oral reports on the endangered animal that they have picked. A Problem-Solution essay will be the final essay in the unit. In this essay, students will cite the problems that make the animal endangered and give some possible solutions.

There are many elements that make up the composition of genre writing. Beautiful genre tapestries can be woven by using these elements when writing. Students will use the basic element patterns when incorporating into their writing these various categories of words or strings of words. Dr. David Kaufer, Chairperson of the English Dept. at Carnegie Mellon University, has created a color system that contains lists of words or strings of words that should be used in writing a particular piece will be given to the students before writing. According to Dr. Kaufer, if there are words associated with the color red, the student has succeeded making mind visible to the reader. If there are words associated with the color orange, the student has succeeded taking the reader forward or backward in time. If there are words associated with gold, the student has succeeded establishing social ties to the reader. If there are words associated with the color green, the student has succeeded giving the reader left to right guidance. If there are words associated with the color blue, the student has succeeded creating visual images and scenes. If there are words associated with the color purple, the student has succeeded moving the reader across time and place. Examples of these words written in context will be given to the students. For example: Red, this color designates inner thought, will include the four dimensions: First Person, Inner Thinking, Think Positive, and Think Negative. Orange, this color designates thinking ahead and back, will include both dimensions. Gold, this color designates information in the world of text, will include the dimensions of Reasoning and Social Ties. Green, which designates information as L-R direction signals to the reader, will include Notifying. Blue, which designates scenic and

spatial description, will include Word Pictures and Motion. Purple, which designates temporal description, will include Past Events, Time Intervals, and Event Shifts. For instance, blue: The Writer Who Deepens Scenic Information and Interest, and purple: The Writer Who Transports the Reader Across Time and Place will be used when the student describes the appearance of the animal and its habitat. Green: The Writer Who Uses Textual Clues to Guide the Reader's Movement from Left to Right, Dimension 11, will be used throughout the report as the student gives information about the animal. Gold: The Writer Who Reasons, Shares Social Ties, and Structures Activities for the Reader will be used as the student tries to explain the reasons that the animal is endangered. Red: The Writer Who Lets Us Peek into Interior Thought will be used as the student writes why he/she choose this particular animal and what they might do to keep it from extinction.

## **Objectives**

### Response to Informational Materials

The students will be able to engage the reader by creating a context for the writing. They will be able to accurately restate or summarize information in their own words. They will be able to relate new information to what they already know. They will be able to connect the new information to other related topics. They will be able to make logical inferences based on information they've read. They will be able to reflect on why this information is important. They will be able to draw conclusions, ask questions, or identify the influence of the author's point of view. They will be able to support claims, inferences, conclusions, etc. with specific reference to the text.

### Report

The students will be able to read and take notes in their own words. They will be able to use an outline to organize facts and information in a way that makes sense. They will be able to engage the reader by using an attention grabber and creating an authoritative tone and a context for the writing. They will be able to center on one controlling idea supported by facts. They will include accurate and appropriate explanations, examples, comparisons, and details. They will be able to exclude irrelevant details and inappropriate information. They will provide a sense of closure to the writing. They will accurately cite four or more sources using MLA format.

## Oral Report

The students will be able to provide the audience with a context for the information being given. They will be able to paraphrase and summarize information to increase understanding. They will use language that is clear and appropriate to the audience. They will be able to make effective use of pace, volume, enunciation, and pronunciation. They will be able to engage the audience with appropriate verbal cues, eye contact, and posture. They will be able to project a sense of creativity and personality in selecting and organizing content and in the delivery of the presentation.

## Problem-Solution Essay

The students will be able to engage the reader by establishing a context and creating a point of view and persuasive tone. They will be able to develop reader interest with a dynamic beginning that clearly identifies the problem and a powerful conclusion that pushes for their solutions. They will organize their writing in a way that considers the needs and interests of their audience. They will be able to support arguments with detailed evidence and be able to cite the sources of their information. They will arrange supporting details, reasons, examples, and/or anecdotes effectively and persuasively. They will be able to propose a reasonable, convincing solution to the problem. They will be able to anticipate counter-arguments. They will provide a sense of closure to the writing.

Students will, also, be able to participate in accountable talk when working in groups. They will use notes to talk about the texts of information that they are using and will then share with the group. They will back up their statements with facts they've gained from their research. They will be able to plug into others' ideas. They will ask questions of each other's research. They will be courteous to all members of the group. They will listen attentively.

Students will use technology to publish their papers. They will use Microsoft Word to type the report. They will be able to use the internet to research their endangered animals, and to import pictures of their animals into their reports.

The writing criteria for all pieces of work requires good word choice, voice, and a variety of sentence types and lengths. The writing will have sharp and clear focus. All information and details will be specific to the topic. There will be logical order and appropriate organization of the writing. Students will make few mistakes in punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and mechanics.

Students will be able to identify rich vocabulary words used with the stories from Elements of Literature. Rich vocabulary words are words used to help students understand the theme of a story. They will be able to read stories aloud with teacher guidance. They will be able to discuss the author's purpose and style, and the theme of the story.

## **Strategies**

The topic for research is endangered animals. This topic is received readily by sixth graders. Their interest in animals is key in motivating them to write informational genres. The unit begins with Collection Four, All Creatures Great and Small, of Elements of Literature. The two selections from this Collection for this curriculum unit are "Zlateh the Goat" by Isaac Bashevis Singer, and "Rescue of a Newborn" by Iain and Oria Douglas-Hamilton. "Zlateh the Goat" is a fictional narrative. "Rescue of a Newborn" is a non-fictional narrative. The Directed Reading Model by R. Hamilton and S. Sauer, 2001, will be used to teach both narratives. The Directed Reading Model can take up to six days to complete. Days one and two-Activating Prior Knowledge should be completed in one to two days. This section of the model includes vocabulary presentation, modeled writing, and introducing the selection. Days two through four include the initial reading of the text, rereading of the text, post-reading questions and summarizing, and revisiting vocabulary: Syllasearch. Syllasearch is an activity that helps students to break down a word into syllables. Days four through six include response writing, editing the Modeled Writing Lesson and flexible grouping.

The next strategy is having the students become familiar with the reference materials that will be used to research their report of information. They will use books on endangered animals, encyclopedias, Encarta, magazines, newspaper articles, and internet sources of information. The internet sources will be only from the browsers that I will assign. The class will visit the school library and computer lab to find information on endangered animals. These visits will be only to acquaint the students with the various endangered animals. They might make a possible selection of an animal for the report. However, they may change the selection after the class sharing. They need to find the animal's habitat and why it is endangered.

In class, the students will be placed in groups to discuss their findings. They will share the information with other group members. The groupings will depend on habitats or locations of these animals in the wild. They will use a criteria checklist for group participation and then a rubric to see how they have worked effectively in the group. Each group will create a chart on large poster

paper on which they will list animals, habitats, and reasons the animal is endangered. Each group will share its chart with the class. Charts should be hung throughout the classroom.

The class will then write a Response to Informational Materials. They will gather news clippings about endangered animals for homework. These will be shared with the class. An article about an endangered animal being spotted in the wild will be used for the class sample. A criteria checklist will be given to the class to inform them of the elements needed in writing this response. The teacher will serve as a scribe to help the class write a response. The lesson will include writing a title that will capture the reader's interest. The class together will create a catchy introduction and cite the article by name and source. Ideas will have organization and be related to the topic. The response will include a summary that concludes with a statement of significance. It will include connections to other endangered animals that they have just learned about in the library or on the internet, make a speculation, or reflect on the information and consider its effectiveness. The class will determine after a review of the class's written response how it would be evaluated using a rubric. They will then look at the written piece to see how it can progress to a proficient or advanced rating. Then, students will independently write a rough draft using both the criteria checklist and the rubric. The rubric used is the PPS rubric for Problem-Solution essays. They will use one of the articles that students have brought in for homework. Instructions to edit and revise the writing should include using more of the words from the lists of orange, gold, and purple. Then, the students will revise and type final copies using Microsoft Word.

The report on endangered animals will begin with the explanation of a criteria checklist. This checklist will inform the student of all the work that must be done to complete the report. It will include the choosing of a specific animal, researching the animal by locating at least four useful references. The correct way of writing a bibliography using MLA style will be introduced. Students will be researching the family the animal belongs to, its appearance, its habitat, the food it eats, how it raises its young, why it is on the endangered list, and measures that people are taking to preserve it. Students will fill out note cards for the information that they find on the animal and cite the resource on the card. This will be done so that the student can cite correctly the source of information in the report. An outline will be used using the aforementioned facts of family, appearance, habitat, diet, the raising of its young, reasons for its endangerment and measures taken for its preservation. Even though this report is an informational writing piece, creative and descriptive sentences will be used by the student to create a thumbnail sketch of the animal's appearance and habitat. This will be used to capture the reader's interest. A first draft will be written

independently using Microsoft Word and shared in small groups. It would be helpful if the groups were made up of students who have researched the same animal. This report is not to be completely copied from note cards. Students should write in an authoritative tone and should consider themselves experts on the information of this animal. Instructions to edit and revise the writing should include using more of the specific colors of the color system pertaining to reports. The PPS rubric for a Report will be presented to the students so that they may create a better paper. Students will then be instructed on finding pictures of their animals on the internet and how to copy and paste them into their reports.

After the students have completed the reports, they will present their reports to the class in an oral report. They may use visuals in their presentations. A criteria checklist will be given to the students so that they may prepare their oral reports. Class time will be set aside so that they may practice with their peers. Students will be evaluated by both the teacher, other students and themselves. There are two separate evaluation sheets—one for the teacher and one for the student to use in self-evaluation and to be used by another student. The students should be able to present their findings by using the order of the outline for the report. They should be able to answer questions from the class with a sense of authority on the endangered animal.

A Problem-Solution essay will be written after the oral presentations continuing the theme of endangered animals. The criteria checklist for this piece of writing will include engaging the reader by creating a background for the problem and using a persuasive tone. Students should state the problem clearly and given an explanation of why it is a problem. They should give concrete evidence that the problem is of concern to the reader of their essay or to a specific group. Outside sources of information are used and cited correctly. Clear solutions are given to the problem. An explanation of how some people may disagree with their solutions should be given. The ending of the writing should sell the solution. The teacher will serve as scribe to write a Problem-Solution essay with the class. The PPS rubric for a Problem-Solution essay will be given to the class so that they may decide how to rate the piece. They will then give recommendations on how to improve the piece to a proficient or advanced rating. Students will then write an independent rough draft. At a conference with the teacher, they will edit and revise their papers. They will then type their final copies.

## **Activities**

Somewhere during their lives, students have had relationships, associations, or encounters with animals. The first story, “Zlateh the Goat”, by Isaac Bashevis Singer, is a story of how a young boy and the family goat come to

depend on each other during a snow storm. They communicate with each other without words but they do understand each other. A pre-reading activity for this story will be vocabulary presentation. The rich vocabulary words for this story will be communication, compassion, anguish, resourcefulness, patience, and companionship. These words are taught in context by using them in short stories. For example, a boy was waiting for his dad to come home from work. His father was taking him to see a baseball game. This boy came home from school. He did his homework, of course, and got dressed for the game. He was all set to go to the game. His mother said that his father was caught in traffic and would be late in returning home. She told him to have patience that his father would be home shortly. He waited and waited. Soon his father came home and they left for the ball park. Other short stories would be told for the other vocabulary words. These thumbnail sketches will be told for all of the rich vocabulary words. The teacher will brainstorm with the students all the different ways that animals communicate with us and with other animals. A modeled writing activity will be taught with the teacher as a scribe. Students will provide information on the various ways that animals communicate with us and the teacher will guide them in the correct way to piece the information together. The title of the story and the author's biography are discussed. Links to the vocabulary and modeled writing should be made.

The story is read aloud with the teacher. The story begins with a family getting ready for Chanukah. The father, Reuven, is a furrier. The weather has been warm and he hasn't had any business. He decides to sell the beloved family goat to the butcher in town in order to get things that are needed for Chanukah. This goat has been a pet to the family. He sends his son, Aaron, to take the goat to town. The two become lost in a snowstorm and have to depend on each other for survival. They communicate with each other by taking care of each other. Aaron provides straw for the goat, and she provides him with her milk. When the snowstorm ends, Aaron cannot part with the goat. So, he takes her home. His father has work again now that the weather has turned cold. They decide not to sell the goat. The family is happy and the goat now has a cherished place in the family.

The story is segmented and questions are asked of the students so that they may understand the author's purpose.

*After the sentence-**New grass sprouted, and the peasants sent their cattle out to pasture.***

Ask questions-What does the author want us to know from what we just read? What's the connection between the weather and the grain?

After the sentence-***Reuven told his oldest son, Aaron, to take the goat to town.***

Ask the question-What problem has the author presented?

After the sentence that ends-***...spend the night at the butcher's, and return the next day with the money.***

Ask the question-So, how does this information about Aaron, his sisters and mother connect to what we already know?

After the sentence-***She knew that they always fed her and never did her any harm.***

Ask the question-What does the author want us to know about Zlateh?

After the sentence-***Those humans in whom she had so much confidence had dragged her into a trap.***

Ask the questions-What is going on here? How does that fit in with what we already know about Zlateh?

After the sentence-***Aaron began to pray to God for himself and for the innocent animal.***

Ask the question-What does the author mean when he writes "...innocent animal"?

After the sentence-***Zlateh, having eaten her fill, sat down on her hindlegs and seemed to have regained her confidence in man***

. Ask the question-Why has Zlateh changed her attitude about how Aaron is treating her?

After the sentences-***You can't speak, but I know you understand. I need you and you need me.***

Ask the question-What is the author telling us about our relationships with animals?

After the sentence-***She comforted him with her patience.***

Ask the question-How can we be comforted by another's patience?

The selection should be reread silently by students on the following day. The creation of a story map will help students to retell the story. The teacher will make connections to the modeled writing and rich vocabulary introduced at the beginning of the story. The vocabulary is reviewed and the words are separated into syllables for decoding-Syllasearch.

Students may write personal narratives about a time when they communicated with an animal. The class should then return to the modeled writing lesson that was written before reading the selection. Students should be able to edit and add to the information of the piece. Students will work in pairs to create a dialog between a human and an animal. They will share dialogs with the class.

The next selection, “Rescue of a Newborn”, in Elements of Literature introduces the topic of endangered animals. It is a non-fiction narrative about a family that worked closely with elephants in the Manyara National Park in Africa. They return years later to visit the park and the elephants. They return to find the elephants dwindling in numbers because of poachers and a lack of suitable breeding males. Virgo, an old matriarch, used to have a close relationship with the authors, but now because of poachers and their time apart, she seems wary of them. During their visit, they help a newborn elephant that has been stuck in the mud. They are fearful that the animal will be killed by predators if left alone overnight. They rescue it from the mud and bring it back to camp. Even though they have the calf with them overnight, they form a bond with the elephant. In the morning, they find his mother and return him to her. In this encounter of returning him to the group, they sense that the elephants do know them by their acceptance of them in their proximity. The rich vocabulary for this narrative is endangered, poachers, distraught, wary, frantic, and morose. This vocabulary will be presented with short stories using the words in context. The title and the authors’ biographies will be used in the introduction of the selection.

During the reading of the selection, the following questions will be asked to focus on the authors’ purpose for writing the narrative.

After the sentence-...***was trying to identify the individual elephants which had survived the holocaust now that the poaching had stopped***

. Explain what the word holocaust means and then ask why the authors compare the poachers’ actions to the actions of Hitler’s army during the holocaust.

After the sentence-***His face is sadder and older; but like a seasoned warrior he keeps his anguished heart closed.***

Ask the question-What is the author telling us about the heart of this character?

After the sentence-***Nor could we have imagined that most of the elephants whose world we shared would be dead by the time our children grew up.***

Ask the question-How does this information about the family’s relationships with the elephants add to the selection?

After the sentence-*Iain took one step forward and called her name again, but she threatened slightly with a nod of her head.*

Ask the question-Why do you think that she feels threatened?

After the sentence-*“She may well have recognized something,” he said, “but let her mistrust man.”*

Ask the question-Why is it better for the elephant to mistrust man?

After the sentence-*She represented a new elephant generation, the first baby to be born after the ivory ban.*

Ask the question-What make this baby elephant a symbol of hope?

After the sentence-*Would she survive to enjoy old age like Virgo or would she be gunned down and made into something functional to sell?*

Ask the question-Should limits be set for the use of things made from endangered animals?

The next day, have the students reread the selection silently. In pairs, have the students create a story map. Revisit the vocabulary words and separate into syllables for decoding-Syllasearch.

Students will visit the library and research the various endangered animals. They will look in books, magazines and encyclopedias and decide which animals they are thinking about to write a report. They will use the search engines Google, Ask Jeeves, Yahoo, and Bayherra to also research endangered animals in computer class. They will need to find the information of name, habitat, and reasons for endangerment for three animals. Students will be using accountable talk in their small groups. They should ask questions about other student’s research. They should back up their statements with facts. They should “plug into” other’s ideas. They should listen attentively and be courteous to the other people in the group. They should share and compare the information they have found. Students will make charts on large post-it chart paper of the names of animals, their habitats, and the reasons for their endangerment. These charts will be shared with the whole class and hung around the room.

The introduction of the color system will begin with a presentation of the different categories of the color system. A sampling of words for each color will be given to the students with examples of the words used in context. Lists of these color strands or words will be hung around the room. A demonstration of how this makes their writing better will be given to students. A sample paragraph written by the teacher will be presented. Then a sample paragraph written by the students and scribed by the teacher will be written. Independent writing by the student and then shared in small groups will be done for each color.

Word lists-these lists of words from the color system will give students a way of explaining what they do by way of language choice.

Red-Interior thought

I  
 I confess  
 I have always  
 I believe  
 I think  
 I confess  
 I am sure  
 I really want to go!  
 I'm not sure.  
 Just now, I...  
 If I only had.....

Orange-Thinking ahead and back

I'm looking forward to...  
 I remember when.....

Gold-Information

Smith claims that  
 It therefore follows that  
 He did it because..  
 Now suppose that...  
 You should think..  
 All birds are animals.  
 For example, a robin is an animal.  
 The evidence for this is...  
 He correctly predicted...  
 This causes that..  
 This is true for everything but...  
 Smith denies that  
 Smith objects to  
 It is widely believed..  
 Many scientists now believe..

Green-Guide the reader's movement

Do you think..?  
 How did..?  
 Let me tell you..  
 What does one make of...?  
 Why did you do such a thing?  
 Would you please...?  
 The first thing we need to do..

Blue-Scenic

Descriptive words	Examples to come from students
Descriptive actions	“ “ “ “ “
Five senses	“ “ “ “ “

Purple-Transports the reader

During the past year  
A long stretch of time  
After a storm  
All the while  
All year round  
As long as  
At a time when they  
At one moment  
Traditionally  
Typically  
Daily  
Usually  
Routinely  
Habitually  
Customarily  
Annually  
Monthly  
Weekly

The Response to Informational Materials is introduced after a homework assignment to bring in either magazine or newspaper articles on endangered animals. Students will share information from this homework assignment in small groups. The teacher will copy these articles for the class. The class will then read aloud with teacher guidance the article “Siberian Tigers are Sighted in China” from the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, February 9, 2003. The teacher and class will discuss the significance of the article. The teacher will act as a scribe as the class summarizes the article. This summary is set aside for later. A criteria checklist will be given to the class with these steps to be fulfilled: Title should capture the reader’s attention with a catchy introduction. Students should cite the article correctly. Summarize the article. Make connections to other endangered animals. Make a statement about the information of the article. The teacher will then scribe the ideas of the class on large chart paper and discuss with the students their suggestions as to writing the response. A rubric will be presented (see Rubric for Writing Response to Informational Materials in Appendices) and students will rate the piece that the class has just created. The writing will be reviewed and the students will discuss how the writing could be improved to a proficient or advanced piece. Students will then select the article that they choose to write a response for the assignment. They will follow the criteria checklist and write a rough draft. The teacher will help the student to edit and revise his/her paper. The student will review the word lists to see which ones they have used in this piece. The student will then revise the rough draft and type the final copy.

The writing of the Report will begin with reviewing and discussing the charts of endangered animals placed around the room. An outline of the report will be given to students to help them as they look for information on the animal that they've chosen. The Latin name of the animal, the family it belongs to, a description of the habitat and the animal, if it lives alone or in a group, what it eats, how it gets its food, how it raises its young, and what are the factors that are causing it to be placed on the endangered list should all be included. A bibliography worksheet will be given to students. Various texts and articles from the classroom will be used to practice citing resources for a bibliography. Students will be given a criteria checklist for the report: Choose an endangered animal. Use at least three books, articles, encyclopedias, Encarta Encyclopedia, and the internet as resources. Use note cards to collect information needed for report and cite the source on the card for later use. Each card should have the name of the author, the name of the book or media, publisher and city and date of copyright. At the top of the card, the student should write the subject of the notes. This will make it easier to organize them when the student begins to write. Write down the page number where you find the information. Make sure all information is correct. If you quote material, you must surround it with quotation marks. Anything not in quotation marks should be in your own words. Students will be given lists of words to use when citing sources in their reports such as: argues, confirms, refers, explains, concludes, maintains, claims, writes, and warns that. Students should be placed in cooperative groups to share the information they have researched. After reading each other's note cards, they should discuss how the note cards can be improved.

JoAnn Portalupi and Ralph Fletcher suggest in their book, Nonfiction Craft Lessons: Teaching Information Writing K-8, to get the student to start writing a report that is interesting to readers is to bring them to the place where they can see the subject in its natural environment. Students should be able to use words that describe that place and animal. The students should make a list of words that describe the setting and endangered animal. Then write a description that will put your reader right in the setting of your subject. Students will practice making lists of words and then creating an interesting opening. They will share with the class their descriptions in small groups.

Instruction in the writing of a thesis statement should include stating the basic topic of endangered animals and explaining briefly the important ideas they've discovered in their research. When writing the rough draft, students should follow the outline that was given to them when they began their researching. They will arrange their note cards in the order of the outline. A Rubric for writing a Report will be explained to the students. Students should not be concerned with mechanics at this stage. They should focus on writing in a clear and organized way. Students will share their rough drafts in cooperative

learning groups. They will give suggestions for each paper. They should ask each other the following questions. What did you learn that surprised you? What do you like about your paper? Students will then conference with the teacher to edit and revise the report. Students will review the word lists to see which ones they have used. A checklist will be given to students. This checklist may be viewed in the Appendices section of this unit.

Students will go to the computer lab to be instructed on how to copy and paste pictures from the internet. A smart board will be utilized to show the entire class the procedure of copying and pasting pictures from the internet and placing them into their reports. Their completed report should include a typed copy of the report, pictures pasted into their reports from the internet, a cover sheet using Word Art and pictures, and a bibliography.

Students will then present their information on an endangered animal to the class in an oral report. They will be encouraged to use visuals in their reports. A criteria checklist will be given to the students so that they may prepare for their oral reports. The criteria checklist will include-Does the report have a dynamic beginning? Is it easy to understand? Is it organized? Does the report have enough information to completely explain the subject? Is there a controlling idea that unifies the report? Is the speaker prepared? Is the speaker poised and confident? Is there a visual aid? Does the speaker speak loudly and clearly? Did the speaker make eye contact with the audience? Was the speaker able to answer questions from the class? Students may practice in class with their peers before presenting their report to the class. The teacher, the presenter, and other students will evaluate the presenter using evaluation sheets.

The Problem-Solution Essay will begin with a discussion of the measures that people are taking to preserve animals and to keep them from becoming extinct. Brainstorm with the class the people that should be contacted with their concerns. A criteria checklist will be given to the class. It will include a checklist of: Problem is stated clearly. An explanation is given to why it is a problem. Concrete evidence is given to the reader or a specific group to whom the paper is directed. Outside sources are given and cited correctly. Clear solutions are given for the problem. An explanation of how some people may disagree with their solutions. The ending sells the solution. The teacher will serve as a scribe to write a Problem-Solution essay with the class using large post-it chart paper. A PPS rubric for a Problem-Solution essay will be given to the class so that the piece may be rated. Students will then decide how to make the writing proficient or advanced. Students will then write a rough draft for their endangered animal Problem-Solution. They will edit and revise their papers with the help of peers and the teacher. They should review the word lists to see which ones they have used. Students working in cooperative groups should read each other's essays and

question each other about their solutions to this problem. The writing piece will then be typed using pictures from the internet. Each essay should include the essay and cover sheet. The cover sheet should include Word Art, and a picture.

Hopefully, at the completion of this unit, the community of teacher and students will have had a great adventure in the world of endangered animals.

## **Annotated Bibliography**

### Teacher Bibliography

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## **Appendices**

Endangered Animals-Questions to form outline for Report.

1. Latin name of animal \_\_\_\_\_
2. What family of animals does it belong  
to? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Description of the animal(physical appearance) \_\_\_\_\_
4. Where does this animal live? Describe the habitat. \_\_\_\_\_

5. Does this animal live alone or in a group? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What does it eat? How does it get its food? \_\_\_\_\_
7. How does it raise its young? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What are the factors that are causing it to be placed on the endangered list? \_\_\_\_\_

Criteria Checklist for Research Report.  
Please check each line when completed.

1. \_\_ Read and take notes in your own words on your endangered animal.
2. \_\_ Use an outline to organize facts and information in a way that makes sense.
3. \_\_ Grab the reader's interest in the animal. Use an authoritative tone. Introduce the topic in an interesting way.
4. \_\_ Topic sentences are clear and details are given for each one.
5. \_\_ Give accurate explanations, examples, comparisons, and details.
6. \_\_ Sensory words are used.
7. \_\_ The ending makes a final comment.
8. \_\_ Include a bibliography

Problem Solution Essay  
Criteria Checklist

Please check each one when completed.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Engage the reader by creating a background for the problem and use a persuasive tone.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ State the problem clearly and give an explanation why it is a problem.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Give concrete evidence that the problem is of concern to the reader of your essay or to a specific group.

4. \_\_\_\_\_ Outside sources of information are used.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Give clear solutions to the problem.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ Explain how some people may disagree with your solutions.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Use an ending that sells the solution.

Use these words when citing a source.

argue

Example: Some people think that poaching has led to the elephant being endangered. However, John Barnett in, Elephants in Africa, argues that this is not true.

proclaim

Example: In the book, Watching Ocelots, Judy Gold proclaims that they are coming off the endangered list.

express

Example: In, Turtles Gone Mad, Amy Block expresses her sadness at the turtles losing their minds.

refer

Example: Anthony Green refers to the habitat of the lion as very brown in his book, Life on the Savannah.

conclude

Example: Liza Thornberry concludes in her book, Talking with the Animals, that you can have a great conversation with a giraffe.

tell

Example: Leona Tamarind tells us in her book, Swinging with the Monkeys, that hitting the ground from high in a tree is dangerous.

remark

Example: B.F. Ferrett makes the remark in his book, Cooking Prairie Dogs, that if you use barbecue sauce they taste like chicken.

confirm

Example: I.M. Dolphin in his book, Oceans I Have Loved, confirms that Sponge Bob and Patrick really do live in Bikini Bottom.

## **Standards**

### **Content Standards for the Pittsburgh Public Schools**

Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

1. All students use effective research and information management skills, including locating primary and secondary sources of information with traditional and emerging library technologies.
2. All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.
3. All students respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.
4. All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade in all subjects.
5. All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.
6. All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering question appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.
7. All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.
8. All students compose and make oral presentations from each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.
9. All students communicate appropriately in all situations.

10. All students communicate appropriately in business, work and other applied situations.