



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR

UNIT OVERVIEW

This task is the culminating task for a 2-3 week unit that uses the topic of human impact on environment as a means to teach students how to analyze and navigate informational texts. Students will write an essay at the end of the unit demonstrating their mastery of the content and their ability to make inferences within a specific text.

TASK DETAILS

Task Name: John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter

Grade: 4

Subject: Literacy

Task Description: Students write an essay using key details from the text to explain why John Muir devoted his life to conservation efforts and describe the effect that his work had on preserving the beauty of nature.

Standards:

RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

RI.4.10 By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Materials Needed:

“John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter” (<http://www.superteacherworksheets.com/reading-comp/5th-muir.pdf>)



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The task and instructional supports in the following pages are designed to help educators understand and implement tasks that are embedded in Common Core-aligned curricula. While the focus for the 2011-2012 Instructional Expectations is on engaging students in Common Core-aligned culminating tasks, it is imperative that the tasks are embedded in units of study that are also aligned to the new standards. Rather than asking teachers to introduce a task into the semester without context, this work is intended to encourage analysis of student and teacher work to understand what alignment looks like. We have learned through the 2010-2011 Common Core pilots that beginning with rigorous assessments drives significant shifts in curriculum and pedagogy. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) support is included to ensure multiple entry points for all learners, including students with disabilities and English language learners.

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GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR
PERFORMANCE TASK

John Muir Task

The prompt below is designed to be used with the text "John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter" (<http://www.superteacherworksheets.com/reading-comp/5th-muir.pdf>)

Read the article, "John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter". Then write an essay using key details from the text to explain (1) why John Muir devoted his life to conservation efforts and (2) describe the effect that his work had on preserving the beauty of nature. Use specific details and examples from the text to support your response.

Be sure to:

1. Have an introduction that sets the context: the title and at least two sentences that summarize the article. (The author is Liana Mahoney)
2. Have a focus that describes the effect John Muir had on preserving the beauty of nature.
3. Have body paragraphs that have topic sentences and details to support each new idea.
4. Use simple and compound sentences.
5. Use examples from the text and descriptive words to elaborate on your ideas.
6. Use transitional words to connect your ideas.
7. Write a conclusion that connects to your focus.
8. Use correct punctuation and spelling.

Instructions for Teachers: This task could be given as a stand-alone task to assess student mastery of R1.4.1, R1.4.10 and W.4.2. Should you feel your students need additional support, we have also included a unit outline, some guidance around addressing text complexity in the article, and two essay planning handouts ("My Writing Checklist" and an essay planning concept map). There are additional supports for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities.



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR
UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)
PRINCIPLES

**John Muir – ELA 4th Grade
Common Core Learning Standards/
Universal Design for Learning**

The goal of using Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) is to provide the highest academic standards to all of our students. Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a set of principles that provides teachers with a structure to develop their instruction to meet the needs of a diversity of learners. UDL is a research-based framework that suggests each student learns in a unique manner. A one-size-fits-all approach is not effective to meet the diverse range of learners in our schools. By creating options for how instruction is presented, how students express their ideas, and how teachers can engage students in their learning, instruction can be customized and adjusted to meet individual student needs. In this manner, we can support our students to succeed in the CCLS.

Below are some ideas of how this Common Core Task is aligned with the three principles of UDL; providing options in representation, action/expression, and engagement. As UDL calls for multiple options, the possible list is endless. Please use this as a starting point. Think about your own group of students and assess whether these are options you can use.

REPRESENTATION: *The “what” of learning.* How does the task present information and content in different ways? How do students gather facts and categorize what they see, hear, and read? How are they identifying letters, words, or an author’s style?

In this task, teachers can...

- ✓ **Embed visual, non-linguistic supports for vocabulary clarification** by including samples of California state quarters, and provide print and/or online pictures of President Theodore Roosevelt, John Muir, national forests, and parks.

ACTION/EXPRESSION: *The “how” of learning.* How does the task differentiate the ways that students can express what they know? How do they plan and perform tasks? How do students organize and express their ideas?

In this task, teachers can...

- ✓ **Provide graphic organizers and templates for data collection and organizing information** that highlight the chain of events that led John Muir to believe that nature should be conserved.

ENGAGEMENT: *The “why” of learning.* How does the task stimulate interest and motivation for learning? How do students get engaged? How are they challenged, excited, or interested?

In this task, teachers can...

- ✓ **Provide prompts, reminders, guides, rubrics, checklists that focus on elevating the frequency of self-reflection and self-reinforcements** by using print and/or online checklists for organizing and editing the necessary writing tasks for informative/explanatory essays.

Visit <http://schools.nyc.gov/Academics/CommonCoreLibrary/default.htm> to learn more information about UDL.



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR RUBRIC

Performance Task

Write an essay using key details from the text to explain why John Muir devoted his life to conservation efforts. Describe the effect that his work had on preserving the beauty of nature.

Rubric

Score	Description
4	<p>The student provides a complete and accurate essay that answers all parts of the prompt. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• shows thorough and insightful understanding of ideas and concepts• shows logical inferences and uses valid reasoning• connects ideas and elaborates in a coherent manner• includes comprehensive text-based support with relevant and sufficient details; words or phrases copied from the text may be used to support an idea• is well organized with clear focus• uses effective vocabulary, which may be above grade level, and complex sentences• contains grammar, spelling, and punctuation that is mostly correct with few minor errors that do not interfere with the reader’s comprehension• provides a strong introduction, conclusion, and transitions (when the prompt specifies a paragraph or essay)
3	<p>The student provides a mostly thorough and accurate essay that answers most of the prompt. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• shows some insight, but also tends to show a literal understanding of some concepts• shows mostly logical inferences but reasoning may not be as clear• connects most ideas but there is less elaboration• includes mostly relevant text-based support with some details; words or phrases copied from the text may be used to support an idea• is well organized, but ideas may shift, which make the focus less clear• uses grade level vocabulary, simpler sentences• contains some grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors which may affect the reader’s comprehension but not significantly• has introduction, transitions, and/or conclusion (where specified by prompt) that are not as strongly related to the body of the essay

Score	Description
2	<p>The student provides an adequate and partially accurate response to part of the prompt. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows a mostly literal understanding of the text and little insight • shows some inferences that are unsupported or not logical • includes loose connections or unrelated ideas and little elaboration • includes modest text-based support with few details; some details are minor; words or phrases may be copied from the text but may not clearly support an idea or fit within the context of the response • is somewhat organized but focus shifts from one idea to another without explanation • Uses simple vocabulary and sentences • contains errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling that interfere with the reader’s comprehension • may have an introduction and/or conclusion (where specified by prompt) but they are loosely related to the topic; transitions do not link ideas
1	<p>The student provides an incomplete and less-than-accurate response that only superficially responds to the prompt. The response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shows minimal understanding or insight • contains incorrect or illogical inferences; some confusion • may convey some information about the text but has unrelated ideas; sentences may be fragmented; there is little, if any, elaboration • may contain a few accurate details to support statements; includes minor or irrelevant details; details may be repeated; words or phrases may be copied without connection to ideas in the response • lacks organization and appropriate focus • vocabulary and sentence structure are simple • contains many errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling that make comprehension difficult • lacks effective introduction, conclusion, transitions (where specified by prompt)
0	<p>The student’s response is illegible, irrelevant, incoherent, or off topic. The student may have copied major parts of the text, but the response lacks an answer to the prompt in the student’s own words.</p>



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR

ANNOTATED STUDENT WORK

This section contains annotated student work at a range of score points and suggested next steps for students. The student work shows examples of student understandings and misunderstandings of the task.

**Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir
Annotated Student Work**

Student D (1 point)

Have you ever picke up a quarter and looked carefully at the back? There's a guy on the back. Do you know what his name is? His name is John Muir. Im going to tell you about him. John Muir loved nature he even loved it as a kid. He likes to explore nature. He was so interested in nature that he even wrote an article. John Muir devoted his life to conservation efforts and the effect that his work had on preserving the beauty of nature.

John Muir devoted his life to conservation efforts. Im going to tell you about him first he spent much of life exploring nature. He even persuaded the president and now you know who is John Muir.

Comment [D1]: The first several sentences are engaging and demonstrate an understanding of how to introduce a topic. (W.4.2.a)

Comment [D2]: The student copies the task prompt, rather than re-stating in his/her own words. (RI.4.1, W.4.2.a)

Comment [LIR3]: Student does not develop his/her essay with ideas, supporting details, or facts. The student demonstrates minimal understanding of the text. (W.4.a & b, R.4.1)

Comment [LIR4]: There is an attempt at a concluding statement but without the body of an essay, the conclusion is unsupported. (W.4.e)

Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir Annotated Student Work

Student performance on the criteria within the rubric

The score for this essay is a 1.

The student demonstrates minimal understanding of the text. As a result, he/she attempts to write a clear and engaging introduction but struggles in stating a focus or developing that focus with supporting details and elaboration. The student also attempts a conclusion but has nothing to base it on since the body of the essay is missing.

Suggested next steps/areas of focus for the student

A teacher would first want to investigate if there are any factors outside of the classroom preventing the student from attending class or completing reading and writing assignments. The teacher will need to support the student in developing reading comprehension through shared readings with the class and independent reading assignments for homework. Before focusing on issues of grammar, spelling, or language conventions, the student should practice summarizing ideas from a text and providing details to elaborate on an idea in his/her writing assignments.

Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir Annotated Student Work

Student C (2 points)

The Important Conservationist

“John Muir the conservationist on the quarter” by Liana Mahoney was one of the well-known conservationist around the world. He fought to keep nature beautiful and safe. He loved nature and showed it in many ways.

John Muir dedicated his life to conserving nature. One way John Muir conserved is by stopping people from cutting down trees that are needed. One example is how trees are needed for farmland animals to have enough space. Another way John Muir conserved was by protecting our world from getting obonged. The last way John Muir conserved was by persuading people to conserve forest by writing letters, newspapers, books, essays, articles and magazines. John Muir’s determination to preserve the beauty of nature changed the way people thought about nature. by preserving John Muir wanted to keep our national parks clean and safe, he also persuded people to conserve nature. Lastly, John Muir affected our world by convincing president Theodore Rosavelt, The congress and the sierra club to mak a law promising to never change and destry natural parks like the yosemetie park and the sequoia park.

As a conservationist John Muir never gave up and fought for our world to stay the same way it was. In honor of him there were many places named after him such as Mountain Muir, and Muir beach. John Muir was an important Man.

Comment [KA1]: The use of the word “safe” demonstrates accurate reading comprehension. However, a more sophisticated academic word from the text, such as “preserve,” would be more grade appropriate. (W.4.2d, RI.4.4)

Comment [N2]: Student demonstrates an emerging use of organization through the use of transitional words. However, ideas are listed with little elaboration. Also, the 2nd paragraph could be made into 2 paragraphs, to separate ideas. (W.4.2b, c & d)

Comment [KA3]: Misunderstanding of text—there appears to be a confusion between animals in “farmland” vs. “forests.” (RI.4.4)

Comment [N4]: Spelling mistakes interfere with clarity and comprehension of ideas for the reader. (W.4.2b)

Comment [KA5]: Students’ textual reference is inaccurate. (W.4.2b, W.4.2d)

Comment [N6]: The reference to the “Sierra Club” demonstrates an attempt to include background information not detailed in the article but its inclusion in this list is confusing and inaccurate. i.e. listing it with Congress and President Roosevelt suggests it is part of governmental legislature.

Comment [KA7]: This sentence is a nice concluding statement related to the information presented (W.4.2.e)

Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir Annotated Student Work

Student performance on the criteria within the rubric

This essay scored a 2.

While this essay demonstrates a basic understanding of the text (“He fought to keep nature beautiful and safe”), the writing demonstrates an overall lack of deep and precise reading comprehension. There is confusion over preserving farmland animals vs. forests, and an inaccurate reference to John Muir’s conservation efforts (“he wrote letters, newspapers, books, essays, articles and magazines”).

Suggested next steps/areas of focus for the student

Giving this student multiple and varied opportunities to access complex text and express his/her ideas through writing will build this student’s fluency. Complex text will also provide the student with examples of good writing that he/she can analyze for organization and development of ideas.

The student could work separating ideas through the appropriate use of paragraphs. While the student is attempting to use transitions (One example . . . another way . . . the last way . . .) they are used more like a list within a paragraph than a way to connect whole paragraphs. Therefore, the student could work on separating his/her ideas into distinct paragraphs with more elaboration and detail from the text. Continued support with accessing complex text will ensure that the student has access to enough ideas and evidence to elaborate more fully in his/her writing.

Work with academic vocabulary, domain-specific vocabulary, and context clues will help the student understand how the meaning of words change depending on context (e.g. farm animals and forest animals).

**Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir
Annotated Student Work**

Student B (3 points)

“John Muir”

Can you believe what one man could do? I read the article “John Muir the Conservationist on the Quarter” by Liana Mahoney. In the article I learned about a man named John Muir. John Muir was born on April 21, 1838. He was a man who loved nature the way it was. He walked more than a thousand miles across the country, through fields and woods admiring nature. John Muir devoted his life to conservation and also to preserving of beauty of nature.

Comment [LIR1]: The use of first person and simple sentence structures exhibits a literal understanding of the subject and grade level informational writing skills. (W.4.2d)

Comment [LIR2]: The student provides a clear introduction that relates to the prompt. (W.4.2a)

John Muir wrote about the problems too. He wrote that people were cutting down the trees for more farmland. He also wrote places he visited describing their beauty. Soon people started to listen. For example Theodore Roosevelt the president of the United States of America, was convinced that was a need to protect our land.

Comment [N3]: Supporting details are accurate but reflect a literal understanding with less elaboration than the essay scored with a four. (RI.4.1, W.4.2.b)

John Muir hard work paid off. After the visit from the president, president Roosevelt set aside 148 million acres of land for national forest and established five national parks. A law was also passed that says that people cannot build homes or businesses. Thanks to him we can enjoy the parks and all its natural beauty.

Comment [N4]: Use of pronouns are confusing and distracts from flow of ideas. (L.4.1)

Comment [N5]: Again, the misuse of pronouns is potentially confusing. Is the student referring to President Roosevelt or John Muir? (L.4.1)

John Muir worked long and hard every day to keep things in nature just the way they are. Today people continued his work.

Comment [D6]: Student provides a concluding statement that restates the focus of the essay. (W.4.2.e)

Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir Annotated Student Work

Student performance on the criteria within the rubric

This essay scored a 3.

The student shows an adequate and literal understanding of the text and John Muir's efforts to conserve land. The focus is clear and contains accurate factual information from the text. Like the writer for the essay that scored 4, this student includes background information to enhance their introduction (John Muir was born . . .). However, there is less elaboration and detail within the body paragraphs.

Suggested next steps/areas of focus for the student

To move this student from “3” work to “4” work, he/she could work on expanding his/her reasoning with more detail. For example, he/she could explain why it is problematic to cut down trees for more farmland.

The student could work on making logical inferences about John Muir’s life, thus demonstrating a deeper understanding of complex text. Continued exposure to varied complex text and continued support with accessing complex text that models inferential reasoning will help the student develop these skills.

The student could work on varying his/her use of pronouns. Also, the student could practice maintaining consistent verb tenses (“Today people continued his work.”).

Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir Annotated Student Work

Student A (4 points)

A Tree's Voice

Long ago there was a tree who could not speak...well not actually, it was John Muir who spoke on it's behalf. John Muir was born in Scotland, April 21, 1838. Soon after, his family immigrated to America and bought a farm where John Muir spent many years admiring nature. In the passage: "John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter" by Liana Mahoney, we learn that even as a young man John loved nature. John Muir spent most of his life working to protect to conserve nature. His work also helped make changes to how was use our land.

John Musir loved nature. Even as a child he loved to watch nature. One thing that bothered him to the the bottom of his soul was that trees were being cut in order to make farmlands for cattle and sheep to graze. He knew trees were important to forests, and the animals and even people. John Muir wrote essays, newspaper articles, magazine articles, and letters to convince people to protect nature. John Muir dedicated his life to his work.

John Muir's work changed the way we see nature. The first step in John's plan was to convince the president Theador Roosevelt to see what he saw. John took Theador on a 3-day camping trip to show the president the beauty of nature. Afterwards The president set aside 148 million acres of land for nation forests and national parks. Then the U.S. Congress passed a law that no one can build homes or businesses there. So parks like Yosemite and Sequoia and national park must stay unchanged.

John Muir made us understand the beauty of the outside world. Since he saved Yosemite Sequoia, and National Park we can now enjoy the beauty of these parks. John Muir died in California 1914. But even if he died, the presidents' law still lives on so we can see what John Muir loved.

Comment [AL1]: Creative introductory sentence inferring connection to Muir's appreciation of the wilderness. First sentence is linked to the title of the essay (W.4.2.a, W.4.2.c)

Comment [AL2]: The student includes information here from prior knowledge that is not included in the text. This is not required by the task but it appropriately supports the introduction. (W.4.2.b).

Comment [LIR3]: The use of first person plural and third person (John Muir spent . . .) demonstrates student's awareness of audience and the need to adopt a formal tone. This is a grade level example of language use (L.4.3c) and an above-grade level writing skill (W.6.2d)

Comment [LIR4]: While this is also a typo, the student demonstrates an attempt to use domain-specific vocabulary. (W.4.2.d)

Comment [N5]: Strong introduction of the topic of the essay. (W.2)

Comment [AL6]: Student is demonstrating an emerging sophistication with inference /elaboration - "...bothered him to the bottom of his soul . . ." (RI.4.1, RI.4.10; W.4.2.b, W.4.2.d).

Comment [N7]: Body paragraphs include relevant and sufficient details. (W.2b)

Comment [AL8]: Good conclusion linking John Muir's past actions to their ongoing effects (RI.4.10, W.4.2.c, W.4.2.e).

Grade 4 Literacy: John Muir Annotated Student Work

Student performance on the criteria within the rubric

The score for this essay is 4.

The student shows a good understanding of the text and John Muir's perspective on preserving the environment. This is apparent in the opening sentence, which is linked to the title of the essay. The last two sentences of the first paragraph contain a clear focus ("John spent most of his life working to protect to conserve nature. His work also helped make changes to how was use our land").

The topic is developed and is supported with facts and details ("John Muir wrote articles . . . John took Theodor on a 3-day camping trip . . . Afterwards the President set aside 148 million acres. . . ."). The student connects ideas and elaborates with details from both the text and prior knowledge ("John Muir was born in Scotland . . . His family immigrated to America. . ."). Although use of prior knowledge is not required for the task, it is included appropriately and it supports the ideas. The student makes logical inferences (" . . . bothered him to the bottom of his soul . . ."). The essay shows good organization and development: the student presents the problem in the body of the essay and describes steps ("The first step in John's plan . . .") that Muir took to address his concerns and accomplish his goals.

The conclusion nicely sums up the lasting effects of Muir's efforts. The student also uses domain-specific vocabulary such as "conserve" and academic vocabulary such as "on it's behalf . . . bottom of his soul . . . cattle . . . graze . . . convince . . . dedicated." The student's conclusion connects the work of John Muir to its effects on our lives today ("We can now enjoy the beauty of these parks . . . we can see what John Muir loved").

Suggested next steps/areas of focus for the student

It is clear that the student made an attempt to write good transitions. However, the student could work on varying his/her transitions and not starting every body paragraph with, "John Muir . . ." A secondary focus could be on spelling, capitalization (e.g., "Afterwards The president...), and proof-reading.



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORTS

The instructional supports on the following pages include a unit outline with formative assessments and suggested learning activities. Teachers may use this unit outline as it is described, integrate parts of it into a currently existing curriculum unit, or use it as a model or checklist for a currently existing unit on a different topic.

Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

INTRODUCTION: This unit outline provides an example of how to integrate performance tasks into a unit. *Teachers may (a) use this unit outline as it is described below; (b) integrate parts of it into a currently existing curriculum unit; or (c) use it as a model or checklist for a currently existing unit on a different topic.*

Grade 4 Literacy: Human Impact on Environment

UNIT TOPIC AND LENGTH:

- This unit uses the topic of human impact on environment as a means to teach students how to analyze and navigate informational texts. They will write an essay demonstrating their mastery of the content and their ability to make inferences within a specific text. Suggested unit length 2-3 weeks.

COMMON CORE LEARNING STANDARDS:

- RI.4.1 Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- RI.4.10 By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
- W.4.2 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.
 - e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
- SL.4.1 Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

<p>BIG IDEAS/ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Humans have an impact on the environment in which they live. ➤ Writers can teach us about the world through informational text. ➤ Readers use strategies to effectively extract information from text 	<p>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can humans keep the earth healthy? ➤ How do good writers share meaningful information about the world? ➤ What do good readers do to comprehend informational text?
<p>CONTENT:</p> <p>Informational Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Main Idea ▪ Drawing Conclusions ▪ Relevant Information ▪ Listening comprehension <p>Expository / Informational Essay</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Informational Text Structure ▪ Reading Response ▪ Transition Words ▪ Text Evidence <p>Written conventions of English</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete sentences ▪ subject-verb agreement ▪ punctuation and capitalization ▪ verb tense ▪ personal spelling list <p>Human Impact on Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Role of conservation ▪ Career and jobs in field of conservation; Organizations and government agencies ▪ Effect of individual choices that human beings make on the environment ▪ John Muir and his contributions 	<p>SKILLS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Examine a topic by reading informative / explanatory texts ➤ Determine main idea of a text ➤ Draw conclusions from informational text ➤ Distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information ➤ Listen to and comprehend informational text ➤ Write in an informational text structure. ➤ Read and respond to informational texts ➤ Plan and Organize an informational essay, using transition words ➤ Develop the topic with supporting details and evidence ➤ Write to a particular audience ➤ Provide evidence from texts to support explanations ➤ Describe the conservationist’s role in protecting the Earth ➤ Analyze the impact of organizations and government on environment ➤ Explain how the footprints people leave have an effect on the way we live ➤ Analyze the impact of John Muir's legacy on the environment

Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

KEY TERMS/VOCABULARY:

- Transition, conclusion, convention, relevant, irrelevant, explanatory, conservation, environment, biosphere, preservation, agency, not-for-profit, legacy

ASSESSMENT EVIDENCE

FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:

As a way to gather information on what students know about 1) conservation and the environment, and 2) reading informational text, prior to administering the final performance task, a teacher could have students complete the following task at the beginning of, or midway through, the unit:

Everyday people leave footprints on earth. Using the following reading, explain one way these footprints can have an effect on the way we live. Use evidence from the text that most strongly supports your explanation. Your response should be written for an audience that is familiar with the texts and follows the conventions of standard English, including capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

Prior to having students complete this task, lead them in an activity in which they answer the following questions:

1. What do you have to read and write to complete this task? In other words, what is this task asking you to do?
2. What are the components (parts) of the task?
3. What will you do first, second, third, etc.?

Suggested Text:

“Rainforests at Risk” by Vickie An.

http://www.readington.k12.nj.us/77141913151714/lib/77141913151714/Weather_Articles_5.17.11.pdf

FINAL PERFORMANCE TASK:

As a stand alone assessment, this task assesses students’ ability to draw conclusions from informational text. Students must be able to independently navigate complex texts in order to build their understanding of the content and task. They must be able to determine the main idea of a text and distinguish between relevant and irrelevant information in order to draw logical conclusions and convey the ideas clearly in writing.

Should you feel your students need additional support, we have also included some guidance around addressing text complexity and two essay planning handouts: “My Writing Checklist” and an essay planning concept map. There are additional supports for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. *See the John Muir task for full details.*

Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

LEARNING PLAN & ACTIVITIES:

This learning plan includes two activities and reading and writing strategies. It does not contain lesson plans or a full sequence of activities for the unit outline described in the previous section.

- 1) As an introduction to the central topic of conservation and the environment, the teacher could choose an engaging narrative text to introduce students to the core concept:
 - Geisel, Theodor Suess. *The Lorax*. New York: Random House, 1971.
Students could engage in a quick write or an anticipation guide in which they ponder:
 - a) The ways in which humans effect the natural environment
 - b) Reasons why humans destroy the environment
 - c) Benefits of preserving the environment
 - 2) There are concerns about the future of the planet that focus on specific issues and problems such as water scarcity, climate change, global warming, and population growth. In order to address these concerns, people form organizations or work through agencies in their governments to address the problems. In this task learners will be asked to investigate an issue and identify a corresponding group that is attempting to "keep the earth healthy". Students will display their work using a web 2.0 application "Museum Box" to share their findings.

Students in groups of 3 or 4 will create a MUSEUM BOX (using the web 2.0 application in the link). The box will include images, student writing, video clips that:

- 1) analyze the impact of human beings on the environment related to one specific issue (i.e., population growth, water scarcity, greenhouse effect); and,
- 2) describe the mission and work of an organization or agency trying to address the specific issue; and,
- 3) engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions in groups; focused on both building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. Students can draw from the web sources listed below:

Websites and Web-tools used

- Interactive Website:
- Museum Box <http://museumbox.e2bn.org/>
- National Geographic EARTH PULSE <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/>
- Facing the Future <http://www.facingthefuture.org>
- <http://www.epa.gov/kids/>
- <http://www.history.com/topics/earth-day>
- <http://www.myvocabulary.com/>

Teachers should supplement this list as necessary.

To help students with researching their organizations, and processing information from the texts they are reading, consider the following reading and writing strategies:



Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

Close Reading Strategies

- Pose questions that point students to key or difficult sections of text and coach students to use text based strategies to deal with complexity (Best done after students have the opportunity to read the text independently)
 - Read difficult portions of the text aloud, as students follow along.
 - Provide multiple opportunities to read the same texts
 - Work with academic vocabulary in the form of both direct instruction and instruction to develop students’ ability to determine meaning from the text
 - Guide use of text structure (headings and subheadings, transitions)
-

Free Writes: As the unit progresses and students’ understanding of conservation evolves, have them re-write their answer to the following question: What is Conservation? Encourage them to refine their definition by adding or deleting information based on what they’ve learned each time they write.

R-A.N (reading to analyze non fiction text) is an instructional activity for assisting students in developing a framework and actively engaging students in constructing meaning from the text. The basic instructional activity consists of 5 parts.

- First, readers identify **What they think they know** about a topic.
 - Second, the readers participate in an activity that provides them with understanding. The teacher reads a selection to students related to the topic of study other than the required text.
 - Next, the students revisit the chart and determine if their idea was **Confirmed** or a **Misconception** developed based on the new knowledge.
 - Then students will complete the part on **New Knowledge** and
 - Lastly they will complete the part on **Wonderings**.
-

BIG FOX- How to Pre-read Non-fiction

Bold- List any words or phrases that are in bold print.

Italics- List any words or phrases that are in italics.

Graphics- Describe any graphics.(photos, drawings, graphs, charts, maps, tables, etc.)

Facts- List at least 5 facts found in the article.

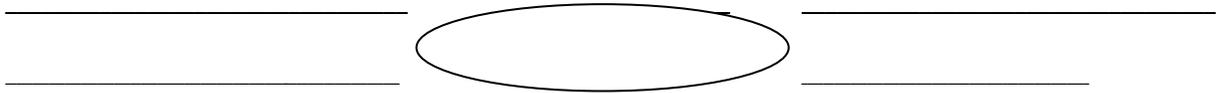
Opinions- List any opinions found in the article.

X marks the spot- or at least the main point. In 2-3 sentences, write the main point of the article. (hint- read the topic sentence of each paragraph.)



Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

Concept Web: Identify the main idea and at least 4 supporting details



T-chart:

Quote	Meaning

Questions to support students with noticing and using text structures:

How is this nonfiction text organized?

List features that you noticed (e.g.,Headings).

What are the features of this article that helped you in understanding the article and answering questions?

RESOURCES:

Texts Used (fiction, non-fiction, on-line, media, etc...)

- Geisel, Theodor Suess. The Lorax. New York: Random House, 1971.
- “John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter” by Liana Mahoney from Super Teacher Worksheets website, copyright© 2005 by Super Teacher Worksheets.
- “Rainforests at Risk” by Vickie An from Time for Kids website.
http://www.readington.k12.nj.us/77141913151714/lib/77141913151714/Weather_Articles_5.17.11.pdf

Websites and Web-tools used

- Interactive Website:
- Museum Box <http://museumbox.e2bn.org/>
- National Geographic EARTH PULSE <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/earthpulse/>
- Facing the Future <http://www.facingthefuture.org>
- <http://www.epa.gov/kids/>
- <http://www.history.com/topics/earth-day>
- <http://www.myvocabulary.com/>

Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

Optional Supports for Final Performance Task:

A NOTE ABOUT TEXT COMPLEXITY

This performance task asks students to respond to a complex fourth grade text. John Muir has developed an extraordinary love and respect for the natural world, and this drives his efforts to convince people, including the president, of the importance of conserving natural land and resources and protecting the earth.

Figurative Language & Levels of Meaning

The complexity of the text requires that the student monitor comprehension and develop the skill needed to make connections among information and ideas in the text so that they fit together. The student can go back and reread to clarify meaning, to ponder the ideas in the text, and ask questions when s/he still does not understand. Many 4th graders will have difficulty understanding the following quote:

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.”

Proficient readers with a high standard of coherence will slow down, reread the passage more carefully, and, if still not clear, will look back at what came before it. This will lead them to the phrases in the first paragraph, “Muir loved watching nature”, “... spent much of his life exploring the beauty of the wilderness”, “and...wrote about the places he visited describing their beauty.” From these phrases and the fact that they directly precede the quote, they will be able to safely infer that the quote has something to do with how much Muir loved nature. Some, likely a small minority of proficient readers, would then return to the quote, comprehend more of it and in the process begin to get a sense or a better grasp of the figurative language contained in the quote.

Thus, instruction that would prepare students to read complex text independently would need to call attention to this type of thinking both through modeling or “think alouds” as well as questions or tasks carefully sequenced and posed during the lesson/unit.

Text Structure

The sentence in the next paragraph, “Muir also wrote about problems” transitions the reader from Muir’s love of nature to his desire to solve problems having to do with nature. Recent brain research suggests, a proficient reader would use this to alert himself to what is coming next, and would thus be more likely to process it. Less proficient readers lose this opportunity and are less likely to see that the text is telling us two related aspects of John Muir, which of course is essential to comprehending the text.

Thus, instruction that would prepare students to read complex text independently would need to call students’ attention to the variety of means that authors use to make transitions; how this aides in revealing the structure and the content of the text; and provide opportunities for students to develop this understanding with complex text.



Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

The second paragraph revolves around Muir’s becoming a conservationist based on seeing loss of forest land to farming. There is a chain of events here as seen in the bolded words below:

Muir also wrote about problems. In order **to create more farmland for sheep and cattle** to graze, many **trees were being cut down**. **This** upset Muir, because he knew that trees were important to forests and to the animals that lived in them. Muir believed that nature should be conserved, or protected, instead of **being changed by human beings**. He wrote articles in magazines and newspapers to spread the word about conserving forests. Soon, others began to listen.

A proficient reader would be able to follow that “This” beginning the third sentence refers to the problem described in the second sentence and that “being changed by human beings” refers to the trees being cut as well. A less proficient reader might have trouble with these types of chains common in more complex text.

Thus, instruction would need to call these chains to students’ attention both directly and by a combination of well structured questions and provide opportunities for students to recognize and break them down until able to do so independently.

Language Conventinality and Clarity

Complex text will nearly always contain some words for which students have either an incomplete sense of the meaning or no sense at all. The Muir text uses “development” but provides much support for students to determine its meaning; it essentially defines it: “National parks are large areas of land that are protected from development. This means that people cannot build homes or businesses there.” Though meaning for “development” is well supported by the text, its importance in the text and relation to conservation warrants focus on both words.

Another strong academic word appearing twice in this small text is “featured”. Students’ understanding of this word would benefit by questions addressing why in both cases the author chooses “featured” and not “shown”. This type of instruction calls students’ attention to the words an author chooses and is more likely to produce students who have their antenna up for the role less common words play in deriving meaning.

Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

SUPPORTS FOR GUIDING THE WRITING PROCESS

MY WRITING CHECKLIST - RESPONSE TO TEXT

Date:

My Title:

Writing Checklist

- My writing has a focus (opinion)
- I included the author and title of the text I read.
- I have a clear beginning with an interesting hook.
- I included a short summary of the text and made a connection between ideas.
- My writing makes sense - I grouped key points and supporting details.
- I used signal words to connect my ideas or reasons (because, also, instead, etc.)
- I used references from the text: quote _____ fact _____ detail _____
definition__other_____
- I used descriptive words to support my focus.
- My ending supports my focus.
- My pictures and diagrams go with my writing and add interesting ideas or details.

Editing Checklist

- My sentences begin with a capital letter and end with the right punctuation Mark.
- I have a variety of complete sentences.
- I checked my writing for correct spelling, punctuation, and word use.
- My work is neat and legible.

Adopted by Knrill I-less, for NYC pilot from Hill, Ruplic, & Norwick, ClasSroom Based AssessmcDi
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Unit Outline – Grade 4 Literacy

INTRODUCTION – Set context
(title/Summary/Focus)

Body – Support the focus

[Empty rounded rectangular box for body content]

Conclusion – Aha! So What?

[Large empty oval shape for conclusion content]



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR
SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH
LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Grade 4 Common Core Sample Lesson: Recommendations for ELLs

Grade 4 Performance Task—John Muir

The following scaffolds can be used to provide access and engage ELLs as they prepare for the final performance task.

Pre-Reading Activities

- **Making Connections**

Teachers will need to help ELLs make connections to the story of *John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter*. One way to do this is by creating a personal connection to the subject with a Think-Write-Share. Teachers can provide students with the prompt below giving them enough time to think and write a quick response. Then, students work in pairs to share their ideas. The teacher can ask for a group share. Teachers should allow students to complete this task in their native languages, if necessary.

Prompt: Think of a time when you had to save or protect something that you loved or needed. What was it? What did you do? How did you feel?

- **Pre-teaching Vocabulary**

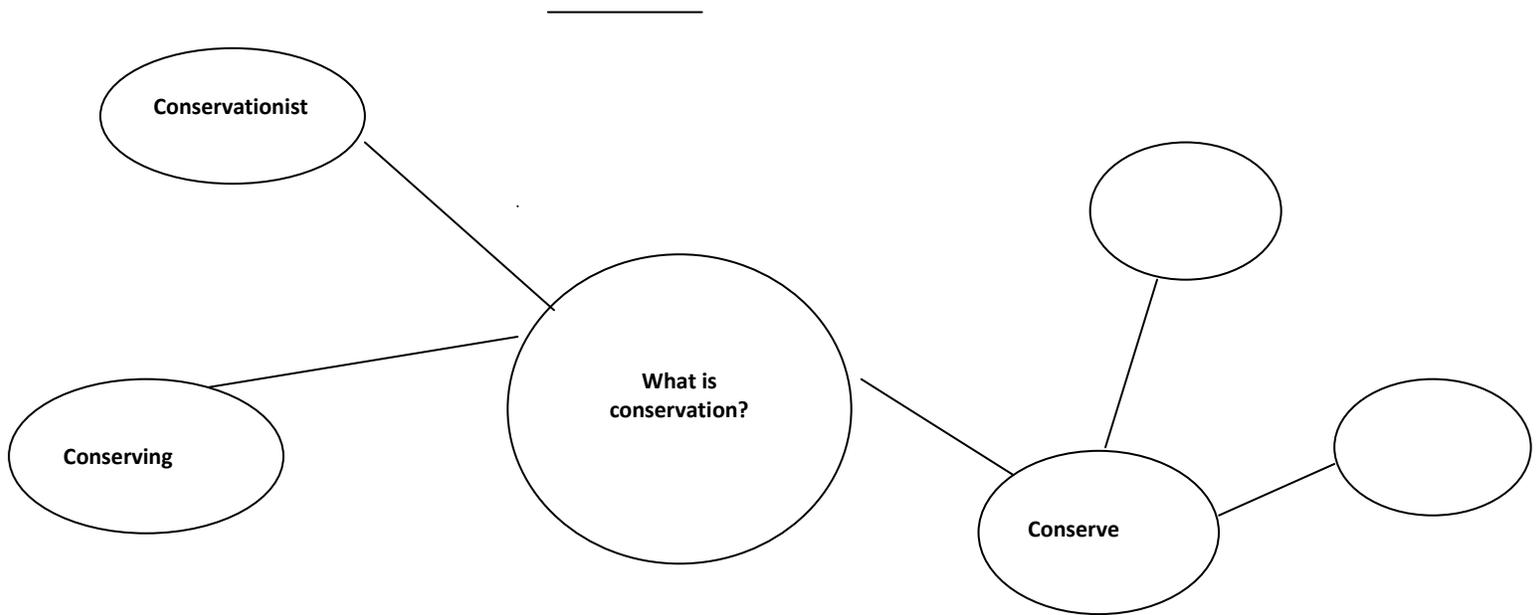
Teachers should reference the *General Guidelines for ELLs: Common Core Sample Literacy Lessons* to build essential vocabulary that ELLs need in order to comprehend the reading and respond to the performance task. Below is a list of suggested words and idiomatic expressions

1. Conserve—Conserved—Conserving—Conservation—Conservationist
2. Feature
3. Establish
4. Wilderness
5. Development
6. Protected—Protecting
7. Camping
8. Spread the word

- **Building Background Knowledge**

Teachers will need to build students' conceptual understanding of key ideas with which they may be unfamiliar but are necessary to fully understand the text. For example, teachers can show students where California is located on a map. They can show the students images of a wilderness and national parks, specifically Yosemite National Park. Students will need to have a deep understanding of the concept of conservation. Teachers can support students' understanding through a brainstorming activity using a semantic map.

- Brainstorming activity on conservation: create a semantic map to include the various forms of the word conserve that will help organize students' ideas around the concept of conservation. This may include phrases, sentences, questions and responses, captions, and images to explain the terms.



Students can discuss these concepts in their native language.

During Reading Activities

- Quote Interpretation

In addition to the “think aloud” suggested in the *Guidance for Teachers* document, ELLs will need support to understand the quotation in the text. Teachers will want to create an activity that supports ELLs to interpret the figurative language that is being conveyed. For example, students can jigsaw the five phrases, creating accompanying visuals by drawing or using computer graphics to illustrate their understanding of each phrase in the quote. Teachers should place students into groups of 5 so that each child is responsible for creating a visual for one phrase of the quote. After students create their visuals, they should practice reading the quote in sequence as it appears in the passage. Finally, the teacher should ask several students to summarize their understanding of the quote.

- Note-Taking

Teachers should provide prompts and graphic organizers to support students as they read the text and prepare for the writing task. Teachers should explain that the prompts and not-takers are to support students’ comprehension of the passage and prepare them to perform the task.

Note-Taking Matrix

Prompt: John Muir dedicated his life to nature. Read the passage and copy words and phrases that provide evidence of this dedication at the different stages of his life.

John Muir	Evidence
Young Boy	

Young Man	
Adult	

Double Entry Journal

Re-read the passage and take notes on the actions that John Muir took to preserve nature and the impact of these actions. Write down as many examples as you need.

John Muir's Action (Words and phrases from text)	Impact of His Action

After students complete matrices individually, they share in groups of four as the teacher walks around to monitor the task.

Pre-Writing Activities

Final Performance Task

Depending on ELLs' previous exposure to essay writing, teachers might need to provide them with direct instruction on the format and structure of an essay as well as models of strong topic sentences, introduction and conclusion paragraphs, and transitional words that writers use to present their ideas. Students can reference the previous two graphic organizers to guide them as they prepare to do the performance task.

Students can create outlines for their essays using a four-square graphic organizer for a four-paragraph essay:

Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Main Idea 1▪ Main Idea 2	Main Idea 1: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Supporting Detail 1▪ Supporting Detail 2▪ Supporting Detail 3
Main Idea 2: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Supporting Detail 1▪ Supporting Detail 2▪ Supporting Detail 3	Conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Main Idea 1▪ Main Idea 2

Students should be given the option to respond in their native languages and use their native languages to discuss their writing.

It is important to note that some ELLs might not be able to express all of their ideas in an essay. They may write just one paragraph. They may need a teacher or a more proficient student to take their ideas from the graphic organizer and incorporate them into an essay. The following scaffolds can be used to provide access and engage ELLs when reading “Rainforests at Risk” by Vickie An (available in English and Spanish) and to prepare students for the formative assessment.

Pre-Reading

- Pre-teaching Vocabulary
Teachers should reference the *General Guidelines for ELLs: Common Core Sample Literacy Lessons* to build essential vocabulary that ELLs need in order to comprehend the reading and respond to the performance task. Below is a list of suggested words and idiomatic expressions:
 1. Endangered
 2. Forest Canopy
 3. Species
 4. Culprits
 5. Clearing
 6. Logging
 7. Deforestation
 8. At Risk
- Building Background Knowledge

Teachers will need to build students' conceptual understanding of key ideas with which they may be unfamiliar and which are necessary to fully understand the text. For example, teachers can show students where Southeast Asia is located on a map, including the countries mentioned in the article: Borneo, Indonesia, and Malaysia. Teachers can show them images of rain forests, jungles, and orangutans. Also, students will need to understand the impact of deforestation. For example, before and after pictures that demonstrate what happens when a habitat is destroyed should be presented.

During Reading

To support students' understanding of the impact on the rain forest, a graphic organizer that reinforces cause-and-effect relationships should be provided to students while they read. Students might need to read this selection several times, including partner reading so that they can develop their thoughts and ideas and record them in the organizer.

Pre-Writing

Formative Assessment

Students will need to understand that the word "footprints" has both a literal and a figurative meaning. In order to prepare students for the formative assessment, it is essential that they understand both meanings of this word. This can be accomplished by using a series of sentences that model the use of the word to convey meaning, for example,

- My wet feet left footprints in the sand.
- Her footprints disappeared in the hot sun.
- My grandmother left her footprints on my family, forever reminding us of the love she had for all of us.
- Who I am today is a result of the footprints from my culture.

Students can work in pairs to write sentences using the word with its figurative meaning. Students should share their sentences with the whole group after the teacher has checked to ensure that they have used the word correctly.

Extension Assessment

In order to facilitate ELLs' participation in the extension assessment, the following should be addressed:

- Student groupings: Place ELLs with more proficient peers, and when possible, with students who speak the same native language.
- Topics: Although students will be working in their groups, make sure that ELLs have the academic vocabulary specific to the topics so they can work

independently with their peers. Also, encourage students to choose topics to which they have a personal connection and/or prior exposure.

- Note-takers: Provide note-takers that support students to have discussions on the topic. Also, note-takers should be used so students can organize their thinking throughout the task to summarize and synthesize ideas from their research.
- Resources: Encourage students to use a variety of resources. If necessary, provide students with these resources if they are not able to locate them on their own.



GRADE 4 LITERACY: JOHN MUIR
SUPPORTS FOR STUDENTS
WITH DISABILITIES

Instructional Supports for Students with Disabilities using UDL Guidelines

Background Information

Information is more accessible and likely to be assimilated by learners when it is presented in a way that primes, activates, or provides any prerequisite knowledge. **Activate or supply background knowledge by anchoring instruction.** One can anchor instruction by linking to and activating relevant prior knowledge.

- ❖ **Anchoring Instruction Activity #1:** Provide students with opportunities to learn by way of visual imagery and touch by providing them with authentic samples of the California state quarter, or enlarge the attached quarter. Have students explore the *design* and *elements depicted* on the quarter.



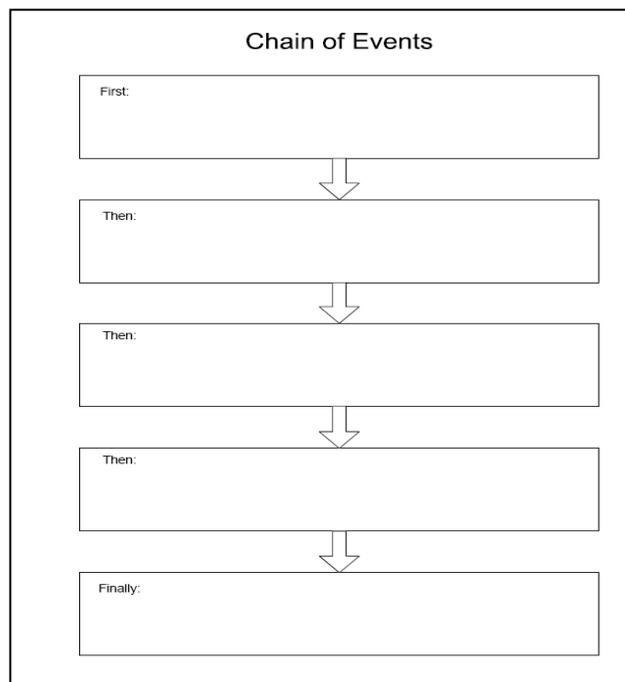
For additional information about the California state quarter, provide students with the following link: <http://www.californiastatequarter.com/flash.html> with accompanying audio.

Anchoring Instruction Activity #2: Embed visual, non-linguistic prompts for vocabulary clarification by providing print and/or online pictures of *President Theodore Roosevelt*, *John Muir*, *condors*, *national forests*, and *national parks*. For additional information, provide students with the following link: <http://www.californiastatequarter.com/flash.html> with accompanying audio.

READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Learning is impossible if information is imperceptible to the learner and difficult when information is presented in formats that require extraordinary effort or assistance. To reduce barriers to learning, it is important to ensure that key information is equally perceptible to all learners by: **providing the same information through different modalities** (e.g., through vision, hearing, or touch); and **providing information in a format that will allow for adjustability by the user** (e.g., text that can be enlarged, sounds that can be amplified).

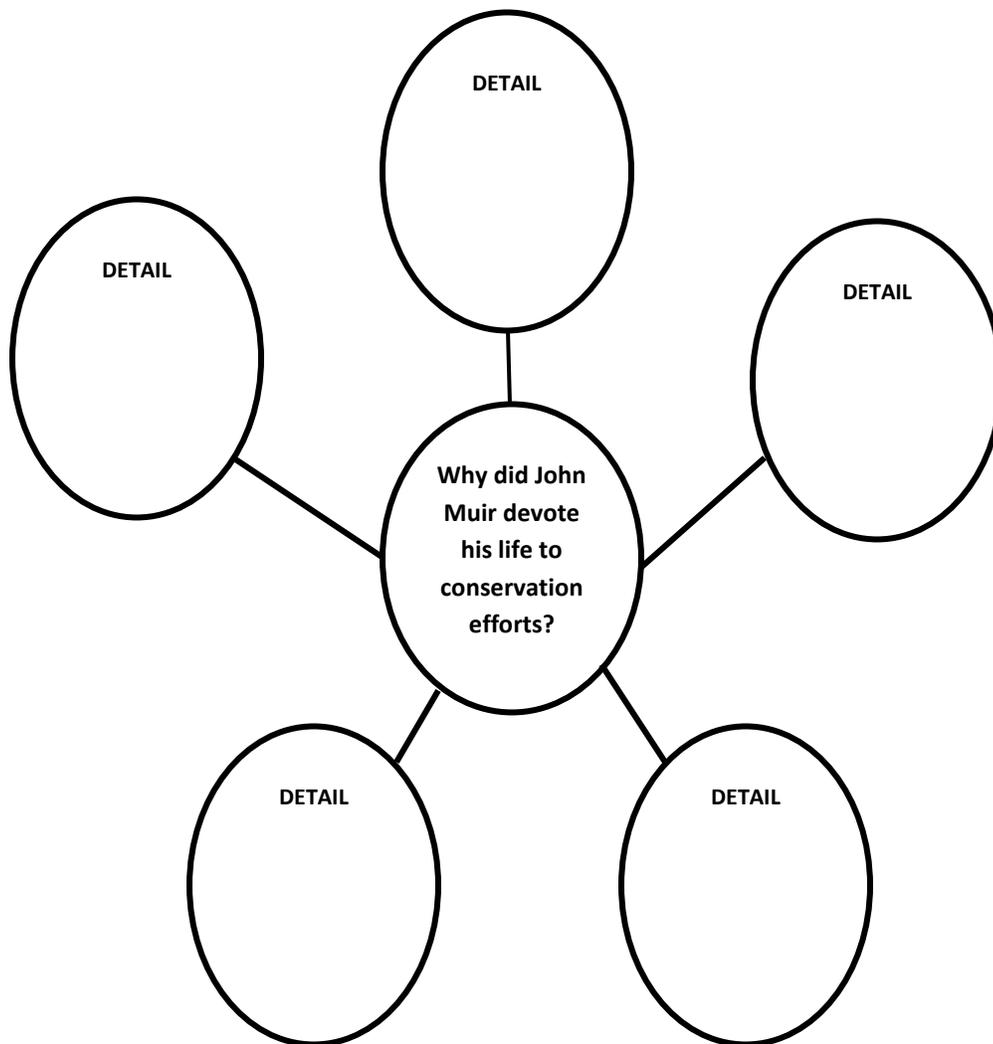
1. **Offer ways of customizing the display of information.** Display text, John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter, in a flexible format and vary the font style and text size, line spacing, and margin size of the introduction.
2. **Offer alternatives for auditory information.** Read aloud and record text, John Muir: The Conservationist on the Quarter, to allow students multiple opportunities to hear information.
3. **To ensure accessibility for all students, clarify vocabulary.** Pre-teach vocabulary, especially in ways that promote connection to the learners' experience and prior knowledge: *condor; conservationist; conservation; conserve; preservationist; preservation; preserve; wilderness; impact; affect; effect; Yosemite National Park; legacy; and activist*
4. **To ensure that all students have equal access to information, provide options for comprehension.** Use graphic organizers to provide support for sequencing the events in the text.



WRITING AN EXPOSITORY/INFORMATIONAL ESSAY

The purpose of education is not to make information accessible, but rather to teach learners how to transform accessible information into useable knowledge. Constructing useable knowledge, knowledge that is assessable for future decision-making, depends not upon merely perceiving information, but upon active “information processing skills” like selective attending, integrating new information with prior knowledge, strategic categorization, and active memorization. Individuals differ greatly in their skills in information processing and in their access to prior knowledge through which they can assimilate new information.

1. **Facilitate managing information and resources.** Provide graphic organizers and templates for data collection and organizing information:



Question: What effect did John Muir's work have on preserving nature?	
John Muir's Work	Effect His Work Had on Preserving Nature

2. **Establish clear expectations for group work.** Post class-created rubric where all students can view.

3. **Provide models or examples of the process and product:**

- Read aloud, from the text, *a detail that supports why John Muir devoted his life to conservation efforts*; think and talk aloud your thoughts behind this *reasoning*; chart your response onto graphic organizer, posted where all students can view.
- Read aloud, from the text, *an example of John Muir's work*; think and talk aloud your thoughts around *the effect his work had on preserving the beauty of nature*; chart your response onto graphic organizer, posted where all students can view

4. **Guide appropriate goal –setting.** Review rubric and provide a checklist to support students' application of writing an expository/informational essay:

CHECKLIST FOR WRITING AN EXPOSITORY/INFORMATIONAL ESSAY	
Did you...	✓
...provide <u>complete</u> and <u>accurate</u> responses that meet all the requirements of the task?	
...provide responses that show <u>thorough</u> and <u>insightful understanding</u> of the task and the text?	
...include <u>comprehensive</u> and <u>detailed text-based support</u> ?	
... <u>connect</u> all your ideas and <u>elaborate</u> on these ideas?	
...write an essay that is <u>well-organized</u> ?	
...write an essay with <u>clear focus</u> ?	
...write for an audience?	
...provide a <u>title</u> ?	
...provide a <u>strong introduction</u> ?	
...provide a <u>strong conclusion</u> ?	
...check your spelling?	
...check your grammar?	
...check your punctuation?	