

## Instructional Unit Template

*This instructional unit template provides an example of how teachers may organize a Common Core aligned unit with culminating performance tasks. This template is a work in progress and continually revised based on feedback from teachers and administrators. Teachers may (a) use this template as it is given here; (b) integrate parts of this template into an existing structure for unit planning; or (c) use this template as a model to design their own planning structures.*

This instructional unit template contains:

- I. [Unit snapshot](#), including:
  - a. Unit topic
  - b. Overarching question
  - c. Enduring understandings
  - d. Focus standards from the NYS Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core
  - e. Unit sub-topics. Each sub-topic includes:
    - i. Anchor texts
    - ii. Anchor learning experiences
    - iii. Formative assessment opportunities
    - iv. Family engagement opportunities
  - f. Culminating task
- II. [Complete Alignment to the NYS Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core](#)
- III. [Ideas for learning centers](#)
- IV. [Book list](#)
- V. [Family engagement](#)
- VI. [Culminating task and rubric](#)
- VII. [Weekly plans](#)

When planning a unit, teachers should consider [Depth of Knowledge \(DOK\)](#) and [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#). DOK offers a common language to understand cognitive demand in curricular units, lessons, tasks, and assessments. Webb developed four DOK levels that grow in cognitive complexity and provide educators a lens on creating more cognitively engaging and challenging tasks. UDL is a set of principles that provides teachers with a structure to develop instruction to meet the diverse needs of all learners. A research-based framework, UDL suggests that each student learns in a unique manner so a one-size-fits-all approach is not effective. 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.

## I. Unit snapshot

*This unit snapshot gives an overview of the unit. This is a helpful starting place; teachers should ultimately flesh out more details about how to design and execute the unit.*

<p><b>Unit Topic</b>  <i>The unit topic should build on students' interests and explore topics that are relevant to your school community.</i></p>				
<p><b>Overarching Question</b>  <i>Child-friendly question that connects the knowledge and skills that children should develop throughout the unit.</i></p>				
<p><b>Enduring Understandings</b>  <i>These are the big ideas that students should remember throughout their educational careers.</i></p>				
<p><b>Focus standards from the Prekindergarten Foundation for the Common Core</b>  <i>These represent the 7-10 standards that will be emphasized throughout the unit. They cover different domains of development. You will touch on other standards throughout the unit, but these should be the foundation.</i></p>				
<p><b>Unit Sub-Topics</b>  <i>These represent the major inquiries of the unit. They build over time and require students to make connections</i></p>				

<p><i>across all content areas. Each sub-topic is designed to take 1-2 weeks to explore.</i></p>				
<p><b>Anchor Learning Experiences</b>  <i>One or two key real-world learning experiences (e.g. field trips, observations, materials in centers) for each sub-topic that provide ample opportunities to deepen students' understanding of the sub-topic.</i></p>				
<p><b>Anchor Texts</b>  <i>A combination of literary and informational texts that can be read throughout the unit. Text based questions about each book build understanding of the sub-topic. The text based questions listed here are each associated with DOK levels (see page 1 or <a href="#">here</a> for more information).</i></p>	<p><i>Texts</i></p>	<p><i>Text-based questions for each unit sub-topic</i></p>		

<b>Formative Assessment Opportunities</b> <i>Key look fors and listen fors that will give you information about students' understanding of the standards and sub-topic. These can be based on strategic questions and/or observations of students working independently or with peers.</i>					
<b>Key Vocabulary</b> <i>Academic vocabulary words that help students understand unit sub-topics and access complex texts. These words can be supplemented by vocabulary in read alouds.</i>					
<b>Family Engagement</b> <i>Learning experiences that connect to classroom study that families can do at home with their children.</i>					
<b>Culminating Tasks</b> <i>Tasks that take place in a small group during the last week of the unit. These tasks allow students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills they have gained throughout the unit.</i>					

## II. Complete Alignment to the NYS Pre-Kindergarten Foundation for the Common Core

List the standards that will be the focus of this unit. You will inevitably touch on other standards throughout the unit, but the standards listed here should be the standards that you focus on and plan learning experiences around.

<b>Domain</b>	<b>Standards</b>	<b>Example of Standards in Action</b> <i>What will it look like for students to engage in learning around these standards during the unit?</i>
<i>Approaches to Learning</i>		
<i>Physical Development and Health</i>		
<i>Social and Emotional Development</i>		
<i>Communication, Language, and Literacy</i>		
<i>Cognition and Knowledge of the World</i>		

### III. Ideas for learning centers

*In the table below, list the materials and learning experiences that you will provide in learning centers to advance the overarching question, enduring understandings, and unit sub-topics. As you plan your learning centers, keep the principles of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#) in mind and consider how you will provide multiple entry points into the material for all students in your classroom. The materials and experiences listed under each center can be rotated throughout the unit.*

<b>Blocks</b>	<b>Dramatic Play</b>
<b>Art</b>	<b>Science / Discovery</b>
<b>Toys and Games / Math Manipulatives</b>	<b>Sand and Water / Sensory</b>
<b>Library</b>	<b>Cooking</b>
<b>Computers / Technology</b>	<b>Outdoors / Playground</b>

#### IV. Book list

*Books should be a foundational component of your unit. You should engage children in several read alouds per day during large group, small group, and center time. Some books are read repeatedly throughout the unit; these are your anchor texts. Anchor texts are a mix of literary and informational texts that advance students' understanding of the overarching question, enduring understandings, and unit sub-topics. Some books will be read only once or twice throughout the unit; these are your supporting texts. Supporting texts focus on sub-topics and areas of interest or may be tangentially related to the overarching question or enduring understandings of the unit.*

*Throughout each of your reading experiences with students, consider the principles of [Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\)](#). You should develop strategies to ensure that all children are able to access and comprehend the text. For example, consider projecting illustrations from the text on a document camera, giving students a chance to point to illustrations when they answer, asking questions at different [Depth of Knowledge \(DOK\)](#) levels, etc.*

<p><b>Anchor Texts</b> <i>These texts should be read throughout the unit; they can be read multiple times during the day and in a variety of settings. For example, you may read one book to a large group and then again that same day to a small group in the dramatic play area. The children should know these books and be able to read them with you.</i></p>	
<p><b>Supporting Texts</b> <i>These books can be touched on throughout the unit. You can send them home using your Lending Library, place them in centers so students can use them, and read them throughout the day.</i></p>	

## V. Family engagement

As you develop your family engagement plans for this unit, you should consider the pillars of family engagement, listed below.

<b>Pillars of Family Engagement</b>				
<i>Welcoming Environment</i>	<i>Sharing Expectations &amp; Making Joint Decisions</i>	<i>Extending Learning</i>	<i>Ongoing Communication</i>	<i>Supporting Transitions</i>
Families will experience warmth and respect from program staff, demonstrated by the collaborative tone of program staff and in the program’s policies, protocols and offerings that are sensitive to their linguistic, cultural and social emotional needs.	Families will be partners in supporting school readiness by helping to define school readiness goals, implementing school readiness strategies and participating in policy-setting and program evaluation.	Families will have the opportunity to support and extend their children’s learning and development at home with the assistance of complementary learning activities developed by the program and shared with families regularly in newsletters, at parent-teacher conferences, and other school events.	Families will experience multiple methods of communication between themselves and the program demonstrated by timely, routine efforts by the program to share information in a linguistically and culturally sensitive way and through effective communication channels.	Families will be equipped with the resources and skills to support their children through the transition into and out of the program, as demonstrated by program policy, and ongoing, meaningful discussions with between program staff and families.
<b>Examples for this Unit</b>				

## **VI. Culminating tasks and rubrics**

*The unit should end in two culminating tasks that give students an opportunity to apply the knowledge they have gained throughout the unit. The tasks should be done in small groups during the last week of the unit. Both tasks should be grounded in science or social studies content; one should be focused on math and the other on literacy. There should also be opportunities to make connections to other domains of development (e.g. approaches to learning, social emotional, and physical) in these tasks. Teachers should take anecdotal notes throughout each of the tasks to capture evidence of students' thinking and understanding of the content. Students' performance on the tasks can be measured using mathematics and literacy rubrics and used as evidence in an authentic assessment system (Work Sampling System, Teaching Strategies GOLD, High Scope COR).*

### **Mathematics Task**

Focus Standards

Depth of Knowledge

Materials Needed

Task Experience

Collecting Information

Rubric

<b>Mathematics</b>		
<b>Standards:</b>		
<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>In Process</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

**Literacy Task**

Focus Standards

Depth of Knowledge

Materials Needed

Task Experience

Collecting Information

Rubric

<b>English Language Arts</b>		
<b>Standard:</b>		
<b>Not Yet</b>	<b>In Process</b>	<b>Proficient</b>

## VII. Sample weekly plan

Weekly plans should be based on the standards and enduring understandings for the unit. They will ultimately translate into more specific lesson plans. Using the template below, you can modify the parts of the day (e.g. morning activities, morning meeting) to reflect your daily schedule. You can copy and paste this table for each week of the unit.

<b>UNIT TITLE:</b>					
<i>Overarching Question:</i>					
<i>Unit Sub-Topic:</i>					
<i>Sub-Topic Vocabulary:</i>					
<i>Enduring understandings:</i>					
<i>Week __ of __</i>	<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Morning activities</b>					
<b>Morning meeting</b>					
<b>Read aloud (intentional)</b>					
<b>Small groups</b>					
<b>Outdoors</b>					

<b>Read aloud (additional)</b>					
<b>Lunch</b>					
<b>Centers</b>					
<b>Closing Meeting</b>					