

Authentic Intellectual Work

Teacher: Kim Kuhnle

Subject: Reading/Language Arts

Grade: 6th grade

Desired Area of Focus/Request for Support: I would like to have a teacher task scored to see if I am challenging students to make applications, evaluate, and synthesize what they learn during a newspaper unit that we are working on in class. **Iowa Core Standards:**

STANDARD 1 Uses the general skills and strategies of the writing process to write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

STANDARD 2 Uses the grammatical and mechanical conventions of written language.

STANDARD 3 Uses a variety of print and non-print resources to locate and gather information.

Introduction/Background:

We are beginning a newspaper unit in language arts. The students are preparing to create a 6th grade newspaper. We will be having some guest speakers come in and talk to them about the operations of a local newspaper. We will also be discussing the different sections of a newspaper, as well as doing a read-aloud of the book called Nothing But the Truth. I will be coordinating their written class work with the newspaper as well as giving some students a chance to share their writings on a class website. This particular task asks them to put themselves into the position of a rookie reporter and report the news that comes to them from an AP source. They will develop interview questions, will be interviewing sources (their classmates as they role play), writing a rough draft, and then editing for a final copy of their news story. They will need to assimilate what they have learned about news reporting through our unit and discussions in creating their own unique finished product.

Reflection: Some of my 6th graders are very good thinkers and problem solvers and others struggle with this. It is very important that this class makes strong connections with the material that is taught to develop meaningful learning. They will be able to practice with certain scenarios such as this one in order to contribute to their own newspaper in the future.

Bring any supporting documents that will assist students in completing this task such as rubrics, additional handouts, graphic organizers, etc.

Name:

Date:

THE GREAT TRAIN WRECK

The scene: You are a rookie reporter working for a newspaper/magazine. You are copy editing a story for spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors when sketchy details of a train wreck near the Oklahoma/Texas border came over the associated Press (AP) wire. The AP is a nationwide news service company that covers hundreds of events around the world. They provide the bare details so that newspapers can pick and choose where to send their reporters.

Here's what comes up on your computer:

(Higgins, TX, Today) A passenger train bound for Amarillo, TX jumped the track early last night after departing Tulsa, OK, at 4 PM. No other vehicles were involved in the crash, which took place in a densely wooded area just over the Texas border.

Two passengers and two engineers survived the deadly accident; it is unknown at this time how many passengers were on the train when the crash took place. Rescue crews from as far as Oklahoma City have converged on the scene to aid in sorting through the burnt remains of the train. Representatives of the National Transportation Safety Board are also on hand to aid with the investigation.

Recent safety examinations of this train showed no mechanical problems. Both front and rear emergency brakes were on when the crash occurred.

It looks pretty routine, but a big disaster is always big news, so you call the Oklahoma State Police and find out that the train was a normal passenger train with several luggage cars. You also find out that the trip is roughly 400 miles and takes 6.5 hours, stops included. The train's most recent stop was in Oklahoma City, where it departed the station safely. Seven witnesses are available to speak with the press in Higgins.

You talk to your editor, who puts you on a plane to Texas to find out exactly what happened. (Rookie reporters always get sent to these sorts of disasters.) You arrive hours later to find the scene crawling with reporters, law enforcement officers, rescue workers, and mysterious men and women in business suits who pick up all sorts of data. Another reporter tells you that they are from the FBI and that they will talk to no one until their press conference in a few days.

These people are available to talk to you: the **front engineer, the rear engineer, a passenger, Amtrak's president, a rep from the FBI, a hiker who was nearby in the woods, a hunter who was also nearby.** [Other students play these roles.]

This is your big chance to impress your editor. Like all rookies, you are required to hand in one interview per story and all your rough drafts.

Due date: _____

Due: One final draft of a news article (typed or neatly written), one rough draft, and one 7-10 question interview with the answers to your questions.

THE GREAT TRAIN WRECK

Name:

	Highly Successful	Successful	Not Yet Successful
Interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 questions & answers • All Y/N questions have follow-up questions • Questions use information gained in earlier questions • Questions aim for information that will be important to the paper's audience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 7 Q & A • Some Y/N questions have follow-up questions • Either of the last two Highly Successful criteria missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fewer than 7 Q & A • Y/N questions do not have follow-up questions • New information and audience not considered in questions
Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces topic of the article • Appropriate to the angle of the article • Creates interest in the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduces topic of the article • Lead is not appropriate to angle of article • Creates interest in the reader 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead is not appropriate to angle of article • Lead does not generate interest in the reader
Article	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Angle appropriate to audience • Uses information from interviews to appeal to audience • Creates the reporter's version of "the truth" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article makes some attempt to entice the paper's audience, but does not follow through • Uses information from interviews • Creates the reporter's version of "the truth" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No attempt to write for the audience • Only uses information from own character's bio OR from first project sheet • Makes contradictory points
Overall Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough draft completed in time for editing • All three parts handed in on time • Neat; no spelling or grammar errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rough draft completed in time for editing • All three parts handed in on time • Neat; few spelling or grammar errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not handed in on time • One or more parts missing • Sloppy or many errors

Comments:

Suggestions for Revising Teacher Task
Newspaper Unit
Kim Kuhnle

1. We have already been doing some modeling on how to be a good interviewer. This will test how well they can apply those skills that have been learned.

2. I will break these tasks into some smaller segments for each class period, so students won't feel overwhelmed. Due dates for each step will be provided.