



EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING

# Grade 3: Module 1: Unit 1: Lesson 8

## Paragraph Writing Instruction



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**Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)**

- I can write an informative/explanatory text that has a clear topic. (W.3.2)
- I can develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. (W.3.2)
- I can construct a closure on the topic of an informative/explanatory text. (W.3.2)
- I can write routinely for a variety of reasons. (W.3.10)

**Supporting Learning Targets**

- I can write a paragraph about what Nasreen wants and why.
- I can support my topic with details from *Nasreen's Secret School*.
- I can write a sentence to close my paragraph.

**Ongoing Assessment**

- Students' on-demand paragraphs



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Opening               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Engaging the Writer: Making Connections between Nasreen and the Children in <i>Rain School</i> (5 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Work Time               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Characteristics of a Paragraph: Studying a Strong Model (15 minutes)</li> <li>B. Modeling: Studying the Graphic Organizer</li> <li>C. Partner Planning: Using the Graphic Organizer (15 minutes)</li> <li>D. Independent Writing: Drafting a Paragraph (10 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Closing and Assessment               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Student Shares (15 minutes)</li> <li>B. Debrief: Learning Target Check (5 minutes)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Homework               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Read your paragraph out loud to someone at home or to yourself into a mirror.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This lesson is the first formal writing instruction in Module 1. Emphasize to students that writing is more than just organizing their ideas or editing for conventions. In order to write well about something, you need to know a lot about it. Students have been building that knowledge during their reading, and may end up re-reading or building more knowledge as they write.<sup>1</sup></li> <li>• In advance: Review students’ pre-assessment paragraphs from Lesson 5 to get a sense of students’ skills in writing paragraphs. This will inform instruction in this lesson.</li> <li>• Create a chart of the Model Paragraph: Children of Chad.</li> <li>• Create a chart of filled in Paragraph Writing Graphic Organizer: Children of Chad.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup>This coaching point is based on [Writing for Understanding: Using Backward Design to Help all Students Write Effectively](#) (Vermont Writing Collaborative, 2008). This book is an excellent resource that can help teachers better understand how to address the Common Core “shift” regarding “writing from sources.”



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
topic, detail, explain, conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Rain School</i> (book; one per student)</li> <li>• <i>Nasreen’s Secret School</i> (book; one per student)</li> <li>• Model Paragraph: Children of Chad chart (new; teacher-created; see example in Supporting Materials)</li> <li>• Paragraph Writing Graphic Organizer (filled in): Children of Chad chart (new; teacher created)</li> <li>• Chart paper for Paragraph Writing anchor chart</li> <li>• Paragraph Writing graphic organizer (one per student)</li> </ul>

Opening	Meeting Students’ Needs
<p><b>A. Engaging the Writer: Making Connections between Nasreen and the Children in <i>Rain School</i> (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gather students in a circle. Hold up <b>Rain School</b> and <b>Nasreen’s Secret School</b>. Think aloud the powerful message of these books. This may sound something like: “You know, after we finished <i>Nasreen’s Secret School</i> and <i>Rain School</i>, I was absolutely amazed. Some stories like these are about real children around the world.”</li> <li>• Ask students to Think-Pair-Share:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “What connections did you see between these two books? What was the same?”</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tell students that one way people respond to powerful stories is to write about them, and share the story with other people in their community and in the world. Read aloud the learning targets. As a whole group, unpack the targets with the question “Based on these learning targets, what do you think we will be doing today?” Have all students think and then ask a few to share out.</li> </ul>	



Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Characteristics of a Paragraph: Studying a Strong Model (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell students that they will be looking at a model, or example, of the type of paragraph they will write. (Either show students a paragraph you actually wrote, or use the model provided at the end of this lesson.)</li> <li>• “I wrote something about the children of Chad and the lengths they went for the power of education and reading. My goal is to share their story with others. So here is something I wrote.”</li> <li>• Display the <b>Model Paragraph: Children of Chad chart</b>.</li> <li>• Have students read it (or read it to them). Think-Pair-Share the question “What is this paragraph about? How do you know?” Guide students toward the idea that the topic of the paragraph is revealed in the first sentence. Underline the first sentence of the paragraph and write “Topic Sentence” in the margin next to it.</li> <li>• Next, lead students into a conversation in which they realize that the paragraph needs more details. This may sound like, “Okay, why not stop there? I’ve said it. The children of Chad go to great lengths for the power of education and reading. I’ve told the reader.” Invite students to share ideas about why more writing is necessary. Look for comments like, “You need to tell how they did something great,” or “The reader is going to be curious about what you mean now.”</li> <li>• Tell students that writers give some details about their topic. Discuss the word “Detail.” Move on to the first detail sentence. Read aloud: “For example, to get the power of education, the students build their own school.” Underline this sentence in a new color, and write “Detail” in the margin.</li> <li>• Repeat the same process again. “Can I stop? I’ve given my detail about the children of Chad.” Ask students to Think-Pair-Share: “What might the reader ask if I stopped right here?” Look for comments like: “What do you mean they build their own school?” or, “What did they use?”</li> <li>• Tell students that writers think about their reader, and explain some more about their details that they read about in <i>Rain School</i>. Discuss the word “explain.” Read aloud: “The students use mud to build walls and desks. They use grass and saplings to make a roof.” Underline this sentence in a new color, and write “Explain” in the margin.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students may benefit by having their own copy of the Model Paragraph: Children of Chad to underline and write on during the lesson. This makes it interactive and also provides them with a model they can keep and use while writing.</li> </ul>



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat this process for the second detail and explanation if necessary. If students seem confident in their understanding, simply tell them you repeated this process again with a second detail about the topic.</li> <li>Read aloud the last sentence: "These are some of the ways that the children of Chad go to great lengths to get the power of education and reading." Ask: "What about this last sentence? Why is it here? What job does it have?" Have students Think-Pair-Share. Listen in on student conversations for helpful comments to share with the class, such as: "It shows us that it is over," or "It says the same thing as the first sentence." Discuss the word "conclusion." Tell students that the job of the conclusion is to wrap it up, repeat the topic, and signal the end so the reader is not looking for more.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>B. Modeling: Studying the Graphic Organizer (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell students that great writers usually do not just start writing. Writers make sure they have good information about their topic. Point out to students that they have already done that by reading carefully and taking notes about the books they have read. Those notes are their raw material to be used for their writing, or else they can go back to the books.</li> <li>Then writers usually choose a focus. Point out that your focus in the model paragraph is one of the efforts children in Chad went to in order to get an education.</li> <li>Usually then writers make a plan and organize their information and thoughts before they actually start writing. "When I started my paragraph about the children of Chad, I had a lot of thoughts, and didn't know which details to use. So I made a plan for my paragraph first." Display the <b>Paragraph Writing Graphic Organizer (filled in): Children of Chad chart</b> directly next to the Model Paragraph: Children of Chad. Help students to see the corresponding ideas and sentences between these two documents.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>C. Partner Planning: Using the Graphic Organizer (15 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell students that they now get to try planning and writing a paragraph about Nasreen. Consider framing this writing like: "Nasreen's story is so important and so extraordinary, I think we should work as writers to share it with our community. So let's write our own paragraphs and put them right outside our classroom so people can hear about girls like Nasreen."</li> <li>Consider brainstorming the topic of their paragraph as a group, as this may prove to be the most challenging part for students. List ideas for possible topics on the board for all students to see.</li> </ul>	



Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tell students that they will work with a partner to plan their paragraph. Each student should complete his or her own Paragraph Writing graphic organizer. And eventually each of them will write their own paragraph. But they can talk together to help each other think about what details to include and how to explain those details.</li><li>• Emphasize that they will have many chances to practice this skill throughout the year, and that today is just a chance to “have a go” with the help of a partner.</li><li>• Distribute a Paragraph Writing graphic organizer to each student. Ask them to fill it out using Nasreen’s Secret School as their source of information. Tell them that once their organizer is done, they should raise their hand and have it checked by a teacher.</li></ul>	
<p><b>D. Independent Writing: Drafting a Paragraph (10 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students then can move on to trying to write their individual paragraph. They may talk with their partner for support, but each student should do his or her own writing.</li><li>• Remind students that they will have lots of practice writing paragraphs this year. Today, they are doing writing that is called “on demand”: the best writing you can do in a limited time.</li><li>• Circulate and support students as needed.</li></ul>	



Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p><b>A. Student Shares (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>As students are writing, try to note a few key revision points that are common to many students. (This information could also come from their pre-assessment of paragraph writing.) Gather students back in a circle. Invite a couple of students to share their writing with the class. (If possible, project their writing using a document camera as they read.) Point out key writing moves that are strong in the piece. Then use this opportunity to give descriptive feedback to that student (but that is helpful to many students). Repeat this once or twice, depending on time.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Consider choosing which students will share their work as they are working. This could be based on model work or paragraphs that lend themselves to good revision feedback.</li></ul>
<p><b>B. Debrief: Learning Target Check (5 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Post all three learning targets again. Go through them one by one, asking students to engage in a quick “target check.” Tell them that after you read the target, they should give it thumbs-up if they feel they really got it. Tell them to give a thumb to the side if they think they need to practice it a few more times. Tell them to give it a thumbs-down if they feel really confused by this. Ask students for new things they learned about paragraph writing. Add to the Paragraph Writing anchor chart.</li></ul>	
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Read your paragraph out loud to someone at home or to yourself into a mirror. Ask that person to tell you one specific thing he or she liked about your paragraph, and one thing you could do to make your writing better. Use this feedback, or your own careful rereading to make a second draft of your paragraph to bring back to school tomorrow.</li></ul>	



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## Supporting Materials



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## Children of Chad Chart

The children of Chad go to great lengths to seek the power of education and reading. For example, they build their own school at the beginning of the year! To do this, they use mud to make bricks to build the walls and desks. They use grass and saplings and make a roof. Also, the children of Chad work very hard studying during the school year. Every day they learn something new. In one part, the teacher writes an “A” on the black board, and the students write it over and over in the air. Finally, the story says that at the end of the year their notebooks are all rumpled from using them, and their minds are fat with knowledge. These are a couple of ways the children of Chad go to great lengths to seek the power of education and reading.



Paragraph Writing Graphic Organizer

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date:**

**Topic:**

**Detail:**

**Explain:**

**Detail:**

**Explain:**