**Overview: Writing to Explain: Lessons for Adolescent Writers**

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| **Lesson** | **Mini-Lessons** | **Materials** |
| Before you start | Talk to classroom teachers and find out when they will be doing this kind of writing. Get any information you can ahead of time about the assignment. Plan to frontload.  Think about the piece you’d like students to write and write a model of this one yourself. This will be your mentor text. It should include examples of the kinds of things you want your students to do. |  |
| Pre-writing/Gathering Ideas | Heart Map places, people, items, issues, things you’d like to understand. Brainstorm ideas for essay of choice, originality.  Who is your audience?  Do some journal entries  Try the Truth Test  Talk about your possible choices to your partner  Read some essays written by professional writers |  |
| Planning-Getting Organized | Decide on what you want to do with your topic-Narrow the focus  Notice how content determines the structure of an explanatory piece and how organization improves clarity.  Think about how you’d like this paper to go.  What subtopics do you want to discuss. Choose two or three.  Organize your work using 2-column notes  Use Elaboration to explain your ideas. |  |
| Drafting the Essay | Move from a pile of notes and ideas to a written piece.  Work on stamina and writing for 25-35 minutes.  Volume matters. It’s hard work, but worthwhile.  Read and Re-read your piece to make sure it sounds like you and is telling your audience what you want to hear. Get your body paragraphs going, then come back and write the Introduction. Write the conclusion last using synonyms or calling your reader to action. |  |
| Revising | Reread for clarity. Look for places where you repeat information.  Check out your sentences. Are they all long? Are they all short? Try a Where/When/Who/Action sentence or an Occasion /Position statement. |  |
| Editing | Edit and proofread yourself. Read your piece sentence by sentence. Read for Capitals, Usage, Punctuation and Spelling. Check for indenting. Use the rubric/checklist provided by class. |  |
| From Final Draft to Finished Essay | Practice reading your piece for publishing. |  |