



## 6-8 / Writing: Informational and Persuasive Pieces about Spinach

### Overview:

This lesson will challenge students to describe spinach and its qualities and uses in many different ways. The lesson begins with a brainstorming activity considering what spinach may look like from the perspective of a chef, historian, doctor, scientist, artist, and animal. After that students will be guided in writing informational pieces about spinach (identifying a main idea and including details) and/or opinion pieces about spinach (stating a point of view and reasons to support).

*(Time Needed: 24 minutes + 15 minutes optional extended time)*

### Common Core Standards:

- Text Types and Purposes
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1. Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content*.
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.D. Establish and maintain a formal style.
    - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2. Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/ experiments, or technical processes.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.C. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.E. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.
  - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.F. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

Objectives:

- Students will write an opinion piece supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
- Students will write an informative piece to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

Materials:

- Hats or props to represent different types of people (chef, historian, doctor, scientist, artist)
- Spinach plant, spinach leaves, or photos of spinach
- [Narrative Writing Mind Map Poster](#)
- [Informational Writing Mind Map Poster](#)
- Persuasive Writing Mind Map Poster
- Index Cards
- Pencils

Outline:

- Engage: Spinach observation (*optional taste test*)
- Explore: Seeing spinach's attributes and uses from many perspectives
- Explain: Reviewing elements of narrative informational, persuasive texts
- Extend: Writing narrative, informational, and persuasive texts about spinach

Lesson Plan:

- Engage (whole group / at the garden or in classroom) - 5 minutes
  - Observe a spinach plant together either in the garden or in the classroom. Ask students to describe the spinach plant. Encourage students to think creatively, remind them to use all of their senses.
  - Optional: Raw Taste Test

- Explore (small groups / at seats) - 10 minutes
  - Teacher asks students to think creatively about how spinach's qualities and uses may be viewed in different ways by different people.
  - Teacher distributes various hats or props (1 to each small group) to represent different types of people and models one thought they may have before asking students to develop their own in their small groups.  
Examples may include:
    - Chef:
      - What does this taste like?
      - What would happen if I cooked it?
      - What other foods would it taste good with?
    - Historian:
      - How long has this plant been growing on the planet?
      - How long have people been eating it?
    - Doctor:
      - What vitamins and minerals does this plant contain?
      - How does this plant help human bodies?
    - Scientist:
      - How does this plant grow?
      - What plant family does it belong to?
    - Artist:
      - What color would I use to paint it?
      - What shape are the different parts of the plant?
    - Animal:
      - Will this taste good?
      - Is it poisonous? Will it hurt me to eat it?
    - Plant:
      - Will this plant help me grow?
      - Will it drink all of my water?
      - Will I grow taller and get to the sunlight first?
- Explain (independent or in small groups / at seats) - 10 minutes
  - Introduce that there are many ways to write about spinach (or any topic) if we just think creatively.
  - Narrative
    - Explain narrative writing using a mind map to identify the elements:
      - Setting
      - Characters
      - Plot (beginning, middle, end)
    - The teacher can model or the students in their small groups can dictate a short narrative story to each other to practice.
  - Informational
    - Explain informational writing using a mind map to identify the elements:
      - Main Idea
      - Details
    - The teacher can model or the students in their small groups can dictate short informational pieces to each other to practice.

- Explain (continued):
  - Persuasive
    - Explain persuasive writing using a mind map to identify the elements:
      - Point of View
      - Reasons
    - The teacher can model or the students in their small groups can dictate short informational pieces to each other to practice.
- Extend (independent or in small groups / at seats) - 15 minutes
  - The teacher can assign each student to a different type of writing to be completed as a “quick write” on an index card.
  - When students have finished, certain students can read their pieces out loud for other students to guess what type of writing it was. These cards can also be edited, revised, and published to later be laminated and put into a center in which students can sort their class’s writing pieces by the type of writing or use whiteboard markers to highlight the different elements of each writing piece.
- Evaluate:

*Example Evaluation*

Persuasive Writing	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.A. Introduce claim(s) about a topic or issue, acknowledge and distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.B. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant, accurate data and evidence that demonstrate an understanding of the topic or text, using credible sources.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.C. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.D. Establish and maintain a formal style.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.1.E. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.	
Informative Writing	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.A. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories as appropriate to achieving purpose; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.B. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.C. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.D. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.E. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone.	
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.2.F. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.	