

Writing Activity 14: Informational Report

Step Follow along as the informational report “Cesar Estrada Chavez” is read.

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Cesar Estrada Chavez

Cesar Estrada Chavez, the grandson of Mexican immigrants, was born March 31, 1927, near Yuma, Arizona. In the late 1930s, Cesar and his family moved to California where they became part of the migrant community that traveled from farm to farm, community to community, picking fruits and vegetables during harvest times. Living conditions were poor for the farm workers; the days were long and the pay was small. The Chavez family often found themselves sleeping in their car.



Once Cesar completed the eighth grade, he quit school and worked full-time in the vineyards. Cesar joined the Navy in 1944 and served for two years, fighting in World War II. After completing his military duty, he moved back to California and returned to work in the fields. Cesar began to see a need for change. In 1948, he took part in an unsuccessful strike to protest low wages and poor working conditions. By 1952, Cesar was traveling throughout California, making speeches in support of farm workers' rights and urging Mexican-Americans to register to vote.

Cesar led a successful strike of California grape-pickers in 1965 that lasted for five years. The striking workers demanded higher wages and encouraged Americans to boycott grapes. The strike attracted national attention, and for the first time, increased public awareness of the terrible conditions farm workers faced. Chavez was able to rally millions of supporters for the farm workers' cause.

Throughout his lifetime, Cesar continued to fight for farm workers' rights. He also fought against the use of toxic pesticides on grapes and other produce. Cesar advocated nonviolent protest and became well respected throughout the country. Cesar E. Chavez died on April 23, 1993, but his legacy of establishing farm workers' rights continues, today.

Step There are several things to keep in mind as you plan and write your own informational report. Remember, a good informational report includes the following parts:

2

- a title
- tells what your report is about
- includes only important information
- tells what you have learned

Step Use the following prompt to complete the prewriting and writing activities:

3

Read through the information given about the Underground Railroad on the next page. Use the Information Planning Guide to select and group the information you will use to create paragraphs that provide the reader with information about the Underground Railroad. Use the information you gather in the planning guide to complete your graphic organizer. You do not have to use every fact to complete your report. You will need to organize the material and add words of your own.

Write a report on the Underground Railroad. Use the facts given, or add facts that you know. Use the informational report organizer to write an introduction, a body of one to three paragraphs, and a summary that ends your report.

Step
3

Facts About the Underground Railroad

- The Underground Railroad wasn't a railroad at all.
- The Underground Railroad was a network of anti-slavery Northerners who provided food, shelter, and a safe place for slaves seeking freedom.
- The purpose of the Underground Railroad was to help slaves reach safety in free states or in Canada.
- Runaway slaves used the North Star to guide their way.
- Slaves who escaped looked for "stations" in towns where free blacks and others would help hide them.
- "Conductors" met runaways at border points, such as Cincinnati, Ohio.
- Harriet Tubman was a famous "conductor" who was nicknamed "Moses."
- The runaways faced dangers of being captured by bloodhounds or patrollers.
- Handbills would often advertise the escape of a slave.
- Runaways would travel at night, often following rivers and staying off roads.
- Some historians believe the Underground Railroad helped make people aware of the evils of slavery.
- "A friend with friends" was a password used by conductors.
- With the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, runaway slaves were not safe in northern cities. The law stated that a person could be fined or imprisoned for not helping a federal marshal arrest a runaway.
- The Society of Friends, or Quakers, actively fought for the rights of runaways.
- A lantern on a hitching post would signal a "safe house."
- A good friend of Harriet Tubman was the Quaker businessman Thomas Garrett. Garrett worked the Underground Railroad for over 40 years.
- The routes to freedom were often over 500 hundred miles long.
- For some runaways, the journey to Canada took from two months to one year.
- Often, runaways would be forced to hide in wood boxes, secret passageways, or even specially designed cupboards.
- In 1865, slavery was abolished with the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

Step 4

Complete the information planning guide and the graphic organizer for an informational report as your prewriting activities. Use your planning guide and graphic organizer to help you think through your informational report.

Information Planning Guide

Topic:	
Planning Questions	Key Words – Short Notes
Who are they?	
What do they do?	
What do they look like?	
Where do they live?	
Why are they important?	
Summary – What are the most important things you have learned about this topic?	

INFORMATIONAL REPORT

Title: _____

INTRODUCTION (What is the report about?)

Paragraph 1:

Paragraph 2:

Paragraph 3:

SUMMARY (The most important points you want to make.)