

# Lesson Skill: Asking questions to gather information needed for writing

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## Strand Writing

**SOL** 6.7  
7.7  
8.7

## Materials

- Computers with Internet access
- 3 x 5 cards
- Samples of good trifold brochures

## Lesson

### Module 1

1. Ask students to name some state parks in Virginia, and list their responses on the board. Tell students that they will be writing an informational brochure about a Virginia state park of their choice and that they will formulate some questions about the information needed in such a brochure.
2. Ask students to brainstorm with a partner to construct questions about the information that should be included in the brochure, such as the following:
  - Where is the park located?
  - Are picnics allowed in the park?
  - Does it have an overnight camping area?
  - Are fires for cooking allowed?
  - What are the special features of the park?
3. When they are finished, ask each pair to share one question, and make a class list of questions on the board.
4. When the class list is sufficiently complete, ask students to write each question from the list on a 3 x 5 card and then to group the cards by categories, such as water sports, camping, location, and hours of operation.
5. Have students go to the Virginia state parks Web site and pick a park in their geographical region to research. Have them gather the information that will answer their questions and write the answers to the questions on the cards.
6. Have students organize the information and draft an informational brochure.

## Module 2

1. Show students samples of good trifold brochures, pointing out the various kinds of information that are included and the layout of the information. Also point out design features, such as the use of various fonts, bold, italics, graphics, and pictures.
2. Distribute copies of the attached “Brochure Template,” and have students fill in the information they gathered about a state park.
3. Have students create a draft of their state park brochure, either on computers or by hand. (If students are working on computers, word processing software commonly provides a template for a trifold brochure.) Make sure students include the following components/features in their brochures:
  - Title
  - Graphics and/or picture
  - Caption for graphics and/or picture
  - Sidebar
  - Glossary
  - Map
  - Scale for map
  - Italics
  - Bold
  - Subheading
  - Web address
  - Numbered list
4. Distribute copies of the “Virginia State Park Brochure—Self-Evaluation” handout, and have students evaluate and score their own brochures. Collect these self-evaluations along with the drafts of the brochures.

### Strategies for Differentiation

- Build background knowledge by using available technology to project the Web site of a state park. Use the images only to work as a class to create a K-W-L chart. As the site is toured, allow students to share what they know about the park. Then allow students to generate questions concerning what they want to learn about the park. Use the questions as the guide to explore the information on the site. Record answers to the questions, as well as additional relevant information, in the L column of the chart. Keep this visual as a class model for students to refer to when they research the park of their choice.
- Students will use a K-W-L chart to generate their questions and record the information from their research on a park of their choice.
- Research and the creation of the brochure may be conducted collaboratively.



**Brochure Template**

Front Side

<p><b>PANEL 4</b> Description of picnicking and dining facilities in the park</p>	<p><b>BACK COVER</b> Mailing address of park Phone number of park Web address of park Other essential information, such as opening hours, fees</p>	<p><b>FRONT COVER</b> Name of park Location of park Picture and caption</p>
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Back Side

PANEL 1	PANEL 2	PANEL 3
Introduction to the park Numbered list of the outdoor activities available	Description of the natural beauty in the park	Special highlights of the park

**Virginia State Park Brochure—Self-Evaluation**

Use the rubrics in the table below to score your own state park brochure:

**Organization:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Pictures and graphics:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Internet use:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Quality of information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL POINTS:** \_\_\_\_\_

Category	Score Point 4	Score Point 3	Score Point 2	Score Point 1
<b>Organization</b>	Information is very organized with well-constructed paragraphs and subheadings.	Information is organized with well-constructed paragraphs.	Information is organized, but paragraphs are not well-constructed.	The information appears to be disorganized.
<b>Pictures and graphics</b>	Pictures and graphics are neat and accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Pictures and graphics are accurate and add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Pictures and graphics are neat and accurate and sometimes add to the reader's understanding of the topic.	Pictures and graphics are not accurate OR do not add to the reader's understanding of the topic.
<b>Internet use</b>	Successfully uses suggested Internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Usually able to use suggested Internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Occasionally able to use suggested Internet links to find information and navigates within these sites easily without assistance.	Needs assistance or supervision to use suggested Internet links and/or to navigate within these sites.
<b>Quality of information</b>	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes several supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. It includes one or two supporting details and/or examples.	Information clearly relates to the main topic. No details and/or examples are given.	Information has little or nothing to do with the main topic.

