Our Changing Community
Conducting Research
Grade Levels K-4

Objectives: In order to understand the essential question of, “How has my community changed over time?” students ask “I Wonder” questions, interview community elders, conduct research using a graphic organizer, interpret historic photographs, and write a report. 

Time Needed: Approximately 6 hours

Vermont’s Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities:
1.8 Report Writing
1.19 Research
4.5 Students understand continuity and change
5.14 Students respond to media

Grade Level Expectations:
H&SS1-2:3 Students design research
H&SS1-2:4 Students conduct research
H&SS1-2:8 Students connect the past with the present

Materials & Resources:
Landscape Change Program Archive, www.uvm.edu/landscape For example, photos from Hinesburg, Vermont
“Same and Different” Worksheet
Assignment Organizer & “Before and After” Observations Sheet

Activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Hook Your Students</th>
<th>4. Culminating Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are asked to draw a picture showing what they think their town looked like in the past. Students ask “I Wonder” questions. This activity can be used as a pre-assessment.</td>
<td>Students write a report about how their town has changed over time. These reports will be presented to the Town Hall for display.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. Introduce Concepts</th>
<th>5. Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are introduced to a research framework (Assignment Organizer, below) that will ask them to research how the town of Hinesburg has changed over time.</td>
<td>Vermont State Writing Rubric for Reports: <a href="http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_curriculum/literacy-writing/benchmarks/grade_3/grade_3_1_8_report.pdf">http://education.vermont.gov/new/pdfdoc/pgm_curriculum/literacy-writing/benchmarks/grade_3/grade_3_1_8_report.pdf</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. Apply Skills</th>
<th>6. Extensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students visit with elders, ask questions, observe historical photographs, and collect data in order to make comparisons that will show how their town has changed or remained the same over time.</td>
<td>Students write oral histories of Hinesburg elders who are interviewed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Author: Pat O’Brien, Hinesburg Community School. Specialty: Generalist
Our Changing Community
Lesson Plan Details

**Detailed summary of curricular format:**

Students will learn a process for conducting research. Students will ask questions, collect data and use resources to show how some aspects of their community have changed over time and how others have remained the same. They will use several resources (interviews of Hinesburg Elders and the Landscape Change website) in order to make some comparisons. Students will write a report showing what they have learned.

**Lesson One: The Hook (45min)** Students will be asked to draw a picture showing what their town might have looked like in the past.
- Provide time for the children to share with one another in small groups
- Next ask the children working in small groups to write down “I wonder” questions about the past.
- Meet as a whole group and compile a list of “I wonder” questions to be used for interviewing Hinesburg elders.

**Lesson Two: (35min)** Introduce the Assignment Organizer (Research Format) students will use to collect their data. This will be done as a whole group.
- Have a brief discussion about how many writers, historians, and scientists need to conduct research in order to find the answers to their questions.
- Next using overheads of the assignment organizer go over the different steps of the framework as a whole group.
- Tell the children they will be trying to find the answers to their “I wonder” questions.
- Ask for some suggestions on how we can find answers to our questions.
- Make a list of resources
- Sum up the steps with the class.

**Lesson Three: (35min)** Interview Guest Speakers
- Guest speakers will talk with the children and then children will have an opportunity to ask questions from the class generated “I wonder” questions.

**Lesson Four: (30 min)** Students will complete the “Same and Different” Worksheet based on the answers to their interview questions with Hinesburg Elders.
- Students will work in small groups completing the worksheet together.
- Call all groups together for a whole group sharing time.
- Complete a class chart with each group sharing their ideas.
- Save this class chart to be used later as a reference for their report writing.

**Lesson Five: (40min)** Go to the media center or use a projector so that the whole class can view the Landscape Change Program website together.
- Tell the class they will be viewing photos of their town long ago.
- Tell students they will need to be detectives and to use their observation skills to look very closely to find changes in our town.
- Show photos and call on students to share what they have noticed.
• After viewing the photos, working in small groups, have students complete a worksheet that will be divided into the categories of buildings, roads, landscape and transportation. You can have students create categories themselves or you can choose to create categories for your students. You may want to adjust these categories according to the particular slides you are viewing. Tell them they will need to either draw pictures or write down the changes they noticed.
• Share as a whole group and create a class chart.
• Keep this chart for students to use as a reference for writing their reports.

Lesson Six: (Writing activity will take several days) Using a graphic organizer students will organize their ideas and may use the class charts as a resource to show at least three ways that their community has changed overtime and three ways it has remained the same. You may choose to differentiate expectations depending upon grade level and individual differences. Using their completed graphic organizer students will take the information they have collected and write a report. They will be asked to “Tell how Your Community has changed in some ways and remained the same in other ways”.
• Students will use the painted essay format to write a report.
• Students will need:
  An introduction stating their focus
  Proof paragraphs with supporting details
  A conclusion that restates the focus and makes a personal connection.
(Expectations can be differentiated based upon individual student needs.)
Our Changing Community
Same and Different Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Same</th>
<th>Different</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>
Our Changing Community
Assignment Organizer and “Before and After” Observations Sheet

Mrs. O’Brien
Hinesburg Community School
K-3
Name:____________________

Super 3 Assignment Organizer

What is my essential question?
How has Hinesburg changed over time?

Super 3 #1 Plan (Begin!)

What am I supposed to do?

☐ Think of questions for our speakers.
☐ Fill out the compare and contrast chart.
☐ Write down my ideas.

What will it look like if I do a really good job?
My report will:
☐ be neat
☐ be spelled correctly
☐ use correct punctuation
☐ have a correctly labeled illustration

What do I need to make to show what I’ve learned?
Write a report.

What do I need to find out?
List questions:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6.
## Super 3 #2

**Do (Middle)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What can I use to find what I need?</th>
<th>What am I going to do or make?</th>
<th>Do it!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>people:</td>
<td>write: painted essay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UVM website:</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinesburg Digital Archives:</td>
<td></td>
<td>focus statement #1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R: Drive</td>
<td></td>
<td>focus statement #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>books:</td>
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<td>Proof paragraph #1</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>focus statement</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>supporting details</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Proof paragraph #2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>focus statement</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>supporting details</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Conclusion</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>restate focus</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>make a personal connection</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>draw:</td>
<td>labeled illustration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Super 3 #3:

**Review**

**PRODUCT**

**How will I know that I have done my best?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is my job done?</th>
<th>Did I do what I was supposed to do?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Should I do something else?</td>
<td>Am I proud of my work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Before

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roads</th>
<th>Buildings</th>
<th>Landscape</th>
<th>Transportation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</table>

### After

<table>
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</table>
Our Changing Community
Vermont State Writing Rubric for Reports, Grade 3

Vermont Department of Education

Fall 2002
Revised Annotations April 2007

1.8
Report
Benchmarks

1.8 In written reports, students organize and convey information and ideas accurately and effectively. This is evident when students:

PreK-4:
A. Analyze a situation based on information gathered, and suggest a course of action based on the information, and
B. Discuss a situation or problem, then predict its possible outcomes based on information gathered.
C. Engage the reader and develop a controlling idea;
D. Use appropriate organizing structures; and
E. Use a range of appropriate elaboration strategies such as including appropriate facts and details, describing the subject or narrating a relevant anecdote.

5-8: Evidence PreK-4 applies, plus -
F. Organize information gathered through reading, interviews, questionnaires, and experiments so that a reader can easily understand what is being conveyed;
G. Establish an authoritative stance on a subject, and appropriately identify and address the reader’s needs to know;
H. Include appropriate facts and details, excluding extraneous and inappropriate information; and
I. Develop a controlling idea that conveys a perspective on the subject.

9-12: Evidence PreK – 8 applies, plus -
J. Use a variety of strategies to develop the report, and
K. Organize text in a framework appropriate to purpose, audience, and context.

Grade 3 Benchmarks

A Penguin’s Life Exceeds the Standard (4)
How the Coyote Survives in Vermont Exceeds the Standard (4)
Mrs. Parks Meets the Standard (3)
Dr. Carver Meets the Standard (3)
Squids Meets the Standard (3)
Lobsters Below the Standard (2)
Tule Elk Below the Standard (1)
## Standard 1.8 Writing to Inform Revised Rubric
### K - 4
1.8 In written reports, students organize and convey information and ideas accurately and effectively.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions of Writing Standard 1.5 Criteria</th>
<th>Score Point 4 (Grades 3 – 4) Shows evidence of exceeding the standard</th>
<th>Score Point 3 (Grades 2 – 3) Shows evidence of meeting the standard</th>
<th>K – 3 Below the Standard (Grades 1 – 2) Shows evidence of being below the standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Includes relevant background information (context)</td>
<td>Includes relevant background information (context)</td>
<td>Little context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Context</td>
<td>Focus is clear</td>
<td>Focus is clear</td>
<td>No context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Focus/Controlling Idea</td>
<td>Report stays on focus</td>
<td>Report stays on focus</td>
<td>Topic and/ or focus may be unclear and/or shift</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Evidence of gathered information</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Audience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organization</strong></td>
<td>Has clear, consistent coherence and organization</td>
<td>Has clear, consistent coherence and organization</td>
<td>May have some organizational structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Overall coherence</td>
<td>Has compelling introduction and/or conclusion that supports focus</td>
<td>Has introduction, body, and conclusion that support focus</td>
<td>May have little or no organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Appropriate organizational patterns</td>
<td>Uses transitions</td>
<td>Uses some transitions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Details/Elaboration</strong></td>
<td>Has a depth of information</td>
<td>Has some supporting information</td>
<td>May have random and/or irrelevant details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Naming</td>
<td>Details are relevant to topic, purpose, and audience</td>
<td>Details support the focus</td>
<td>Ideas are not elaborated or details are insufficient to support focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describing</td>
<td>Uses a variety of elaboration strategies</td>
<td>Ideas are elaborated appropriate to grade level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explaining</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Comparing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Voice and Tone</strong></td>
<td>Voice of a knowledgeable person</td>
<td>Voice is of a person who desires to convey gathered information</td>
<td>Uses confusing language (sentence structure and vocabulary).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocabulary</td>
<td>Uses effective vocabulary, sentence structure and/or variety</td>
<td>Uses appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure and/or variety</td>
<td>Uses pale vocabulary and basic sentence structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sentence structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sentence variety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The benchmarks define the performance level of the descriptors for each grade.

Grade 3 Writing Benchmarks: Standard 1.8 (Reports) 2
A Penguin’s Life

It is cold here in Antarctica. I’m in an egg and there’s not very much room in here. This egg is the size of a grapefruit.

My egg is under my dad’s blubber. It’s warm in here. Once my egg starts to crack it takes two days to crack all the way open.

When I’m out I have thick gray fur to keep me warm. My dad is here with me, but my mom is out getting food for me. When my mom comes back she has a lot of food stored in a place in her throat called a crop. She regurgitates the food in my mouth. After I have had a good meal of squid, krill, and fish, I can start to waddle around.

In six months I can go on my own, but when I go swimming I have to watch out for leopard seals, killer whales, and squas. They are my enemies.

Now that I’m all grown up I can start to mate. I have had an egg. Now the baby can go through the hassle of being in that small grapefruit size egg.
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Exceeds the Standard

This creative third grade report is focused on the life cycle of a penguin. The first person point of view is an integral part of the focus. A compelling opening engages the reader, and context is clear. The voice is of a knowledgeable person using topic-specific vocabulary. The writing is organized in a chronological and cyclical manner, with the reference to the size of the egg repeated in the conclusion. It has clear, consistent organization and a depth of information. All details are relevant to the topic, purpose, and audience, giving it a strong, unified sense of purpose. The writer uses effective sentence structure.
How the Coyote Survives in Vermont

The coyote is a dog-like animal that can grow to 3’ long and weigh up to 40 pounds. They also have strong canine teeth near the front of the mouth. Coyotes’ teeth are also used for holding their prey. When February comes, coyotes find a mate to have babies with. The male coyote goes to get the food while the female coyote watches the babies. Other times, the female coyote goes and gets the food and the male coyote watches the babies. I think the habitat for the coyote is good in Vermont because their food is plentiful.

The Vermont habitat is good for the coyote because of the forests, mountains, and ponds. Also, the coyote can adapt to mostly all seasons. The coyote finds a cave and turns it into its den to stay out of the rain and to escape from other animals.

In addition, the food is plentiful for the coyote because they can eat deer, jackrabbits, white rabbits, mice, and on occasion, rats. Vermont has lots of these animals for the coyote to eat.

In conclusion, the coyote lives in Vermont because of the natural habitat and the good supply of food. If there were no forests in Vermont, there would not be any coyotes, and coyotes are magnificent animals.
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Exceeds the Standard

Instead of writing all-you-want-to-know about coyotes, this third grade writer has focused the report on the food in the habitat of Vermont that helps the coyote survive. Even the context in the first paragraph is strongly connected to the idea of survival and food. Paragraphs are connected with effective transitions. In the conclusion the writer demonstrates synthesis of the information. The voice is of a knowledgeable person.
Mrs. Parks

Our class is learning about famous African Americans. My report is about Rosa Parks. Rosa Parks gave black people rights everywhere in our country. She also was a famous African American who started the bus boycott that desegregated blacks from whites. Rosa Parks is the bravest person I know.

One brave thing Rosa Parks did was act calm when she was being arrested for not moving, this is important because she gave courage to people who were afraid. She led a march to end desegregation, that was important because black people learned to stand up for themselves. She refused to sit in the back of the bus, this was good because people learned not to be pushed around. She fought for the right for blacks and women to vote.

One time I was brave when I got my retainer. When I am brave I think of Rosa Parks. If it wasn’t for Rosa Parks, the world may still be segregated. She was certainly a brave woman.
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Conclusion does have reflection on significance of information

Meets the Standard

This report meets the standard for third grade: it has relevant background information and a clear focus. The strength of the writing is the development of the idea of bravery in the second paragraph. Despite a digression, the writing is enhanced by the reflection contained in the conclusion. Voice is of a person who desires to convey information. The writer uses appropriate vocabulary.
Doctor Carver

Our class is learning about famous African Americans, and I'm learning more about George Washington Carver from the book The Story of George Washington Carver, by Eva More. He helped many black farmers by making their soil better and finding many uses for plants.

He made the soil better by putting rags, trash and manure in the soil. He learned that when things rot they make good soil. He found many uses for the sweat potatoes like flour, starch, sugar, molasses, vinegar, dye and glue. He spent months in his laboratory finding these uses. After he invented more uses and there where 100 uses in all. He made 500 uses for the peanut: some were soup, mock chicken, cookies, ice cream and coffee. Because of his work black people weren’t so poor.

George Washington Carver helped the world by finding many uses for plants that use less nitrogen. He showed black people that if you keep on trying you can do anything. I help the earth by picking up trash and recycling it just like George Washington Carver.
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George Washington Carver helped the world by finding many uses for plants that use less nitrogen. **He showed black people that if you keep on trying you can do anything.** I help the earth by picking up trash and recycling it just like George Washington Carver.

---

**Meets the Standard**

This report fulfills all the requirements for meeting the standard for third grade. It has a clear focus, and an introduction, body, and conclusion that support the focus. In addition, the writer demonstrates understanding of the information. Voice is of a person who desires to convey knowledge.
Squids

There are many kinds of Squids. The giant deep-sea Squid can be longer than a city bus and they are cousins of the octopus. Squid have a long body and ten arms. They live in the Caribbean. The Squid protects itself by hiding.

A Squid can squirt out a blob of inky stuff. The inky blob may confuse hungry creatures. Its eggs come in handy because it surrounds itself with eggs and protects itself that way. Isn’t this amazing that it can be camouflaged in one second? They hide by moving with jet propulsion. If a shark tries to attack a Squid it will shoot out ink so it confuses the shark and zips away. Remember about the eggs? This is something like it. They swim together to protect themselves. They Squirt out dark liquid to hide themselves from enemies. They change their color and patterns to blend in with their surroundings.

Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.
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Therefore you can see that the squid have many ways of hiding.

Writer restates focus but has no “aha” statement

Meets the Standard

Rather than writing an all-you-want-to-know report, this writer focuses on the different ways squid hide to protect themselves. The introduction contains appropriate context. The writer elaborates effectively on several ideas, using a strong vocabulary and a grade-appropriate variety of sentence structures. The voice is of a person who desires to convey information.
Lobsters

Lobsters are lovely. There are 30 types of lobsters. There are 45 species of the Palinade family. Lobsters share coral reefs. Lobsters like warm water. Lobsters have a fan tail.

Lobsters are lovely. Lobsters have big backs. People think lobsters are nice.

Lobsters like Cape Cod.

Lobsters are lovely. They hide in mud sand and plants predator’s.

Lobsters are very lovely. Lobsters can eat fish in a matter of minutes. When lobsters come out they like a grown up. Lobsters like to live under rocks.

Usually lobsters swim by their self. They get food for their young. A female lobster is called a hen. Female lobsters carry their eggs until they hatch. A female lobster has a bigger tail than the male.

I use to think that lobsters pinch if you pick them up, but they only pinch you if you bother them.
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I use to think that lobsters pinch if you pick them up, but they only pinch you if you bother them.

Below the Standard (2)
The attempted focus in this piece (“Lobsters are lovely”) is meaningless as a controlling idea. Restating an irrelevant adjective does not work as a focus. There is a quantity of information in no particular order, with some irrelevant opinions. The sentence structure is simple and basic with little variation. This all-you-want-to-know report is below the standard for third grade.
Tule Elk

The Tule Elk is unique because of the antlers. I love the Tule Elk because of the fur.

The Tule Elk used to be endangered but is now protected by the California State Reserve. They were reduced in number by hunting and loss of habitat.

Tule Tule Elk can run 35 mph away from wolves, coytes and cougars. If they are weak or injured the predators kill them.

The Tuel Elk used to be on the endangered list. I was glad to find out that they are off the list and a protected. They are a beautiful animal.
Tule Elk is unique because of the antlers. I love the Tule Elk because of the fur.

The Tule Elk used to be endangered but is now protected by the California State Reserve. They were reduced in number by hunting and loss of habitat.

The Tule Elk can run 35 mph away from wolves, coytes and cougars. If they are weak or injured the predators kill them.

The Tule Elk used to be on the endangered list. I was glad to find out that they are off the list and are protected. They are a beautiful animal.