TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE:
UNIT STARTER STUDENT ACTIVITY PACKET
GRADE 3 ELA UNIT CONNECTED TO
EARTH SCIENCE
Pluto's Secret (IRA), Daily Task 1

Writing Task: What was Pluto's secret? How did this change impact scientific thinking? Write a paragraph using text evidence to explain your thinking. In your writing, be sure to:

- write an introduction;
- use information from the text to describe Pluto's secret;
- use information from the text to describe how this change impacted scientific thinking;
- use linking words and phrases to connect your ideas;
- use vocabulary words from the text to explain your thinking; and
- write a conclusion statement.
Our Planet Earth (SR), and “Just Right” (SR) from And Then There Were Eight: Poems about Space

Daily Task 2

Writing Task: In your journal, write a letter to the extraterrestrial being explaining why Earth is just the right distance from the sun. Using evidence from both texts and precise language, summarize what you have learned about the importance of the sun and its distance from Earth. In your writing, be sure to:

- introduce your topic;
- develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details;
- group related information together;
- use illustrations when needed;
- use linking words and phrases; and
- end with a concluding statement.

Optional: Share your written response with a partner. Partners should provide feedback about content in the letter.
Writing Task:
In Pluto's Secret, scientists used new inventions and research to learn new facts about Pluto. Imagine you are a Jr. researcher studying the relationship between the sun and Earth. In your journal, write a brief to explain to other scientists the significance of the relationship between Earth and the sun.

- introduce the topic;
- develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details from the text and your graphic organizer;
- use linking words and phrases;
- use precise language to provide details about the topic;
- and provide a conclusion; and
- use the conventions of language correctly.
“Gravity” (IRA) and “What is an Orbit?” (SR) Daily Task 4

Congratulations! You have just been hired as a spokesperson for important NASA astronomers. Prepare a brief to share with your partner what you have learned about gravity and why gravity is important. Write a brief explaining what gravity is, how gravity impacts people and things on Earth, and how gravity affects objects within our solar system. Be sure your paragraph includes:

- introduce your topic;
- group related information together;
- add details and facts from the text;
- use linking words and phrases; and
- write an effective concluding statement.
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The Planets (SR), Daily Task 5

Using your Dash Facts collected for the first four planets in the text, select a planet to compare and contrast to Earth. Are there any similarities to Earth? What differences do you notice? Write a paragraph to summarize your information.

In your paragraph, be sure to:

- Write an introduction;
- Use information from the text to describe Pluto's secret;
- Use information from the text to describe how this change impacted scientific thinking;
- Use linking words and phrases to connect your ideas;
- Use vocabulary words from the text to explain your thinking;
- Write a conclusion statement.
Imagine you are an astronomer that searches the skies for new discoveries. You have just found a new planet past Pluto! Your job is to add a page to Gail Gibbon's book, *The Planets*, to teach others about the new planet you discovered. Follow Gail Gibbon's style and craft. Think about what you have learned in this text and others in the unit to create an additional page for the book.
NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) is considering taking people to other planets in the solar system. Using information you've gained in the unit so far, and the research notes you've collected in your Dash Facts graphic organizer, imagine you are the meteorologist from the Solar Weather Channel. Create a news report titled “Go Here, Not There” to persuade NASA to take people to one planet instead of another one. Your news report should do the following:

- introduce your two planets;
- develop your opinion of which planet to travel to instead of another planet;
- provide reasons to support your opinion on why one planet is better for travel than the other;
- consider weather conditions, what you would need to take with you, how you would get your oxygen, and how you would stay warm or cool;
- provide a concluding statement or section; and
- use linking words and phrases to connect your opinion and reasons.
Thinking about what you already know about space, select an event from the story that the author used to convey accurate scientific information. How did the author demonstrate that space concept accurately in the text? In contrast, what imaginary concepts or facts about space did the author include in the story? In your paragraph, be sure to:

- Introduce a topic;
- Group related information together;
- Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details;
- Provide a conclusion;
- Use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within each category; and
- Use specific vocabulary from our text.
Writing Task: Yesterday, we explored how Danny and Walter's adventures in *Zathura* compared to realistic experiences in outer space. Re-read what you wrote in your packet about some of realistic and imaginary events that took place in the book. Now, consider how Walter and Danny's reactions to those events shaped these characters from the beginning of the story through the ending. Explain, using key details from the text how Danny and Walter’s actions and dialogue helped communicate the central message. Use our class anchor chart to help you write your paragraph.

In your paragraph, be sure to:
- introduce a topic;
- group related information together;
- develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details;
- provide a conclusion;
- use linking words and phrases to connect ideas within each category; and
- use specific vocabulary from our text.
Writing Task: Using text-based evidence, the anchor chart, and our class discussion, what advancements in technology have resulted over time that helped scientists learn more about the universe?

Select at least four technologies that helped scientists learn and make new discoveries about our universe. Write to describe these four technological advancements in order, and how each technology helped scientists to learn new information about our universe. In your writing, be sure to:

- include an introduction;
- use information from the text to describe at least four technological advancements that helped scientists learn more about the universe;
- use information from the text to describe how the new technology helped scientists learn new information about our universe;
- use linking words and phrases to connect your ideas;
- use vocabulary words from the text to explain your thinking; and
- write a concluding statement.
End of Unit Task

Students, imagine you are a junior NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) scientist that has been studying our solar system. The president has asked you if we can relocate people to other planets. Prepare a brief for the president on why Earth is ideally suited for life, but the other planets are not.

Be sure to do the following when you write your brief:

- write an introduction;
- use information from unit texts to explain why earth is ideally suited for life;
- use information from unit texts to explain why each of the other planets in our solar system is not suitable for life. In your explanations, be sure to talk about the specific characteristics the planet has based on its position in relation to the sun;
- use linking words and phrases to connect your ideas;
- Use vocabulary words from our words of study: climate, patterns, distance, atmosphere, surface; and
- write a conclusion statement.

Pretend your classmates are presidential advisors whose job is to provide feedback on your brief before you send it to the president. When you are finished writing your brief, present it to the “advisors”. After they have provided you feedback, make necessary revisions to your brief before submitting.

When you are playing the role of the advisor, ask clarifying questions. Some possible questions are as follows:

- What might be some other key facts?
- How could you use the vocabulary words in your writing?
- What is your main message to the president?
- In what ways are you connecting your ideas together?