



**EXPEDITIONARY  
LEARNING**

# **Grade 4: Module 2B:** **Performance Task**



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### Summary of Task

This performance task gives students a chance to blend their research of animal defense mechanisms with narrative writing. In this task, students use their research about a specific animal as the basis for a choose-your-own-adventure story. The narrative opens with a short informational piece describing the student’s animal and its defense mechanism. Then students write a narrative where their animal is featured as the main character that faces a dangerous predator and thus has to use a defense mechanism. The choose-your-own-adventure format lets students envision and write two different variations of the plot, with each variation featuring the use of a different defense mechanism. The first variation will be scaffolded during writing instruction throughout Unit 3, with students using teacher feedback and peer critique to improve and revise their work. The second variation will serve as the End of Unit 3 “on-demand” assessment. After this assessment, students will complete a final revision of their work based on teacher feedback from the end of unit assessment, and then present their final narrative, with both plots, to the class or another audience. **This task addresses NYSP12 ELA CCLS RI.4.9, W.4.2, W.4.3, W.4.7, W.4.8, and W.4.9b.**

### Format

#### Choose-Your-Own-Adventure Narrative

The format of the narrative will be a choose-your-own-adventure genre, based on a study of a mentor text *Can You Survive the Wilderness* by Matt Doeden. It will include an introduction with a short informational essay about animals the students researched. The narrative will be research-based and have two variations or versions (i.e., two possible outcomes for the plot). One version of the narrative will be scaffolded (during Unit 3 instruction). The other version will function as an on-demand assessment.

### Standards Assessed through This Task

- RI.4.9 Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.
- W.4.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
- W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.4.7 Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
- W.4.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
- W.4.9b Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.



### Student-Friendly Writing Invitation/Task Description

After researching informational texts on a specific animal and its defense mechanisms, create a choose-your-own-adventure book about your chosen animal. Write an introduction that describes your animal's physical characteristics, habitat, predators, and defense mechanisms. In your narrative, describe an encounter with a predator and two possible defense mechanisms for survival. Use details and examples from your research to develop your narrative, including concrete words, phrases, and sensory details to convey your animal's experiences.

### Key Criteria for Success (Aligned with NYSP12 ELA CCLS)

Below are key criteria students need to address when completing this task. Specific lessons during the module build in opportunities for students to understand the criteria, offer additional criteria, and work with their teacher to construct a rubric on which their work will be critiqued and formally assessed.

#### **Your choose-your-own-adventure narrative should include:**

- An illustrated cover page with title
- An informational page with a physical description of your animal, its habitat, its defense mechanisms, and predators
- An "About Your Adventure" page explaining how to read the book and the possible challenges your animal could encounter (in question form)
- An introduction to your narrative, describing the challenge your animal encounters and two choices (defense mechanisms) it could make in order to survive
- A page for each choice (defense mechanism) describing the experience or events showing how your animal responds to the choice
- List of sources from your research



### Options for Students

- Students will write their narrative individually. They will use their research notes to plan their narratives.
- Students might have a partner to assist as they work on their narrative, but the narrative will be an individual's product.
- Student narratives could be various lengths, shorter for those for whom language is a barrier.
- Students could present their narratives to their own class as practice for presenting to others in the school community.

### Options for Teachers

- Students may present their narratives to their own class, to other classes in the school, or to parents or other adults.
- Student narratives could be accompanied by additional illustrations.
- Student narratives could be displayed in the room, in the school library, or in the community to enhance student motivation with the potential authentic audiences.

### Resources and Links

#### Video:

- Three-banded armadillo: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wSGQrRuyP8U>
- Monarch butterfly: <http://dsc.discovery.com/tv-shows/life/videos/monarch-butterfly-winter-migration.htm>
- Springbok gazelle: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qr5Sru8gGsk>
- Mimic octopus: [http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfjz1d\\_mimic-octopus\\_animals](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xfjz1d_mimic-octopus_animals)

### Central Text and Informational Texts

- Marilyn Singer, *Venom* (Plain City, OH: Darby Creek Publishing, 2007), ISBN: 978-1-58196-043-3. (Teacher copy only).
- Christina Wilsdon, *Animal Behavior: Animal Defenses* (New York, NY: Chelsea House, 2009), ISBN: 978-1-60413-089-8.
- Matt Doeden, *Can You Survive the Wilderness?* (North Mankato, MN: Capstone Press, 2012), ISBN: 978-1-4296-7996-1. (Teacher copy only).
- Additional informational texts listed in each separate unit overview document.