

Writing Workshop

Grade 6- Personal Narrative

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Readington Township Board of Education

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Writing Workshop

Grade 6- Personal Narrative Length of Unit: Four Weeks

Unit Rationale

Unit Summary:

This unit will continue to build on the students' understanding of the Writer's Workshop format that was utilized in fifth grade. Students will use a model of writing they can easily relate to (themselves) in order to ease the transition into the middle school environment. Students will draw from their own personal experiences to craft a personal narrative referring to a memory, or small moment in their life. This type of writing is a "window into a life and reveals who the writer truly is." Additionally, the reading of memoirs and narratives will take place throughout the unit with the use of read alouds, independent reading, and unit texts to support students as they immerse themselves in the genre.

The personal narrative crafted by students will allow teachers to view individual writing structures and level of maturity in students' writing. Students will learn the process of Writer's Workshop, and establish structured routines that will be followed throughout the year. Students will also learn the components of the writing process that will be repeated throughout all writing units. Throughout this unit students will continue to enhance the structure, development and language conventions of their writing. Students will develop characters, setting, and plot throughout their writing, especially in the heart of their story. They will blend description of characters, action, dialogue and character inner thinking. The personal narrative unit will develop students' craft of writing so that students are able to show *why* characters did what they did by including their thinking and their responses to what happened.

The personal narrative allows other students to get to know their peers' experiences through written form and begin to provide their peers with effective feedback and establish rapport amongst the students and teachers in the classroom. Personal narratives are essential to develop writing skills at an abstract level rather than in a concrete form so students can incorporate creativity and be able to explain author's meaning within the narrative.

Unit Rationale:

Students at the end of the unit should be able to write fast and furiously each time they write, producing two to three pages in a single setting, ten to twelve pages a week or more in total, and the same amount at home. Students will be able to remain engaged in writing project, which can include talking, planning, and drafting for sixty minutes. Students will continue to show initiative in their writing lives and work on both independent and unit-based projects for longer periods of time than is required. Sixth grade writers will revise

not only their drafts, but also their writing notebook entries, choosing to find ways to ratchet up their own work by using strategies they have learned, mentor texts, and talks with partners. Rather than following strategies to revise key places, a student in sixth grade might instead read through a piece of writing searching for places where the writing feels stronger or weaker and mark or rewrite those over and over. A student in sixth grade at the end of this unit might also start to revise by experimenting with craft to bring out significance. For example, rewriting a lead to start with description or dialogue, and also looking more closely at varying sentence length, word choice, punctuation moves, and so on. We expect that our writers in sixth grade will not wait for the editing phase of the writing process to ensure that she is using correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar. Our writers should spell correctly when writing. Writers in sixth grade will have a strong grasp of the commands of language and begin to see that language is the writer’s tool. Students will begin to see that editing is also about considering the tone and cadence of a piece, and begin to vary sentence length to create a desired rhythm or to affect meaning for the reader. (*Language Arts Core Curriculum Content Standards* <http://www.corestandards.org/ELA-Literacy/W/6> , *Performance Assessment* by Lucy Calkins)

Enduring Understandings	Essential Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you an author? • Why is conferring and getting feedback about your writing important? • What are the most important routines for being successful during writing workshop? • What is a personal narrative and how is it unique from other types of personal? • Why do writers draw from their own experiences while writing? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you an author? • Why is conferring and getting feedback about your writing important? • What are the most important routines for being successful during writing workshop? • What is a personal narrative and how is it unique from other types of personal? • Why do writers draw from their own experiences while writing?

Unit Content	Unit Skills
<p>Unit 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is Writer’s Workshop? • Transitional words and phrases to convey sequence • Dialogue that expresses character personality traits that helps to move the story along (indirect and direct 	<p>Unit 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View examples of transitional words/phrases in mentor texts and write using higher level transitional words to enhance writing. • Use dialogue to infer character’s personality traits to

quotes- intended for advanced writers during conferences)

- that expresses character personality traits that helps to move the story along (indirect and direct quotes- intended for advanced writers during conferences)
- Sensory language, descriptive detail, precise vocabulary, figurative language (literary devices)
- What is a personal narrative? How does an author incorporate deeper meaning into their writing?
- How to use examples for mentor texts to try new writing strategies and take risks.

create a “show not tell” picture. Students will see how dialogue is written in their novels and mentor texts.

- Students will take risks in their writing to develop mood, tone, setting, characters, and sensory language in order to engage the audience.
- Brainstorm memories and establish author’s purpose using a graphic organizer
- Listen to read aloud mentor texts and read samples of memoirs.

Structure

- Write a story that has tension, resolution, and realistic characters to convey an idea or lesson.
- Write a beginning in which not only sets the plot or story in motion, but also hints at the larger meaning the story will convey.
- Use transitional phrases to connect what happens to why it happens such as *If I hadn’t... I might not have..., because of..., although..., and little did I know that...*
- Write an ending that connects with what the story is really about.
- Give the readers a sense of closure by showing a new realization or insight or a change in character or narrator.
- Use paragraphs purposefully, perhaps to show time or setting changes, new parts of the story, or to create suspense for the readers.
- Create a sequence of events that are clear.

Development

- Develop realistic characters.
- Develop details, action, dialogue, and internal thinking that contributes to the deeper meaning of the story.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop character traits and emotions through what characters said and did. • Develop some relationships among characters to show <i>why</i> they acted and spoke as they did. Tell the internal as well as the external story. • Choose several key parts to stretch out and several more to move through more quickly. • Weave together precise descriptions, figurative language, and symbolism to help readers picture the setting, actions, and events to bring forth meaning. • Vary sentence structure to create pace and tone of the narrative and to engage readers. • Use language that fits the story’s meaning, for example, in parts that had dialogue, different characters use different kinds of language. <p>Language Conventions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use resources to be sure the words in the writing were spelled correctly. • Use punctuation to set the mood, convey meaning, and /or build tension in the story.
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Unit Standards	Core Vocabulary	Links to Technology	Resources
<p>College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Words that reveal emotion • Sensory language • Strong action • Personal Narrative • Conflict • Theme • Setting 		<p>Mentor Texts: <i>First Day of Middle School</i> by D’Andra Darwin (Found on RMS shared drive) <i>First Day of Middle School</i> by Priscilla Anne Flick (Found on RMS shared drive) <i>Eleven</i> by Sandra Cisneros</p>

<p>technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.</p> <p>Writing Standards for Grade 6</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characters • Mentor Text • Literary Devices • Sensory Details • Dialogue • Tag lines • Transitional Phrases • Transitional Words • Conferring • Conference 		<p>(Harcourt Anthology Text) <i>Fully Armed, We Hit the Beach</i> An excerpt from <i>Some Kind of Wise Guy</i> by Bill Ervolinio <i>Seedfolks</i> by Paul Fleishman <i>The Memory Box</i> by M. Bahr <i>The Wand in the Word</i> by Leonard Marcus <i>This is Just to Say</i> by Joyce Sidman <i>Boy: Tales of Childhood</i> by Roald Dahl <i>Guys Write for Guys Read</i> by Jon Scieszka <i>Looking Back</i> by Lois Lowry <i>Love that Dog</i> by Sharon Creech</p> <p>Teacher Resources:</p> <p>http://readingandwritingproject.com/</p> <p>Core Curriculum Content Standards http://www.corestandards.org/the-standards/english-language-arts-standards</p> <p>Writing Pathways Grades K-5 Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions (This resource includes 6th grade information as well as K-5.)</p>
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<p>sequences.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3a Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3b Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3c Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.</p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.6.3e Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.</p>			
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English Language Arts
Standards Language Grade 6

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.2](#)

Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.2a](#) Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.2b](#) Spell correctly.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.3](#) Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.3a](#) Vary sentence patterns for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.

[CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.6.3b](#)

Maintain consistency in style and tone.

Instructional Strategies	Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect ideas for a personal narrative • Draft a personal narrative • Publish a personal narrative • Develop characters, setting, and plot • Learn and write parts of a narrative story • Read samples of personal narratives • View/Learn/Practice the steps of the writing process • Partake in meaningful writing conferences • Set and follow through with goals as a writer • Practice strategies learned during mini lessons • Share writing with teacher and peers <p>Possible Mini Lessons for Personal Narrative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start with a shared writing: Write a personal narrative with the class as you are modeling thinking and developing sequence • The Teachers College Writing Process: collect/choose, plan, draft, revise/edit, publish • Collecting/Choosing Lessons <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing off a photo Writing off an object Writing off a neighborhood map Heart Map Emotions/Memories List Places Memories List Rereading and reflecting from collected entries in notebooks. • Planning (In the notebook) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrowing the topic Finding the heart of the story Mapping the draft-a draft plan • Drafting 	<p>Publication/Celebration by: October 1st</p> <p>Suggestions for conducting, grading, and responding to the assessments:</p> <p><u>Giving the Assessments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble all materials before the assessment day. • Inform the students in advance of the date and time of the assessment. • To help students remain aware of their pacing, the teacher might write “Time Started” and “Time Remaining” and change to indicate the current time remaining after every ten minutes. • Students who receive time-and-a-half or double time should receive the same modification for this assessment. • Students who receive scribing or directions read aloud should receive the same modification for this assessment. To facilitate multiple students hearing the text read aloud, teachers may record the directions and the text and have the students listen to the recording on individual devices (if available.) • During the assessment, teachers should take the opportunity to observe students’ test-taking behaviors, recording observations that may lead to small-group instruction during test prep. <p><u>Scoring the Assessments:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create teacher teams to grade student work that is not from your own classroom, including at least two teachers on a team so that another teacher can double-check the work if a grader is in doubt about the scoring, Ideally, set aside an hour for all teams on the grade level to come together to agree on an anchor paper: what can we all agree is a 1 on the rubric? What essay meets a 3 on the criteria on the rubric? This way there will be a shared sense of what truly meets the criteria. Make copies of the

Moving from the draft plan to the draft

Creating the lead

Creating the body

Creating the ending

Elaborating sentences and ideas

Using vivid language to write more

- Revision

What is the difference between editing and revision?

What does revision look like?

What are revision marks?

Stronger leads

Adding dialogue (real or imagined)

Strong action words

Sensory/vivid details

- Editing

Verb tense

Complex sentence structure

Spelling

Mini grammar lessons

anchor papers and use them to benchmark during the grading.

- Use data sheets to record the student data. Create a column on the data sheet that is titled “Next Steps” for the classroom teacher to fill in.

Planning for Responsive Teaching

- After scoring, teachers get back their own students’ work and meet to discuss next steps. Based on students’ performances in writing narratives, teachers can plan for support.

“On Demand” Writing Prompt- (This assessment should also be used as a pre-assessment in order to guide instruction and then again as a post assessment in order to determine success of learning.) Teachers should consider giving this prompt before and after the unit for self-reflection purposes.

Tell students:

“I’m really eager to understand what you can do as writers of narratives, of stories, so today, will you please write the best personal narrative, the best Small Moment, story that you can write? Make this be the story of one time in your life. You might focus on just a scene or two. You’ll have only forty-five minutes to write this true story, so you’ll need to plan, draft, revise, and edit in one sitting. Write in a way that allows you to show off all that you know about narrative writing. In your writing, make sure you write a beginning for your story, use transition words to tell what happened in order, elaborate to help readers picture your story, show what your story is really about, and write an ending for your story.”

Give students two chunks of time* to do this writing so we are given a glimpse into whether the writer takes a piece through rehearsing, drafting, and revising. *Lucy Calkins*

(*if needed)

Assess and score pieces using the grade specific rubric on the CD-Rom of Writing Pathways or download the rubric from the RMS shared drive.

On-Going Assessment

1. Writer's Notebooks

The first step toward becoming a teacher of writing is being sure that all students have a writer's notebook containing his/her current work. Each writer can also have a portfolio containing samples of their work accumulated throughout the year.

The most important work to save is that produced by the child's own hand. What this means is that the child has edited, word processed and published their writing. The writing should be dated, organized, saved and studied by the teacher, or department. The writer's notebook is the first tool for assessment. Any child's notebook is a window onto this child as a writer. Possible questions to consider when reviewing a child's writing notebook are:

- What are the range of topics that reoccur?
- How does the child's writing on this topic evolve over time?
- What does the child tend to do most often when h or she sits down to write?
- What patterns can one detect in how a child goes about starting a narrative?
- What happens to an entry that becomes a narrative or the child aims to be an essay?
- How does the child seem to keep himself going?
- What principles of elaboration are evident in the child's writing?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much of the child's writing seems to be done at school? At home? • What sorts of topics or genre or conditions seem to generate energy for the child? • To what extent do we see evidence that instruction is affecting what the child does? <p>2. <u>Goals and Rubrics</u> It is important that children and teachers are clearly working towards specified goals within the unit. The clear goals for each unit should help assess each student and our own teaching within each unit. Rubrics should name the intentions for each unit, look at the big ideas within each unit. Departments should develop their own rubrics to match the learning goals and needs of their students.</p> <p>Use word document titled Goals for Launching Writer's Workshop to assist in planning and assessment.</p> <p>3. <u>Writing Conferences</u> One-to-one writing conferences are especially important to assess where our writers are in their learning. Meet with students to provide teaching opportunities. Watch with a record sheet in hand, and if children do something you regard as significant to the unit, make a note of it. If you teach a child a particular skill or strategy then record that teaching point.</p>
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Differentiation	
<p><u>Strategies for Special Education & Intervention Students:</u> Introduce genre using a mentor text at students' independent level (Examples: Rollercoaster, Night Driving or Wise Guy series). This text will allow students to discover what is personal</p>	<p>Review and Assist students with 5th grade Narrative skills:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Structure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write a story of an important moment that reads like a

narrative and pick out the elements of a personal narrative.

Throughout this unit, increase mentor text level for students to achieve mastery at a higher level.

Start with a shared writing: Write a personal narrative with the class as you are modeling thinking and developing sequence.

Provide students with graphic organizers to organize ideas. Work individually with students to teach individual skills (dialogue, sentence structure...)

Provide a copy of the mentor text for students to use while writing.

Reread the mentor text a second or third time with the student(s)
Solo 6 Software for typing, editing, and word processing

story, even though it might be a true account.

- Write a lead that not only shows what was happening and where, but also gives clues to what will later become a problem for the main character.
 - Use transitional phrases to show passage of time in complicated ways, perhaps by showing things happening at the same time (*meanwhile, at the same time*) or flashback and flash-forward (*early that morning, three hours later*).
 - Write an ending that connected to the main part of the story. Give readers a sense of closure by relating the end of the story to something the character said, did, or realized.
 - Use paragraphs to separate different parts or time of the story and to show when a new character was speaking.
 - Develop parts of the story that are longer and more developed than others.
- Development**
- Develop characters, setting, and plot throughout the story, especially at the heart of the story by blending description, action, dialogue, and thinking.
 - Show *why* characters did what they did by including their thinking and their responses to what happened.
 - Slow down the heart of the story; make less important parts shorter and less detailed and blend storytelling and summary as needed.
 - Include precise details and use figurative language so that readers can picture the setting, characters, and events. Use some objects or actions as symbols to bring forth meaning.

- Vary sentences to create the pace and tone of the narrative.

Language Conventions

- Use what is known about word families and spelling rules to spell and edit.
- Use the dictionary and online spelling tools when necessary.
- Use commas to set off introductory parts of sentences, such as *One day at the park, I went of the slide.*
- Use commas to show talking directly to someone, such as *Are you mad, Mom?*