Unit 3: Narrative Writing: Writing Gripping Fictional Stories

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Within this unit the third graders return to narrative writing, with one important difference; now they will be writing fictional narratives. The children approach this unit not only as writers who understand what it means to write about a Small Moment and recreate it step by step, bit by bit; they also approach this unit as readers. They have lots of experience reading and listening to narrative picture books and chapter books and they will call upon this experience when they begin to write. As writers the children will focus on story structure and characters, creating characters who want something and plotting the trouble they will run into along the way. They will learn to add tension to their story writing and they will of course be "writing up a storm". Ultimately, they will view themselves as "writers of short stories". Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

Standards

LA.W.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using narrative technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LA.W.3.3.A	Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
LA.W.3.3.B	Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
LA.W.3.3.C	Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
LA.W.3.3.D	Provide a sense of closure.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.6	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.W.3.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self-correction and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.SL.3.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.3.1.C	Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.

LA.SL.3.1.D	Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
LA.SL.3.3	Ask and answer questions about information from a speaker, offering appropriate elaboration and detail.
LA.SL.3.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
LA.SL.3.6	Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.
LA.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.3.3.B	Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.
LA.L.3.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 3 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.3.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.3.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate conversational, general academic, and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal spatial and temporal relationships (e.g., After dinner that night we went looking for them).

Essential Questions

How do writers become invested in the Writing Workshop?
How do good habits, routines, and procedures within the workshop model enable writers to grow?
How do writers write with volume, stamina, and speed?
How can writing partners, mentor texts, and writing strategies help a writer?
How can writers "borrow" good writing from the books they have read?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- fictional narratives are a form of narrative writing, however the characters are created by the writer, therefore not real.
- storytelling is different from reporting.
- writers have many ways to develop and revise stories they create.
- writers have routines and procedures to follow in a workshop setting.
- writers learn all they can about a genre before writing.
- writers learn craft moves from a mentor text, for example slowing down or speeding up pace.
- writers need to revise and edit their written pieces, for instance by checking that verb tenses match.

Application of Skills: Students will be able to...

- identify the elements of a "Small Moment" story
- show sequence with strong transitional words
- story-tell their ideas before they begin to write
- tell a story that includes the elements of several "Small Moment" stories connected by a theme
- use a variety of means of assessing, revising, and editing their work
- write a story rich in details to describe characters, plot, and setting
- write a story that includes dialogue
- write a story that uses a storyteller's voice
- write a story with a clear sequence of events

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

Preparation before beginning the unit:

- ***Mentor texts, such as the ones listed in "Resources", will be shared in whole or in part throughout the unit. The books may at times be read aloud outside of the Workshop but then referred to during the Workshop. Excerpts can be reproduced for close inspection or projected with the use of a document camera.
- Gather a stack of gripping fiction books to assist in the unit's focus. Some suggested titles are listed below in **Resources**. Be prepared to refer back to the novels that have been read during Read Aloud and Shared Reading.
- Read, discuss, and explore fiction (the more immersed the children are in the genre, the better) before beginning the unit. Concentrate on plot, setting, and character development and make note of the authors' craft.

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from the *If...Then...Curriculum (Grade 3)* found in the *Units of Study for Teaching Writing (Calkins et al., 2013)* and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add to and or emphasize based on their student's needs.

Teaching Points

- Teach students that writers collect ideas for their stories in their writer's notebooks. One way writers get ideas is by paying attention to the moments and problems in their own lives. The stories they will write, however, have one big difference; they are fiction.
- Coach students to generate a list of something like four story ideas, write the first page of a few of those stories, and then choose one to write as a whole story, leaving the remaining few as books-in-waiting.
- Teach students that writers look back through their personal narrative entries and ask themselves, "What if...?" and "What would happen if..." to try to drum up ideas for fiction.
- Teach students that writers get ideas for stories by thinking about stories they wish existed in the world. They look at the people around them and at themselves and think, "How can I write a story for people like me, so we can see ourselves in books?"
- Teach students that writers can come up with ideas for stories by thinking about a place that is familiar and imagining what could happen in that place.
- Teach students that writers often think of a strong emotion and try to imagine a character experiencing that emotion. They try to play the movie of that scene that might have produced that emotion.
- Teach students that fiction writers don't just go from choosing a story idea to writing a draft. Instead fiction writers live with a story idea for a time; using "thinking on the page" strategies to live with their characters and rehearse for their drafts. Sometimes they try acting out scenes, recording everything that was said and done, to bring the scene to life.
- Teach students that writers story-tell or act out their stories to help as they plan their drafts and as they write their drafts.
- Remind students that instead of writing "watermelon stories"; for example about a character's whole day; they should

concentrate on a single seed story; for example a character's trip to the mall.

- Coach students to focus their writing on two small moments with a main character or two very close to their own age.
- Teach students that writers keep on writing and writing, thinking always to themselves, "When I'm done, I've just begun." Tell the children that as they finish each draft they will move it to the other side of their folder, and then pick right up on their next story; either picking up one of their books-in-waiting, or starting a new four story idea list.
- Teach students that writers want their stories to come alive and be full of meaning so the first thing they might do is decide what their story is going to be about. Then they will envision what will happen at the start of the story and then each little bit after that, scene by scene, like a movie in their mind.
- Teach students that writers want their characters to seem like real people, with real feelings and problems. One strategy is to picture the external traits of their character(s) and imagine what those traits might make them, and therefore their character, feel like on the inside.
- Teach students that writers focus on two really important things when they are developing a character. Every fiction writer needs to know what their characters want, what they yearn for, and what gets in the way- what keeps the character from getting what they want.
- Teach students that fiction writers of fairy tales use figurative language, "painting a picture" in their readers' minds.
- Coach students to show their character's desires and troubles rather than tell. Writers do this by putting examples of what they want to show into the small moments, creating what fiction writers call scenes. These scenes may include thoughts or conversations (dialogue) that the character is having.
- Teach students that writers pay attention to the things that are important to their characters and imagine how these can lead to troubles. They think about what they know about the character as a person and what kind of troubles that kind of person might have.
- Teach students that writers make every part of a story interesting so the reader can't wait to turn the page. They do this by making the problems facing the character get worse and worse throughout the story. One strategy for planning these problems is a story mountain. It will remind you to keep giving your characters something that makes it harder and harder for them to climb toward their goal (what they want).
- Show students the value of talking together to grow their ideas into story plans.
- Teach students that writers often pause right when they are all fired up about where their story is going; and they rewind, reread, and listen to their story. Then they revise it, right then and there. Sometimes they revise their lead and sometimes they revise their entire story, perhaps looking for the heart of the story and adding some tension. And sometimes, they get help with these ideas from a mentor text.
- Teach students that writers use conventional spellings so that readers can read their work.
- Teach students that when writers want to create a scene, they are creating drama. One way they do this is to include dialogue- to make their characters talk. And another way is to include description- to make their characters move or react physically to what is going on in the scene.
- Support students' efforts at paragraphing by showing them how writers create new paragraphs in special places.
- Teach students that writers pay close attention to setting, where and when is this story, this scene, taking place. Writers don't ever want their readers to feel disoriented and have to ask, "Wait, where is this? What's going on?" One strategy is to have a partner read their story to check for clarity.
- Teach students that writers take time with their endings, weighing and considering, drafting and revising, until they find one that fits. The ending must tie up loose ends, resolve the unresolved difficulties and bring home the story's meaning.
- Insert a lesson on checking verb tenses as a necessary fix-it strategy.
- Teach students that writers rethink easy endings and try to discover endings they did not at first imagine. To do this they think about the changes the character has gone through, not just on the outside but also on the inside.
- Coach students to switch back and forth from drafting to revision, thinking about that the word revision means to "re-vision" or see again.
- Teach students that one strategy writers use to help them re-vision a story is to reread it with a particular question or concern in mind, such as, "How did my character get across the room?".
- Teach students that there is a place that writers can go to get new lenses with which to view their drafts. They go to the stories that resemble the one they are hoping to write. These are the stories that matter to us; that cause us to pull in close. One strategy is to ask yourself, "What did the author do that seems to work so well? Can I do something like that to my story?" This re-seeing can lead to rewriting.
- Teach students that writers celebrate the conclusion of a successful writing project.

Activities to Support Teaching Points

- create and refer to anchor charts

- study pages from exemplar writer's notebooks
- provide and present mentor texts as models
- teach children to read like writers using mentor texts
- create an on-going class book for modeling and trying out new skills
- use writer's notebook for daily writing
- tap, sketch, or jot across the pages as a way of planning stories
- explore and try a variety of leads and endings
- practice creating mental movies and acting out a story in order to make writing come alive
- use figurative language and sparkle words to improve descriptions of character and setting
- add dialogue to writing to bring characters alive
- set mini-writing goals as you move through the writing process
- provide checklists to assess and develop on-going writing goals
- write long and strong to build stamina
- teach that sentences are used to group one idea and paragraphs are used to group similar ideas
- plan to celebrate the conclusion of classroom writing projects
- use technology to research information about a specific topic
- use technology to publish a piece of writing

Assessments

Assessment in this unit takes three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Assessment rubrics are available in Lucy Calkins' Reading and Writing Project resource kits, but teachers may also develop their own rubrics in order to include more specific elements of knowledge and skills listed in this unit summary.

Student self-assessment and peer assessment should take place whenever possible--again, in all three forms: diagnostic, formative, and summative. Removing the traditional emphasis on teacher assessment enables students to take more initiative and become self-directed.

On-going teacher assessment will take place in the context of a conference. Conferences, both small group and one-to-one conferring, are used to reinforce expectations, provide advice and/or assistance, and ultimately, to support growth.

Diagnostic Assessments

*Since this is a subsequent narrative unit, the students' original On-Demand Performance Assessments will stand as a diagnostic tool the teacher can utilize. The volume of work; notebook work, drafts and final drafts; composed by each student at the conclusion of the previous Narrative Writing Unit(s) also provides the teacher a wealth of diagnostic information.

If there is a student new to the class the original On-Demand Assessment can be administered:

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt: Narrative Writing (E.g. "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 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.
- Write an ending for your story." - Taken from *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5*)

Formative Assessments (Informal)

Daily observation of students' participation during the active engagement segment of each mini-lesson.

Students' conversation with partners during Turn and Talk segment of mini-lessons.

Comments, corrections, and records from peer conferences between students.

Observation of daily writing progress in writing notebooks and/or folders.

Formative Assessments (Formal)

Teacher-student conferences

Summative Assessment

Summative writing will take the form of both handwritten pieces and pieces generated using appropriate technology.

Published Narratives

Completed unit writing projects

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt (Same prompt as the diagnostic on-demand)

Activities to Differentiate Instruction

The design of Writer's Workshop allows for individualized instruction and independent growth for every child. At the heart of differentiation in Writer's Workshop is data and the analysis of data. Through the usage of monitoring student progress during independent writing, analysis of student writing using the learning progressions and writing checklists, teachers should be able to delineate which students are in need of additional supports, in what areas those supports should be targeted at, and which students are ready to be pushed further in their writing work.

Some methods to use to support struggling writers as well as advanced writers:

- Encourage student choice in topics to ensure that they are writing on topics that are meaningful for them
- Provide support as needed through conferencing
- Provide support as needed through strategy groups
- Provide modified and/or alternate grade level checklists and rubrics to scaffold or stretch learning
- Scaffold or stretch learning through the use of various strategies
- Provide appropriate writing partners
- Utilize charts to provide a visual reminder for students throughout the mini-lesson.
    - Add drawings and visuals to charts
    - Provide individualized copies of teaching charts
    - Depending on the concept, the chart may be most effective to visually break the concept into parts and touch each part during a demonstration
- For students needing more support at the end of the mini-lesson, keep them at the rug for an extra minute after dispersing the rest of the class and clarify the main topic of the mini-lesson or work one-on-one with them to start their writing
- Set writing goals for students and follow-up with the writing goals after an appropriate amount of time.
- Create group and one-on-one conferring calendars to ensure that students are being met with on a regular basis and working toward individualized goals
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen
- Assign roles to partners (Partner 1/Partner 2) to help scaffold which student should speak first and avoid one partner dominating the conversation and the other partner becoming a passive listener
    - For ELL students, creating a triad instead of partnership may be beneficial
- Demonstrate for students how to use writing checklists to set goals for their writing and also self-assess

Supports for ELL students:

- Provide consistent teaching structures
- Use consistent teaching language
- Offer plentiful opportunities for reading practice
- Provide access to a broad variety of texts
- Use assessment to provide extra support
- Support students in the preproduction and early production stages of learning English
- Use visual examples in your teaching
- Modify our mini-lessons to be as concise as possible
- Provide extra ?active engagement? time in mini-lessons for extra practice
- Provide readers with topic-based text sets
- Provide opportunities for listening and learning the social language of the reading workshop
- Provide opportunities to read in both their home language and in English
- Plan instruction with the ELL teacher
- Extend the language ELLs are producing through questioning
- Provide explicit instruction in tenses, pronoun references, and connectives
- Support students in building vocabulary using their own reading as the context
- As the unit progresses, the teacher, in coordination with the students, will develop a word wall that will highlight vocabulary specific to the topic chosen

In order to support this differentiation work, teachers may want to consult the following materials:

- Units of Study books at lower or higher levels for teaching strategies that are appropriate to the support needed.
- *The Writing Strategies* Book by Jennifer Serravallo
- If. . . Then. .. Curriculum book for alternate units or teaching points to support the individual reading levels.
- *A Guide to the Writing* Workshop (Primary Grades) chapter 14 for more in-depth information on differentiation

Challenge gifted students to incorporate more complex writing techniques in each writing piece based on the 4th grade Writing Learning Progressions:

- tell a story bit by bit but then remove unimportant parts
- use paragraphing to separate different parts or times of the story or to show when a new character is

speaking
- show why characters do things by including their thinking
- vary the pace of the story; make some parts go quickly, some slowly
- use figurative language such as simile, metaphor, and/or personification to bring a story to life

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Reading Workshop

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- utilize read alouds and independent reading as mentor texts
- apply spelling strategies
- identify areas of spelling needs
- apply grammar skills
- identify areas in need of addressing (spelling, grammar, mechanics)
- expand written vocabulary from read alouds and independent reading
- model sentence and paragraph structure after mentor texts

Houghton Mifflin Social Studies

- *w*rite fictional narratives or small moment stories about life in Green Brook
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories that examine/involve following rules
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories about characters from history
- examine how geography affects characters in fiction
- examine how culture affects characters in fiction
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories about being good citizens

Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Health and Wellness

- use a notebook to log experiences
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories concerning family relationships
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories about getting along with others
- write letters to friends and family from a fictional character's perspective
- write journal entries about health goals and practices from a fictional character's perspective
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories involving consequences to poor health and safety practices

Science, Engineering, and Math

- write journal entries related to scientific observation
- use a notebook to log activities
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories about the constellations
- write fictional narratives or small moment stories that include a math problem being solved
- write math problems tied to fictional story book characters

Study Skills

- use graphic organizers to plan writing
- use checklists and rubrics to monitor progress
- use Venn diagrams and t-charts to gather, compare, and contrast events
- use highlighters, note cards, post-its, and other tools during revision and editing process

The Arts

- turn narrative pieces into skits and plays
- add illustrations to further convey meaning
- create narratives from pictures and photographs
- create comic books or graphic novels

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Resources

Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing:

- *Writing Gripping Fictional Stories with Meaning and Significance; found in the If...Then...Curriculum* by Lucy Calkins with Julia Mooney and Colleagues from TCRWP
- *Launching the Writing Workshop*, Grades 3-5; Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli
- *A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop*, Intermediate Grades; Lucy Calkins
- *Writing Pathways, Grades K-5, Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions*; Lucy Calkins
- *If...Then... Curriculum*, Grade 3 (Assessment-Based Instruction); Lucy Calkins; Julia Mooney; and Colleagues From the TCRWP
- *Resources for Teaching Writing* (DVD) Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing; Lucy Calkins

The Art of Teaching Writing; Lucy Calkins

The Writing Thief; Ruth Culham

Wondrous Words; Katie Wood Ray

Creating Classrooms for Authors; Jerome C Harste, Kathy G Short with Carolyn Burke

Guiding Readers and Writers, Grades 3-6; Irene C Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

Smarter Charts; Marjorie Martinelli

Launching the Writing Workshop; Denise Leograndis

Some Suggested Mentor Texts

Shortcut; Donald Crews (J)

Too Many Tamales; Gary Soto (M)

Koala Lou; Mem Fox (K)

The Ghost-Eye Tree; Bill Martin

Mr. Peabody's Apples; Madonna (N)

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant (L)

Fox; Margaret Wild (Z)

Fireflies; Julie Brinckloe (K)

When I Was Young in the Mountains; Cynthia Rylant (K)

Kitchen Dance; Maurie J. Manning

Those Shoes; Maribeth Boeltz (L)

My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother; Patricia Polacco (M)

Roller Coaster by Maria Frazee (K)

Little Red Writing; Joan Holub and Melissa Sweet

Some Suggested Early-Reader Chapter Books

(Choose parts or chapters of these to highlight the "gripping the edge of your seat" elements of a short story.)

Kate DiCamillo's *Mercy Watson* series

James Howe's *Pinky and Rex* series

Barbara Park's *Junie B. Jones* series

Suzy Kline's *Horrible Harry* series

Part of Reading Street Anthology

When Charlie McButton Lost Power; Suzanne Collins

Prudy's Problem and How She Solved It; Carey Armstrong-Ellis

Suki's Kimono; Chieri Uegaki (M)

Jalapeno Bagels; Natasha Wing (L)

Some Suggested Read Aloud Novels

(Choose parts or chapters of these to highlight the "gripping the edge of your seat" elements of a short story.)

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone; J.K. Rowling (V)

Charlotte's Web; E.B. White (R)

The One and Only Ivan; Katherine Applegate (S)

Because of Winn Dixie; Kate DiCamillo (R)

A Series of Unfortunate Events, The Bad Beginning; Lemony Snickett (V)

The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane; Kate DiCamillo (V)

The Boy On the Porch; Sharon Creech

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory; Roald Dahl (R)

Matilda; Roald Dahl (S)

21st Century Skills

CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP11.1	Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible

and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.