Unit 1: Narrative Writing - Realistic Fiction

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

The first unit of the year will focus on the narrative style of writing, focusing in fourth grade on Realistic Fiction. The unit begins by asking student to do an on-demand writing piece which will allow teachers to assess what students can do prior to teaching the unit. Using the assessments, the teacher will be able to tailor their plans to the specific needs of their class, thus bringing the whole class on the journey of work that is essential for meeting the goals of the unit. Within the unit, there are both goals related to writing process as well as story development. Students will work toward writing with greater volume throughout the writing process, and using mentor texts to help them meet their writing goals. Students will be taught how to generate ideas, using such methods as thinking about their every day experiences, and then rehearse their stories before they write to develop character and plot. Small group work will be integral to the unit, and center around the teachings of character and story development and conferring strategies. Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

Standards

LA.RL.4.3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).
LA.W.4.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using narrative technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LA.W.4.3.A	Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
LA.W.4.3.B	Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
LA.W.4.3.D	Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
LA.W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.4.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.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.
LA.W.4.9.A	Apply grade 4 Reading standards to literature (e.g., "Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions].").
LA.W.4.10	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.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.4.2	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).
LA.SL.4.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

Essential Questions

- What makes a realistic fiction story?
- Where do writers get their ideas?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- writers explore ideas that will become fiction stories
- writers explore techniques for story telling
- writers have many ways to develop and revise stories they create
- writers have routines and procedures to follow in a workshop setting.
- writers include basic skills such as spelling, grammar, and punctuation apply to all writing.
- writers need to revise and edit their written pieces
- writers plan/rehearse their stories multiple times before putting pen to paper
- writers use and understand the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing
- writers use correct grammar and punctuation in their published work
- writers write a short fiction story with two or three characters and two or three scenes
- writers write entries in Writer's Notebook
- writing partners support each others' efforts during the writing process.

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

- choose realistic fiction topics that are rooted in everyday experiences.
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing
- Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing
- Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings
- orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

- provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing
- write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- write with volume throughout the writing process.

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from *Units of Study, Narrative Writing, Grade 4* (Calkins et al., 2014) and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Teaching Points

- teach students that fiction writers get ideas for stories from small moments in their lives. Teac
- teach students that writers get ideas for stories by imagining the books they wish existed in the world and by thinking about issues in their lives.
- teach students that, like all writers, fiction writers need to choose a seed idea (a story idea) and then begin to develop characters by creating their external and internal traits.
- teach children that writers can develop characters by telling about their characters' motivations and struggles and also by creating scenes that show these things.
- teach children that writers sketch out possible plot lines for stories, often in story arcs, that represent traditional story structure.
- teach children that writing scenes is, in a sense, the same as writing Small Moment stories. Writers often begin by putting the character into action or by laying out the character's exact words and then unfolding the moment step by step.
- teach children that fiction writers create their best drafts when they experience the world through their character's skin, letting the story unfold as it happens to them.
- remind writers of various strategies for writing effective leads. Also remind children that writers reread literature, letting it teach techniques for writing.
- remind students that writers "stay in scene," making sure the action and dialog are grounded in the setting.
- teach children that writers of fiction do their best to craft the endings that their stories deserve. In particular, they make sure their endings mesh with and serve the purposes of their stories.
- teach children that when revising, writers don't simply reread; they reread with a lens. Writers vary their lenses according to what they value for their work.
- remind students that writers study mentor authors to notice what other writers do that really works. One thing writers do is use actions and revealing details to show rather than tell about or explain the character.
- teach students that just as fiction writers revise with "lenses," they edit with them as well, rereading their writing several times for several reasons, making edits as they go.

- teach students how to use quotations marks correctly when adding dialogue to their stories
- remind students the difference between a simple, compund, and complex sentence
- teach students how to show possession by using apostrophes
- teach students that writers get their essays ready for the world by carefully checking their spelling, punctuation, and other conventions.
- teach students that writers work on their craft and development by incorporating figurative language, dialogue, and other writing risks

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 dialog 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

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 5th grade Writing Learning Progressions:

- writer tells a story of an important moment; it read like a story, even though it might be a true account.
- writers shows why characters did what they did by including their thinking and their responses to what

happened.
- writer slows down the heart of the story and made less important parts shorter and less detailed and blended storytelling and summary as needed.
- writer includes precise details and uses figurative language so that readers can picture the setting, characters, and events. Writers use objects or actions as symbols to bring forth his/her meaning.
- writer varies sentences to create the pace and tone of his/her narrative.

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Reading Workshop

- apply language and ideas from read alouds and independent reading
- 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

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

Professional Resources:

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

- *Crafting True Stories* by Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli
- *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

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

Mentor Texts:

The Boy Who Loved Words, Schotter, Roni

Come On Rain! Hesse, Karen

Fireflies! Brinckloe, Julie

Hurricane! London, Jonathan

Knuffle Bunny: A Cautionary Tale, Willems, Mo

A Letter to Amy, Keats, Ezra Jack

The Listening Walk, Showers, Paul

Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street, Schotter, Roni

Owl Moon, Yolen, Jane

Peter's Chair, Keats, Ezra Jack

Roller Coaster, Frazee, Marla

Shortcut, Crews, Donald

Those Shoes, Boelts, Maribeth

When I was Little, Curtis Jamie Lee

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.