Unit 2: Opinion - Personal and Persuasive Essays

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

Unit Overview

The Unit Personal and Persuasive Essay is designed so that students become writers who provide support for a claim in ways that chunk the supportive evidence into logically grouped categories. Writers will be choosing topics that they know well and can write well about in order to ensure the unit is about powerful expository writing and not just research collecting. It is important to push students to truly develop their thinking and to tell students that thought prompts actually push writers to think new things. First writers will choose an idea, learn how to write it as a thesis and build the structure and support for an essay. Writers will then use transitional words, such as “for instance” “in order to” and “specifically”. In addition, writers should also be able to draw on detailed specifics to support their claims. It will be important to teach students that some people divide the world of texts into two categories: narrative and expository writing. This ensures that students understand the ways narrative and expository (Essay, opinion, persuasive) writing are different from each other.

- Narrative writing is a story told in a clear sequence of events. It includes a main character, setting, conflict, and resolution.
- Expository writing is used to inform a reader about a topic.

The main goal for this unit is ensuring that personal essays are structured in a main-claim/supportive examples or reasons fashion. This unit starts with students writing flash essays, in conjunction with on demand performance assessments. Once students have a strong foundation in personal essay the unit will shift into persuasive essays, probably written about the same topic as the personal essay. Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

Standards

LA.RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
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.RL.4.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in literature.
LA.RL.4.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems at grade level text-complexity or above, with scaffolding as needed.
LA.RI.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
LA.RI.4.2	Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.
LA.RI.4.4	Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a grade 4 topic or subject area.

LA.RI.4.5	Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text.
LA.RF.4.3	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words.
LA.RF.4.4	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension.
LA.W.4.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
LA.W.5.1.A	Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.
LA.W.4.1.B	Provide reasons that are supported by facts from texts and/or other sources.
LA.W.5.1.B	Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details from text(s), quote directly from text when appropriate.
LA.W.4.1.C	Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).
LA.W.5.1.D	Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.
LA.W.4.1.D	Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.
LA.W.4.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
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.4.4	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.4.3	Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.
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.
LA.L.4.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.4.1.A	Use relative pronouns (who, whose, whom, which, that) and relative adverbs (where, when, why).

LA.L.4.1.B	Form and use the progressive (e.g., I was walking; I am walking; I will be walking) verb tenses.
LA.L.4.2.D	Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.
LA.L.4.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.4.3.A	Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.
LA.L.4.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.4.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal precise actions, emotions, or states of being (e.g., quizzed, whined, stammered) and that are basic to a particular topic (e.g., wildlife, conservation, and endangered when discussing animal preservation).
LA.4.W.4.1.A	Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related idea the writer's purpose.

Essential Questions

- How do writers learn a variety of strategies for living like an essayist?
- How do writers generate lists and select one item to develop ideas around it?
- What is the difference between expository and narrative writing?
- How do writers become helpful partners to each other during the writing process?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- a writing partner is helpful during the writing process
- expository writing is used to inform a reader about a topic
- narrative writing is a story told in a clear sequence of events. It includes a main character, setting, conflict, and resolution
- there is a difference between expository and narrative writing
- writers generate lists and select one item and generate ideas around it to grow thoughts in their Writer's Notebook
- writers learn a variety of strategies for living like an essayist
- writers use and understand the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing
- writers use correct grammar and punctuation in their published work

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

- 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

- form and use the progressive verb tense
- introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose
- link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g. for instance, in order to, in addition)
- provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented
- provide reasons that are supported by facts and details
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing
- use relative pronouns and adverbs in their writing
- write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from *Units of Study, Opinion 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 children that writers use an essay frame to help structure their writing.
- teach children that writers use several strategies for growing insightful ideas including using important people, places, and objects as inspiration.
- orient children to the genre of writing to learn, helping them see how writers free write to grow new ideas.
- remind students that to inquire into the characteristics of any kind of writing, it is important to study an example of that kind of writing, asking, "What did the prompts to grow their ideas.
- teach children that writers mine their entries and their lives for insights, developing these into more fully formed ideas and thesis statements.
- teach children that writers support their thesis by developing different types of reasons.
- teach children that writers draw on narrative writing and use mini-stories to support the ideas they want to advance.
- teach children that writers gather a lot of different material to write their essays, including lists, and they decide which material should go in their essays.
- teach children that writers organize for drafting by checking that their evidence is supportive and varied.
- teach children that writers create cohesion with logically sequences information, transition words, and repeated phrases.
- teach children the different ways writers commonly open and close essays, and that writers try out multiple leads and conclusions before deciding which works best for their essays.
- teach students to self-assess their writing, using the Opinion Writing Checklist. You will support your writers in creating a brand-new, revised draft.
- teach writers to be brave and turn their personal essays into persuasive opinions.
- teach students that writers transfer all they know about one genre of writing to another genre. Writers ask themselves. "What is similar about personal essay writing and persuasive essay writing?"
- teach students that writers link their evidence to their reasons and thesis statement so that there are no gaps in their logic or reasoning.
- 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
- teach students how to use relative pronouns (i.e. whose, whom) and adverbs (where, when, why) correctly in their writing pieces
- teach students how to use the progressive verb tense (i.e. I am swimming, I was swimming, I will be swimming)

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. "Think of a topic or issue that you know and care about, an issue around which you have strong feelings. Tomorrow, you will have forty-five minutes to write an opinion or argument text in which you will write your opinion or claim and tell reasons why you feel that way. When you do this, draw on everything you know about essays, persuasive letters, and reviews. If you want to find and use information from a book or another outside source, you may bring that with you tomorrow. Please keep in mind that you'll have forty-five minutes to complete this, so you will need to plan, draft, revise, and edit in one sitting. In your writing, make sure you:

- Write an introduction.
- State your opinion or claim
- Give reasons and evidence.
- Organize your writing.
- Acknowledge counterclaims.
- Use transition words.
- Write a conclusion." - 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 story based on the 5th grade

writing learning progressions:

- The writer gave reasons to support his/her opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. The writer put them in an order that would be most convincing to the reader.
- The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support her claim.
- The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.

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

Earrings, Viorist, Judith

Dear Mrs. LaRue: Letters From Obedience School, Teague, Mark

I Wanna Iguana, Orloff, Karen Kaufman

Hey, Little Ant, Hoose ,Phillip and Hannah

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.