Unit 4: Literary Essay

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s): **English Language Arts**
Time Period: **Marking Period 3**
Length: **Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

To write well about reading, students need to learn more not only about writing but also about reading. Throughout this unit you will teach students ways writers read complex text closely and then write about the literature they are reading. You will teach children to notice authors' choices about the setting, objects, words, metaphors, and characters they use in their texts. Students will write structured, compelling essays in which they make and support claims and analyze, unpack, and incorporate evidence. Students focus on arguing for their ideas about characters while carrying forward what they have been taught about planning and drafting essays, writing introductions and conclusions, and marshaling evidence in support of reasons. Students will draft both handwritten pieces as well as pieces using appropriate technology.

Standards

LA.RL.5.1	Quote accurately from a text, and make relevant connections when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
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.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize 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.4.9	Compare, contrast and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) stories in the same genre (e.g., mysteries and adventure stories) on their approaches to similar themes and topics.
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.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.4.1.B	Provide reasons that are supported by facts from texts and/or other sources.
LA.W.4.1.C	Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).
LA.W.4.1.D	Provide a conclusion related to the opinion presented.
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.4.4	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.4.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
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.SL.4.6	Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation.
LA.L.4.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.4.1.D	Order adjectives within sentences according to conventional patterns (e.g., a small red bag rather than a red small bag).
LA.L.4.1.E	Form and use prepositional phrases.
LA.L.4.1.F	Produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.
LA.L.4.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.4.2.A	Use correct capitalization.
LA.L.4.2.B	Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.
LA.L.4.2.C	Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
LA.L.4.3.A	Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.
LA.L.4.3.B	Choose punctuation for effect.
LA.L.4.3.C	Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion).
LA.L.4.4.A	Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning

	of a word or phrase.
LA.L.4.5.A	Explain the meaning of simple similes and metaphors (e.g., as pretty as a picture) in context.
LA.L.4.5.B	Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.
LA.L.4.5.C	Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).
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 respond to a text with a reasoned, well-crafted piece of writing?
- How do students become more skilled in opinion writing?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- writers use and understand the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing
- Students become more skilled in opinion writing by forming their own ideas about topics.
- Writers respond to a text with a reasoned, well crafted piece of writing that reflects the framework of essays.
- writers use correct grammar and punctuation in their published work

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

- choose punctuation for effect
- 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
- differentiate between appropriate times to use formal and informal English
- Provide reasons that are supported by details from the text.
- Students will become more skilled in opinion writing.
- Students will respond to a text with a reasoned, well-crafted piece of writing
- Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing
- use words and phrases to convey ideas in their writing and enhance their literary essays
- Write literary essays to support 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, Literary Essay, 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 reading with an attentiveness to detail can spark ideas and that writing can be a vehicle for developing those ideas.
- teach students that experts know that certain aspects of their subjects merit special attention. Literary essayists know it pays off, for example, to study characters.
- teach students one way writers elaborate on their ideas- using simple prompts.
- teach students that writers select ideas to craft into theses. Show ways writers question and revise their theses, making sure these are supported by the whole text.
- teach students ways that essayists select mini-stories as evidence to support their ideas.
- teach students that writers use direct quotes to support their claims about a text. Teach them ways writers are discerning, choosing only the quotes that best support their ideas.
- teach students that writers not only use stories and quotes as evidence, they also use lists to support their claims.
- teach students some of the ways that writers create drafts out of collections of evidence. Teach children ways to study published literary essays to find structures for their own literary essays.
- teach students that writers seek out patterns in their books or short stories, using those patterns to develop ideas about the story's theme or message.
- teach students that essayists look at all sides of a text and form complex ideas, adding depth to their writing.
- teach students that essayists flash-draft essays, getting their thoughts down quickly on paper so they can revise later.
- teach students that essayists think carefully about their introductions and conclusions, giving readers the larger context for their claim in their introduction and leaving their readers with something to think about in their conclusion.
- teach students that writers find evidence to support their claims by studying the choices authors make in their texts.
- teach students that essayists notice the similarities and differences between texts and categorize their observations into patterns or ideas, in preparation to write a compare-and-contrast essay.
- teach students that essayists write compare-and-contrast essays by looking at similar themes across texts, or similar characters, and naming how the texts approach the themes differently or how the characters are similar and different.
- teach students thats writers elaborate on each of their distinct, individual supporting ideas, ensuring they have developed their essay with enough evidence for their claim.
- 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 that when writing about reading authors often choose specific words and phrases to convey their ideas to the reader
- remind students to enhance their writing by choosing punctuation for effect
- teach students that authors know when to use formal and informal English in their writing based on its

context

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: Literary Essay (E.g. "Think of a text that you know and care about, a text 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 literary essays or essays in general. If you want to bring in the text you'll write about, 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 Literary Essays

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 progression:

- Students will make a claim or thesis on a topic or text, support it with reasons, and provide a variety of evidence for each reason.
- Students will try to find a deeper meaning in the text and analyze the author's purpose.
- Students will provide a response that is fully sustained and consistently and purposefully focused: opinion is clearly stated, focused, and strongly maintained and the opinion is communicated

clearly within the context.
- Students will provide a response that has a clear and effective organizational structure creating unity and completeness.
- Students will provide a thorough and convincing response that provides support/evidence for the writer's opinion that includes the effective use of examples and details.
- Students will respond clearly and effectively by expressing ideas and using precise language.
- Students will provide a response that demonstrates a strong command of conventions: few, if any, errors in usage and sentence formation, effective and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

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

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 4 (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:

Baseball in April and Other Stories, Soto, Gary

Bigmama's, Crews, Donald

A Chair for My Mother, Williams, Vera B.

Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul, Canfield, Jack

Chicken Sunday, Polacco, Patricia

Curouroy, Freeman, Don

Crow Call, Lowry, Lois

Every Living Thing, Rylant, Cynthia

Fireflies!, Brinkloe, Julie

Nothing Ever Happens on 90th Street, Schotter, Roni

Owl Moon, Yolen, Jane

The Pain and the Great One, Blume, Judy

Peter's Chair, Keats, Ezra Jack

When I was Young in the Mountains, Rylant, Cynthia

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.