Unit 1 - Launching the Writing Workshop

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

Unit Overview

This first unit is meant to introduce students to the writing workshop. Students are encouraged to develop independence, confidence, and stamina while learning routines and procedures. The importance of drawing for planning should be stressed in this unit. The children will write in both information books as well as true stories. In teaching writers to stretch out a story, they will draw the start on one page, then the next part on the next page, and whatever happened next on the third page. These drawings will help children stretch out and add details to their stories.

Standards

LA.W.K.1	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., My favorite book is...).
LA.W.K.2	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.
LA.W.K.3	Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.
LA.W.K.5	With guidance and support from adults, strengthen writing through response and self-reflection using questions and suggestions from peers (e.g., adding details).
LA.W.K.6	With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.
LA.W.K.7	Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).
LA.W.K.8	With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.
LA.L.K.1.A	Print many upper- and lowercase letters.
LA.L.K.1.B	Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs.
LA.L.K.1.D	Understand and use question words (interrogatives) (e.g., who, what, where, when, why, how).

Essential Questions

1. What does writing workshop look like?
2. How do we write true stories from their lives?
3. How do we revise our writing?

4. How do we use what we know about letters and sounds to help us write?

Application of Knowledge: Students will know that...

- Understanding letter sounds helps us write words, sentences, and stories.
- Writers look back at their writing to decide how they can make their writing better
- Writers think of stories from their lives, remember them and tell them, and then draw and write them.
- Writing workshop is a place to gather and record our life stories.

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

- Confirm understanding of read-alouds by asking and answering questions
- Describe familiar people, places and things with detail.
- Participate in conversations about texts and topics with peers and adults.
- Respond to questions and suggestions to strengthen writing, with teacher assistance
- Use drawings (or other visual) to provide additional details

Teaching Points and Suggested Activities

The following teaching points and activities are adapted from Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grade K (Calkins et al., 2013) and serve as a loose framework for teachers, who will add and or emphasize based on their students' needs.

Teaching Points

Bend I: We Are All Writers:

- We are all writers: putting ideas on paper with pictures and words - teach students that young writers think of something that they know about and use pictures and words to put their ideas on paper.
- Writers know that "when we are done, we have just begun" - teach students that writers look back at their writing and see if they can add more to it.
- Carrying on independently as writers - teach students that writers come up with solutions to their problems and carry on writing
- Writers call to mind what they want to say, then put that onto the page - teach students that writers picture what they want to write about first and then put all of the details onto the page.
- Stretching out words to write them - teach students that young writers say words slowly and then write down the sounds that they hear.
- Writing even hard-to-write ideas - teach students that when writers have an idea that is hard to draw or a word that is hard to spell, they don't quit. Writers keep trying.

Bend II: Writing Teaching Books

- Turning pieces into scrolls and books - teach students that when writers want to teach more, they add ore pages to their book
- Planning teaching books page by page - teach students that when writers write a whole book, they plan how that book will go
- Asking and answering questions to add more - teach students that writing partners help each other add more to their writing
- Stretching out words to write even more sounds - teach students that young writers say words slowly, over and over again, to write all of the sounds that they hear
- Making writing the best it can be - teach students that writers pause before they finish a piece, using a checklist to make their writing the best it can be before publishing it

Bend III: Writing Stories

- Getting ideas for stories and practicing storytelling - teach students that writers get ready to write by telling their stories
- Planning stories page by page: planning and telling stories across pages - teach students that writers plan how their stories will go by touching each page as they tell their story.
- Adding more details to pictures and stories - teach students that writers add details to their writing by thinking about where they were, who they were with, and what they were in their story
- Stretching and writing words: hearing and recording sounds in sequence - teach students that writers spell words the best they can, stretching out the word slowly, listening closely to the sounds they hear, and then writing those sounds down.
- Bringing our writing to life: adding dialogue with speech bubbles - teach students that writers bring their stories to life by making their characters talk
- Using everything to make pieces the best they can be - teach students that writers reread their stories, drawing on everything they know to improve them

Bend IV: Preparing for Publication

- Editing - teach students that writers edit their writing by rereading their words and rewriting them if necessary to make their writing more readable to themselves and others
- An author's celebration - students will have the opportunity to share their writing with an audience and celebrate becoming a published author.

Activities to support teaching points

- create and refer to anchor charts
- use two-pocket folders for each student to organize writing
- use whiteboards, post-its and alphabet charts for individual use and engagement
- study pages from exemplar writing
- 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
- tap, sketch, or jot across the pages as a way of planning stories
- practice creating mental movies and acting out a story in order to make writing come alive
- add dialogue to writing to bring characters alive
- set mini-writing goals as you move through the writing process
- write long and strong to build stamina
- provide editing checklist to improve writing
- plan to celebrate the conclusion of classroom writing projects

Assessments

Assessment in this unit take 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 - most useful if done before and after a unit.

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.
- Show what happened in order.
- Use details to help readers picture your story.

Make an ending for your story." - Taken from Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-5)

(More information can be found in *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

Published Work

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

Integrated/Cross-Disciplinary Instruction

Science

- Create a book about a science experiment or living thing

Social Studies

- Write/tell about why rules are important
- Tell stories about important people in your family/neighborhood
- Develop speech bubbles for public figures

Math

- Write how to play a math game

Suggested Mentor Texts and Other Resources

Resources

Crafting True Stories by Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli

Launching the Writing Workshop, Grades K-2; 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 2 (Assessment-Based Instruction) by 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 K-2; Irene C Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell

Smarter Charts; Marjorie Martinelli

Launching the Writing Workshop; Denise Leograndis

The mentor texts listed are mentioned in the *Units of Study*, but many of the titles can be substituted with books you already own having similar characteristics

Mentor Texts
Freight Train - Donald Crews

Creak! Said the Bed - Phyllis Root

Naked Mole Rat Gets Dressed -Mo Willems

Farm Animals - DK Publishing

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.