

# Unit 1: Descriptive Writing

Content Area: **ELA**  
Course(s): **Creative Writing**  
Time Period: **Sept/Oct**  
Length: **Full Year, Grades 11 - 12**  
Status: **Not Published**

## **Title Section**

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## **Department of Curriculum and Instruction**



**Belleville Public Schools**

Curriculum Guide

## **Creative Writing, Grades 11 - 12**

## **Unit 1: Descriptive Writing**

**Belleville Board of Education**

**102 Passaic Avenue**

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## Unit Overview

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- The primary purpose of descriptive writing is create imagery. That is, to paint a picture of a person, place, thing, idea, or event so clearly, the reader can *experience* what the writer is describing. This type of writing requires concise vocabulary, incorporation of the five senses, and effective use of figurative language. In order to do this, careful examination of exemplars in this type of writing is paramount. Students will be asked to search and find short excerpts of highly descriptive excerpts that speak to them to share with the class. The teacher will do the same. After small group analysis and whole group share, students will engage in all phases of the writing process to emulate exemplar descriptive writing: brainstorm; prewrite; exploratory draft and draft 2 following peer edits; final draft; publish and share. Unit 1 seeks to teach young writers how to express themselves in a more colorful, interestingly, and ultimately, in a more meaningful way through the use of emotions and concise wording. Mediums to present descriptive writing will be decided by the student. At the end of the unit, writers will choose one piece to polish and add it to their portfolio.

Some "print" suggestions":

magazine article (with titles, subsections & pictures)

personal essay

a letter

a poem

a story

a news article

and any other possible, creative way to get the writer's message out to the reader

Some multi-media suggestions:

media presentation with a script and audio that targets a specific audience.

TED-talk

prezi

speech

create a you tube video or commercial

\*media presentations or talks must have a written script to add to the portfolio

By the end of Unit 1, students should expect to learn:

How to make observations

How to analyze observations

How to write a physical description of a person, place, thing, event, memory, etc., using the five senses as well as colorful, interesting adjectives to support the description

Elaboration techniques to allow the reader to "experience" what is being described. This is also known as "show, don't tell."

To use metaphors and similes to show comparison

To use prepositional phrases in descriptions to show location

To use adjectives that are not run of the mill

To enhance writing through the use of active verbs

How to include personal feelings about what is being described to enhance description and meaning

## NJSLS

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LA.RI.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
LA.RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
LA.RI.11-12.6	Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.7	Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.
LA.RI.11-12.9	Analyze and reflect on (e.g., practical knowledge, historical/cultural context, and background knowledge) documents of historical and literary significance for their themes, purposes and rhetorical features, including primary source documents relevant to U.S. and/or global history.
LA.W.11-12.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
LA.W.11-12.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
LA.W.11-12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
LA.W.11-12.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

LA.W.11-12.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
LA.W.11-12.8	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation. (MLA or APA Style Manuals).

## **Exit Skills**

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The skills students should obtain by the end of this unit are:

How to make astute observations

Strategies for analyzing different forms of media and observations

To create imagery

Write a well developed, highly descriptive essay

Use all phases of the writing process

Elaboration techniques to build a descriptive essay

Effective use of figurative language

Appropriate use of prepositional phrases

Differentiate between action verbs and linking verbs

Evaluate essays using peer review guidelines

Edit and revise essays based on comments from peer review

## **Enduring Understanding**

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### ***Enduring Understandings***

Creative writing is an original, imaginative piece of writing that is meant to entertain and/or share the human experience

Creative writing can be used to instruct its audience

Reading excellent texts improves one's writing

Writers draw inspiration from but not limited to: literature, art, film, music, photography, poetry, personal experience, imagination

Author's use the five senses to write descriptively

Authors use similes and metaphors for comparison

Authors "show don't tell" by using action verbs

Writing is a multi-stage process: brainstorming, prewriting, drafts 1 and 2, peer review, edit and revision, final draft, publishing

## **Essential Questions**

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### **Essential Question:**

What things should be observed?

What are ways of analyzing?

What is descriptive writing?

Why do writers write?

How do authors improve their craft?

What inspires an author to write?

What techniques and strategies can writers use to create highly descriptive pieces of writing?

What are the steps to developing a well-crafted, original piece of writing?

How do you critique another writer's work?

- Point beyond specific topics or skills
- Promote the transfer of understanding
- Topical: Unit or lesson specific but still promotes inquiry
  - Unit or lesson specific - used to guide individual units or lessons
  - Promote inquiry
  - Resist obvious answers
  - Require explanation and justification

### **Examples:**

- What is a true friend?
- What makes an artist amazing?
- In what sense is the body a system?
- What is the law of nature, and how is it like or unlike social laws?
- To what extent is US history a history of progress?
- In what ways do diet and exercise affect health?
- Must heroes be flawless?
- How do effective writers hook and hold their readers?
- How do cultures affect one another?
- Does practice make perfect?
- What is healthy eating? Healthy living?
- How and when do we use mathematics?
- How does something acquire value?

## **Learning Objectives**

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Produce a journal with daily entries of personal observations/thoughts/experiences

Examine exemplary descriptive texts and apply techniques to original compositions

Develop highly descriptive essays using the five senses

Create original similes and metaphors to make comparisons

Write descriptively about literature, art, film, music, photography, poetry, personal experience, and imagination

Integrate prepositional phrases into compositions

Differentiate between active and linking verbs

Differentiate between the active and passive voice

Critique peer's writing utilizing peer review guidelines and rubrics

Edit and revise writing according to peer edits

Build a Writing Portfolio



## Interdisciplinary Connections

Please list all and any cross-curricular content standards that link to this Unit.

VPA.1.1.12.B.1	Examine how aspects of meter, rhythm, tonality, intervals, chords, and harmonic progressions are organized and manipulated to establish unity and variety in genres of musical compositions.
VPA.1.1.12.B.CS1	Understanding nuanced stylistic differences among various genres of music is a component of musical fluency. Meter, rhythm, tonality, and harmonics are determining factors in the categorization of musical genres.
VPA.1.1.12.C.CS1	Theatre and the arts play a significant role in human history and culture.
VPA.1.1.12.C.CS2	Characters have physical, emotional, and social dimensions that can be communicated through the application of acting techniques.
TECH.8.1.12.A.CS1	Understand and use technology systems.
TECH.8.1.12.B.CS2	Create original works as a means of personal or group expression.
TECH.8.1.12.C.CS2	Communicate information and ideas to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.
TECH.8.1.12.C.CS3	Develop cultural understanding and global awareness by engaging with learners of other



	cultures.
TECH.8.1.12.E.CS1	Plan strategies to guide inquiry.
TECH.8.1.12.E.CS2	Locate, organize, analyze, evaluate, synthesize, and ethically use information from a variety of sources and media.

## **Alignment to 21st Century Skills & Technology**

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### **Key SUBJECTS AND 21st CENTURY THEMES**

Mastery of key subjects and 21st century themes is essential for all students in the 21st century.

Key subjects include:

- English, reading or language arts
- World languages
- Arts
- Mathematics
- Economics
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Government and Civics

## **21st Century/Interdisciplinary Themes**

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- Civic Literacy
- Environmental Literacy
- Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Global Awareness
- Health Literacy

## **21st Century Skills**

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- Communication and Collaboration
- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical thinking and Problem Solving
- ICT (Information, Communications and Technology) Literacy
- Information Literacy
- Life and Career Skills
- Media Literacy

## **Technology Infusion**

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Microsoft Word

Google Docs

Edmodo

blogs

discussion boards

Powerpoint

Ted Talks

podcasts

Prezi

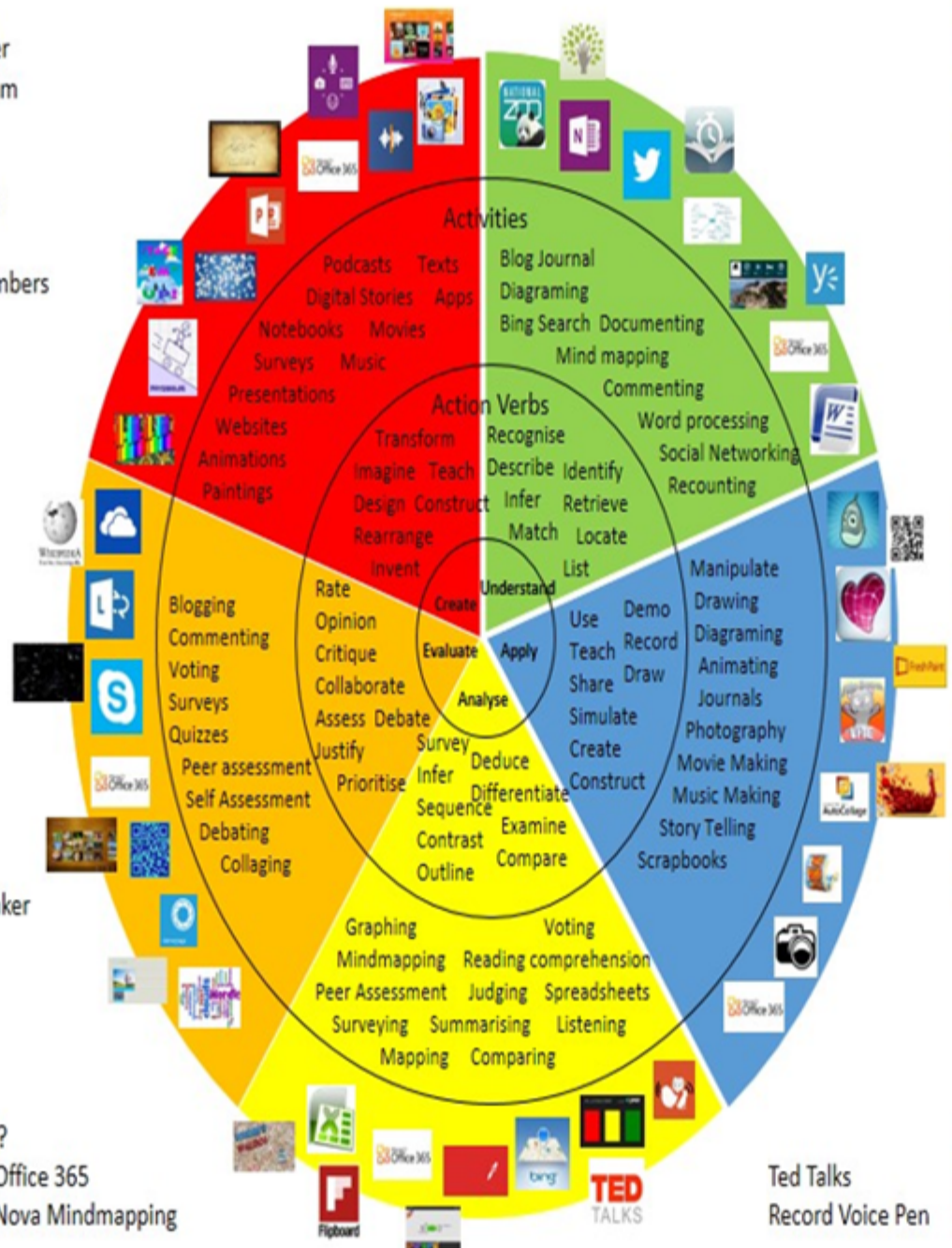
New York Times often run writing contests for teens

## Win 8.1 Apps/Tools Pedagogy Wheel

Podcasts  
Photostory 3  
Kid Story Builder  
Music Maker Jam  
Paint A Story  
Office 365  
MS PowerPoint  
Stack 'Em Up  
NqSquared Numbers  
Physamajig  
Xylophone 8

Wikipedia  
Skydrive  
Lync  
SkyMap  
Skype  
Office 365  
Puzzle Touch  
Easy QR  
Memorylage  
Life Moments  
Word Cloud Maker

Where's Waldo?  
MS Excel  
Flipboard  
Office 365  
Nova Mindmapping



## Differentiation

Varied level texts

Flexible grouping

Journal prompts

Modify length of assignment

Questioning techniques

Highlight and emphasize important information

Provide graphic organizers

Refer to relevant previously taught or mastered skills

Use multiple analogies and examples

Provide notes

Offer stems to jumpstart writing

Use multiple examples and non-examples

Model close reading

Model structure and clarify unfamiliar syntax explicitly

Portray structure, relationships, and associations through concepts webs

Proceed from simple to the complex when teaching concepts and skills

Use concrete examples for abstract concept

Require shortened assignments

Conference as often as needed

## **Special Education**

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- printed copy of board work/notes provided
- additional time for skill mastery
- assistive technology
- behavior management plan
- Center-Based Instruction
- check work frequently for understanding
- computer or electronic device utilizes
- extended time on tests/ quizzes
- have student repeat directions to check for understanding
- highlighted text visual presentation
- modified assignment format
- modified test content

- modified test format
- modified test length
- multiple test sessions
- multi-sensory presentation
- preferential seating
- preview of content, concepts, and vocabulary
- reduced/shortened reading assignments
- Reduced/shortened written assignments
- secure attention before giving instruction/directions
- shortened assignments
- student working with an assigned partner
- teacher initiated weekly assignment sheet
- Use open book, study guides, test prototypes

## **ELL**

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- teaching key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information
- using videos, illustrations, pictures, and drawings to explain or clarify
- allowing products (projects, timelines, demonstrations, models, drawings, dioramas, poster boards, charts, graphs, slide shows, videos, etc.) to demonstrate student's learning;
- allowing students to correct errors (looking for understanding)
- allowing the use of note cards or open-book during testing
- decreasing the amount of work presented or required
- having peers take notes or providing a copy of the teacher's notes
- modifying tests to reflect selected objectives
- providing study guides
- reducing or omitting lengthy outside reading assignments
- reducing the number of answer choices on a multiple choice test
- tutoring by peers
- using computer word processing spell check and grammar check features
- using true/false, matching, or fill in the blank tests in lieu of essay tests

## **Intervention Strategies**

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- allowing students to correct errors (looking for understanding)
- teaching key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information
- allowing products (projects, timelines, demonstrations, models, drawings, dioramas, poster boards, charts, graphs, slide shows, videos, etc.) to demonstrate student's learning
- allowing students to select from given choices
- allowing the use of note cards or open-book during testing

- collaborating (general education teacher and specialist) to modify vocabulary, omit or modify items to reflect objectives for the student, eliminate sections of the test, and determine how the grade will be determined prior to giving the test.
- decreasing the amount of work presented or required
- having peers take notes or providing a copy of the teacher's notes
- marking students' correct and acceptable work, not the mistakes
- modifying tests to reflect selected objectives
- providing study guides
- reducing or omitting lengthy outside reading assignments
- reducing the number of answer choices on a multiple choice test
- tutoring by peers
- using authentic assessments with real-life problem-solving
- using true/false, matching, or fill in the blank tests in lieu of essay tests
- using videos, illustrations, pictures, and drawings to explain or clarify

## **Evidence of Student Learning-CFU's**

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Please list ways educators may effectively check for understanding in this section.

- Admit Tickets
- Anticipation Guide
- Common benchmarks
- Compare & Contrast
- Create a Multimedia Poster
- Define
- Describe
- Evaluate
- Evaluation rubrics
- Exit Tickets
- Explaining
- Fist- to-Five or Thumb-Ometer
- Illustration
- Journals
- KWL Chart
- Newspaper Headline
- Outline
- Question Stems
- Quickwrite
- Quizzes
- Red Light, Green Light
- Self- assessments

- Socratic Seminar
- Study Guide
- Teacher Observation Checklist
- Think, Pair, Share
- Think, Write, Pair, Share
- Top 10 List
- Unit tests

## **Primary Resources**

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Personal novels

Excerpts based on student choice

Anthology

Progress

Teacher resources

Edgar Allen Poe short stories (prose narratives with a single focus)

Scope

SmartBoard

Laptops

## **Ancillary Resources**

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Utilize the Internet for additional creative writing resources and websites

Student journals

## **Sample Lesson**

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RL.11-12.3. Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed). RL.11-12.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (e.g., Shakespeare as well as other authors.) RL.11-12.5. Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.

RL.11-12.6. Analyze a case in which grasping a point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement). W.11-12.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

- A. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- C. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
- D. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- E. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Statement of Objective: Compose a paragraph of description using metaphor, simile, alliteration, and sound words

### **Anticipatory Set/Do Now:**

Using a 3-column chart with the headings: pleasant, neutral, unpleasant, list as many sound words (onomatopoeia) as you can under its proper heading.

### **Learning Activity:**

Notice the reactions of students when unpleasant sounds are described. Explain that they are "experiencing" that sound when they cringe. When writers paint a picture using the senses, readers can actually experience what is being written.

Distribute the handouts. Students will first apply their knowledge of metaphors, similes, alliteration, and sound words by completing sentences with the correct figurative language. After correcting whole group, students will read, annotate, and analyze descriptive language in JK Rowling's "The Monster." Finally, small groups will mirror Rowling's writing by creating a similar descriptive paragraph. Handouts attached.

### **Student Assessment/CFU's:**

think, write, pair, share  
describe  
evaluate

### **Materials:**

The Monster  
writing notebooks  
figurative language practice

### **21st Century Themes and Skills:**

communication and collaboration  
Creativity and innovation

### **Differentiation/Modifications:**

provide examples



provide stems  
model close reading

**Integration of Technology:**

If possible, type paragraphs on laptops and perform a read aloud for the class.