

# Unit 2 Writing: Narrative Writing: Crafting Realistic Fiction Stories

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Trimester 1**  
Length: **4-5 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## **Brief Summary of Unit**

---

This unit will focus on story structure and the plotting work a short story writes does, establishing a situation and introducing a narrator or characters. Additionally, students are expected to use details including dialogue, descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings, figurative language, temporal words and phrases to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure. The goal of this unit is for students to write a well-elaborated realistic fiction story that focuses on an important message or heart of the story. Students will immerse themselves in realistic fiction stories and will draw on what they've learned from previously writing small moment stories. Students will begin by writing several short flash draft stories before choosing a favorite to revise, edit, and publish. Students will repeat the process after publishing their first piece, guided by previous sessions, anchor charts, and conferences.

This unit is designed to be part of a developmental progression across grade levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including physical and social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness, and global citizenship. During this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision Date: June 2022

## **Pacing Guide**

---

Please refer to [this Language Arts Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 3](#). Sentence Study is paced and aligned within the Syntax, Style, Grammar and Conventions section. Please refer to [this folder](#) for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons and materials.

A sample K-5 Literacy Schedule Across a Week is accessible in instructional materials section of the [Grades K-5 folder](#).

## Standards

---

The identified standards reflect a developmental progression across grades/ levels and make interdisciplinary connections across content areas including social sciences, technology, career readiness, cultural awareness and global citizenship. The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

These mandates may be hit through the selection of choice literature:

### Amistad Commission

This unit also reflects the goals of the Department of Education and the Amistad Commission including the infusion of the history of Africans and African-Americans into the curriculum in order to provide an accurate, complete, and inclusive history regarding the importance of African-Americans to the growth and development of American society in a global context.

### Asian American and Pacific Islander History Law

This unit includes instructional materials that highlight the history and contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in accordance with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in Social Studies.

### New Jersey Diversity and Inclusion Law

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including:

<ADD WHICH APPLY TO THE UNIT FOLLOWING THE COLON AND SEPARATED BY COMMAS>  
economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with gender and sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, disabilities, and religious tolerance.

LA.W.3.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using narrative technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LA.W.3.3.A	Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
LA.W.3.3.B	Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
LA.W.3.3.C	Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.

LA.W.3.3.D	Provide a sense of closure.
LA.W.3.4	With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.3.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.W.3.6	With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.W.3.10	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.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.1.A	Explain the function of nouns, pronouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs in general and their functions in particular sentences.
LA.L.3.1.B	Form and use regular and irregular plural nouns.
LA.L.3.1.C	Use abstract nouns (e.g., childhood).
LA.L.3.1.D	Form and use regular and irregular verbs.
LA.L.3.1.E	Form and use the simple (e.g., I walked; I walk; I will walk) verb tenses.
LA.L.3.1.F	Ensure subject-verb and pronoun-antecedent agreement.
LA.L.3.1.G	Form and use comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs, and choose between them depending on what is to be modified.
LA.L.3.1.H	Use coordinating and subordinating conjunctions.
LA.L.3.1.I	Produce simple, compound, and complex sentences.
LA.L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.3.2.B	Use commas in addresses.
LA.L.3.2.C	Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.
LA.L.3.2.D	Form and use possessives.
LA.L.3.2.E	Use conventional spelling for high-frequency and other studied words and for adding suffixes to base words (e.g., sitting, smiled, cries, happiness).
LA.L.3.2.F	Use spelling patterns and generalizations (e.g., word families, position-based spellings, syllable patterns, ending rules, meaningful word parts) in writing words.
LA.L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
TECH.9.4.5.CI	Creativity and Innovation  Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.

## **Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings**

- How do writers anticipate the trajectory of their work across a whole unit?
- How do writers write with volume, stamina, and speed?
- How do writers become invested in the Writing Workshop?
- What makes writing interesting to read?

- How do writers determine their audience?
- Writers write routinely.
- Writers write for a specific purpose.
- Writers develop and refine their ideas.
- Revising improves the quality of writing.
- Editing corrects writing for grammar, punctuation, spelling errors, and sentence/paragraph structure.

### **Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At...**

---

Students will know:

- The definition of a noun, verb, adjective, pronoun and verb.
- Sentences begin with a capital letter and end with punctuation.
- How to correctly punctuate dialogue.
- Writers revise in order to improve their work.
- Writers edit in order to improve their work.

Students will be skilled at:

- Writing narrative pieces of writing
- Writing for a specific audience
- Revising work
- Editing work
- Collaborating with peers
- Incorporating meaningful dialogue
- Using figurative language

### **Evidence/Performance Tasks**

---

Students demonstrate differentiated proficiency through both formative and summative assessments in the classroom. Based on individual student readiness and performance, assessments can be implemented as formative and/or summative.

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered three times per year. Follow up diagnostic assessments are used to target skill remediation. Student proficiency allows for additional or alternative assessment based on demonstration or absence of skill.

The performance tasks listed below are examples of the types of assessments teachers may use in the classroom and the data collected by the district to track student progress.

**Formative:**

- Answer essential questions
- Teacher observations/conferring notes
- Turn and talks
- Partnerships rehearsing their writing
- Peer Conferences
- Writer’s Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites)
- Teacher checklists using mini-lessons for measurable skills
- Writing Conferences: Individual and small group
- Writing Partnership work and discussions
- Writing folders with student work
- Writing pieces to note the growth need of the writer
- Observations
- Listening in on partnership discussion of writing piece
- Drafts online (Google Docs)

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 2-3 final pieces to score not including the post assessment.
- Published pieces
- Score grammar and spelling in final drafts only
- Student portfolios
- During publishing students read their piece to assess oral speaking and reading skills
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Learning Progressions
- Teachers College Reading and Writing Project Rubrics and Student Samples
- Rubrics: created for the standards-based report card as well as teacher-created.
- Standards should be addressed as reported on the Standards-Based Report Card

**Benchmark:**

- Benchmark writing assessments: opinion, narrative, and informational, scored using rubrics, district-created and provided.
- Located in the shared Grades K-8 Language Arts folder on the Google Drive, reported three times per year

**Learning Plan**

---

Our upper elementary writing instruction follows a balanced literacy approach including a number of

strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop. These include mini-lessons, shared writing, independent writing, small group strategy instruction, one-to-one conferencing, partnerships and/or writing clubs. Writing Workshop emphasizes immersion, independence, and choice. Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where children share their writing with others in the school community.

Lessons should follow the mini-lesson format:

- Teaching point(s) for each lesson
- Connection: Connects new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach/Modeling: Uses ‘think alouds’ when modeling what you expect students to do
- Guided Practice/Active Engagement: Guides students through practice of the teaching point
- Link to Independent Practice: Helps writers understand the purpose for the writing they are about to do and the skills/craft they will be practicing/applying independently as good writers
- Independent Writing/Student Conferences: Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs.
- Closure/Sharing: Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point.

The architecture of a writing conference includes:

- Research
- Decide
- Teach and Coach with guided practice
- Link

Mentor sentence study will be taught across the week to teach syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Students will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific sentence patterns and applying it to their own writing. Please refer to this link in the K-5 folder for specific lessons and materials.

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

---

**Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Think of a Character and of Small Moment Stories**

**Writers get seed ideas for fiction from strong emotions in ordinary lives.**

Realistic fiction writers write edge-of-your-seat fiction stories. They write stories that keep the readers wanting more. One way to do this is to read many stories by other authors to learn from them.

- Students will spend time reading short stories and picture books to find inspiration. Students should post-it or jot notes about stories or scenes they enjoyed.

**Realistic fiction writers generate ideas for stories by thinking of a time when a character had a strong emotion and pay attention to how this ordinary moment might become a fictional story.** (Create a CHART for generating ideas. Include list of emotions in chart)

Example chart:

Book	Strong Emotion	My Writing Ideas
Dancing in the Wings	Embarrassment - too tall	Embarrassed too small at basketball
	Struggle - learning to do something well	Struggling to make the soccer team

- Students should create a class list of strong emotions. i.e. jealousy, embarrassment, frustration, surprise, hope, fear, anger, etc.
- Students should spend about 10 minutes generating seed ideas and then choose one to write as a whole story. Remember these are just flash drafts. Students will be expected to write several stories throughout the unit, each one taking about a day and a half)

### Writers plot storylines using story mountains.

Story arcs or mountains are used to assist students in planning their stories.

- Plot the story mountain for *Dancing in the Wings*. Guide students to develop a story mountain for their planned story, thinking about the sequence of events. Have students place a heart on the post-it note of the scene they think is most important.
- Later in the unit, students will be encouraged to step into their character's shoes scene by scene, adding details to reveal the heart of the story.

Writers rehearse their drafts.

Fiction writers practice their stories aloud, telling their stories while pointing to each of their story mountain events. They do this a few times, first to themselves and then to their writing partners.

- As stories improve each time, writers jot down their ideas quickly or draw tiny sketches (aprox. 15 mins)
- Students then draft ideas.

## **Writers write with focus, limiting their characters and scope.**

Short story writers draft small moments or scenes with one or two characters close to their age, not large casts. Note: stories ideas should occur in one or two twenty-minute stretches of time (short stories should not follow the characters through an entire day or longer, they should follow a character through a short stretch of time- a small moment)

Writers know that when they think they're done, they've just begun. When one story is complete, writers begin another. Writers write many short story flash drafts.

- Re-read old entries and add to them.
- Choose a new idea from a list of ideas.
- Create a new list of ideas and choose one to write, start to finish.

Writers sometimes stretch their writing over more pages, going deeper into one story, adding more and stretching it out to show the importance of it instead of moving on to another story.

- Note: be sure students understand that this does not mean simply write more to make the story longer. The purpose of this is to add to the heart of the story and elaborate. This may only be appropriate for more sophisticated writers.
- “How to Help Other Writers Elaborate with Focus” CHART

Ask writers questions like “What do you really mean?” and say things like “I’m confused, can you say more?”

Writers ask their partners “What are you picturing?” “Does that part make sense?”

## **Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Revise with Intention**

In this bend there will be a shift from drafting to revision, from writing with volume to writing effective stories. An important focus will be storytelling with detail, not summarizing.

See page 10 in *If...Then...*Curriculum Grade 3 for examples.

## **Writers develop characters by showing their motivations and struggles.**

Fiction writers create tension by including obstacles, complication problems, and challenging situations. Tension is a quality in writing that compels the reader to keep turning pages out of eagerness to know what happens next. Tension keeps the reader on the edge of their seats (see pg. 11 in *If...Then...*Curriculum)



- Have students look at the way that Debbie Allen shows Sassy as a motivated dancer that struggles because of her size. Allen shows this in scenes throughout the story. In each scene the reader learns about Sassy’s struggles through actions, dialogue, and details.
- Students then think about what their character wants and what might be keeping their character from getting it, and how they can create little scenes that show the reader what is happening.
- Make it hard for the main character to get what he/she wants. Think “What will make this difficult to achieve?” “What trouble will get in my character’s way or stop him/her from getting what he/she wants?”
- Add several ‘bumps in the road’ to keep the reader thinking “What’s going to happen next?” “How are they going to get out of this?”
- Make sure challenges or obstacles are logical to the story plot.

**Writers use small moments to write their characters into scenes throughout their stories.**

Fiction writers make their stories come alive by storytelling with detail and thinking about the internal journey of their characters.

- “Ways to Story Tell” CHART
- Think “If this were a play, what would the character be doing on stage?” and write it bit by bit.
- Act out moments and jot down what the character says, does, and what’s happening around them.
- Look at mentor texts and learn from other writers.
- Include the internal journey (thoughts and feelings) and the external journey.
- Weave dialogue with character’s actions, thoughts, and feelings (see pg. 11 in *If...Then...Curriculum* for an example)

**Writers tell their stories in order using transition words and phrases.**

Students are now well into drafting realistic fiction stories. Adding transition words or phrases helps paragraphs and sentences flow together smoothly, making them easier to read.

- Refer to “Transition Words and Phrases” CHART

**Writers use dialogue to craft characters and move the story forward.**

Encourage students to look at their drafts for places where they can add dialogue to reveal strong feelings and thoughts the character may have.

Writers revise their stories by using what they know about language to paint pictures in the mind of their

readers.

- “Language Paints a Beautiful Picture” CHART (pg 97 of *Once Upon a Time: Adapting Fairy Tales*)
- Present students with examples of figurative language comparisons (similes and metaphors) and precise and exact describing words.

**Writers study mentors to rewrite leads to capture the reader’s attention and endings that relay the story’s message or heart.**

A lead is the start of a story that hooks the reader and introduces the storyline, character, and setting. The ending of a story needs to reflect the most important part of the story.

- Leads may include dialogue, actions, important details about the main character, descriptions of the setting.
- Writers test several leads and endings before finding one that fits.
- Writers make endings a big deal!
- Study mentor texts to admire what other writers have done (possible CHART created by students of types of leads and endings)
- Partners can read each other’s stories to find the lesson learned to be used as endings. (refer to *Toy Story* clip- this scene sends the message that friends stick together, no matter what)

### **Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Repeat the Process and Accumulate Lessons Along the Way**

---

**Writers reflect on past work and set goals for future work.**

With every new piece, writers draw on what they’ve learned and aim to make the next book better. Use checklists to monitor progress and set goals.

- “What did I do in my last story that made it so good I want to do it again?”
- “What else can I try?”
- “What else might I want to work on today to make this my strongest piece of writing yet?”

**Writers revise for elaboration and character by storytelling to uncover important details and adding dialogue to highlight important character traits.**

Writers know that revision is a compliment to good writing.

- “Revision is a Compliment to Writing” CHART

“What will I work on today? How will I make my piece of writing the very, very best it can be?”

- “Summarizing vs. Storytelling” CHART (note: many students may still be summarizing rather than storytelling with detail. A chart showing the differences may be helpful) Use pages 10 and 13 in If...Then...Curriculum for examples of each)

### **Writers revise for meaning.**

Think about important life lessons your character learns and show those life lessons. Often a writer will add something about those lessons as a way to end a story.

- Possible CHART: Students create a chart of lessons learned by characters in their stories or stories created by others.

### **Writers polish their writing for publication.**

- Capitalize proper nouns such as names and special places.
- Reread to ensure the story remains in a third person voice.
- Add words or punctuation that may have been left out.

NOTE: Students will write many pieces during this unit. Have students pick one that he/she will publish. Encourage students to reread their pieces to find the one that builds the most tension and/or carries the most significance. Celebrate with a class or small group share. You may have students rehearse their stories before presenting. Class discussion can be helpful to discuss the lessons learned or the message in the story. Students may even work together to add book blurbs or ‘about the author’ sections.

---

## **Materials**

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, enrichment, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Materials used for grammar and convention study include the following: *Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language* by Jeff Anderson.

## **Instructional Materials**

---

Possible Read alouds and Mentor Texts:

- *Dumpling Soup*, Jama Kim Rattigan
- *Shortcut*, Donald Crews
  
- *The Proudest Blue*, Ibtihaj Muhammad
  
- *The Name Jar*, Yangsook Choi
  
- *Too Many Tamales*, Gary Soto
- *Kaola Lou*, Mem Fox
- *The Ghost-Eye Tree*, Bill Martin
- *Mercy Watson*, Kate DiCamillo
- *Junie B. Jones*, Barbara Park
- *Horrible Harry*, Suzy Kline
- *Ruby the Copycat*, Peggy Rathman
- *Dancing in the Wings*, Debbie Allen
- *Horrible Harry*, Suzy Kline
- *Judy Moody and Stink*, Megan McDonald
- *Third Grade Angels*, Jerry Spinelli
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5VHRcUa0k8>
- Toy Story 3- Incinerator Scene (in Spanish)

Possible Teaching Chart:

- See *If...Then...Curriculum* Grade 3 for CHART.
- See *Once Upon a Time: Adapting Fairy Tales* for CHART.
- Use resource CD for rubrics, student samples, and charts.
- Use *Writing Pathways* book for performance assessments, learning progressions, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing examples.

## Teacher Resources

---

- Units of Study for Teaching Writing, Lucy Calkins with Colleagues from the Reading and Writing Project, Grade 3 Heinemann, 2013.
- Resources for Teaching Writing CD, Grade 3, Heinemann, 2013.
- *The Writing Strategies Book*, Jennifer Serravallo
- *Feedback that Moves Writers Forward*, Patty McGee
- *Patterns of Power*, Jeff Anderson
- *Mechanically Inclined*, Jeff Anderson
- [Trail of Breadcrumbs](#) Website
- [Two Writing Teachers](#) Blog
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson
- Cranford Public School Grades K-5 Google Folder for instructional materials
- [Crosswalk \(suggested IRA titles and Mini Lesson numbers\)](#)

## Suggested Strategies for Modifications and Accommodations

---

[Content specific accommodations and modifications as well as Career Ready Practices are listed here](#) for all students, including: Special Education, English Language Learners, At Risk of School Failure, Gifted and Talented, Students with 504.

The structure of writing workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each reader:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- The teacher will assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- Students have individualized choice of topics within each unit.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

Possible accommodations during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student
- Take additional time to complete a task or project
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks

- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; eliminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Access speech to text function on computer

Possible modifications to content during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Refer to the Strategies for Striving Students in the K-8 folder for specific appropriate interventions.
- Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.