

# Unit 7 Writing: Crafting True Stories

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Trimester 3**  
Length: **4-5 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

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Students will write true stories based on their life experiences. The unit begins by providing students insight for the kind of writing third grade students will be doing. It is recommended that students are exposed to personal narrative stories (see Possible Read-alouds and Mentor texts in the beginning of the learning plan) before they write their own and throughout the process. The class will be introduced to several different strategies for coming up with ideas for stories but can use their own strategies as well. Students will spend time flash drafting several ideas before choosing a seed idea. Throughout the unit, students will work on stamina, volume, conventions and craft. Students will elaborate paragraphs with dialogue, step-by-step actions, thoughts, and feelings. Grammar is embedded throughout the unit as a guide for what to cover. Rubrics will be used throughout the process for students to self assess.

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.

## Pacing Guide

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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

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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.

LA.L.3.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.3.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.3.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.3.3.A	Choose words and phrases for effect.
LA.L.3.3.B	Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of spoken and written standard English.
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.

## **Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings**

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- 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 ...**

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- 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.
- that writers revise in order to improve their work.
- that writers edit in order to improve their work.

- 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**

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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)
- Writing Club work and discussions

### **Summative:**

- 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**

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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: Writing Personal Narratives with Growing Independence**

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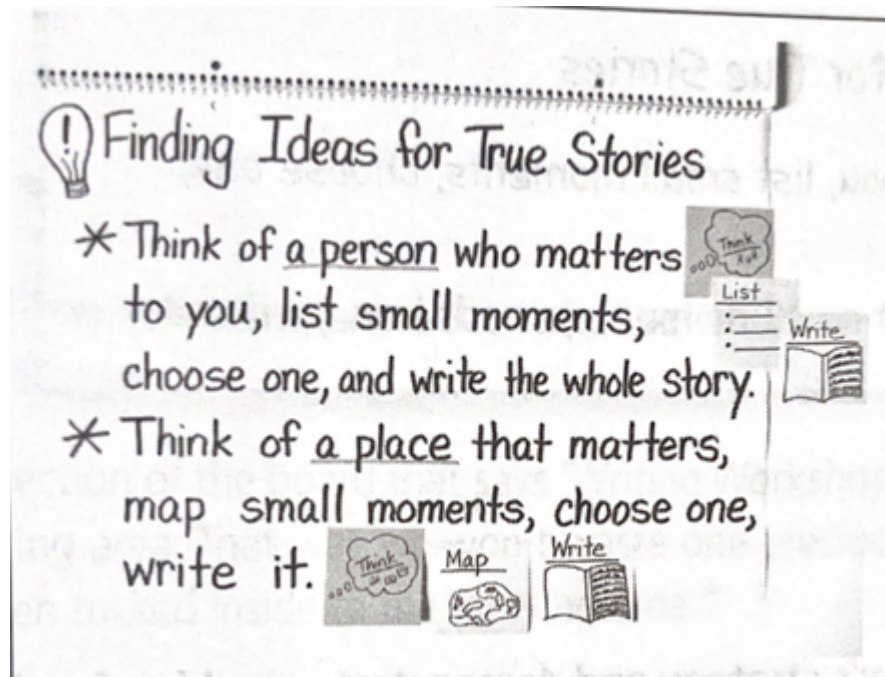
Note: Students will work on writing many short flash drafts before choosing a seed idea in bend 2. A CHART will be created and added to throughout the entire unit. See page 37 for the first bullet points. Students may

feel they are ready to publish at any point in the unit. A plus side to having students publish multiple pieces (even if it is not officially time to publish) is that they will continue to build their skills across more pieces and students can avoid getting bored with one story. Some students may need the variety even though the beginning pieces may be missing some key elements.

### Writers find ideas for stories and write up a storm

- Teach students a strategy for when they are having trouble coming up with an idea for a true story. Tell them to think of a person who matters to you, then list small moments you've had with that person, and then write (or tell) the story of one of those small moments.

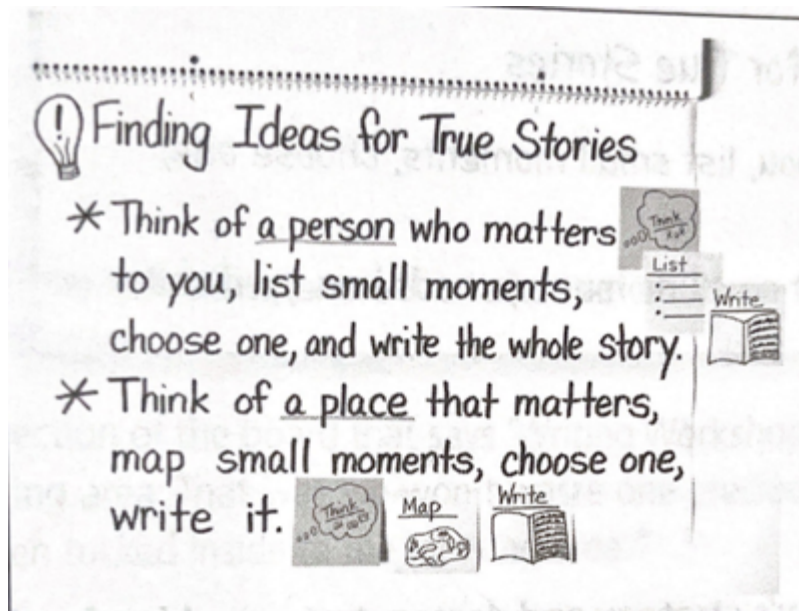
Chart 1



- Model the process for students on chart paper.
- Remind students they will need stamina when writing up a storm. Tell them that writers push themselves to write fast and furious to gather ideas.

### Writers draw on a repertoire of strategies

- Remind students that writers draw on a repertoire of strategies for generating writing ideas. Yesterday we thought of people that matter to us, today we will think of places that matter.
- Add second bullet to "Finding Ideas for True Stories" Chart 1.

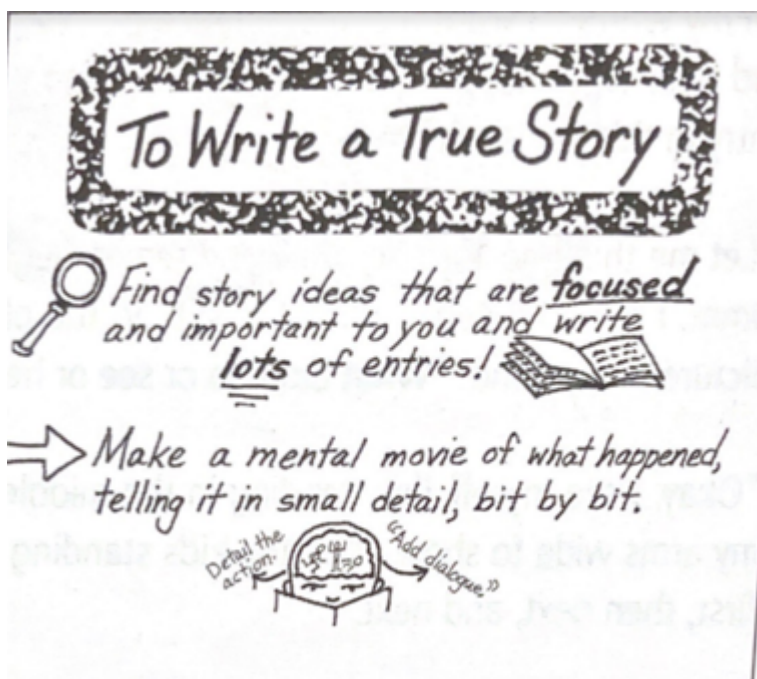


- Model the process for students on chart paper.

**Writers use a storyteller’s voice. They tell stories, not summaries**

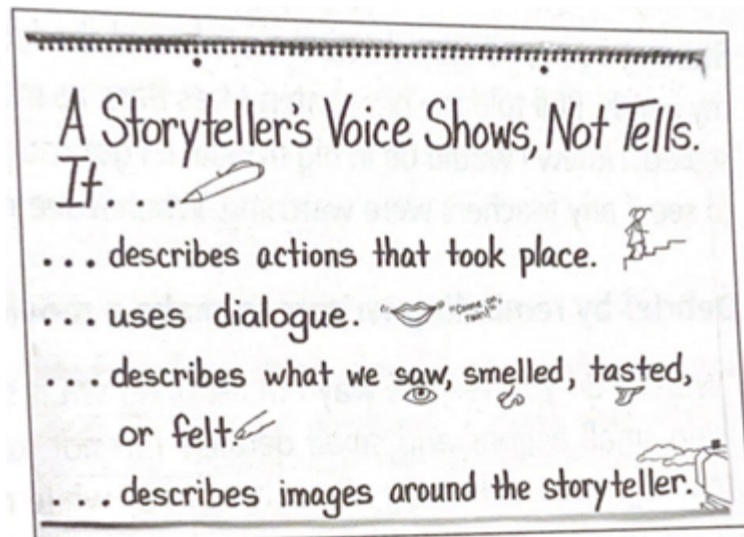
- Make a mental movie of what happened and tell it in small detail, bit by bit, so your reader can almost see, hear, and feel everything.

Chart 2



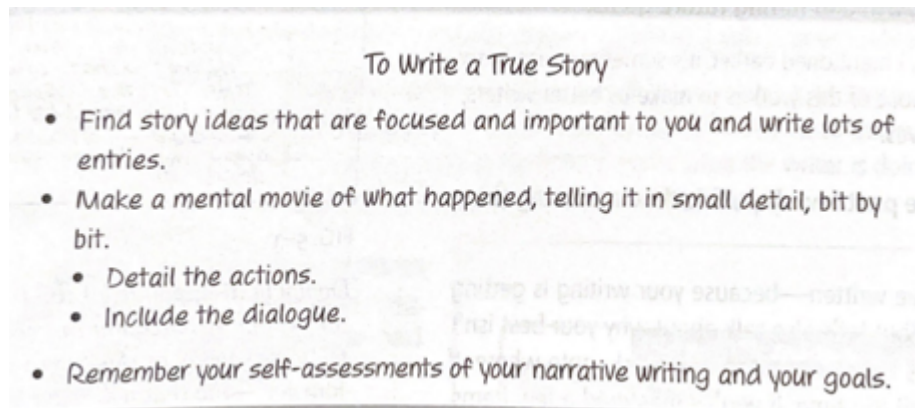
- Practice telling your story with a partner using thoughts, action, and dialogue
- A storyteller’s voice shows (and tells when needed).

CHART 3



Writers asked themselves “How am I doing?”

#### CHART 4



- Self-assessments of personal narratives writing and goals using rubrics (see resources)

Writers edit as they go

- Remember to spell the words you know by heart correctly
- Take a moment to spell the words you almost know by heart. Think about spelling strategies.
- Don't spend too much time on challenging words. Just go for it.

**Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Becoming a Storyteller**

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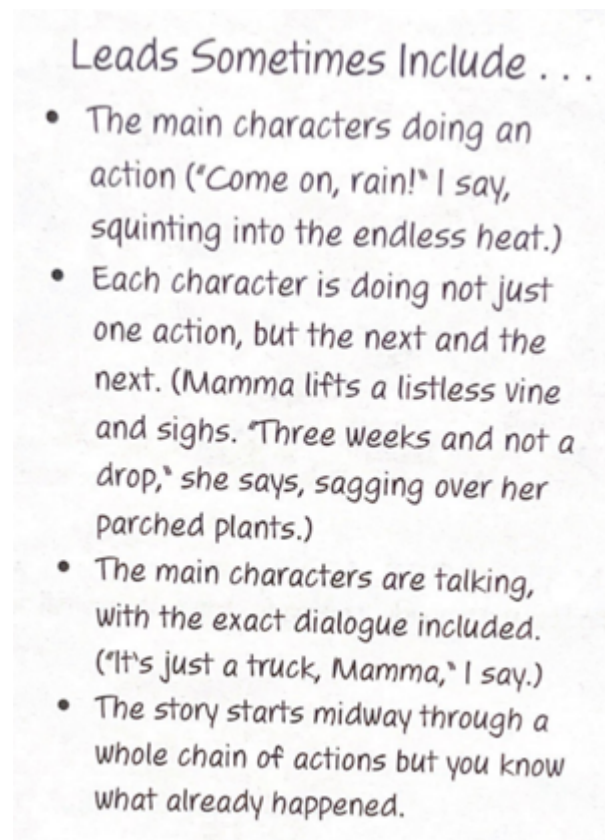


## Writers choose a seed idea to develop into a published book.

### Writers try different leads on for size

- Learn from other authors to see what craft moves they use. Share and notice the leads in various books such as *Come on Rain*, *Fireflies*, or *Saturdays and Teacakes*.
- Students share what they notice about the leads in mentor text. Chart responses.
- Show and chart what leads sometimes include (see below)

Chart 5



- Students try out similar techniques in their notebooks for their draft.

### Writers create discovery drafts

CHART 6

### To Write a True Story

- Find story ideas that are focused and important to you and write lots of entries.
- Make a mental movie of what happened, telling it in small detail, bit by bit.
  - Detail the actions.
  - Include the dialogue.
- Remember your self-assessments of your narrative writing and your goals.
- Rehearse for your writing by storytelling the story repeatedly.
- Try different leads for your story (Action? Dialogue?).
- Write a flash draft, writing fast and furious, eyes on the mental movie.

- After creating different leads, write the entire story fast and furious
- Make a mental movie starting from the very beginning and scrawl the story on paper

### Writers revise by studying what others have done

- Use mentor texts (*Come on, Rain!*) to analyze what other writers have done.
- Chart and discuss what the author, Karen Hesse, did to make her storytelling voice so good.

Chart 7

*Come On, Rain!*

What Hesse Did to Make Her Storytelling Voice So Good in *Come On, Rain!*

- ⇒ She put in exact words people say. [*"Is there thunder?" Mamma asks. "No thunder," I say.*]
- ⇒ She wrote *how* people talk. [*breathe, murmur, whisper*]
- ⇒ She used descriptive details. [*ice-chilled glass*]
- ⇒ She told it bit by bit. [*Mamma sinks onto a kitchen chair and sweeps off her hat. Sweat trickles down her neck and wets the front of her dress and under her arms. Mamma presses the ice-chilled glass against her skin.*]

**Writers develop the heart of the story by not only writing the external story, but the internal story as well.**

- Think about: Why does the story matter?
- Students reread their drafts to find the part of their story that really matters (when they finally accomplished their goal, the moment their pet died, when they heard they made the team...)
- Remind students that revisions are not always about fixing errors, but rather t's about finding and developing the heart of the story- the funniest, saddest, strangest, or most breathtaking part of the story. Then authors tell that part of the story bit-by-bit.
- Students spend time writing the heart of their story bit by bit, then share orally.

**Writers paragraph to support sequencing, dialogue, and elaboration**

- Create new paragraphs when there is a new subtopic. For example, when time has moved forward, and when a new person is speaking students will understand a new paragraph is needed.
- Remind students to review all their paragraphs and elaborate where needed so the reader can create a mental movie.

REVIEW GRAMMAR/CONVENTIONS: Mini lesson on opener and closer sentences. This will also teach students about using commas. This lesson will help students to enhance their writing, particularly in paragraphs that need elaboration.

**Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Writing with New Independence on a Second (or more) Piece**

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**Writers become their own job captain**

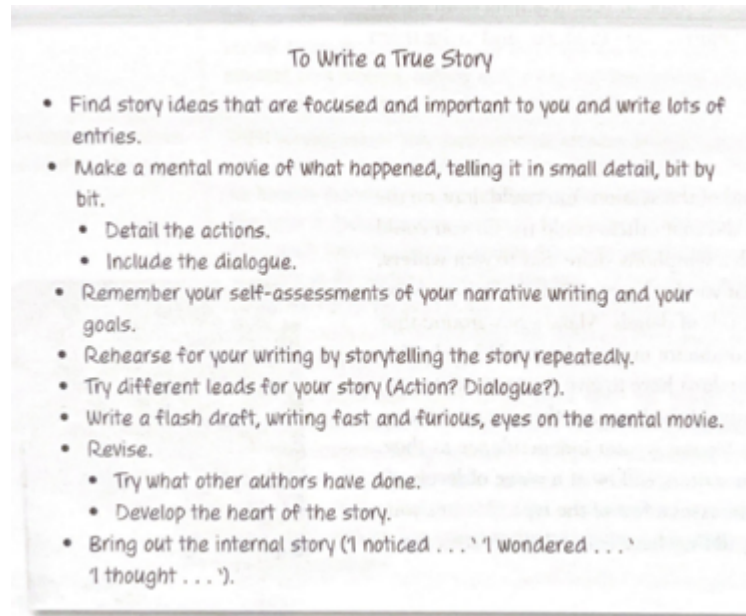
- Writers are in charge of their own writing.
- They think back over everything they know how to do and work on plan for their writing.
- Writers use charts and their own writing to remind them of stuff they know how to do.

**Writers draft their ideas, writing from inside the memory**

- Writers get lost in their story, becoming a part of it.
- Writers write from inside the memory as if they are there, not just giving information about what happened.

## Writers revise, balancing kinds of information

### CHART 8



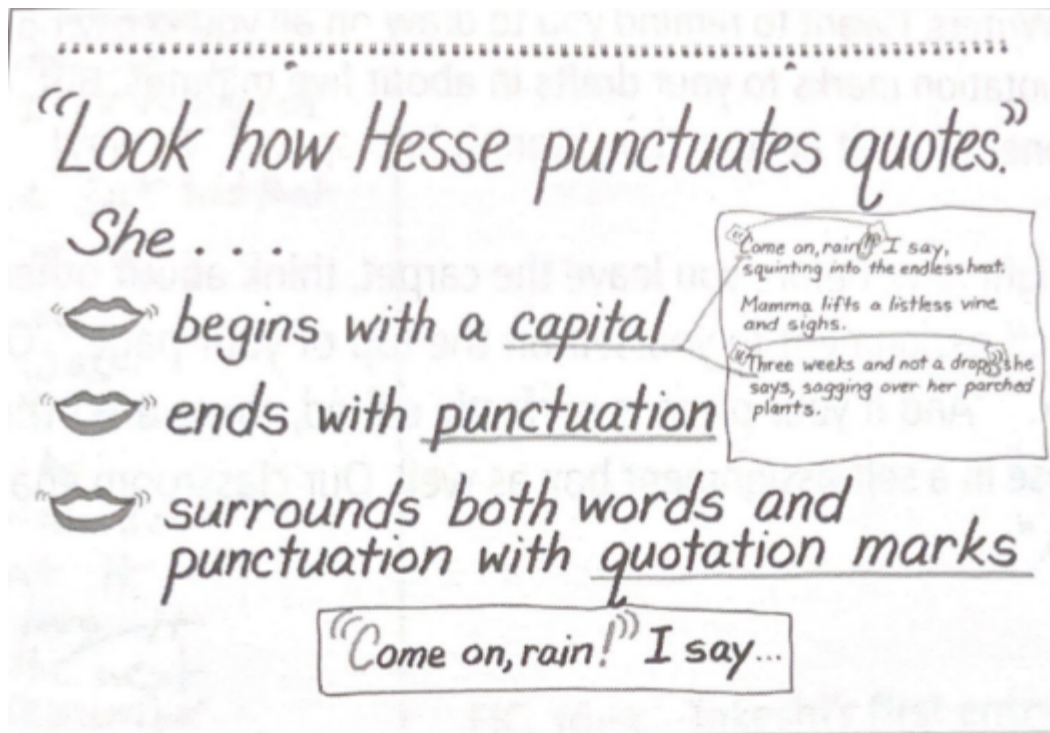
- Check to make sure your details are balanced and that dialogue doesn't overwhelm

REVIEW GRAMMAR/CONVENTIONS: Mini lesson on regular and irregular verbs. Start a chart to list out some of each. Kids can add to the chart as they go. This can be a very quick lesson with the focus being to make students aware that irregular verbs exist.

## Writers use commas and quotation marks to punctuate dialogue (GRAMMAR lesson on commas and quotation marks.)

- Writers use quotation marks to capture exact words
- Use mentor text to examine how other writers punctuate quotations.
- “Look How Hesse Punctuates Quotes” from the book *Come on, Rain!*

### CHART 9



## **Suggested Teaching Points/Activities: Fixing up and Fancying Up our Best Work**

### **Writers revise in big and important ways**

- Reread piece as if you were a stranger, asking “Is this clear?” “Can I take away a part or add a part to make it clearer?”

### **Writers revise their endings**

- Use mentor text to examine craft moves of other writers
- End with important action, strong images, important dialogue, etc.

### **Writers use editing checklists**

- Writers rely on an editing checklist to use as a lens to reread and refine their writing.
- See resources for editing checklist

REVIEW GRAMMAR/CONVENTIONS: Mini lesson on regular and irregular plural nouns. Start a chart to list out some of each. Kids can add to the chart as they go. This can be a very quick lesson with the focus being to make students aware that irregular plural nouns exist.

## Writers celebrate their published writing

- Writers share published pieces.

## Materials

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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

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Possible Read alouds and Mentor Texts:

- *Come on Rain*, Karen Hesse
- *Enemy Pie*, Derek Munson
- *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother*, Patricia Polacco
- *Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul*
- *Knucklehead*, Jon Scieszka
- *Owl Moon*, Jane Yolen
- *Fireflies*, Julie Brinckloe
- *Saturdays and Teacakes*, Lester Laminack

Possible Teaching Charts:

- Charts 1-9
- Use *Writing Pathways* book for performance assessments, learning progressions, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing examples
- See *If...Then...Curriculum Grade 3* for specific ideas for small group or individual conferring scenarios pg. 72-78

## Teacher Resources

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- 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
- The Story of My Thing, Gretchen Bernabei
- [Trail of Breadcrumbs](#) Website
- [Two Writing Teachers](#) Blog
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson
- Cranford Public School Grades K-5 Google Folder in Drive for [instructional materials](#)
- [Crosswalk \(suggested IRA titles and Mini Lesson numbers\)](#)

## Suggested Strategies for Modifications and Accommodations

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[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-5 folder for specific appropriate interventions.
- Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.
- Refer to the Pathways to Intervention documents in the K-5 folder for specific appropriate interventions.
- Consult with Cranford Problem Solving Team (CPST), as needed.