Unit 3 Writing: Structuring Episodes: Writing Series Fiction

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **7-8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

This Grade 3 writing unit, "Structuring Episodes: Writing Series Fiction," guides students through generating, revising, and expanding realistic fiction stories into their own cohesive book series. In the first bend, students learn to draw from personal experiences and imagination to craft small-moment stories centered on a character facing realistic trouble. During the second bend, they focus on deep revision, using checklists and mentor texts to bring characters to life, escalate plot tension, and master dialogue punctuation. In the final bend, students transition to writing a multi-book series, where they maintain consistent character traits across stories, incorporate setting details, and organize their chapters into clear paragraphs. The unit concludes with a publishing celebration where students make their completed series "library ready" with illustrated covers, blurbs, and "about the author" pages to share in the classroom library.

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 2026

Pacing Guide

Please refer to the Language Arts Writing Workshop pacing guide for grade 3 in the curriculum folder. 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 for Sentence Study.

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.

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 mater

economic diversity, equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with race and ethnicity, disabilitie

The standards that follow are relevant to this course in addition to the associated content-based standards listed below.

Foundational Skills: Reading Language

- L.RF.3.3: Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding and encoding words.

Foundational Skills: Writing Language

- L.WF.3.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of encoding and spelling.
- L.WF.3.3: Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing including those listed under grade two foundational skills.

Language

- L.KL.3.1: Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- L.VI.3.3: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

Reading Literature

- RL.IT.3.3: Describe the development of individual character's traits, motivations, or feelings and explain how their actions contribute to the plot within a text.
- RL.PP.3.5: Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.

Writing

- W.NW.3.3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events with basic story elements.
- W.WP.3.4: With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
- W.WR.3.5: Generate questions about a topic and independently locate related information from at least two reference sources (print and non-print) to obtain information on that topic.
- W.RW.3.7: Engage in independent and task-based writing for both short and extended periods of time, producing written work routinely.

Speaking and Listening

- SL.PE.3.1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners on grade 3 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.PI.3.4: Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.
- SL.AS.3.6: Speak in complete sentences when appropriate to task and situation in order to provide requested detail or clarification.

9.2.5.CAP.3	Identify qualifications needed to pursue traditional and non-traditional careers and occupations.

Performing Arts Standards

1.4.5.Cr1: (a). Create roles, imagined worlds, and improvised stories in a drama/theatre work articulating the physical qualities of characters, visual details of imagined worlds, and given circumstances of improvised stories in a drama/theatre work. (b). Imagine, articulate, and design ideas for costumes, props, and sets that support the story, given circumstances, and characters in a drama/theatre work. (c). Imagine how a character's inner thoughts impact their actions and collaborate to determine how characters might move and speak to support the story and given circumstances in drama/theatre work.

1.4.5.Cr2: (a). Devise original ideas for a drama/theatre work that reflect collective inquiry about characters, plots, and their given circumstances. (b). Participate and identify defined responsibilities required to present a drama/theatre work informally to peers/audience and participate in the process.

1.4.5.Cr3: (a). Collaborate with peers to revise, refine, adapt, and improve ideas to fit the given parameters of an improvised or scripted drama/theatre work through self and collaborative review. (b). Use and adapt sounds and

movements in a guided drama experience. (c). Refine technical choices by creating innovative solutions to design and technical problems that arise in rehearsal for a drama/theatre work.

1.4.5.Pr5: (a). Describe and apply dramatic elements of dialogue, action, character emotion, and theme in the

performance and/or creation of a drama/theatre work. (b). Physically and intellectually investigate how movement and vocal choices are incorporated and make meaning in drama/theatre work.

1.4.5.Pr6: (a). Practice drama/theatre work and share reflections individually and in small groups, and informally with an audience.

Essential Questions

- Bend 1: How can we use our personal experiences and imagination to write multiple made-up trouble stories?
- Bend 2: How can we embrace revision to help improve our trouble stories?
- Bend 3: How can we study mentor texts to help us revise and plan a book series?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

By the end of this unit, students…

- Generate multiple narrative ideas from their lives and from imagined trouble.
- Write realistic fiction stories with clear characters, settings, and plots.
- Develop characters through dialogue, small actions, sensory details, and inner thinking.
- Build tension through escalating trouble.
- Craft beginnings that hint at trouble and endings where problems resolve and characters learn something.

- Establish a consistent mood using setting details.

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)
- Writing Club work and discussions

Summative:

- Students should have 2-3 final pieces to score not including the post assessment.
- Published pieces
- Embedded sentence patterns in writing pieces as modeled and practiced through mentor sentence study
- Score grammar and spelling in final drafts only
- Student portfolios

- During publishing students read their piece to assess oral speaking and reading skills
- 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-5 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.

To assist students in reaching the goals for this unit, teachers will guide them through the following steps:

- Immersing students to study the purpose, structure, and characteristics of writing while generating possible writing ideas
- Choosing topics by considering focused areas of expertise
- Organizing information and writing pieces
- Elaborating to increase writing volume and to add a variety of detail
- Revising and editing to prepare for publishing

Through mentor text, students will be immersed in text type in order to recognize text features and structures of the particular type of writing. It is suggested that students form writing partnerships with the goal of collaborating and supporting each other throughout the writing process. Grammar and conventions mini lessons will be taught throughout this unit.

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

Sentence Study

Mentor Sentence study will be taught across the week to teach syntax, diction, grammar, and punctuation. Student will learn how to write like an author by mimicking specific entence patterns and applying it to their own writing. Please refer to this folder for the scope and sequence as well as specific lessons.

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

Before Beginning This Unit . . .

Before beginning this unit:

- Prepare many copies of 3-6 page story booklets with various line spacings, sticky notes, paper flaps, tape, pens, scissors.
- Decide if you want to change partnerships.
- Prepare anchor charts.
- Look over mentor text.
- Prepare demonstration texts.
- Encourage students to save or take home favorite pieces from prior units for portfolios.
- Provide choices of writing paper to promote ownership and investment in writing.
- Ensure the writing center is stocked with varied supplies, including multicultural colored pencils, diverse paper, pens, sticky notes, scissors, tape, staplers, and fun pens for revision.

Detailed Curriculum Map

Teaching Points and lessons are located in the K-5 folder under Grade 3 Curriculum for Language Arts. These curriculum unit guides include not only aligned teaching points to standards, but also specific lessons and appropriate resources. Guidelines for preparing to teach the unit as well as goals for the end of the unit

are outlined. Academic vocabulary and prerequisite skills are identified. Essential questions and possible assessments are detailed as well.

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.

Instructional Materials

The instructional materials which correspond with this unit are linked in the detailed curriculum map under resources and housed in the Grades K-5 folder under grade 3.

The core materials for this unit include the Units of Study in Writing for grade 3, The Reading and Writing Project at Mossflower, 2026.

Please refer to this folder for specific materials for Sentence Study.

Teacher Resources

- Heinemann Online Flight Materials
- *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 Thining, Gretchen Bernabei
- Trail of Breadcrumbs Website
- Two Writing Teachers Blog
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson
- Cranford Public School Grades K-5 Google Folder for instructional materials

Suggested Strategies for Modifications and Accommodations

Content specific accomodations 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 compete 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; elminate 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 accomodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plans.

Framework for Alternative Setting (LEAP Program at Lincoln School)

In our K–5 alternative school setting, each class consists of students who require a highly personalized approach to reading instruction. The district's core Writing Units of Study will continue to serve as the primary writing curriculum framework; however, lessons will be further adapted to ensure accessibility and engagement for all learners. Teachers will use a combination of pacing adjustments, flexible timing, and individualized goal setting to meet students at their current skill levels. Instruction will be delivered through a blend of whole-group, small-group, and one-on-one settings, with intentional scaffolds in place to build

confidence and reduce frustration.

To adapt any writing unit for an alternative school serving students with school avoidance, anxiety, behavior challenges, and social constraints, teachers should employ flexible, supportive modifications while aligning with grade-level writing standards (focusing on organization, elaboration, and mechanics) and speaking/listening standards (focusing on collaborative discussions).

- Timing Adjustments: Extend the pacing of instructional blocks or bends (e.g., extending a typical 2-week drafting phase to 3 weeks) with shorter daily writing sessions (20–30 minutes). Incorporate calming transitions or choice-based entry activities to ease transition anxiety.
- Activity Modifications: During the initial brainstorming and topic-generation phase, use sensory-friendly methods like drawing, sketching, or voice recording instead of demanding whole-group sharing. During structural planning, provide pre-made graphic organizers tailored to the specific genre's layout (e.g., chronological, narrative plot maps, or thesis-and-reason structures) and allow low-stakes, paired verbal rehearsals to build confidence. For the revision phase, incorporate supportive one-on-one teacher conferring for feedback, replacing peer review sessions with optional self-reflection journals. Simplify checklists and rubrics with visual icons, and offer flexible writing alternatives like dictated drafts or digital speech-to-text tools for students with severe writing aversion.
- Intervention Programs: Integrate comprehension-focused frameworks (such as Visualizing and Verbalizing) to unpack exemplar texts, structured foundations programs (like UFLI) for keyword jotting and sentence-level drafting, and systematic phonics/morphology programs (like Sonday System) during conventions exploration (e.g., mechanics, grammar, and parts of speech).
- NJTSS Framework: Implement Tier 1 universal supports, such as explicit modeling of introductions, transitions, and conclusions with visual aids; Tier 2 targeted small-group interventions for elaboration and planning, tracked via regular anecdotal notes; and Tier 3 intensive individualized sessions for goal-setting and revision, prioritizing emotional safety and student agency.
- Data Analysis: Leverage formative assessments (e.g., conferring notes, on-demand writing samples) and summative pre/post benchmarks to personalize pacing, ensuring students produce structured, cohesive compositions in a nurturing environment that celebrates writing progress through low-pressure, voluntary sharing.