

# Unit 5 Writing: Social Issue Research Project

Content Area: **English Language Arts**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Trimester 3**  
Length: **4-6 weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Brief Summary of Unit

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In this unit students will create an informational piece based on the social issue that they will be reading about in their next reading unit: Social Issue Book Clubs. Writers will focus on an issue they will be studying, organize the information that they've gathered through their research with logical structure and compelling writing strategies. Writers will integrate subject relevant vocabulary which will orient the reader, provide elaboration of details, and represent their deep knowledge of the issue. Throughout this unit, learners will need to do some additional research on their social issue using a variety of resources such as books, magazines, and the Internet. Qualities of strong informational writing will be taught throughout this unit and writers will apply these lessons to creating their own Google Slide Presentation. Writers will infuse text features and structures to amplify their ability to convey the passion for the subject matter. This will be accomplished using modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing, and independent writing through flash drafts and a final published piece in a Google Slide Presentation that has TKF features. An emphasis will also be placed on self-assessing their writing using rubrics, checklists, goal setting and the application of feedback from both the teacher and fellow students. Writers will transfer the writing skills from this unit across all genres of writing.

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: June 2021

## Pacing Guide

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Please refer to [this Language Arts Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 5](#)

## Standards

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Please refer to [this Language Arts Reading and Writing Workshop Pacing Guide for grade 5](#). 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](#).

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.

#### Information Literacy

This unit challenges students to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to, digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons may include the research process and how information is created and produced; critical thinking and using information resources; research methods, including the difference between primary and secondary sources; the difference between facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources; the economic, legal, social, and ethical issues surrounding the use of information.

LA.L.5.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.5.1.A	Explain the function of conjunctions, prepositions, and interjections in general and their function in particular sentences.
LA.L.5.1.B	Form and use the perfect (e.g., I had walked; I have walked; I will have walked) verb tenses.
LA.L.5.1.C	Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions.
LA.L.5.1.D	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in verb tense.
LA.L.5.1.E	Use correlative conjunctions (e.g., either/or, neither/nor).
LA.L.5.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.5.2.A	Use punctuation to separate items in a series.
LA.L.5.2.B	Use a comma to separate an introductory element from the rest of the sentence.
LA.L.5.2.C	Use a comma to set off the words <i>yes</i> and <i>no</i> (e.g., <i>Yes, thank you</i> ), to set off a tag question from the rest of the sentence (e.g., <i>It's true, isn't it?</i> ), and to indicate direct address (e.g., <i>Is that you, Steve?</i> ).
LA.L.5.2.D	Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to indicate titles of works.
LA.L.5.2.E	Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.
LA.L.5.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.5.3.A	Expand, combine, and reduce sentences for meaning, reader/listener interest, and style.
LA.L.5.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 5 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.5.4.B	Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., <i>photograph</i> , <i>photosynthesis</i> ).
LA.L.5.4.C	Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
LA.L.5.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships (e.g., <i>however</i> , <i>although</i> , <i>nevertheless</i> , <i>similarly</i> , <i>moreover</i> , <i>in addition</i> ).
LA.W.5.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly to provide a focus and group related information logically; include text features such as headings, illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
LA.W.5.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
LA.W.5.2.C	Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., <i>in contrast</i> , <i>especially</i> ).
LA.W.5.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.5.2.E	Provide a conclusion related to the information of explanation presented.
LA.W.5.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.5.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
LA.W.5.7	Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through

investigation of different perspectives of a topic.

LA.W.5.8	Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.
LA.W.5.10	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.SL.5.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 5 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.5.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
LA.SL.5.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
LA.SL.5.2	Summarize a written text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).
LA.SL.5.4	Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.
LA.SL.5.5	Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.
TECH.9.4.5.CI.3	Participate in a brainstorming session with individuals with diverse perspectives to expand one's thinking about a topic of curiosity (e.g., 8.2.5.ED.2, 1.5.5.CR1a).
TECH.9.4.5.CT.2	Identify a problem and list the types of individuals and resources (e.g., school, community agencies, governmental, online) that can aid in solving the problem (e.g., 2.1.5.CHSS.1, 4-ESS3-1).
TECH.9.4.5.CT.4	Apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to different types of problems such as personal, academic, community and global (e.g., 6.1.5.CivicsCM.3).
TECH.9.4.5.DC.1	Explain the need for and use of copyrights.
TECH.9.4.5.DC.2	Provide attribution according to intellectual property rights guidelines using public domain or creative commons media.
TECH.9.4.5.DC.3	Distinguish between digital images that can be reused freely and those that have copyright restrictions.
TECH.9.4.5.DC.4	Model safe, legal, and ethical behavior when using online or offline technology (e.g., 8.1.5.NI.2).
TECH.9.4.5.TL.3	Format a document using a word processing application to enhance text, change page formatting, and include appropriate images graphics, or symbols.
TECH.9.4.5.GCA.1	Analyze how culture shapes individual and community perspectives and points of view (e.g., 1.1.5.C2a, RL.5.9, 6.1.5.HistoryCC.8).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.1	Evaluate digital sources for accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance (e.g., Social Studies Practice - Gathering and Evaluating Sources).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.2	Create a visual representation to organize information about a problem or issue (e.g., 4.MD.B.4, 8.1.5.DA.3).
TECH.9.4.5.IML.3	Represent the same data in multiple visual formats in order to tell a story about the data.
TECH.9.4.5.IML.6	Use appropriate sources of information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures to answer questions (e.g., RI.5.7, 6.1.5.HistoryCC.7, 7.1.NM. IPRET.5).

## **Essential Questions/Enduring Understanding**

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### **Essential Question**

- How can I organize a life that allows me to read across multiple texts, studying a social issue from multiple perspectives?
- How can I use all that I know about nonfiction reading and research to learn about a topic?
- How can I build theories from studying multiple perspectives on a topic?
- How do I lead my readers to learn from me about a topic?

### **Enduring Understanding**

- Student should seek to understand multiple perspectives about a topic.
- Specific reading strategies and research techniques will help me to learn more about a topic.

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

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### **Students Will Know**

- Writers write with independence.
- Writers write with fluency, stamina, and speed.
- Writers will elaborate on their topic by identifying facts, details, and quotations that brings clarity to their topic.
- Writers will convey information on a historical content area by organizing their information in a logical structure.
- Writers will include text features that enhance the information being presented.
- Writers will conduct research projects that build their knowledge of a topic from a plethora of resources.
- Writers will paraphrase and present information in their own words.

### **Students Will Be Skilled At**

- Using mentor texts to emulate author's' craft moves in their own writing.
- Develop and strengthen their writing by planning, revising, conferencing, and editing.
- Demonstrating a command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- Producing writing with appropriate development and organization.
- Reporting on a topic or text by drawing evidence from literary or informational texts to recall relevant information, support analysis, paraphrase, reflection, and research/cite.
- Using non-fiction text structures and features to enhance their informational writing.
- Providing a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.

## **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.

Benchmark writing assessments: opinion, narrative, and informational, scored using rubrics, district-created and provided. Located in the shared K-5 Language Arts folder on the Google Drive, they are reported three times a year.

#### **Formative:**

- Answer essential questions
- Teacher observations/conferring notes
- Turn and talks
- Partnerships rehearsing their writing
- Peer Conferences/Partnership Discussion and Rehearsing
- 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 and should reflect this work

## **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

A writing club is like a book club. It is a group of students that meet to discuss one student in the group's piece at a time. The students listen to the piece read aloud. If on Google Docs, it can be shared with the group and they can follow along. (This takes a lot coaching in the beginning.) Students provide feedback to the writer, first what they did really well, and provide evidence from the piece that supports it. Then they provide something that they can use to enhance their piece and evidence as to why it can be changed. The writer that shared can use the advice. Developing trust in the group and valuable advice takes time. Over time groups can run on their own.

Mentor sentence study will be taught across the week to teach syntax, dictation, 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**

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How can I organize a life that allows me to read across multiple texts, studying an aspect of a specific social issue from multiple perspectives?

Researchers organize what they are bringing with them to their writing.

Writers write to grow ideas.

Students will come up with more information to write about as they plan a draft. Example of Post-its: any topic that the students will be reading in book clubs during the social issue unit.

Students have dialogue and decide what goes together under one topic and what one topic is all by itself. Write more post-its, collect and organize. Set up post-its and pages for flash-draft

- Teach someone what you now, then revise your organization based on how your teaching went.
- Study published authors to see how they have done the same work – and then try it.
- Read, research, and note-take prior to flash-draft.
- Review important tips with group members and take 2-3 minutes to discuss a few key pointers that can help everyone. Look back over your post-its and notebook collection. Then "FLASHDRAFT". "Think about what you are going to write and just right. Try not to take your pen/pencil off of the paper!"

- Push for more length. Just when you think you can't say anything more, THINK: "What else can you say about something?"
- Utilize rubrics and partnerships to strengthen drafts.
- Students will share their pieces with each other.

Researchers shift from reading to recording information to writing to grow ideas.

Students will use information collected in notes to write and grow ideas. Students will reflect on those ideas.

Students will create an entry using one of their ideas. (NOTE: these will not be perfect! The purpose of this activity is to get students writing so they will have entries to work off of later in the unit.)

Students will look for patterns in their writing and begin to ask questions about their topic.

Students will review notes and improve sentences with a new version finding and using the right words for things – Domain – Specific Vocabulary

Writers think about the information they are learning and come up with new ideas. Writers ask questions and then figure out answers to those questions saying to themselves, "Maybe it's because... I wonder if perhaps..."

Partner work: Revision

Share Google Slide Presentation with partner. Tell your partner what you would add.

Writers are aware that one social issue may domino into many more social issues.

Writers assess notes prior to draft

1. Consider unanswered question, new questions, and less developed sections. Begin lesson by asking students to reread the list of questions and place sticky notes on the pages in their notebooks where more research is needed. Say something like, "Today I want to teach you that when researchers prepare to draft, they take stock of all the information they have and conduct quick research to tie up any loose ends." Demonstrate this process of rereading and modeling leaving marginal notes in text of where you might add additional information.

- Rehearse drafts to partners
- Prepare for draft
- Draft

Informational writers take a moment to look back over their research and conjure an image of what they hope to create, sometimes by quickly sketching a new outline, drafting a fresh version of our report.

- If you find yourself stuck, pause and reread
- Think: "Have I separated the different parts of my writing into sections or clumped it all together?" "Have I used paragraphs to help my reader pause and take in what I have written?" (Small group/conference)
- If we want our readers to know we are experts on a topic, we have to ask ourselves, "Does my writing reflect a more formal



tone?" If not, we need to revise.

Writers make sure they are always meeting the goals they have set for themselves and pushing themselves to come up with plans for how to reach those goals.

- Students use checklist to review their progress and choose an area to improve on.

\*\*At the end of this bend, all students should share draft, celebrate, and use writing checklist to assess and make plans for later on in the unit. Give students a bit of time to not just tell but show their partner what they did well using their piece and the checklist.

### **Suggested Teaching Points/Lessons: Writing Focused Research Reports That Teach and Engage Readers**

Writers use mentor texts to draw up inspiration.

- Gather inspiration from short videos found on the web.
- Students listen to what the filmmaker has done to draw in the audience that they too can do. Asking: "What Makes this Powerful Information Writing/Viewing"
- Use "Qualities of Good Writing" Chart to help take note notes
- Write mission statements to help guide students' writing.

Writers gather information using primary sources.

- Use knowledge to construct own perspective.
- Writers compare and contrast primary sources.

Writers think and rethink the structure of their writing in order to make it the best it can be. Review structures if necessary.

- Check the structure and format of your writing. Decide which format it will take: compare/contrast, cause and effect, etc.
- Provide students with models of other formats
- Study mentor text –optional

Writers include multiple points of view in their stories by asking themselves, "What are some other ways to see this?" Do we want a slant or angle or include our own?

- Use a shared video clip or artifact. Ask students to describe the first story, "What's the obvious?" and then "What are the sides that are not often heard?"
- Example: Make all titles start with the same keyword or phrase

Writers "fancy" up our work. We use photographs, diagrams, bold print, etc. Informational writers include text features to support and aide a reader's comprehension. (This should look like a Time For Kids article)

- Compile examples of text features.
- Add text features to your shared piece of writing.
- Explain logic behind decision of text feature chosen.
- Have students plan on adding text feature to their own writing.

Research writers construct an introduction that guides and beguiles, leaving the reader no choice but to read on.

- Model several introductions: a fact or question, a direct quote, or contrasting then with now.
- See Georgia Heard's Finding the Heart of Nonfiction: Teaching 7 Essential Craft Tools with Mentor Texts for models
- Play with introductions/leads. Have students write and rewrite using different leads/introduction.

- Similar to introduction, a conclusion will leave reader wanting to continue a relationship with topic. Can summarize, add a twist in the form of a new fact, or a “point to ponder”
- Optional Minilesson – End with compare and contrast to life today.

Wrapping it up:

- Possible mini-lessons on sources
- Selecting and using quotes within their writing
- Use of quotations within writing
- Keeping track of sources and citing sources
- Students who relied heavily on few sources (Remind them that readers tend to look at sources to judge the writer’s credibility.
- Revisions
- Study mentor texts to gather own ideas for revisions. Listen to the sound of the mentor text for the way it flows. Transfer to own writing.
- Writers use punctuation to pack in facts and information into sentences they have ALREADY written.
- Writers use “appositives” or interrupters to add in more information.
- Writers use transitions.

\*\*At the end of this bend, all students will complete a published piece after proofreading. It is suggested that at this time there is a mini celebration where students can read writing to small groups, whole class, or other classes, design blogs with their writings, or distribute to libraries and other classrooms.

## **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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Read Alouds- See Reading Unit on Social Issues

Time for Kids

Scholastic News

Google Jr

Websites for Research

Discover– articles on science, technology and the future <http://discovermagazine.com/>

## Teacher Resources

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- *Units of Study for Teaching Writing*, Lucy Calkins with Colleagues from the Reading and Writing Project, Grade 5 Heinemann, 2013.
- Fountas and Pinnell Classroom Materials: Minilesson Book, Guided Reading, Interactive Reading
- Changing the World Grade 5 Unit 2 The Lens of History
- Use resource CD for rubrics, student samples, and charts.
- Writing Pathways book for performance assessments, learning progressions, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing examples
- Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers Conventions of Language Grades 1-5 by Jeff Anderson
- Feedback That Moves Writers Forward by Patty McGee
- The Continuum of Literacy Learning by Guy Su Pinnell & Irene C. Fountas
- The Common Core Writing Book by Gretchen Owocki
- Projecting Possibilities for Writers: The How, What & Why of Designing Units of Study by Matt Glover & Mary Alice Berry
- Ruth Culham's The Writing Thief
- Georgia Heard's Finding the Heart of Nonfiction: Teaching 7 Essential Craft Tools with Mentor Texts
- Everyday Editing by Jeff Anderson
- For All Parts of the Writing Process, including tools for intervention and ways to publish, see The Good Writer's Guide by Gretchen Bernabei
- Cranford Public School Grades K-8 Google Folder for instructional materials
- [Crosswalk \(Interactive IRA titles and Mini Lesson numbers\)](#)

## Suggested Strategies for Modification/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.
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing.
- 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 plan
- 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.