

Unit 1: Writing to Express and Reflect

Content Area: **English Language Arts**

Course(s):

Time Period: **Marking Period 1**

Length: **4-5 Weeks**

Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Summary: Students will understand the value of personal, reflective, real-world writing as it moves beyond recounting an experience and into an exploration of how that experience has shaped the writer and his/her interactions with others in the world. In order to gain a thorough understanding of audience, purpose, and tone, students will engage in reading about writing techniques in addition to scrutinizing sample, mentor text essays from a variety of sources including short memoirs, creative narratives, and college essays that reveal personal growth. Students will then utilize the writing process, including brainstorming, topic development and organization, drafting, revision, editing, and publication, to convey their understanding of this genre. In order to share critical interpretations of strong writing and to offer feedback to their peers, students will actively engage in whole class discussions, small group conversations, as well as teacher-student conferences as they allow for an enhanced understanding of different perspectives on writing.

Interdisciplinary Connections and Career Readiness: 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. When completing this course, students can make informed choices and pursue electives that further their study and contribute toward the formation of career interest.

Revision: June 2023

Standards

LA.L.11-12.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.11-12.1.A	Apply the understanding that usage is a matter of convention, can change over time, and is sometimes contested.
LA.L.11-12.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.11-12.2.A	Observe hyphenation conventions.
LA.L.11-12.2.B	Spell correctly.
LA.L.11-12.3.A	Vary syntax for effect, apply an understanding of syntax to the study of complex texts.
LA.W.11-12.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
LA.W.11-12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

LA.W.11-12.3.C	Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole and build toward a particular tone and outcome (e.g., a sense of mystery, suspense, growth, or resolution).
LA.W.11-12.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
LA.W.11-12.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.
LA.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach, or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
LA.W.11-12.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, share, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
LA.RI.11-12.1	Accurately cite strong and thorough textual evidence, (e.g., via discussion, written response, etc.), to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferentially, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
LA.RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text, and analyze their development and how they interact to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.3	Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines faction in Federalist No. 10).
LA.RI.11-12.5	Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.
LA.RI.11-12.6	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.
LA.RI.11-12.10b	By the end of grade 12, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at grade level text-complexity or above.
LA.SL.11-12.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well reasoned exchange of ideas.
LA.SL.11-12.1.C	Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.
LA.SL.11-12.1.D	Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

Essential Understandings

- expressive and reflective writing necessitates an exploration of personal emotion

- mentor texts serve as samples that model effective writing techniques
- students need to experiment with rhetorical strategies and writing techniques to develop their voice and style
- utilizing the writing process will allow one to effectively develop and refine their writing

Students Will Know

- how to structure and develop a college essay using appropriate details and tone
- how to utilize standardized grammatical rules to clarify meaning
- key definitions related to the study of narrative and reflective writing
- rhetorical strategies and narrative techniques that enhance personal reflection
- the stages of the writing process
- the value of free-writing as it aids in the stage of invention and brainstorming topics

Students Will Be Skilled At

- developing their voice via detail and tone in their writing
- identifying strategies used by mentor text writers that may serve as models for future writing
- offering appropriate and constructive feedback to students on their writing
- organizing and delineating divisions of an essay to convey meaning
- participating in editing and revision of essays prior to publication
- progressing through all of the stages of the writing process to develop an effective, original essay
- using different rhetorical strategies to connect with their audience and establish their purpose
- utilizing proper grammatical structures in their writing

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Developmental progression across years in both reading and writing is evidenced by multiple benchmark assessment screeners, administered two 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.

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.

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:

- Teacher Observations
- Accountable Talk, Socratic Seminars/Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism
- Writers Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites), emphasizing author's craft
- Close reading analysis of text using evidence as substantiation
- Conferences: Individual and small group, accompanying conference notes
- Reflective exercises and assessments
- Oral Reading and Interpretation
- Peer and self-evaluations of learning
- Entrance and Exit Tickets
- Open-Ended Responses in Journal
- Textual Analysis Reading Responses
- Dialectical Journal
- Rhetorical Precis
- SOAPStone Analysis

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- On-demand Writing Assessments, timed and untimed
- Researched Presentations
- Performance Assessments
- Project-based Learning
- Problem-based Learning
- Personalized Learning
- Visual Literacy Prompts
- Digital Portfolios
- Online Discussion Forums
- Analytical and Expository Essay

Benchmark:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
 - Engage in text set analysis using visual literacy and close reading analysis strategies to compose a claim and use evidence as support
 - Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
 - SAT (grades 11-12)
 - Final Exam
 - IXL
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- Accurately use MLA formats in the final draft of an assignment, as needed
 - Analyze and discuss examples of narrative and reflective writing
 - Answer the essential questions.
 - Draft a written response to a writing prompt.
 - Engage in stages of the writing process to address a specific audience and purpose

- Independently read and annotate a mentor text for the purpose of analysis.
- Participate in large and flexible group discussions of the text.
- Read, edit, and revise a peer's written work.
- Use technology to brainstorm, draft, edit, revise, publish, and share a written response to a prompt
- Work collaboratively on small group analysis of the text.

Learning Plan

Taught using a Writing Workshop approach, this unit of study will move through the development and publication of a work or multiple works of writing (while study mentor texts relevant to a specific genre of study or rhetorical mode). Strategies and techniques in Writing Workshop 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. Various forms of writing including digital writing are emphasized as well. Grammar instruction is embedded in writing instruction through mini-lessons, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modelling is done through mentor texts, both published and student-crafted. Teachers focus on process in addition to product with an emphasis on synthesizing texts with nuanced understanding; teacher-created multi-modal text sets may be used as materials. High-and low-stakes, timed and untimed pieces are all important. Each unit ends with a celebration of learning where writers share their work with others in the school community.

Lessons may 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 teacher will confer and offer feedback throughout the writing process. The architecture of a writing conference includes:

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

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests,

aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Suggested Lessons:

- Introduce real world express and reflect writing through a discussion of purpose (memoir, college essay) and audience
- Analyze point of view, the presentation of detail through diction and syntax, the use of imagery and figurative language, as well as tone through mentor text readings
- Explore personal, free choice short memoir writing through the drafting of Six-word memoirs (SMITHmag.net format) as well as the creation of a Memoir Encyclopedia modeled from Amy Krouse Rosenthal's *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life*
- Utilize expressive and reflective writing techniques and strategies to develop either a descriptive/narrative college essay response to a prompt from the Common Application or a developed narrative that highlights a significant event from the student's own life
- Read and discuss a variety of descriptive, narrative mentor texts including works by L. Hughes ("Salvation"), A. Dillard ("The Chase"), M. Twain ("Boyhood Remembered"), and K. Chopin ("The Story of an Hour")
- Read and discuss a variety of student college essay samples from former CHS students as well as those published in print (INK Magazine) and online forums
- Identify strategies to utilize in college essay writing including a conversational tone, use of select academic vocabulary, dialogue, effective transitional expressions, and concrete, imaginative details
- In pairs/trios, role play an admissions counselor analysis session of the mentor texts and what may be gleaned about the student's character from the essay-as a class, discuss how the techniques identified in the sample texts may be incorporated in original ways into student essays
- Engage in personal brainstorming/invention activities to reflect on important life moments: have students use a quote they remember hearing to develop a short, focused reflection where they analyze their emotional response to the comment; develop brief free-writes on a person of significance well as a moment when they misjudged a person
- Select a topic and organize key details using notes, pictures, or a graphic organizer
- Using Chromebooks, laptops, or personal devices, draft an essay of no more than 600 words (Common Application limit)
- Review eliminating fragments and run-ons as well as the development of complex, varied sentences with specific diction
- Conference with peers and instructor for the purpose of editing and revision
- Engage in individual editing and revision
- Optional sharing and submission of final draft

Materials

The materials used in this course integrate a variety of leveled 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.

Teachers must refer to the district-approved [Core Book List](#) while selecting whole-class or small-group

leveled resources.

- 642 Tiny Things to Write About by San Francisco Writer's Grotto
- Easy Writer by Lunsford
- Grammar Girl's QuickandDirtytips.com
- It's Complicated: The American Teenager by R. Bowman
- Library media databases including Facts on File, EBSCO, and Points of View.
- Library print resources.
- Mechanically Inclined by J. Anderson
- MLA Handbook.
- Selections from INK Magazine
- The St. Martin's Guide to Writing.
- The Writer's Resource Ed. Day and McMahon
- Write Like This by K. Gallagher
- Writer's Inc.
- Writer's Inc. Daily Language Workouts
- Writing prompts from CommonApp.com
- Writing with Mentors by A. Marchetti and R. O'Dell
- www.nytimes.com
- www.SMITHMag.net

Suggested Strategies for Accommodation and Modification

[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.

Possible accommodations include:

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing/reading
- Offer graphic organizers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques
- Offer oral assessments
- Supply study guide questions and access to class notes
- Work in partnerships
- Give responses in a form (verbal or written) that is more accessible for the student
- Take additional time to complete a task or project
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts

- Individualize reading choices based on ability and level
- Take frequent breaks
- Use an alarm to help with time management
- Small group and one on one assessment
- Mark text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it
- Receive help coordinating assignments
- Answering fewer questions or completing shorter tasks
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual
- Differentiate roles in discussion groups
- Use digital technology, eBooks,, audio version of printed text
- Create alternate assignments or homework
- Provide distinct steps in a process; eliminate unnecessary steps, as needed
- Use art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines
- Encourage students to self-advocate and use alternate methods of presenting information
- Encourage the use of asynchronous learning to promote student autonomy and flexibility throughout the analysis and writing process.

Adhere to all modifications and accommodations as prescribed in IEP and 504 plan