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

Focus: “A writer’s life and work are not a gift to mankind; they are its necessity.” - Toni Morrison

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 their 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 mentor texts 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.

Revised: July 2024

Standards

RI.CI.11–12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of an informational text and analyze how they are developed and refined over the course of a text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex account or analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL.IT.11–12.3	Analyze the impact of the author’s choices as they develop ideas throughout the text regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RI.IT.11–12.3	Analyze the impact of an author's choices as they develop ideas throughout the text regarding a complex set of ideas or sequence of events, and explain how specific individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop.

RL.TS.11–12.4	Evaluate the author's choices concerning the structure and the effectiveness of specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) and how they contribute to its overall structure and meaning, as well as its aesthetic impact.
RL.PP.11–12.5	Evaluate perspectives/lenses from two or more texts on related topics and justify the more cogent viewpoint (e.g., different accounts of the same event or issue, use of different media or formats).
W.NW.11–12.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
W.NW.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.
W.NW.11–12.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
W.NW.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).
W.NW.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.
W.NW.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.
SL.PE.11–12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with peers on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL.PI.11–12.4	Present information, findings and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically. The content, organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Students Will Know and Will Be Skilled At

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

- 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
- identifying strategies used by mentor text writers that may serve as models for future writing
- organizing and delineating divisions of an essay to convey meaning
- developing their voice via detail and tone in their writing
- participating in editing and revision of essays prior to publication
- offering appropriate and constructive feedback to students on their writing

- 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 and Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- 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

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
- Narrative Essays

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

Learning Plan

English IV Writing is designed to refine and elevate writing skills as students prepare for life beyond high school. This course focuses on various forms of writing while engaging in rigorous analysis of texts, exploration diverse writing styles, and development a strong command of grammar and syntax.

This first unit focuses on writing that expresses and reflects. Students will delve into writing that expresses personal insights and reflections, crafting narratives, memoirs, and reflective essays that capture their unique experiences and perspectives. Through workshops, peer reviews, and individual feedback, students will hone their ability to convey complex information in an accessible and engaging manner. By mastering these skills, they will be equipped to communicate effectively in academic, professional, and everyday contexts. This unit of study also has opportunity to model coursework offered at various colleges and universities, preparing students for the demands of higher education coursework by engaging with college-level writing expectations and standards.

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 studying 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; modeling 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 multimodal 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.

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

Sample Writers' Workshop Approach: Daily Mini-Lesson

- Establish teaching point(s) for lesson
- Make a connection
    - Connect new learning to previous learning/lessons
- Teach and model
    - Use 'think alouds' when modeling what you expect students to do
- Facilitate guided practice and 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
- Facilitate independent writing and student conferences
    - Provides time for students to do independent writing while teacher confers with individual students, works with small groups, or writing clubs.
- Close the lesson
    - Pull students back together and recognize the work they have done relating to the teaching point

Sample Coursework Connection: NYU

Interactive Narrative:

In this class, we will break down the concept of what an interactive narrative is, how it is designed, and how the elements of traditional narrative are still very much at play, but expanded upon to give a reader/player/audience more agency in the overall experience. We will also examine the current state of the tech and entertainment industries and study how new mediums of storytelling (included but not limited to video games) are shaping the content that is produced. We will also do a deep-dive into the role of a Narrative Designer: a hybrid role within the tech industry that revolves primarily around story concept and execution, but also requires technical expertise and collaboration with other designers, programmers, artists, and licensors.

Sample Unit Planning

Whole Class Texts:

- College essay samples from former CHS students as well as published samples
    - Highlights aspects of a successful college essay while appreciating use of craft
- Narrative Mentor Texts (such as, but not limited to: "Salvation" by Langston Hughes, "The Chase" by Annie Dillard, "Boyhood Remembered" by Mark Twain, "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin
    - 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

Narrative and Expressive Writing:

- Writing samples/essays based on real world narrative writing
    - 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*
    - 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
    - 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
    - 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

Speaking:

- Present final drafts to the class community
    - Focuses on posture, eye contact, volume, and presenting
- Peer editing throughout writing process
    - Focuses on how to participate in a conversation by asking questions, setting revision goals, and navigating feedback
    - 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

Listening:

- Small group discussions during class
    - Focuses on how to participate in a conversation by asking questions, actively listening, and extending upon peers
- Collective sharing of final drafts

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.

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:

- Accessing speech-to-text function on computer.
- Using visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts.
- Allowing students to set individual goals for writing/reading.
- Offering graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques.
- Offering oral assessments.
- Supplying study guide questions and access to class notes.
- Working in partnerships.
- Giving responses in a form (verbal or written) that is easier for the student.
- Using additional time to compete a task or project.
- Scaffolding by chunking material and texts.

- Individualizingreading choices based on ability and level .
- Providing frequent breaks.
- Using an alarm to help with time management.
- Assessing individually or in small groups.
- Marking text with a highlighter or other manipulative such as a post-it.
- Receiving help coordinating assignments.
- Modifying the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual.
- Differentiating roles in discussion groups.
- Using digital technology, eBooks, audio version of printed text.
- Creating alternate assignments or homework.
- Providing distinct steps in a process; elminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Using art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment.
- Managing executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines.
- Clarifying key terms and definitions at the beginning of the unit to create a shared vocabulary for analysis and evaluation.
- Encouraging students to self-advocate and use alternate methods of presenting information.
- Encouraging 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.