Unit 1 Writing: Exploring Ideas of Text Through Writing

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **3 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will write and show deep thinking about texts. Student responses will show evidence of the following: elaboration, relevant details, coherence, and organization. Students will use varied sentence structure along with effective language.

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. In this course, students are provided with opportunities to develop skills that pertain to a variety of careers.

Revision date: July 2023

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

LA.RL.6.1	Cite textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
LA.W.6.1.E	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.
LA.W.6.2.A	Introduce a topic and organize ideas, concepts, and information, using text structures (e.g., definition, classification, comparison/contrast, cause/effect, etc.) and text features (e.g., headings, graphics, and multimedia) when useful to aiding comprehension.
LA.W.6.2.B	Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
LA.W.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
LA.W.6.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.6.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal/academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.6.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or

	explanation presented.
LA.W.6.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
LA.W.6.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.6.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.6.9.A	Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast texts in different forms or genres [e.g., stories and poems; historical novels and fantasy stories] in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics”).
LA.W.6.9.B	Apply grade 6 Reading standards to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Trace and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not”).
LA.W.6.10	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.L.6.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.6.1.E	Recognize variations from standard English in their own and others' writing and speaking, and identify and use strategies to improve expression in conventional language.
LA.L.6.2.A	Use punctuation (commas, parentheses, dashes) to set off nonrestrictive/parenthetical elements.
LA.L.6.3.A	Vary sentence patterns for meaning (syntax), reader/listener interest, and style/voice.
LA.L.6.3.B	Maintain consistency in style and tone.

Essential Questions

- How can I develop and support a strong claim?
- How do I develop theories and rework my ideas while writing?
- How do I go about analyzing the evidence that I find?
- How do I make connections among different ideas throughout a text?
- How do I use writing as a means to express my thinking?
- What strategies do writers use to make their thinking visible?
- Why do writers read their books closely?
- Why is it important for writers to develop theories and create well-rounded characters?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- supporting their thinking with appropriate evidence from the text.
- citing text evidence.
- clearly explaining their thinking about reading.
- connecting evidence from the text to their explanations.

- elaborating ideas.
- how to choose scenes and events that are thought provoking.
- how to revise their thinking as they are reading and writing.
- how to write theories they may have about different characters.
- organizing their thoughts.
- ow to use various methods to make thinking visible.
- synthesizing key events.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

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.

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:

- 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 Assessments including Alternative Assessments:

- 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.
- On-demand Writing Assessments
- Standards should be addressed

Benchmark Assessments:

- Benchmark reading and writing assessments, scored using rubrics, district-created and standards-aligned; based on NJSLA, reported twice per year
- Grade-level Standards-based Rubrics
- Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, grades 3-8, Levels L-Z, Heinemann (part 3, Writing about Reading section)
- New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA)

Learning Plan

Middle School 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 writers share their work 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

Throughout the year, students write in all modes of rhetoric including narration/description, argument/persuasion, and exposition. A variety of writing forms, including digital writing, are emphasized. Grammar lessons are embedded in writing instruction, holding students accountable for skills taught and practiced; modeling is done through published and student-crafted mentor texts. Teachers focus equally on process and product with an emphasis on synthesizing across texts for nuanced understandings; teacher-created multi-modal text sets will be used as materials. High-and low-stakes writing and timed and untimed assignments will be used throughout the unit. Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address the distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds of individual students.

Sentence study teaches 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 see this grade level folder for details.

This unit of study focuses on writing routinely about their independent reading books with a focus on elements of character, plot and setting. Students will demonstrate their thinking by summarizing main events, supporting claims with strong evidence and elaboration and dissect signposts and their impact on the story.

For this particular unit, teachers should...

- Prepare materials for discussion, writing, and synthesis
- Select mentor texts for modeling
- Prepare for conferences with students
- Prepare materials for review of signposts
- Create formative and summative assessments

Bend 2: Expanding on Your Original Post Its/Jots and Responses

Possible Activities and Mini Lessons:

- Using a mentor text, excerpts from a novel, or children's book, pause at different spots and have students jot or write post-its about their thinking. (preassessment)
- Class discussion on how students write about their reading. What have they done in the past?
- Review different literary elements such as point of view, character traits, theme, setting, ...
- Read mentor texts with the class and model the strategies used for deeper thinking about the text: close reading, finding scenes in the story that are important, sketching out scenes, keeping track of conflicts...
- Review Notice and Note Fiction Sign Posts
- Give students time to practice in their independent reading books.
- Have students share their best thinking in partners or small groups
- Have students go on a gallery walk around the room where they read other students' writing and respond to it

Bend 3: Supporting Your Ideas with Evidence

Possible Activities and Mini Lessons:

- Show several models of how writers cite text evidence directly from the text either using direct quotes or paraphrasing. These examples can be pulled from the class or ones that the teacher may create.
- Have students identify and label what they notice about these responses.
- Using mentor texts, do an example as a whole class. Students may want to keep this model in their writing or reading notebook.
- Working in small groups, students find evidence in the mentor texts and then justify to the entire class why this evidence supports their thinking.
- Using their independent reading books, give students time to practice finding evidence that supports their thinking.
- Provide sentence starters to help students organize their information. Example - This conflict first shows up on page when ____ says_____. This causes the character to feel____. or I noticed the author included_____ and ____, and this adds to my thinking about___. Now I am thinking that the author wants to show us that____.

Bend 4: Creating a Well Written Response: Connecting and Elaborating

Possible Activites and Mini Lessons:

- Using the mentor texts that were used in Bends One and Two, students can look back and see how writers elaborate and connect ideas.
- Provide sentence starters to help students organize their information. Example - This conflict first shows up on page when ____ says_____. This causes the character to feel____. or I noticed the author included_____ and ____, and this adds to my thinking about___. Now I am thinking that the author wants to show us that____.
- Working in small groups, students can divide their responses into different levels
- Level 1 - would include their idea about the text such as a character trait
- Level 2 - would include the ideas and a piece of text evidence
- Level 3 - would include the idea, evidence, and either thinking would be elaborated or a theory beginning to form
- Level 4 - would have all of the above and start to connect the text to bigger ideas/themes
- Using their independent reading books, have students take a response they wrote earlier and expand on it using text evidence and new information they've learned.
- Create a chart which shows the structure of a well written response. **(RACE, ACES)**

Grammar concepts for this unit:

- Beginning to understand different sentence patterns by identifying subjects and predicates
- Review different types of sentences
- Once again, return to the mentor texts and have students analyze the sentences. They can look at the different types and see how the subjects of a sentence don't always come at the beginning.

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.

Please reference the materials in this Middle School ELA, grade 6 folder under "writing."

- Alfred Tatum's, Reading for their Life
- anchor charts- (see pg 17- unit 3- TC curriculum)
- Cranford Reading and Writing Workshop Haiku Site
- leveled text sets (recommended to keep groups between 3-6 students)
- magazines - Junior Scholastic, Time for Kids, Scholastic- Scope, New Moon
- mentor texts- Readworks.com, Newsela, teenhealthandwellness.com
- Notice and Note - Fiction by Kylene Beers and Robert Probst

- sentence starters- (see pg 9- unit 3- TC curriculum)
- short stories
- www.readingandwritingproject.com

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.

The structure of writing workshop is designed to differentiate and address specific goals and learning for each writer:

- 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.
- Instruction provides focused small-group strategy lessons.
- Individual conferences with each student will address specific needs of the writer.

Possible accommodations during writing workshop include, but are not limited to:

- Access speech-to-text function on computer
- Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts, word walls.
- Allow students to set individual goals for writing.
- Offer graphic organizers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques.
- Offer oral assessments
- 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
- Scaffold by chunking material and texts.
- 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
- Modify the length and quantity of assignments to fit individual
- Use digital technology, eBooks,, audio version of printed text
- 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

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