Unit 3 Writing: Finding Your Voice Through Argumentative Writing

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 2**
Length: **4-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will draw on prior knowledge to generate topics for an argumentative piece of writing while planning claims and support for those topics. They will draft and revise powerful arguments while also recognizing and writing counter arguments. Students will use credible research to convince readers while exploring topics and writing argumentative pieces.

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.

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 facts, points of view, and opinions, accessing digital library resources.

In accordance with New Jersey's Chapter 32 Diversity and Inclusion Law, this unit includes instructional materials that highlight and promote diversity, including: equity, inclusion, tolerance, and belonging in connection with race and ethnicity and disabilities.

LA.W.6.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
LA.W.6.1.A	Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.
LA.W.6.1.B	Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.
LA.W.6.1.C	Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.
LA.W.6.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
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.6.4	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.SL.6.3	Deconstruct a speaker's argument and specific claims, distinguishing claims that are supported by reasons and evidence from claims that are not.
LA.SL.6.4	Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate speaking behaviors (e.g., eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation).
LA.L.6.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.6.1.B	Use intensive pronouns (e.g., myself, ourselves).
LA.L.6.1.C	Recognize and correct inappropriate shifts in pronoun number and person.
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.6.2.B	Spell correctly.

Essential Questions

- What language and techniques do authors use to appeal to their audience?
- How can I read to analyze how an author develops certain perspectives and power positions in a story?
- How can notice power, perspective, and positioning in texts?
- How do writers develop ideas beyond theme by examining authorial decisions?
- How do writers analyze power and perspective to find theme?
- What are the defining characteristics of an editorial/argument essay?
- writers view a text with a critical lens to change initial ideas

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- appeal to their audience analyze perspectives and power positions in a story.
- how to develop thesis statements.
- how to use evidence to support the opposing position.

- choosing vocabulary to support the argument and have an effect on the reader.
- crafting thesis statements.
- explaining a topic/text.
- how to consider the perspective of characters by looking at them from different points of view.
- how to create debates.
- how to explore the messages that the author creates by considering moments when characters' words don't match their actions.
- how to interpret the power of author's craft by rewriting a section using different types.
- how to notice and wonder about power relationships.
- how to use evidence to support a position.
- including and arranging evidence, facts, quotations, examples and definitions.
- organizing the argument into purposeful sections.
- supporting their claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
- using resources to check on spelling and mechanics for correctness.
- using clear, concise evidence.
- using credible sources.
- using transitions to imply relationships.
- using transitions to connect claims , reasons and evidence.
- writing a conclusion that strengthens the overall argument.
- writing an introduction to interest readers.

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 including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 1-2 final pieces.
- 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 the development of a strong thesis statement, ability to use evidence to support a position, as well as a rebuttal, organizing an argument into purposeful sections, and crafting a conclusion that resonates with the reader. Students will use credible and reliable sources to support and strengthen their argument.

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 credible and reliable sources.
- Create formative and summative assessments

Instructional 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."

- Anchor charts
- Anchor texts/read-aloud texts(mentor/modeling)
- High interest books, article , essays and videos that match reading levels
- Other Mentor/Anchor Text ideas: • "My Side of the Story" and "Carrots" by Adam Bagdasarian from First French Kiss • "You Belong with Me" by Taylor Swift (music video) • Excerpts from poems by James Howe: Addie on the Inside p. 68-70 and 95-99: "Devalued", "Listening from the Last Stall", "Here We Go Again", • *Photos from various sources (p. 31 of TC binder 2014-15) • *Comic strips ex: Calvin and Hobbes (p. 35) • *Nonfiction article suggestions for race, class, and gender (p.43) • "Eleven" by Sandra Cisneros • "Mr. Entwhistle" by Jean Little • "Inside Out" by Francisco Jimenez • Readworks.org • The Cay by Theodore Taylor • Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH by Robert C. O'Brien • Bridge to Terabithia by Katherine Paterson • The View from Saturday by E. L. Konigsburg • The Devil's Arithmetic by Jane Yolen • Scholastic/Scope Magazine • *See appendix in Unit 5 in TC Reading binder on p.10-11 (Reading Curricular Calendar and How Long It Should Take a Child to Read a Book) and p. 23-24 (Series that Move up Levels within Series and Som Courses of Study for Teen Readers.
- Scholastic Scope magazine
- www.commonlit.org
- www.newsela.com
- www.readingandwritingproject.com

Teacher Resources

- *Units of Study in Argument, Informatiion, and Narrative Writing, Grade 6*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
- Associated Online Resources, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project,

readingandwritingproject.org

- *Read Write Teach: Choice and Challenge in the Reading-Writing Workshop*, Linda Rief
- *Lessons that Change Writers*, Nancie Atwell
- *In the Middle: New Understandings about Writing, Reading, and Learning*, Nancie Atwell, associated videos
- *Energize Research Reading and Writing,* Chris Lehman, Grades 4-8
- *Comprehension and Collaboration: Inquiry Circles in Action*, Stephanie Harvey and Harvey Daniels
- *Finding the Heart of Nonfiction,* Georgia Heard
- *Patterns of Power: Inviting Young Writers into the Conventions of Language*, Jeff Anderson
- *The Power of Grammar,* Mary Ehrenworth and Vicki Vinton
- *A Writer's Notebook,* Ralph Fletcher
- *Writing a Life,* Katherine Bomer
- *Study Driven*, Katie Wood Ray
- *Thinking Through Genre*, Heather Lattimer
- *Feedback that Moves Writers Forward*, Patty McGee
- *The Big Book of Details*, Roz Linder
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson

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 organizaers, 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