Unit 1 Writing: Launching Writing Workshop

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

Brief Summary of Unit

During this brief introductory unit, the goal is to create a comfortable writing environment for our students. Students will be challenged to develop stamina through “low risk” writing prompts. Additionally, they will review and practice parts of a paragraph.

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.

Additional applicable Interdisciplinary Standards and related requirements may be included:

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.

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.

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

This unit further reflects the goals of the Holocaust Education mandate where students are able to identify and analyze applicable theories concerning human nature and behavior; understand that genocide is a consequence of prejudice and discrimination; understand that issues of moral dilemma and conscience have a profound impact on life; and understand the personal responsibility that each citizen bears to fight racism and hatred whenever and wherever it happens.

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.W.7.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
LA.W.7.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; 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).
LA.W.7.2.C	Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
LA.W.7.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
LA.W.7.2.E	Establish and maintain a formal style academic style, approach, and form.
LA.W.7.2.F	Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.
LA.W.7.4	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.7.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

LA.W.7.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.
LA.W.7.10	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.7.1.C	Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
LA.SL.7.1.D	Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.
LA.SL.7.2	Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
LA.SL.7.5	Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
LA.SL.7.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.L.7.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.7.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.7.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.7.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.7.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.7.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Essential Questions/Enduring Understandings

- How can building stamina make us stronger writers?
- How can powerful writers engage their readers?
- How can the structure of a paragraph facilitate the reader's understanding?

Students will understand:

- Writing for long periods of time helps writers elaborate and arrive at new ideas.
- Using precise, concise wording, enticing hooks, and intriguing ideas captivates and maintains the reader's attention.
- A well structured, organized paragraph enables the reader to understand the writing easily.

Students Will Know/Students Will be Skilled at

- A topic sentence contains the main idea of the paragraph
- A paragraph focuses on one main idea
- Supporting details must relate to the topic sentence
- Precise wording engages the reader
- Concise wording keeps the reader's attention
- Transitions create a smooth flow of ideas
- An effective clincher provides closure for the reader

- using sophisticated vocabulary
- including Precise/concise wording
- focusing on one main idea
- incorporating effective ways to engage your reader
- using logical transitions
- including of compelling details
- using a powerful clincher

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.

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.

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

This particular unit focuses on launching your writing workshop for the year and the goal for the day expands far beyond the teaching point. You will want to teach students how to gather ideas, but above all, you want to rally their excitement for writing. This unit will lay the ground-work for a productive workshop, which means relaying, whether explicitly or implicitly, the rituals and routines that will carry you through the year. As the teacher, you will share stories of yourself as a writer, whether they are from past or present as this is a critical means of engaging students and developing a community of writers. During the launch, remember that the more likely kids are to share their own writing stories, will make them more apt to see themselves as writers.

For this particular unit, teachers should...

- Select texts for quick writes and ideas
- Prepare materials for discussion, writing, and structure
- Select mentor texts for modeling
- Prepare for conferences and/or small groups with students
- Prepare students to write for various periods of time (quick vs. long)
- generate a list of skills students will master throughout the unit (focusing specifically on a few in each area)
- create a summative assessment (backward design)

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. This Middle School ELA folder for grade 7 contains instructional materials for writing.

Suggested Instructional Materials

- *Seedfolks*, vignettes
- *Hunger Game*s, excerpted
- Varied Short Stories
- All Things Living, Cynthia Rylant
- "Wings", Maclemore
- "Lean on Me", Withers
- "Try", Colbie Caillat
- "Shake it Off", Taylor Swift
- Literary exemplars from Notice and Note Signposts
- "Scars To Your Beautiful"

Additional Student Resources:

- Chromebooks/laptops
- Google Classroom or other LMS
- Writing Portfolios
- Writer's Notebook/Journal
- Google Documents/Drive
- Think Cerca
- Common Lit
- Audible
- Padlet
- Socrative.com
- Poll everywhere
- Scholastic
- Remind.com
- Skype
- Edublogs
- Soundcloud
- Netflix
- YouTube

Teacher Resources

- *Units of Study in Argument, Informatiion, and Narrative Writing, Grade 7*, 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
- *Assessing Writers*, Carl Anderson

Suggested Strategies for Accomodations and Modifications

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; eliminate unnecessary steps, as needed.
- Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines

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