Unit 1 Writing: Reflecting on Writing Life, Preparing for a Writing Future

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **2-3 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will reflect on themselves as writers, and write an extended metaphor assignment about themselves as writers.

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: 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.W.8.4	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.8.5	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.8.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.
LA.W.8.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.8.10	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.8.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.L.8.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.8.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.8.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Essential Questions

- How does purpose influence form in writing?
- How does writing a self-reflective work about writing process make a student more self-aware and potentially improve process?
- How is writing used in real life?
- In what way does sharing writing helps build community?
- Why is it important to know one's audience when writing?

Students Will Know/Be Skilled At

- Brainstorming, freewriting, drafting, and revising a reflective writing piece.
- Considering purpose and audience when reading, writing, and analyzing writing
- Identifying and apply the stages of the writing process.
- Reflecting on their writing with the goal of improvement and growth

Evidence/Performance Tasks

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.

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.

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
- Peer Conferences/Partnership Discussion
- Writer's Notebook (quick writes/drafts/prewrites)
- Teacher checklists using mini-lessons for measurable skills
- Writing Conferences: Individual and small group
- Writing folders with student work
- Writing pieces to note the growth need of the writer
- Observations
- Drafts online (Google Docs)
- Writing Club work and discussions
- iReady assessments
- CommonLit writing prompts
- Students will respond in a "Writer's Log Notebook" or separately to the Writing Habits Journal Questions and share in groups
- Students will read a poem about writing, share their reactions, identify the speaker, setting, and use of metaphor.
- Students will consider their own experiences as writers to complete the Writing Metaphor Assignment

Summative including Alternative Assessments:

- Students should have 1-2 final pieces.
- Published pieces
- Score grammar and spelling in final drafts only
- Student portfolios
- 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
- Students will choose a project option for the Writing Metaphor Assignment which includes one of the following: a persuasive paper, a paper-based or online PowerPoint scrapbook, or a CD cover for a soundtrack for a movie of their writing process.

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.

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.

For additional materials, please see this folder in the Middle School ELA folder, grade 8.

Instructional Materials

- "Digging" by Seamus Heaney
- “The Writer” by Richard Wilbur
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL): Using Metaphors in Creative Writing
- Writing Habits Journal Questions
- Writing Identity Survey Prompts
- Writing Metaphor Rubric

Teacher Resources

- http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson905/WritingHabits.pdf
- https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/writer
- Swartzendruber-Putnam, Dawn. "Written Reflection: Creating Better Thinkers, Better Writers." English Journal 90.1 (September 2000): 88-93. http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/EJ/0901-sept00/EJ0901Written.pdf
- Writing About Writing: An Extended Metaphor Assignment, Tracy Gardner, National Council of English Teachers, www.readwritethink.org

Suggested Strategies for Accommodations 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 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