Writing: Film Production

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 2**
Length: **20 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Having studied film and narrative techniques, students will work through the entire short film creation process by scripting and storyboarding, enlisting actors, scouting locations, filming, and editing several long (5 - 20 Minutes) and short-form (30 seconds to 5 Minutes) films. Utilizing standards-based grading practices, students will need to complete a minimum of two long and four short films per marking period while proving mastery of each of the writing standards presented in the Advanced Film Scorecard. Be it narrative or documentary, student directors will be tasked will tracking their projects, and scores for each marking period will be based on where the student arrives on the scorecard, not the average. Furthermore, as filmmaking is an iterative process, students will be welcome to edit and revise their film including reshoots if needed to improve scores and arrive at a product to their satisfaction.

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. Students may continue to make informed choices and pursue electives that further their study and contribute toward the formation of career interest.

Revision: July 2024

Standards

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.

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.

9.4.12.CI.1	Demonstrate the ability to reflect, analyze, and use creative skills and ideas (e.g., 1.1.12prof.CR3a).
9.4.12.CI.3	Investigate new challenges and opportunities for personal growth, advancement, and transition (e.g., 2.1.12.PGD.1).
9.4.12.CT.1	Identify problem-solving strategies used in the development of an innovative product or practice (e.g., 1.1.12acc.C1b, 2.2.12.PF.3).
9.4.12.CT.2	Explain the potential benefits of collaborating to enhance critical thinking and problem solving (e.g., 1.3E.12profCR3.a).
W.IW.11–12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts (including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes) to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
W.IW.11–12.2.A	Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
W.IW.11–12.2.B	Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.
W.IW.11–12.2.C	Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.
W.IW.11–12.2.D	Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.
W.IW.11–12.2.E	Establish and maintain a style and tone appropriate to the audience and purpose (e.g., formal and objective for academic writing) while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.
W.IW.11–12.2.F	Provide a concluding paragraph or section that supports the argument presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).
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.
W.WP.11–12.4	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, trying a new approach; sustaining effort to complete complex writing tasks; tracking and reflecting on personal writing progress (e.g., using portfolios, journals, conferencing); or consulting a style manual (such as MLA or APA Style), focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
W.WR.11–12.5	Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when

	appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
W.SE.11–12.6	Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the strengths and limitations of each source in terms of the task, purpose, and audience; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and overreliance on any one source and following a standard format for citation (MLA or APA Style Manuals).
W.RW.11–12.7	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes.

Essential Questions

- How are works influenced by those that preceded them?
- How does a film utilize dialogue, cinematography, editing, color, and sound to establish a cohesive theme?
- How does a production delegate work effectively?
- How does a production effectively establish mise-en-scene?
- How does one conduct meaningful interviews?
- How does one conduct valuable and critical research to documentary filmmaking?
- How does screenwriting differ from traditional prose?
- How does the time period or cultural context in which a film is made impact its narrative?
- What are all of the aspects of film production?
- What defines a good script?
- What defines a good script?
- What is the three-act structure?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

- Analyzing characterization in film.
- Applying all of the steps of film production such as screenwriting, storyboarding, enlisting actors, location scouting, filming, and editing.
- Breaking down the three-act structure.
- Establishing the mise-en-scene in an original work.
- How to write an original script.
- Identifying narrative conventions and adapting them to original work.
- Utilizing film hardware.
- Utilizing film software.
- Writing and producing informational films.
- Writing and producing narrative films.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Assessment for Advanced Film Production will be standards-based:

Film production (from idea generation through exhibition) will follow standards-based grading practices. Students will co-author their assessments by conferring with the teacher using this Advanced Film Scorecard. and aligning each project to specific grade-level New Jersey Student Learning Standards. Students will need to complete a minimum of two long and four short films per marking period while proving mastery of each of the writing standards presented in the Advanced Film Scorecard, which is heavily inspired by other standards-based programs and is adapted from the Marzano Method. Be it narrative or documentary, student directors will be tasked will tracking their projects, and scores for each marking period will be based on where the student arrives on the scorecard, not the average. Students will be encouraged to revisit each standard throughout the marking period to reassess until mastery is achieved.

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:

- Teacher Observations
- Accountable Talk, Socratic Seminars/Fish Bowls
- Analysis of multimodal text sets
- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism
- 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

Summative:

- 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

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- 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

Other Assessment Ideas:

- Analysis of critical commentary, literary criticism using various databases, CLCs, and Bloom's Literary Database
- Close reading analysis of text using evidence as substantiation, develop notetaking skills and annotations
- Conferences: Individual and small group, accompanying conference notes
- Reflective exercises and assessments
- Oral Reading and Interpretation, rehearsal and modeling effective listening and speaking techniques
- Open-Ended Responses in Journal regarding Reflections, Character Development, and/or Life Choices
- Researched Presentations, Biographical, Historical, Psychological and/or Philosophical analysis of a Memoir
- Performance Assessments, including a dramatic reading of a scene, excerpt, or poem that relates to one of the subthemes
- Participate in organized literature circles where students lead discussions about character, conflict and theme and work collaboratively to determine answers to questions posed by teacher and other students
- Evaluate societal concerns reflected through plot and theme
- Cite and interpret quoted material from the text and from literary criticism
- Create a narrative memoir using narrative techniques and factual information in proper MLA format
- Participate in peer and teacher/student critiques to revise and edit their essays
- Create artistic, interactive and/or multimedia projects that suggest an understanding of the text beyond its literal meaning

Learning Plan

Filmmaking is time intensive, as such students with open campus will be allowed to utilize class periods attached to the lunch block for production purposes. Throughout the marking period, the intent is for students to have complete ownership of their projects, genres, and methods as long as they can show mastery of each of the skills present on the Advanced Film Scorecard. This scorecard is heavily inspired by other standards-based programs and is adapted from Marzano Method. Viewing filmmaking as a form of writing and creation the scorecard includes all the New Jersey writing standards applicable to narrative and informational writing for students to track throughout the marking period.

Throughout a marking period, students will need to complete 2 long (5 - 20 Minutes) and 4 short-form (30 seconds to 5 Minutes) films from the proposal process to completion and identify which elements of the scorecard will be achieved with each given project. As students complete more projects throughout the semester, their grades will evolve to show where they have arrived within a given skill as opposed to the

average of their scores. This process will include project proposals, scriptwriting, storyboarding, casting, location scouting, set/costume design, production, and editing.

Students will create both narrative and informational texts. 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 the product with an emphasis on synthesizing texts with nuanced understanding; teacher-created multi-modal text sets will be used as materials. High- and low-stakes, timed, and untimed pieces are all important.

Teachers may personalize instruction during this unit and address individual student's distinct learning needs, interests, aspirations, or cultural backgrounds.

This unit of study will focus on transferring all previous knowledge toward the production of several films. The central quotation from Steven Spielberg is "Every time I go to a movie, it's magic, no matter what the movie's about."

Sample Narrative Project Plan:

- Propose project ideas to the teacher and class
- Screenwriting
- Revise and Edit
- Storyboard
- Cast, Location Scout, Costuming and Set Design
- Film
- Edit
- Revise and Edit

Sample Informational Project Plan:

- Propose project ideas to the teacher and class
- Research topic and outline stakeholders
- Follow the documentary script outline
- Schedule interviews and other essential events
- Gather b-roll footage
- Film Interviews and events
- Edit
- Revise and Edit

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 and the Core Film List while selecting whole-class or small-group leveled resources.

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:

- **Access speech-to-text function on computer**
- **Use visual presentations of all materials to include organizers, charts**
- **Allow students to set individual goals for writing/reading**
- **Offer graphic organizaers, note-taking models, strategies for summarizing, and questioning techniques**
- **Offer oral assessments**
- **Supply study guide questions and access to class notes**
- **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**
- **Individualize reading choices based on ability and level**
- **Take frequent breaks**
- **Use an alarm to help with time management**
- **Small group and one on one assessment**
- **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**
- **Differentiate roles in discussion groups**
- **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**
- **Use art, music, and film to convey alternate interpretation of literature and assessment**
- **Manage executive function by scaffolding process and amending deadlines**

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