Unit 3: Publishing, Critique, and Reflection

Content Area: **English Language Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Trimester 1**
Length: **9 week cycle class (40-45 days)**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Students will explore the dynamic world of digital journalism, news reporting, and filmmaking while examining how media informs, entertains, and influences audiences. They will learn to think like journalists by asking meaningful questions, determining what is newsworthy, researching stories, evaluating the credibility of sources, identifying misinformation, conducting interviews, and communicating ideas ethically and effectively. Through the study of multimedia storytelling, students will examine how journalists and filmmakers use visual, audio, and written techniques to inform, engage, and inspire audiences. Students will create news broadcasts, feature stories, short films, and other digital media using industry-inspired production techniques while developing skills in research, writing, scripting, filming, editing, collaboration, and digital publishing. Throughout the course, students will explore the responsibilities of media creators, including accuracy, fairness, responsible digital citizenship, and ethical decision-making. By the end of the course, students will have developed original multimedia work and a deeper understanding of how journalism and digital storytelling shape public understanding and inspire informed civic participation.

Interdisciplinary Connections: 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 about how to and what to participate in today's dynamic world of social media.

Revision: July 2026

Standards

Information Literacy: This unit challenges students to locate, analyze, evaluate, and use information effectively. Information literacy includes, but is not limited to digital, visual, media, textual, and technological literacy. Lessons will include the learning and understanding how information is created and produced, critical and analytical thinking, evaluating and use of information resources, research processes and methodologies including identifying the difference between primary and secondary sources, discerning the difference between facts, points of view, perspectives and opinions, accessing peer-reviewed print and digital library resources, and 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.

District ELA

- LA.L.8.1–5
- LA.SL.8.5–6

Reading

- RI.PP.8.5
- RL.MF.8.6
- RI.MF.8.6

Writing

- W.WP.8.4
- W.RW.8.7

Speaking & Listening

- SL.PE.8.1
- SL.PI.8.4
- SL.UM.8.5
- SL.AS.8.6

Career Readiness / Technology

- CRP11
- TECH.8.1.12
- TECH.9.4.2.DC.3
- TECH.9.4.2.TL.7

Essential Questions

- How can digital media be used to inform, inspire, and create positive change?
- What responsibilities do media creators have when publishing for authentic audiences?
- How does constructive feedback strengthen creative work?
- How do we evaluate the effectiveness and impact of digital media?
- How do reflection and revision contribute to continuous growth as communicators and creators?
- How can responsible digital citizenship promote ethical participation in today's media landscape?

Students Will Know/Students Will Be Skilled At

Students Will Know:

- The responsibilities of media creators when publishing for authentic audiences.
- How constructive critique and revision strengthen digital media.
- How digital media can inform, inspire, entertain, and promote positive change.
- How reflective practice supports continuous growth as communicators and creators.

Students Will Be Skilled At:

- Publishing digital media for authentic audiences using appropriate digital platforms.
- Applying responsible digital citizenship by communicating ethically, practicing appropriate netiquette, protecting personal information, recognizing misinformation, and using digital media safely and responsibly.
- Communicating information clearly and ethically using evidence, proper attribution, and responsible digital citizenship.
- Evaluating multimedia projects using established criteria for storytelling, technical quality, and ethical communication.
- Holding meaningful discussions that provide constructive feedback to peers.
- Reflecting on personal growth as a researcher, journalist, filmmaker, collaborator, and digital communicator.
- Curating and presenting a digital portfolio demonstrating growth throughout the course.

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.

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, interviews, documentaries, vlogs, and video diaries

- 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
- Textual Analysis Reading Responses
- Dialectical Journal
- Rhetorical Precis
- SOAPSTone Analysis

Summative, including Alternative Assessments:

- Create culminating artifacts including, but not limited to the following: showcase, portfolio, reflection, peer critique, online publishing, film festival.
- Score student videos according to a set of criteria developed as a class, including, but not limited to, readability, visual appeal, organization, responsible attribution of sources.
- Develop a portfolio of mentor scripts, videos or blogs that match students' intended purpose (e.g. Student who plans to record a sports blog might collect example of model sports reports or podcasts and annotate according to strengths and weaknesses)
- Write scripts, transcribe interviews or gather images for digital storytelling project options

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.

Benchmark:

- 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

Learning Plan

Instructional time will be dedicated to whole-class instruction, collaborative learning, workshop-based production, and independent project development. Students will learn the complete digital journalism production cycle through authentic multimedia experiences that mirror professional newsrooms. Instruction emphasizes inquiry, collaboration, ethical decision-making, creativity, and iterative revision as students develop original digital media for authentic audiences. Throughout the unit, teachers will model professional techniques, provide frequent feedback through conferences and peer critique, and gradually release responsibility as students become increasingly independent creators.

Instruction will generally follow the progression below, though pacing and project selection may vary based on student interests and instructional needs.

This unit contains one module, focusing on how student-journalists publish for authentic audiences, evaluate media, reflect on growth, and curate a digital portfolio. Please review this scope and sequence for more detail.

Module 5: Publication, Reflection, and Critique

Students publish or present completed multimedia projects for authentic audiences. Through structured peer review and self-reflection, students evaluate the effectiveness of journalistic choices, storytelling techniques, ethical decision-making, technical execution, and overall communication. Students reflect on their growth as researchers, collaborators, journalists, filmmakers, and responsible digital citizens while curating a portfolio of original work.

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.

Instructional Materials

- Masterclass: 8 Tips for Writing a Documentary Script from Ken Burns (https://www.masterclass.com/articles/ken-burns-shares-tips-for-writing-a-documentary-script)

- New York Film Academy: How to Write a Documentary Script (https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/how-to-write-a-documentary-script/)
- New York Times: 8 Ways to Teach with Short Documentary Films (https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/27/learning/lesson-plans/8-ways-to-teach-with-short-documentary-films.html)
- New Yorker Documentary Shorts (https://www.newyorker.com/video)
- NFI: How to Make a Documentary (https://www.nfi.edu/how-to-make-a-documentary/)

Teacher Resources

- Adobe: How to Make a Documentary (https://www.adobe.com/creativecloud/video/discover/how-to-make-a-documentary-video.html)
- Desktop Documentaries (https://www.desktop-documentaries.com/making-documentaries.html)
- IMDB: Top 50 Documentary Short Films (https://m.imdb.com/search/title/?genres=documentary&explore=title_type,genres&title_type=short)
- Text: Film and Literature: An Introduction and Reader, Corrigan
- Text: Making Movies, Sidney Lumet
- Text: Understanding Movies, Louis Giannetti, Prentice Hall
- The Film Fund (https://www.thefilmfund.co/tips-for-short-documentary-filmmaking/?expand_article=1)

Suggested 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

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

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