

# 4th Writing 2024-2025 Unit 5 Journalism (Weeks 29-32)

Content Area: **Template**  
Course(s):  
Time Period: **Full Year**  
Length: **9 Weeks**  
Status: **Published**

## Unit 5 Journalism

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### Unit Rationale

This Journalism unit is considered informational writing. However, it pulls together writing skills from the previous informational unit and the earlier opinion and narrative writing units. This is appropriate because at this point in the year, students have already been exposed to all three bands of writing. Informational writing represents one-third of the NJ 4th Grade writing standards and this is our second informational writing unit of the year. This journalism encourages students to explore and write about newsworthy events in their world, whether it be something in their community, school, or family. Students will learn a new form of organization, focusing on the inverted pyramid structure, including the 5Ws and H (What, Who, When, Where, Why, and How). Building upon their research skills, students will be introduced to interviewing and obtaining quotes to include in their articles. Students will examine mentor news articles to inspire journalism leads and conclusions. This unit continues to emphasize accurate punctuation, capitalization, and sentence structure.

### SEL Competencies

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SEL.PK-12.1	Self-Awareness
SEL.PK-12.1.1	Recognize one's feelings and thoughts
SEL.PK-12.1.2	Recognize the impact of one's feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior
SEL.PK-12.1.3	Recognize one's personal traits, strengths, and limitations
SEL.PK-12.1.4	Recognize the importance of self-confidence in handling daily tasks and challenges
SEL.PK-12.2	Self-Management
SEL.PK-12.2.1	Understand and practice strategies for managing one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
SEL.PK-12.2.2	Recognize the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals
SEL.PK-12.2.3	Identify and apply ways to persevere or overcome barriers through alternative methods to achieve one's goals
SEL.PK-12.3	Social Awareness
SEL.PK-12.3.1	Recognize and identify the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of others
SEL.PK-12.3.2	Demonstrate and awareness of the differences among individuals, groups, and others'

	cultural backgrounds
SEL.PK-12.3.3	Demonstrate an understanding of the need for mutual respect when viewpoints differ
SEL.PK-12.3.4	Demonstrate an awareness of the expectations for social interactions in a variety of settings
SEL.PK-12.4	Responsible Decision-Making
SEL.PK-12.4.1	Develop, implement and model effective problem-solving, and critical thinking skills
SEL.PK-12.4.2	Identify the consequences associated with one's actions in order to make constructive choices
SEL.PK-12.4.3	Evaluate personal, ethical, safety, and civic impact of decisions
SEL.PK-12.5	Relationship Skills
SEL.PK-12.5.1	Establish and maintain healthy relationships
SEL.PK-12.5.2	Utilize positive communication and social skills to interact effectively with others
SEL.PK-12.5.3	Identify ways to resist inappropriate social pressure
SEL.PK-12.5.4	Demonstrate the ability to prevent and resolve interpersonal conflicts in constructive ways
SEL.PK-12.5.5	Identify who, when, where, or how to seek help for oneself or others when needed

## 21st Century Life and Career

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CRP.K-12.CRP1	Act as a responsible and contributing citizen and employee.
CRP.K-12.CRP1.1	Career-ready individuals understand the obligations and responsibilities of being a member of a community, and they demonstrate this understanding every day through their interactions with others. They are conscientious of the impacts of their decisions on others and the environment around them. They think about the near-term and long-term consequences of their actions and seek to act in ways that contribute to the betterment of their teams, families, community and workplace. They are reliable and consistent in going beyond the minimum expectation and in participating in activities that serve the greater good.
CRP.K-12.CRP2	Apply appropriate academic and technical skills.
CRP.K-12.CRP2.1	Career-ready individuals readily access and use the knowledge and skills acquired through experience and education to be more productive. They make connections between abstract concepts with real-world applications, and they make correct insights about when it is appropriate to apply the use of an academic skill in a workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP3	Attend to personal health and financial well-being.
CRP.K-12.CRP3.1	Career-ready individuals understand the relationship between personal health, workplace performance and personal well-being; they act on that understanding to regularly practice healthy diet, exercise and mental health activities. Career-ready individuals also take regular action to contribute to their personal financial well-being, understanding that personal financial security provides the peace of mind required to contribute more fully to their own career success.
CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.
CRP.K-12.CRP4.1	Career-ready individuals communicate thoughts, ideas, and action plans with clarity, whether using written, verbal, and/or visual methods. They communicate in the workplace with clarity and purpose to make maximum use of their own and others' time. They are excellent writers; they master conventions, word choice, and organization, and use effective tone and presentation skills to articulate ideas. They are skilled at interacting with others; they are active listeners and speak clearly and with purpose. Career-ready individuals think about the audience for their communication and prepare accordingly to

	ensure the desired outcome.
CRP.K-12.CRP6	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
CRP.K-12.CRP6.1	Career-ready individuals regularly think of ideas that solve problems in new and different ways, and they contribute those ideas in a useful and productive manner to improve their organization. They can consider unconventional ideas and suggestions as solutions to issues, tasks or problems, and they discern which ideas and suggestions will add greatest value. They seek new methods, practices, and ideas from a variety of sources and seek to apply those ideas to their own workplace. They take action on their ideas and understand how to bring innovation to an organization.
CRP.K-12.CRP7	Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
CRP.K-12.CRP7.1	Career-ready individuals are discerning in accepting and using new information to make decisions, change practices or inform strategies. They use reliable research process to search for new information. They evaluate the validity of sources when considering the use and adoption of external information or practices in their workplace situation.
CRP.K-12.CRP8	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
CRP.K-12.CRP8.1	Career-ready individuals readily recognize problems in the workplace, understand the nature of the problem, and devise effective plans to solve the problem. They are aware of problems when they occur and take action quickly to address the problem; they thoughtfully investigate the root cause of the problem prior to introducing solutions. They carefully consider the options to solve the problem. Once a solution is agreed upon, they follow through to ensure the problem is solved, whether through their own actions or the actions of others.
CRP.K-12.CRP9	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
CRP.K-12.CRP9.1	Career-ready individuals consistently act in ways that align personal and community-held ideals and principles while employing strategies to positively influence others in the workplace. They have a clear understanding of integrity and act on this understanding in every decision. They use a variety of means to positively impact the directions and actions of a team or organization, and they apply insights into human behavior to change others' action, attitudes and/or beliefs. They recognize the near-term and long-term effects that management's actions and attitudes can have on productivity, morals and organizational culture.

## **Essential Questions**

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What makes something newsworthy?

Why should the most important information go first in a news article?

What makes a good interview question?

What does it mean to write like a journalist?

Why is the correct use of quotes and quotation marks important in a news article?

## **Pre-Assessments**

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Pre-Assessment- On Demand- Write an article about something interesting happening in your school, in your community, or in the world. Try to choose a topic that could be considered newsworthy.

## **Instructional Plan**

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### **Unit Rationale**

#### Indicators

1. Writers investigate a newsworthy event within their immediate world.
2. Writers organize their article using the inverted pyramid structure, making sure to include the 5 Ws and H (What, Who, When, Where, Why, and How).
3. Writers conduct interviews to obtain quotes and content for their article.
4. Writers craft journalistic leads and conclusions that are modeled after mentor news articles.
5. Writers punctuate and cite quotations correctly.

#### Grammar:

- Grammar Concepts to Teach:
  - Nothing New
- Grammar Concepts to Revisit:
  - Writers use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
  - Writers produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons.
- Grammar Concepts Already Mastered (3rd and 4th):
  - Writers use commas and quotation marks in dialogue
  - Writers produce simple, compound, and complex sentences
  - Writers ensure subject, verb, and pronoun agreement in sentences
  - Writers use apostrophes appropriately to show possessions
  - Writers use linking words and phrases
  - Writers organize text by forming paragraphs

- Writers use quotation marks to mark quotations from a text

[Journalism 4th Mini Lessons](#)

[Informational Learning Progressions and Rubrics](#)

## **Journalism Collecting**

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### **Collecting To Write A News Article**

#### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT collect newsworthy topics.

WALT explore news articles.

WALT write about newsworthy topics.

#### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can... list newsworthy topics in my notebook.

I can... read and analyze news articles.

I can... notice and list newsworthy events in my notebook.

I can... write about newsworthy events in my community.

#### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

Provide background knowledge

Direct Instruction

Gradual release

Video instruction

Shared Writing

Independent writing

Group work

Video/Text Analysis

Questioning

Cooperative Learning

### **Formative Assessments**

Entrance/Exit slips

Writing checks/quizzes

Post It Notes

Student conferences

Class discussions

Observation

Turn and talks

Active Writing Notebooks

Color Coding of Writing

### **Instructional Materials and Resources**

Heinemann Unit Resources

Jennifer Servallo Texts and Resources

Elementary Balanced Literacy Drive

BrainPop

### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Journalism Developing**

### **Developing A News Article**

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## **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT investigate a newsworthy event within our immediate world.

WALT write about newsworthy events in the immediate world.

WALT organize my writing about news into the inverted pyramid structure.

WALT conduct interviews to obtain quotes and content for their article.

## **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can... look at the world around me and list newsworthy events happening in my school, home, and community life.

I can... write short articles about newsworthy events happening in my school, home, and community life.

I can... use the inverted pyramid structure when I write news articles, stating the most important information first.

I can...interview a person for my article, recording accurate quotes.

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### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Journalism Drafting**

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### **Drafting A News Article**

#### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT draft a news article using the inverted pyramid structure.

WALT draft using carefully chosen quotations correctly.

WALT craft journalistic leads and conclusions that are modeled after mentor news articles.

#### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can...draft a news article using the inverted pyramid structure, including the 5Ws and H.

I can... read mentor news articles for inspiration.

I can... draft including quotes from my interviews.

I can... draft to include a journalistic lead and conclusion.

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## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

### **Journalism Revising**

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#### **Revising For An Informational Text**

#### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT revise to make sure our articles are clear and accurate.

WALT revise to craft a vivid image in the mind of the reader through language and details.

WALT revise for word count.

WALT write titles and headlines.

#### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can... revise to meet a word count, adding and taking away.

I can... revise using language and details to paint a picture in the reader’s mind.

I can... revise for accuracy making sure my article is true.

I can... revise to add a title and headline that grab the reader’s attention.

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## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

### **Journalism Editing**

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#### **Editing An Informational Text**

##### **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT edit a news article.

WALT to spell and capitalize domain-specific vocabulary correctly.

WALT edit to use commas correctly.

WALT edit to use quotation marks correctly.

##### **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can... edit to capitalize proper nouns and headings.

I can... edit to make sure the text is spelled correctly.

I can... edit to make sure commas are used correctly, avoiding run-on sentences.

I can... edit to use quotation marks correctly.

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### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to ... (WALT)**

WALT publish news articles.

WALT present our news articles. to our class.

## **Student Success Criteria ... “I can statements”**

I can... finalize my news article, ensuring it's my best work.

I can... share my news article with my class by reading a portion of it out loud.

I can... celebrate my published article!

## **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

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## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

### **Modifications and/or Accommodations**

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#### **Suggested Modifications (ELL, Sp. Ed, Gifted, At-risk of Failure)**

#### **English Language Learners**

Native language support: The teacher provides auditory or written content to students in their native language.

Adjusted Speech: The teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. This could include facing the students, paraphrasing, clearly indicating the most important ideas, and speaking more slowly.

Visuals: The teacher uses graphics, pictures, visuals, and manipulatives. This helps ELL students better understand and comprehend the subjects at hand.

Front-Loading Vocabulary: The teacher front loads vocabulary. This means providing students with a list of important vocabulary words they will need to know for a book, lesson, etc. prior to the lesson being taught. Including pictures to go with the vocabulary words is also very beneficial for the students.

## Special Education Students

**Chunking:** The teacher presents information in a way that makes it easy for students to understand and remember. Chunking is based on the presumption that our working memory is easily overloaded by excessive detail. The best way to deliver information is to organize it into meaningful units. Because students with special needs get overloaded easily, chunking is an effective strategy to use with them.

**Checking for Understanding:** It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

**Extra time:** The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

**Oral Reading:** The teacher will read work orally to students. Class work such as tests and literature circles may need to be read aloud to the student.

**Timers:** The teacher will use timers as an instructional tool. The use of timers is beneficial for students who have trouble completing tasks. Timers can be helpful so the student is aware of how much time they have to complete an assignment.

## Students with 504 Plans

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**Checking for Understanding:** It is important to constantly check for understanding, especially for students who have accommodations. Teachers want to make sure students understand the concepts being covered in a way that makes sense to them.

**Extra time:** The teacher provides students with special needs extra time to complete work or answer questions. It is important to give students enough time to process their thoughts.

## Gifted & Talented Strategies

**Extensions/Enrichments:** Teachers will provide gifted and talented students with extension/enrichment projects. Students will be challenged to further their understanding, to apply acquired knowledge, and/or to produce something in reference to acquired knowledge.

**Modify/Change Activities:** Teachers will monitor and modify activities to accommodate those students who need to be challenged further. Additional reading, problem-solving, writing, or project

work is necessary for those students who are ready to move on at a rate more accelerated than their peers. In this way, G & T students are provided the same opportunity for support as special needs students.

## Students at Risk of School Failure

**Directions or Instructions:** Make sure directions and/or instructions are given in limited numbers. Give directions/instructions verbally and in simple written format. Ask students to repeat the instructions or directions to ensure understanding occurs. Check back with the student to ensure he/she hasn't forgotten.

**Peer Support:** Peers can help build confidence in other students by assisting in peer learning. Many teachers use the 'ask 3 before me' approach. This is fine, however, a student at risk may have to have a specific student or two to ask. Set this up for the student so he/she knows who to ask for clarification before going to you.

**Alternate or Modified Assignments:** Always ask yourself, "How can I modify this assignment to ensure the students at risk are able to complete it?" Sometimes you'll simplify the task, reduce the length of the assignment or allow for a different mode of delivery. For instance, many students may hand something in, the at-risk student may jot notes and give you the information verbally. Or, it just may be that you will need to assign an alternate assignment.

**Increase One to One Time:** When other students are working, always touch base with your students at risk and find out if they're on track or needing some additional support. A few minutes here and there will go a long way to intervene as the need presents itself.

**Contracts:** It helps to have a working contract between you and your students at risk. This helps prioritize the tasks that need to be done and ensure completion happens. Each day write down what needs to be completed, as the tasks are done, provide a checkmark or happy face. The goal of using contracts is to eventually have the student come to you for completion sign-offs.

**Hands On:** As much as possible, think in concrete terms and provide hands-on tasks. This means a child doing math may require a calculator or counters. The child may need to tape record comprehension activities instead of writing them. A child may have to listen to a story being read instead of reading it him/herself.

**Tests/Assessments:** Tests can be done orally if need be. Break tests down in smaller increments by having a portion of the test in the morning, another portion after lunch and the final part the next day.

**Seating:** Seat students near a helping peer or with quick access to the teacher. Those with hearing or sight issues need to be close to the instruction which often means near the front.

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## **Integration of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Climate Change; Informational and Media Literacy**

See Crosswalks

## New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

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ELA.L.WF.4.3	Demonstrate command of the conventions of writing, including those listed under grade three foundational skills:
ELA.L.WF.4.3.A	Use basic paragraphing, including using paragraph indentations and using paragraphs in dialogue.
ELA.L.WF.4.3.B	Place adjectives and adverbs and form comparative and superlative adjectives and adverbs.
ELA.L.WF.4.3.E	Form and use possessive nouns and pronouns.
ELA.L.WF.4.3.F	Capitalize the first word in quotations as appropriate, capitalize other important words (e.g., section headings).
ELA.L.WF.4.3.G	Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics for titles; use quotation marks for direct speech; use comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
ELA.L.KL.4.1	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
ELA.L.KL.4.1.A	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases.
ELA.L.KL.4.1.B	Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.
ELA.L.KL.4.1.D	Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion).
ELA.W.IW.4.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.A	Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), text features (e.g., illustrations, diagrams, captions) and multimedia when useful to aid in comprehension.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.B	Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, text evidence, or other information and examples related to the topic.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.C	Link ideas within paragraphs and sections of information using words and phrases (e.g., another, for example, also, because).
ELA.W.IW.4.2.D	Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
ELA.W.IW.4.2.E	Provide a conclusion related to the information or explanation presented.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.A	Explicitly draw on previously read text or material and other information known about the topic to explore ideas under discussion.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.B	Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions and carry out assigned roles.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.C	Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
ELA.SL.PE.4.1.D	Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
ELA.SL.II.4.2	Paraphrase portions of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, and orally).

ELA.SL.ES.4.3	Identify the reasons and evidence a speaker provides to support particular points.
ELA.SL.PI.4.4	Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience in an organized manner, using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.

## **Integration of Career Readiness. Life Literacies and Key Skills**

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TECH.K-12.P.1	Act as a responsible and contributing community members and employee.
TECH.K-12.P.3	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
TECH.K-12.P.4	Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
TECH.K-12.P.5	Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.
TECH.K-12.P.6	Model integrity, ethical leadership and effective management.
TECH.K-12.P.7	Plan education and career paths aligned to personal goals.
TECH.K-12.P.8	Use technology to enhance productivity increase collaboration and communicate effectively.
TECH.K-12.P.9	Work productively in teams while using cultural/global competence.

## **Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking**

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CS.3-5.DA	Data & Analysis  The development and modification of computing technology is driven by individual's needs and wants and can affect individuals differently.  Individuals can select, organize, and transform data into different visual representations and communicate insights gained from the data.
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## **Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSL for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math**

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SOC.K-4.1	What are effective strategies for accessing various sources of information and historical evidence, determining their validity, and using them to solve a problem or find a solution to a public policy question?
SOC.K-4.1.3	Critical Thinking
SOC.K-4.1.3.1	Distinguish fact from fiction.
SOC.K-4.1.4	Presentational Skills
SOC.K-4.1.4.1	Use evidence to support an idea in a digital, oral and/ written format.
SOC.K-4.1.4.2	Share information about a topic in an organized manner (e.g., provide a coherent line of reasoning with supporting/relevant details) speaking clearly and at an appropriate pace.