

# 4th Writing 2024-2025 Unit 4 Literary Essay (Weeks 22-28)

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

## **Unit 4 Literary Essay**

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### **Unit Rationale**

This Literary Essay unit teaches students to use their opinion and essay writing skills to write about a book or text. This is the second opinion writing unit in the fourth grade curriculum. It addresses the fourth grade NJ opinion writing standards. This unit draws upon essay writing skills from Unit 2, Persuasive Essay. It builds upon the third grade Baby Literary Essay Unit. This unit teaches students to craft a thesis that states a claim and leads to a structured essay. The unit teaches students to find and utilize text evidence, including and analyzing quotes. Students will learn to organize their essay and paragraphs, utilizing transitional and linking phrases. Students will learn to conclude the essay with a call to action. This unit also has an emphasis on correct comma usage and avoiding sentence fragments and run on sentences. Learning to write a literary essay allows students to express their big thinking about characters and themes, supporting their ideas with evidence, and organizing their thinking. These essay writing skills will follow students into state testing, fifth grade, and the rest of their education.

### **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 an 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.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.CRP5	Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
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.CRP11

Use technology to enhance productivity.

CRP.K-12.CRP11.1

Career-ready individuals find and maximize the productive value of existing and new technology to accomplish workplace tasks and solve workplace problems. They are flexible and adaptive in acquiring new technology. They are proficient with ubiquitous technology applications. They understand the inherent risks-personal and organizational-of technology applications, and they take actions to prevent or mitigate these risks.

CRP.K-12.CRP12

Work productively in teams while using cultural global competence.

CRP.K-12.CRP12.1

Career-ready individuals positively contribute to every team, whether formal or informal. They apply an awareness of cultural difference to avoid barriers to productive and positive interaction. They find ways to increase the engagement and contribution of all team members. They plan and facilitate effective team meetings.

## **Essential Questions**

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How can big thinking around texts impact our thinking about the world?

What type of big thinking about a text would make an interesting literary essay?

How does text evidence make an essay stronger?

How could a literary essay call someone to action?

Why is correct comma usage important?

How do sentence fragments and run-on sentences impact the reader?

## **Pre-Assessments**

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[Opinion Pre-Assessment On Demand](#)

## **Instructional Plan**

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### Indicators of Understanding

1. Writers develop a thesis about a big idea within a text that states a claim and leads to the structure of the essay.
2. Writers provide textual evidence to support their claim.
3. Writers move the reader through the essay through carefully chosen thought prompts and transitional phrases.
4. Writers conclude their literary essay with a bigger idea that extends into a call to action.
5. Writers use commas to make long, complex sentences clear and correct.

### Grammar:

- Grammar Concepts to Teach:
  - Writers link opinions and reasons using words and phrases (e.g. for instance, in order to, in addition).
  - Writers produce complete sentences, recognizing and correcting inappropriate fragments and run-ons
- Grammar Concepts to Revisit:
  - Use commas and quotation marks to mark quotations from a text.
  - Writers use italics appropriately.
- Grammar Concepts Already Mastered (3rd Grade 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

## [4th Grade Literary Essay Mini Lessons](#)

## [Literary Essay Resources](#)

## [Opinion Learning Progressions and Rubrics](#)

## **Literary Essay Collecting**

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### **Collecting For A Literary Essay**

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

WALT collect opinions about narrative texts

WALT state an opinion/claim about a book

WALT identify themes in books.

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

I can... list opinions about books in my writer's notebook.

I can... explore and read books with strong characters and themes.

I can... list books and their themes.

#### **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**

## **Developing A Literary Essay**

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

WALT craft a thesis around the theme.

WALT support a claim with reasons/examples from the text.

WALT cite text evidence to support reasons.

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

I can... state my opinion/claim about a text and its theme.

I can... I can support my opinion with reasons that are examples from the text.

I can... I can support reasons with text evidence.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

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### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Literary Essay Drafting**

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### **Drafting A Literary Essay**

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

WALT draft a literary essay.

WALT draft an introduction that grabs the reader's attention.

WALT draft paragraphs using transitions to organize and move readers from one reason/detail to the next.

WALT correctly cite sources within the essay using proper punctuation and capitalization.

#### **Student Success Criteria ... "I can statements"**

I can...hook my reader with an interesting introduction.

I can... draft my literary essay organizing it into reason paragraphs.

I can... support my reasons by citing text evidence.

I can... explain my text evidence using thinking stems.

### **Instructional Strategies and Activities**

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## **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

### **Literary Essay Revising**

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#### **Revising A Literary Essay**

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

WALT revise to conclude our literary essay with a bigger idea that extends into a call to action.

WALT revise to add clarifying statements and take away unnecessary or repetitive statements.

WALT revise to elaborate using thinking stems and transitions.

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

I can...write a conclusion that restates my opinion and tells the reader what to do next.

I can... revise to add more thinking and analysis to my essay.

I can... revise to make sure my essay makes sense, adding and taking away.

I can... revise using a checklist.

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

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### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Literary Essay Editing**

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### **Editing A Literary Essay**

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

WALT edit a literary essay.

WALT use commas to make long, complex sentences clear and correct.

WALT use quotation marks correctly.

WALT capitalizes correctly.

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

I can... reread my literary essay, checking for editing errors.

I can... edit my essay to make sure I used commas correctly.

I can... edit my essay to make sure I used quotation marks correctly.

I can... check my essay for capitalization errors and fix them.

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### **Reflections and Suggested Modifications**

## **Literary Essay Publishing**

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### **Publishing A Literary Essay**

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

WALT publish literary essays.

WALT present our persuasive essays to our class.

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

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

I can... share my essay with my class by reading a portion of it outloud.

I can... celebrate my published essay!

## **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.

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

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See Crosswalks

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.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.C	Choose punctuation for effect.
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.AW.4.1	Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.
ELA.W.AW.4.1.A	Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.
ELA.W.AW.4.1.B	Provide reasons that are supported by facts from texts and/or other sources.
ELA.W.AW.4.1.C	Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., for instance, in order to, in addition).
ELA.W.AW.4.1.D	Provide a conclusion related to the opinion 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.
ELA.SL.AS.4.6	Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion); use formal English when appropriate to task and situation.

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

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.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.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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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.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.

## **Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSLs 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-4.1.3.1	Distinguish fact from fiction.
SOC.K-4.1.3.2	Identify and interpret a variety of primary and secondary sources for reconstructing the past (i.e., documents, letters, diaries, maps, photos, etc.).
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.