Unit 1: Narrative Writing (Weeks 1-9)

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

Unit 1: Narrative Writing

Unit Rationale

Over the course of the unit, we will examine the qualities of strong narratives, and then learn about how to emulate these qualities in our own narrative writing. We will particularly focus on the importance of planning out our narratives, and of "showing" rather than "telling" to make our stories come alive. Because this is the first unit of the year, we'll also spend initial time focusing on writing workshop procedures, what a writing community is and does, and how to give and receive useful feedback on our writing.

Essential Questions

- Why do writers draw from their own experiences while writing?

- Why do we brainstorm and plan before we write?

- Why is conferring and getting feedback about your writing important?

- What are the most important routines for being successful in a writing workshop?

Pre-Assessments

Students will be asked to complete an on-demand narrative writing task that will allow the teacher to adapt instruction to the specific strengths and weaknesses of students in the class.

Instructional Plan

See lessons below.

There are specific materials for each of these novels within the 6th grade teacher's drive If you cannot access this link please email Sarah Whitman at swhitman@collsk12.org for full access

Resource: Windows & Mirrors Grade 6 Textbook

ALL LESSONS CAN TAKE SEVERAL DAYS

Lesson 1: Narrative Writing

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT narratives use effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences

WALT write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events

WALT introduce a narrator and/or characters in narrative writing

WALT organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically in narrative writing

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...identify elements of narrative writing.

I can...identify techniques narrative writers use.

I can...identify author's craft in narrative writing.

I can...plan out a narrative story based on plot structure.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Provide background knowledge

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Flash Drafts

Formative Assessments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- [Video](#) on the power of writing

- Digital communication lessons

- Note taking strategies and practice

- Narrative mentor text analyses (audio, written)

- Storytelling activities via The Moth

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.W.NW.6.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	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.

Lesson 2: Narrative Techniques

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection to develop our narratives

WALT introduce a narrator and/or characters in narrative writing

WALT transition words, phrases, and clauses convey the sequence or signal shifts in narrative writing

WALT write narrative conclusions that follow from the narrated experiences or events

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...develop a narrative writing pieces using specific techniques.

I can...sequence my story with appropriate transitions.

I can...write an exposition that introduces my characters.

I can...write an ending that brings my story to a close and teaches my reader a lesson.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

- Jigsaw
- Group Work

Formative Assessments

- Short written responses

- Multi-text assignments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Writing community building activities

- Generating writing ideas

    o Somebody-Wanted-But-So-Then

    o Using places we know to generate ideas

- Choosing "Small Moments" -- "Seeds" vs. "Watermelons"

- Mapping out the scenes of our stories

- Writing beginnings that hint at the conflict and larger meaning of the story

- Using transitional phrases to connect the scenes in our stories

- Writing endings that connect with what the story is really about

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.W.NW.6.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.C	Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	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.

Lesson 3: Word Choice

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT use precise language to convey experiences and events in narrative writing

WALT writers use different voices, styles, and organizational strategies according to task, purpose, and audience

WALT writers strengthen their writing by revising

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...improve my writing by using strong word choice.

I can...appeal to my audience with style and voice.

I can...convey events in my story with precise language.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Direct Instruction

- Gradual release

- Incorporating video and digital resources

- Free writing time

Formative Assessments

- Exit slips

- Creative writing prompts

- Student conferences/check ins

- Flash writes

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- SHOWING vs. telling--adding sensory details, dialogue, actions, and thoughts

  o Writing and punctuating dialogue

  o Figurative language

- Using transitional phrases to connect the scenes in our stories

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.KL.6.2.B	Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.D	Maintain consistency in style and tone.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.C	Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.

Lesson 4: Revisions

Student Learning Intentions or We are learning to … (WALT)

WALT writers strengthen their writing by revising

WALT writers utilize the help of their peers and adults to improve their writing

WALT use technology to produce and publish writing

WALT use technology to interact and collaborate with peers in the writing process

Student Success Criteria … "I can statements"

I can...improve my writing with grammar support.

I can...apply constructive feedback to my writing.

I can...provide constructive feedback to my peers.

Instructional Strategies and Activities

- Peer Editing
- Group Work
- 1:1 conferencing

Formative Assessments

- Student conferences/check-ins

- Class discussions

- Observation

Instructional Materials and Resources

- Peer feedback and support
- Peer conferences
- Grammarly.com
- Noredink.com

Reflections and Suggested Modifications

ELA.L.SS.6.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

Modifications and/or Accommodations
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

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.

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

See Crosswalks

This unit allows for great discussion on a variety of informational texts. This can include DEI, climate change, and informational and media literacy.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1uf0fWDvpqWFOAb51rOq7mN5xq-xu-M5Yp2FbEVZ9Kt8/edit?gid=0#gid=0

New Jersey Student Learning Standards: Content Area

ELA.L.SS.6.1	Demonstrate command of the system and structure of the English language when writing or speaking.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.B	Gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
ELA.L.KL.6.2.D	Maintain consistency in style and tone.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.A	Interpret figures of speech (e.g., personification) in context.
ELA.L.VI.6.4.C	Analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.A	Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.B	Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.C	Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.D	Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
ELA.W.NW.6.3.E	Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
ELA.W.WP.6.4	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning; flexibly making editing and revision choices; sustaining effort to fit composition needs and purposes; and attempting to address purpose and audience.
ELA.W.RW.6.7	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.
ELA.SL.PE.6.1.A	Come to discussions prepared, having read or studied required material; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

TECH.9.4.8.CI.4	Explore the role of creativity and innovation in career pathways and industries.

Integration of Computer Science and Design Thinking

CS.6-8.8.1.8.AP.6	Refine a solution that meets users' needs by incorporating feedback from team members and users.

Interdisciplinary Connections: NJSLS for ELA, Social Studies, Science and/or Math

The ability to write fluently and clearly is a necessity in all academic subject areas. Students will be able to respond to literature taught in other subject areas, noting authors' craft decisions and seeking to emulate in their writing the narrative techniques they come across in literature.

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1bNUBwwW9BLgTLqfjfVAJiet6rbmQ3THg-sXDz2rEnXk/edit?gid=0#gid=0

ELA.RL.PP.6.5	Determine how an author conveys or develops perspective in a text (through the narrator or speaker when appropriate).

21st Century Life and Career

CRP.K-12.CRP4	Communicate clearly and effectively and with reason.

SEL Competencies and Standards

SEL.PK-12.1.2	Recognize the impact of one's feelings and thoughts on one's own behavior
SEL.PK-12.2.1	Understand and practice strategies for managing one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors
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