Dec. WRITING: Author study, Cynthia Rylant

Content Area: **English**
Course(s):
Time Period: **December**
Length: **4-5 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

Student Outcomes:

Students will:

- Explore a variety of Cynthia Rylant books to gain an understanding of who she is and how and why she writes
- Listen to Cynthia Rylant's autobiography to learn and discuss her motivation and purposes for writing
- Observe and discuss how Cynthia Rylant uses effective techniques to develop real and personal experiences
- Observe, discuss, and compare how Cynthia Rylant approaches a familiar topic in similar and different ways
- Draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis and reflection in order to better understand Rylant's message or themes she often writes about
- Reflect on their own lives to recall significant moments or events to list as ideas for writing topics
- Use specific details to describe special places connected to experiences in their lives
- Examine their own passions, interests, and their desires and relax their minds to freewrite topics
- Brainstorm symbols that are important to them to get ideas for their writing, then reread to narrow down their choice of ideas to publish
- Envision events, think about their purpose, and use concrete words and personification to convey their experiences precisely
- Organize the event sequence and use narrative text structure when writing their drafts
- Examine Cynthia Rylant's leads and endings to improve upon their own
- Revise their writing by using descriptive details and dialogue
- Examine how varying sentence lengths can create rhythm and fluency in their writing and then revise their sentences for variety
- Revise and edit their narratives for clarity, organization, spelling, and conventions of grammar and usage
- Reflect on their writing pieces to create their own Author's Notes and define their growth as writers

Enduring Understandings

Studying and reading closely the work of prolific writers helps us become better writers.

Essential Questions

How does Cynthia Rylant use writing techniques we can study to become better writers?

Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

Week 1 Immersion:

Objectives:

- Explore Rylant's books and discuss her motivations and purposes for writing
- Observe and discuss how Rylant uses various techniques to develop experiences and approaches topics in a variety of ways
- Draw evidence from literary texts to support analysis and reflection in order to better understand Rylant's message or themes

Activities/Tasks/Materials

- Day 1: What makes Cynthia Rylant a good mentor author? (22-24)
    - Showcase all of the mentor texts
    - Read aloud An Angel for Solomon Singer
    - Appendix 1 "Why is Cynthia Rylant a Good Teacher of Writing?"
    - Appendix 3 "Letter to Parents"
- Day 2: Cynthia's Motivation and Purpose for Writing (25-26)
    - *Best Wishes* by Cynthia Rylant
    - Appendix 4 "Cynthia Rylant Writes About...Because..."
    - **Independent Writing Time: Write a reflection in Writers' Notebooks: How are you like Cynthia? What topics do you write about often?**
- Day 3: Effective Techniques That Develop Personal Experiences (27-29)
    - *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant
    - Appendix 6 "Examples of Narrative Techniques in *The Relatives Came*"
    - **Independent Writing Time: Use concrete words and sensory details to convey personal experiences and events**
- Day 4: Approaching Familiar Topics in Similar and Different Ways (30-31)
    - *Night in the Country* by Cynthia Rylant
    - *Long Night Moon* by Cynthia Rylant
    - Appendix 7 "Sensory Details"
    - **Independent Writing Time (or partners/groups): Appendix 8 "Charting Similarities and Differences"**
- Day 5: Using Text Evidence to Support Analysis and Reflection (32-34)
    - *"Spaghetti" from Every Little Thing* by Cynthia Rylant
    - Chapters 1 & 2 from *Boris* by Cynthia Rylant
    - Class set of another story from *Every Little Thing* to take notes on
    - **Independent Writing Time: Find the theme of one of the stories from *Every Little Thing***

- ****Write a letter to Cynthia Rylant***

Week 2 Generating Ideas:

Objectives:

- Reflect on own life to recall significant moments or events and list ideas for writing topics
- Use specific details to describe special places connected to experiences
- Freewrite topics

Activities/Tasks/Materials

- Day 1: Reflecting on the Past (43-44)
  - *Best Wishes* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Personal List or Appendix 1 "Sample Chart of Possible Topics"
  - Writers' Notebook T-Chart
  - Appendix 2 "Timeline of Memorable Moments"
  - Extension Activity-HW
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 2: Writer's Write About Places They Love (47-48)
  - *Long Night Moon* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Personal List or Appendix "Places to Write About"
  - Writer's Notebook T-Chart "Where, When"
  - Extension Activity-*Scarecrow*
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 3: Habits of Mind Help Writers Find Topics (50-51)
  - *Best Wishes* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Writers' Notebooks-Ideas List
  - Extension Activity: Appendix "Ideas From Special Memories"
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 4: Passions and Longings (53-54)
  - *Boris* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Appendix 1 "What Are My Passions and Longings?"
  - Extension Activity-*Missing May*
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 5: Inspired by Symbols (57-58)
  - *Missing May* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Writers' Notebook-Brainstorm list of symbols
  - Poster of symbols as a visual
  - Extension Activity: Appendix "Excerpts"

- **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**

Week 3 Selecting & Collecting:

Objectives:

- Reread Writers' Notebooks to narrow down their choice of ideas to publish
- Think about purpose, add sensory details to writing, use concrete words and personification, and organize event sequence

Activities/Tasks/Materials

- Day 1: Writers Reread Their Work to Select Ideas (60-61)
  - Appendix 1 "Guiding Questions for Selecting an Idea"
  - "Possible Topics" chart & sticky notes
  - Extension:Class Chart
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 2: Writers Think About Their Purposes (64-65)
  - Appendix 1 "Cynthia Rylant's Purposes for Writing"
  - Extension: Appendix 2 "Purposes and How I Might Accomplish This"
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 3: Envisioning Events and Conversations (68-69)
  - *Best Wishes* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Writers' Notebook "Envisioning Events and Talk"
  - Extension: Appendix 1 "Senses Observation Sheet" & Appendix 2 "Interview Sheet"
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 4: Personification (72-73)
  - *Boris* by Cynthia Rylant
  - *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Extension: Share personification used in writing
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 5: How to Create Movement Over Time (74-75)
  - *Night in the Country* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Appendix 1 "Movement Over Time"
  - *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Extension: *An Angel for Solomon Singer* by Cynthia Rylant & "Retired" from *Every Little Thing* by Cynthia Rylant
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**

Week 4 Drafting & Revising

Objectives:

- Produces a draft using a narrative text structure
- Examine Rylant's endings and leads to revise his or her own beginning and ending
- Revises draft using descriptive details and dialogue
- Revises for varying sentence lengths and rereads the draft to ensure that it Is organized and clear

Activities/Tasks/Materials

- Day 1: Narrative Text Structure (78-79)
  - Appendix 1 "Characteristics of a Narrative Text Structure
  - *An Angel for Solomon Singer* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Appendix 2 "Narrative Text Structure Graphic Organizer"
  - Appendix 3 " Transition Words and Phrases to Show Time"
  - Draft narrative on loose-leaf paper-skip lines (may take a couple of days)
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 2: Endings With a Purpose (83-84)
  - *An Angel for Solomon Singer* by Cynthia Rylant
  - *Appalachia: The Voices of Sleeping Birds* by Cynthia Rylant
  - *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Appendix "Cynthia's Endings"
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 3: Show, Don't Tell What a Character is Feeling (86-87)
  - "Shells" from *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Appendix "Description, Thought, Talk, and Action"
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 4: Revising the Lead (89-90)
  - *An Angel for Solomon Singer* by Cynthia Rylant
  - *Best Wishes* by Cynthia Rylant
  - "Shells" and "Spaghetti" from *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant
  - Appendix "Sample Leads"
  - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 5: Sentence Fluency & Revising for Clarity and Organization (92-99)

Sentence Fluency:

- *Night in the Country* by Cynthia Rylant
- Chart titled "Cynthia's Sentence Variety"
- Appendix 1 "First Draft vs. Revisions"
- Appendix 3 "Synonyms for Commonly Used Verbs and Adjectives"
- Extension: Appendix 2 "Revising Sentence Beginnings for Variety"

Clarity & Organization:

- Appendix "Revising for Clarity and Organization Checklist"
- Student Draft for display
- Extension: Create Storyboards
- **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**

Week 5 Editing & Publishing

Objectives:

- Use strategies taught & references to correct misspelled grade-appropriate words
- Edits draft for conventions of grammar ans usage
- Reflects on the writing piece to create an Author's Note
- Reflects on writing and its meaning as part of his or her growth as a writer

Activities/Tasks/Materials

- Day 1: Correct Spelling (101-102)
    - Appendix "Have-a-Go-Sheet"
    - Extension: Edit for capitalization, punctuation, and grammar
    - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 2: Editing Verbs (104-105)
    - *Scarecrow* by Cynthia Rylant
    - Appendix "Subject/How Many?/Past, Present, or Future?/Verb"
    - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 3: Writing an Author's Note (107-108)
    - Appendix "Thoughts for Crafting an Author's Note"
    - Appendix 1 "Cynthia Rylant's Purposes for Writing"
    - Extension: Book Blurb
    - **Independent Writing Time: Work on skills taught while teacher confers with students individually**
- Day 4: Student Self-Reflection (110-111)
    - Appendix "Questionnaire for Self-Reflection on Cynthia Rylant Author Study"
    - **Conference one last time with students**

***WRITING CELEBRATION

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

Students will learn about the writing career of Cynthia Rylant.

	Collaboration with individuals with diverse perspectives can result in new ways of thinking and/or innovative solutions.
9.4.5.CI.1	Use appropriate communication technologies to collaborate with individuals with diverse perspectives about a local and/or global climate change issue and deliberate about possible solutions (e.g., W.4.6, 3.MD.B.3,7.1.NM.IPERS.6).
9.2.5.CAP.1	Evaluate personal likes and dislikes and identify careers that might be suited to personal likes.
9.2.5.CAP.2	Identify how you might like to earn an income.
9.2.5.CAP.3	Identify qualifications needed to pursue traditional and non-traditional careers and occupations.
	Curiosity and a willingness to try new ideas (intellectual risk-taking) contributes to the development of creativity and innovation skills.
9.2.5.CAP.4	Explain the reasons why some jobs and careers require specific training, skills, and certification (e.g., life guards, child care, medicine, education) and examples of these requirements.
	The ability to solve problems effectively begins with gathering data, seeking resources, and applying critical thinking skills.
9.2.5.CAP.6	Compare the characteristics of a successful entrepreneur with the traits of successful employees.
9.4.5.CT.4	Apply critical thinking and problem-solving strategies to different types of problems such as personal, academic, community and global (e.g., 6.1.5.CivicsCM.3).
9.4.5.DC.1	Explain the need for and use of copyrights.
9.4.5.DC.2	Provide attribution according to intellectual property rights guidelines using public domain or creative commons media.
9.4.5.DC.3	Distinguish between digital images that can be reused freely and those that have copyright restrictions.
9.4.5.DC.4	Model safe, legal, and ethical behavior when using online or offline technology (e.g., 8.1.5.NI.2).
9.4.5.GCA.1	Analyze how culture shapes individual and community perspectives and points of view (e.g., 1.1.5.C2a, RL.5.9, 6.1.5.HistoryCC.8).
9.4.5.TL.3	Format a document using a word processing application to enhance text, change page formatting, and include appropriate images graphics, or symbols.

Technology and Design Integration

-SmartBoard Technology

-Google Applications (Docs, Presentation, Classroom)

8.1.5.CS.1	Model how computing devices connect to other components to form a system.
	Software and hardware work together as a system to accomplish tasks (e.g., sending, receiving, processing, and storing units of information).
8.1.5.CS.2	Model how computer software and hardware work together as a system to accomplish

	tasks.
	Shared features allow for common troubleshooting strategies that can be effective for many systems.
8.1.5.CS.3	Identify potential solutions for simple hardware and software problems using common troubleshooting strategies.

Interdisciplinary Connections

6.1.5.CivicsCM.1	Use a variety of sources to describe the characteristics exhibited by real and fictional people that contribute(d) to the well-being of their community and country.
6.1.5.CivicsCM.3	Identify the types of behaviors that promote collaboration and problem solving with others who have different perspectives.
6.1.5.EconET.1	Identify positive and negative incentives that influence the decisions people make.
	Interactions of people and events throughout history have shaped the world we experience today.

Differentiation

- Understand that gifted students, just like all students, come to school to learn and be challenged.
- Pre-assess your students. Find out their areas of strength as well as those areas you may need to address before students move on.
- Consider grouping gifted students together for at least part of the school day.
- Plan for differentiation. Consider pre-assessments, extension activities, and compacting the curriculum.
- Use phrases like "You've shown you don't need more practice" or "You need more practice" instead of words like "qualify" or "eligible" when referring to extension work.
- Encourage high-ability students to take on challenges. Because they're often used to getting good grades, gifted students may be risk averse.

- **Definitions of Differentiation Components**:

    - Content – the specific information that is to be taught in the lesson/unit/course of instruction.
    - Process – how the student will acquire the content information.
    - Product – how the student will demonstrate understanding of the content.
    - Learning Environment – the environment where learning is taking place including physical location and/or student grouping

Differentiation occurring in this unit:

See extensions embedded in lesson plans above.

Modifications & Accommodations

Refer to QSAC EXCEL SMALL SPED ACCOMMOCATIONS spreadsheet in this discipline.

Modifications and Accommodations used in this unit:

IEP accommodations

additional teacher contact

questioning for understanding

Benchmark Assessments

Benchmark Assessments are given periodically (e.g., at the end of every quarter or as frequently as once per month) throughout a school year to establish baseline achievement data and measure progress toward a standard or set of academic standards and goals.

Schoolwide Benchmark assessments:

Aimsweb benchmarks 3X a year

Linkit Benchmarks 3X a year

DRA

Additional Benchmarks used in this unit:

AIMS Web and writing samples

Formative Assessments

Assessment allows both instructor and student to monitor progress towards achieving learning objectives, and can be approached in a variety of ways. **Formative assessment** refers to tools that identify misconceptions, struggles, and learning gaps along the way and assess how to close those gaps. It includes effective tools for helping to shape learning, and can even bolster students' abilities to take ownership of their learning when they understand that the goal is to improve learning, not apply final marks (Trumbull and Lash, 2013). It can include students assessing themselves, peers, or even the instructor, through writing, quizzes, conversation, and more. In short, formative assessment occurs throughout a class or course, and seeks to improve student achievement of learning objectives through approaches that can support specific student needs (Theal and Franklin, 2010, p. 151).

Formative Assessments used in this unit:

Discussions

Worksheets

conferences on writing drafts

Summative Assessments

Summative assessments evaluate student learning, knowledge, proficiency, or success at the conclusion of an instructional period, like a unit, course, or program. Summative assessments are almost always formally graded and often heavily weighted (though they do not need to be). Summative assessment can be used to great effect in conjunction and alignment with formative assessment, and instructors can consider a variety of ways to combine these approaches.

Summative assessments for this unit:

Final writing projects

Instructional Materials

Schoolwide, Inc. Cynthia Rylant unit

related books

Standards

LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.6	With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.8	Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print

	and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.10	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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3a	Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3b	Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3c	Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3d	Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.3e	Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9a	Apply grade 4 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., a character’s thoughts, words, or actions].”).
LA.4.CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.4.9b	Apply grade 4 Reading standards to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text”).