April: SW: Writing: Memoirs

Content Area: **English**
Course(s):
Time Period: **April**
Length: **6-8 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Unit Overview

This unit explores the genre of writing memoirs.

Enduring Understandings

People write memoirs to tell about their life and share life lessons.

Essential Questions

Why do people write memoirs?

How can we write our own memoir?

Instructional Strategies & Learning Activities

Immersion: Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons
Day 1:
Exploring Memoir
uses all mentor texts from the unit, specifically The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson.
Rationale: Writers of memoirs usually focus on a period of time, reflecting on the implications of a major event in their lives or a specific historical period. Students will explore the purposes and features of memoir writing as they preview the mentor texts and closely read The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Day 2:
Strong Sense of Place
uses Marshfield Dreams by Ralph Fletcher, The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson, and Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli.
Rationale: Writers can make a place seem real and alive through the descriptive language they use in their memoirs. Students will notice how

memoir writers include sensory details and descriptive details to convey an experience and reflect a strong sense of place.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4, SL.7.5, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6

Day 3:
People Who Make a Difference
uses Thank you, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco.
Rationale: Memoir writers often write about the people in their lives who have made an impact on them. Students will consider how memoirs often include and/or focus on significant people in the writer's life.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6

Day 4:
Forms of Memoir
uses Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash by Donald Graves.
Rationale: Memoir writers need to decide on not just what to include in their stories, but how they will tell the stories of their lives. Students will explore how writers consider their audience and purpose when deciding on the form their writing will take.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6

Day 5:
Revealing Reflections
uses Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli.
Rationale: Memoir writers reflect on the significance of the memories they write about. Students will think about
why memoirs are written, what makes them so significant, and why the use of reflection enhances the memoirs that
are being shared.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6

Mini-Lessons
Generating Ideas I: Zoom in on Your Idea
uses Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash by Donald Graves.
Rationale: Memoirists usually focus on a single period of time or on significant events, places, and ideas. Students
will use a series of questions to help them focus on a writing idea and think about the inside and outside story.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6

Generating Ideas II: Using Pictures to Spark Memories
uses Marshfield Dreams by Ralph Fletcher and The Moon and I by Betsy Byars.
Rationale: Writers use photographs to help unlock memories and inspire them to generate ideas. Students will use
photographic images to help inspire ideas for memoir writing.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3,

SL.7.4,
SL.7.5, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Generating Ideas III: Defining Moments
uses Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli and Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash by Donald Graves.
Rationale: Writers think about important events from their lives as a way to generate ideas for their memoirs. Students will identify defining moments in their own lives in order to record possible ideas for their memoirs.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.6
Generating Ideas IV: A Special Place
uses Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli and The Moon and I by Betsy Byars.
Rationale: Writers write about places where they have spent time that hold a special place in their hearts. Students
will recall important memories of special places to help them generate possible memoir writing ideas.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.5, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.5, L.7.6

Generating Ideas V: Lasting Impressions
uses Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash by Donald Graves and "A Family Thing" from Knots in My Yo-yo String
by Jerry Spinelli.
Rationale: Writers think about the people in their lives who have made a lasting impression and the traditions they
have experienced that have helped create memorable moments. Students will think about special people in their
lives, along with the traditions they have grown to appreciate, to help generate ideas for their memoirs.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.6
Selecting: Rereading to Find a Focus
uses When I Was Your Age, Volume Two by Amy Ehrlich (Ed.).
Rationale: Memoir writers write about many topics. They often identify a theme or pattern in what they write about
and focus their memoir around that theme or central idea. Students will thoughtfully select an idea from their Writers' Notebooks that they will develop and publish.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.6
Collecting I: Slowing Down a Moment
uses Marshfield Dreams by Ralph Fletcher and The Moon and I by Betsy Byars.
Rationale: Writers collect additional information about their memories to help them flesh out their ideas. Students
will think about a significant part of their memories that they might want to slow down in order to provide emphasis
and highlight the importance.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.5, L.7.6
Collecting II: The Art of Reflection
uses Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli.

Rationale: Writers recognize that reflection is an important part of memoir writing and that this will help readers
understand and appreciate the meaning or significance behind their memories. Students will discover how reflection
impacts the strength of how their memories are presented.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.6
Collecting III: Filling in the Background Information
uses When I Was Your Age, Volume Two by Amy Ehrlich (Ed.).
Rationale: Writers include background information about the events and people in their memoirs to help the readers understand the meaning and significance of their memories. Students will gather relevant background information about the people and events connected to their memories for the purpose of giving their readers "the
complete picture."
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6

Drafting I: Narrative Text Structure
uses Marshfield Dreams by Ralph Fletcher, Baseball, Snakes, and Summer Squash by Donald Graves, and The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson.
Rationale: Memoir writers think about their purpose, audience, and the best way to organize their ideas when drafting. Students will think about the organization of narrative writing, explore different options for structuring their
memoirs, and select a structure that matches their purpose and will connect well with their audience.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.5, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Drafting II: Bold Beginnings
uses Thank you, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco, When I Was Your Age, Volume Two by Amy Ehrlich (Ed.), and
Marshfield Dreams: When I Was a Kid by Ralph Fletcher.
Rationale: Memoir writers consider how to best introduce their memoirs because the beginning, or lead, sets the
tone for their writing. Students will think about the best way to orient their readers by crafting an engaging and inviting lead.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Drafting III: The Important Role of Transition Words
uses Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli.
Rationale: Writers use a variety of transition words and phrases to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another. Students will determine the type of transition words, phrases, or clauses they will
use as they continue to draft their memoirs.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.6
Drafting IV: Reflective Endings
uses Thank you, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco, Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli, and The Moon

and I by
Betsy Byars.
Rationale: Writers often use a reflective stance in their memoirs to provide a deeper understanding of the person,
place, event, or experience. Students will provide a conclusion that follows from narrated experiences or events and
shows a reflective stance.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Revising I: Details Make a Difference
uses Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli and When I Was Your Age, Volume Two by Amy Ehrlich (Ed.).
Rationale: Writers include relevant descriptive details in their memoirs to help readers picture what is written and
make the writing interesting and unique. Students will look at their drafts to identify places that need more
opportunities for readers to visualize what is happening, and then they will add details and specific examples of the
events, experiences, memories, and people in their memoir.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.5, L.7.6

sing II: Including Thoughts & Feelings
uses Thank you, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco, The Other Side by Jacqueline Woodson, and Marshfield Dreams by
Ralph Fletcher.
Rationale: Writers include the use of internal dialogue to allow readers to better understand the characters and to
make personal connections. Students will identify places where they can add internal dialogue—thoughts and
feelings—for the purpose of making their memoirs relatable, engaging, and interesting to read.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.5, L.7.6
Editing I: Correct Comma Use
uses excerpts from Marshfield Dreams by Ralph Fletcher and Knots in My Yo-yo String by Jerry Spinelli.
Rationale: Writers use pause punctuation, such as commas, for a variety of purposes. Students will edit their drafts
to ensure proper usage of commas when separating adjectives or phrases or when listing things in a series.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.6
Editing II: You Can Quote Me
uses students' memoir drafts.
Rationale: Memoir writers often include dialogue in their pieces to enhance the readers' experience. Students will
use the conventions of standard English to edit their drafts for correct punctuation of dialogue.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.6

Publishing I: Grab Your Readers With a Memorable Title
uses all mentor texts from the unit.
Rationale: Writers know that a title is the first thing readers read and that it needs to include intriguing and attention-grabbing words or phrases. Students will recognize the important role that titles play and decide on a title
that will engage and encourage readers to want to read their memoirs.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3, SL.7.4,
SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.6
Publishing II: Who Is the Author?
uses The Moon and I by Betsy Byars, Thank you, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco, and Knots in My Yo-yo String by
Jerry Spinelli.
Rationale: Writers base personal narrative stories on experiences from their lives and often include an Author's
Note to provide readers with information about where their story ideas came from. Students will write an Author's
Note that best reflects where their idea or memory came from and that puts special finishing touches on their pieces.
Common Core State Standards: W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.6, W.7.7, W.7.8, W.7.9, W.7.10, SL.7.1, SL.7.2, SL.7.3,
SL.7.4, SL.7.5, SL.7.6, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, L.7.4, L.7.6
Student Self-Reflection
uses a self-reflection questionnaire.
Rationale: All writers use self-reflection to learn and grow as writers. Reflecting on the writing process as well as their
published memoirs will help students understand how they have grown as writers over the course of the unit of study.

Integration of Career Readiness, Life Literacies and Key Skills

9.2.8.CAP	Career Awareness and Planning
9.4.8.CI	Creativity and Innovation
	Gathering and evaluating knowledge and information from a variety of sources, including global perspectives, fosters creativity and innovative thinking.
9.2.8.CAP.2	Develop a plan that includes information about career areas of interest.
9.2.8.CAP.3	Explain how career choices, educational choices, skills, economic conditions, and personal behavior affect income.
9.4.8.CI.3	Examine challenges that may exist in the adoption of new ideas (e.g., 2.1.8.SSH, 6.1.8.CivicsPD.2).
9.2.8.CAP.4	Explain how an individual's online behavior (e.g., social networking, photo exchanges, video postings) may impact opportunities for employment or advancement.
9.4.8.CI.4	Explore the role of creativity and innovation in career pathways and industries.
9.4.8.CT	Critical Thinking and Problem-solving

	Multiple solutions often exist to solve a problem.
9.4.8.DC.1	Analyze the resource citations in online materials for proper use.
9.4.8.DC.2	Provide appropriate citation and attribution elements when creating media products (e.g., W.6.8).
9.4.8.DC.3	Describe tradeoffs between allowing information to be public (e.g., within online games) versus keeping information private and secure.
9.4.8.DC.4	Explain how information shared digitally is public and can be searched, copied, and potentially seen by public audiences.
9.4.8.DC.5	Manage digital identity and practice positive online behavior to avoid inappropriate forms of self-disclosure.
9.4.8.DC.6	Analyze online information to distinguish whether it is helpful or harmful to reputation.
9.4.8.IML.1	Critically curate multiple resources to assess the credibility of sources when searching for information.
9.4.8.IML.3	Create a digital visualization that effectively communicates a data set using formatting techniques such as form, position, size, color, movement, and spatial grouping (e.g., 6.SP.B.4, 7.SP.B.8b).
9.4.8.IML.12	Use relevant tools to produce, publish, and deliver information supported with evidence for an authentic audience.
9.4.8.IML.13	Identify the impact of the creator on the content, production, and delivery of information (e.g., 8.2.8.ED.1).

Technology and Design Integration

Students will interact with the unit using the Smartboard, document camera and Chromebooks/Google Classroom

IC	Impacts of Computing
8.1.8.IC.1	Compare the trade-offs associated with computing technologies that affect individual's everyday activities and career options.
8.1.8.IC.2	Describe issues of bias and accessibility in the design of existing technologies.

Interdisciplinary Connections

Writing connects with all disciplines.

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:

Students will be encouraged to challenge themselves when writing. Struggling students will recieve additional instruction and modifications .

Modifications & Accommodations

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

Modifications and Accommodations used in this unit:

IEP and 540 accommodations will be utilized.

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

Additional Benchmarks used in this unit:

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:

Quizzes

Rough drafts

discussion

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:

Unit tests

Final drafts

Instructional Materials

Mentor Texts
Baseball, Snakes, and
Summer Squash: Poems
About Growing Up
by Donald Graves
Knots in My Yo-yo String

by Jerry Spinelli
Marshfield Dreams: When I Was a Kid
by Ralph Fletcher
The Moon and I
by Betsy Byars
The Other Side
by Jacqueline Woodson
Thank you, Mr. Falker
by Patricia Polacco
When I Was Your Age, Volume Two: Original Stories About Growing Up
by Amy Ehrlich (Ed.)

Standards

LA.W.7.1	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.
LA.W.7.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.
LA.W.7.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
LA.W.7.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)
LA.W.7.5	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.
LA.W.7.6	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.
LA.W.7.7	Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.
LA.W.7.8	Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.
LA.W.7.9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
LA.W.7.10	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.
LA.SL.7.1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
LA.SL.7.2	Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats

	(e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.
LA.SL.7.3	Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.
LA.SL.7.4	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.
LA.SL.7.5	Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
LA.SL.7.6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
LA.L.7.1	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
LA.L.7.2	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
LA.L.7.3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
LA.L.7.4	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
LA.L.7.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
LA.L.7.6	Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.