

Writer's Workshop

Units of Study

Grades 3-5

Unit 1: Launching the Writer's Workshop-

In this Unit of Study, teachers and writers work to establish consistent routines and procedures so that writers approach their writing with rigor and independence.

In this Unit of Study, writers will be able to:

- comprehend the value of a Writer's Workshop Notebook.
- utilize their writer's notebook as a dispensable tool for living writerly lives, as well as a workbench for experimenting with different strategies.
- write with volume and stamina.
- demonstrate the use of multiple strategies for generating notebook entries.
- evaluate writing by mentor authors that sounds like writing they hope they will soon emulate.
- work through each step in the writing process; gathering seed ideas, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.
- demonstrate qualities of good narrative writing.

Unit 2: Raising the Level of Quality Writing-

In this Unit of Study, writers revisit narrative writing. The purpose of this unit is to work within the same genre so that writers can write longer, more significant, more conventional, and more graceful pieces of writing. It is especially important that children learn to write effective narratives because every other kind of writing they will do relies upon them being skilled at writing narratives. This Unit of Study is designed to improve the quality of writing and of the writers in general.

In this Unit of Study, writers will be able to:

- draw upon the cumulative repertoire of strategies and skills they have learned in previous Units of Study.
- generate multiple seed ideas using their repertoire of strategies.
- identify qualities of good narratives in the mentor texts the teacher uses to teach the unit.
- utilize storytelling as another strategy to rehearse writing.
- develop catchy leads and endings to their stories.
- choose mentor texts to get ideas for revisions, noticing sections that particularly affect them and then examining the text closely in order to think, "What has the author done to create this effect?"
- demonstrate their understanding of a "Small Moment" personal narrative.

Personal Narrative

- True story that happened to the writer
- Reader can see, hear and feel what the writer was going through
- Written in 1st person
- A memory
- Differs from a memoir because there isn't a reflection piece
- Written in the moment
- Starts with action, dialogue or setting
- Tells 2 stories-
 - the inside story- what the author is thinking or feeling
 - the outside story- the action going on

"Good" Qualities of Personal Narrative

- Chronological order
- Small moment
- Inner thinking
- Actions of character
- Setting
- Show not tell Simile
- Metaphor
- Use of dialogue
- Makes the reader feels as if they're sitting on your shoulder and can experience whatever you are writing about

Unit 3: The Personal Essay-

This Unit of Study invites writers into the difficult and exhilarating work of learning to write within the expository structure.

In this Unit of Study, writers will be able to:

- distinguish the differences between narrative and non-narrative writing.
- develop a repertoire for collecting non-narrative notebook entries.
- reread previous notebook entries in order to expand upon an idea that seems especially important or interesting.
- transfer this idea into a thesis statement in which they will prove throughout their essay.
- write on topic by staying aligned to their thesis statement.
- organize the structure of their essay by using various organizational strategies.
- articulate evidence to support their thesis drawing on the work they did in the narrative Units of Study.
- develop effective introductions and conclusion to tie the beginning and end of their essay together.

"Good" Qualities of Personal Essays

- A catchy lead
- A thesis statement that overviews the main idea of the essay
- An introduction
- A body that contains supporting information - a story angled to support the thesis
- A discussion of the story that is cited for evidence
- A conclusion that repeats the thesis and adds a new spin

Unit 4: Literary Essay-

In personal essays, many writers have written about lessons they have learned from people they know and interact with. Writing also helps us learn from the characters in the books we read. This Unit of Study allows the writer experience and reflect on the characters and ideas in their books. This unit builds on the organizational structure writers have learned in the personal essay unit.

In this Unit of Study, writers will be able to:

- expect to grow ideas from texts that they read.
- articulate the lessons they believe a character has learned in a story or essays that name the theme or idea a text teaches.
- turn their ideas about a particular text into notebook entries.
- transfer this idea into a thesis statement in which they will prove throughout their essay.
- write on topic by staying aligned to their thesis statement.
- organize the structure of their essay by using various organizational strategies.
- articulate evidence to support their thesis by using events in the story that support their thesis.
- develop effective introductions and conclusion to tie the beginning and end of their essay together.

"Good" Qualities of Literary Essays

- A catchy lead
- A thesis statement that overviews the main idea of the essay
- An introduction
- A body that contains supporting information - a story angled to support the thesis
- A discussion of the story that is cited for evidence
- A conclusion that repeats the thesis and adds a new spin