

Elementary Writing Curriculum: Units of Study in Writing

Grade 1

Unit 1: Small Moments			
Overview	<p>Writers will be able to independently use their learning to write multiple sentences across multiple pages.</p> <p>Writers will be able to use small moments from their lives to generate, record and tell a story to others.</p> <p>Writers can become resourceful word solvers as a result of their work throughout this unit.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers use events from their lives to write Small Moment Stories. • Writers bring their stories to life. • Writers use revising and editing to make their best writing better. 		
Unit Learning Bends	Bend I: Writing Small Moment Stories with Independence	In this bend, students will begin to write small moment stories with more and more independence. As teachers confer with writers, they will ask students to, “Read me what you’ve written,” followed by “Tell me more,” and some appreciative listening. They will encourage students with suggestions such as, “You should definitely add that!” Children will touch and tell stories, then sketch and write. Teachers will establish structures and routines to build student independence.	Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed: W.1.3 W.1.5
	Bend II: Bringing Small Moment Stories to Life	In this bend, teachers will teach students the strategies they need to bring their characters to life. Writers will learn to develop their stories bit by bit.	
	Bend III: Studying Other Writers’ Craft	In this bend, students will continue to learn strategies to elaborate on their stories. Writers will also learn “craft moves” (from mentor texts) to shape the way readers read their writing.	
	Bend IV: Fixing and Fancying Up	In this bend, teachers will teach students a few revising and editing strategies. Writers will “fancy up” their writing by making a cover page,	

	Our Best Work	adding details and color to illustrations, and writing a “blurb.” They will work with a partner to rehearse reading their pieces with expression, fluency, and phrasing. Children will celebrate by sharing their books and adding them to the classroom library.	
Unit Resources	Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Night of the Veggie Monster</i> 		
Lesson Topics Across the Unit	Lesson 1: Lives Are Full of Stories to Tell Lesson 2: Planning for Writing: Writers Touch and Tell, Sketch, then Write Lesson 3: Using Pictures to Add On Lesson 4: Stretching Words to Spell Them: Hearing and Recording All Sounds Lesson 5: Zoom In: Focusing on Small Moments Lesson 6: Partnerships and Storytelling Lesson 7: Reading Our Writing Like We Read Our Books Lesson 8: Unfreezing Our Characters and Our Writing Lesson 9: Telling Stories in Itsy-Bitsy Steps Lesson 10: Bringing What’s Inside Out: Making Characters Think and Feel Lesson 11: Using Drama to Bring Stories to Life Lesson 12: Using Familiar Words to Spell New Words Lesson 13: Editing: Capital Letters and End Marks Help Readers Lesson 14: Studying a Story to Learn Ways the Author Makes It Special Lesson 15: Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Exact Actions Lesson 16: Trying Out a Craft Move from a Mentor Text: Writing with Pop-Out Words Lesson 17: Turning to Other Mentor Texts Lesson 18: Using All We Know to Revise Lesson 19: Editing with a Checklist Lesson 20: Celebration: Making Books Ready for the Classroom Library		
Unit 2: How-To Writing			
Overview	Writers will be able to independently use their learning to write clear, sequential procedures. By the end of this unit, writers will know how to write across pages and to develop each step of their procedures by adding details. Students will also be able to transfer phonics knowledge into their independent writing. Enduring Understandings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procedural writing is important because it helps students navigate informational text. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedural writing requires explicitness, clarity, and sequence. • Studying mentor texts can help us learn and apply effective procedural writing in our own how-to books. 		
Unit Learning Bends	Bend I: Getting Started: Thinking of Topics, Rehearsing, and Writing Tons of Books	In this bend, students will learn the structure of a how-to book. During this first week they will be introduced to some exemplar texts and will then write with great energy producing many of their own procedural texts.	Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed: W.1.2 W.1.5 W.1.6 W.1.7 W.1.8
	Bend II: Write in Such a Way That Readers Can Read the Text and Follow the Directions	In this bend, students will learn the importance of writing procedural texts with directions that readers can easily follow. This will involve thinking about clarity of directions as well as writing mechanics – which means leaving space between words, relying on sight words, constructing longer sentences with prepositional phrases when possible, etc.	
	Bend III: With Feedback, Writers Can Revise Their How-To Texts, Make New Text Worlds Better, and Share Them with an Audience	In this bend, the focus is on lifting the level of procedural writing. Children aim to write clearer, more elaborate texts, both through revision and right from the start. Their revised work will be published at the end of the final week.	
Unit Resources	<p>Suggested Mentor Texts for the Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Pumpkin Book</i> by Gail Gibbons • <i>My First Soccer Game or My First Karate Class</i> by Alyssa Satin Capucilli • <i>How a House is Built</i> by Gail Gibbons • <i>How to Be a Baby, by Me the Big Sister</i> by Sally Lloyd-Jones • <i>How to be a Ballerina</i> by Harriet Castor • <i>How to Make a Bouncing Egg</i> by Lori Shores • <i>How to Make Slime</i> by Lori Shores • <i>Change it! Solids, Liquids, Gases and You</i> by Adrienne Mason 		
Lesson Topics	<p>A variety of lessons will be incorporated across this unit. Lessons can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generating Ideas and planning books across pages • Writers sketch and write across pages 		

<p>across the Unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers generate ideas, plan, and draft their writing • Coaching writers to tell more detailed and smaller steps. • Writing with more clarity and elaboration within each book • Writers review and edit and use tools to create better structured, more developed and more readable how-to books • Writers plan and write how-to books with more independence • Writers study the purpose, structure, and craft moves of mentor authors • Writing partners support each other by reading writing out loud • Writers emulate features of informational writing using a mentor text • How-to book writers picture each step and then choose exactly the right words • Elaboration in How-to books: Writers provide warnings, suggestions, and tips • Using comparisons to give readers clear directions • Writers can write introductions and conclusions to help their readers • Writers lift the level of their writing and set goals for themselves • Editing and revising writing prior to final publication • Writers are reminded of spelling and punctuation rules they should be applying to writing • Writers publish and celebrate their writing
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Unit 3: Nonfiction Chapter Books

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Writers will be able to independently use their learning to write about a topic they know well to teach others. By the end of this unit, writers will know how to organize information across pages, provide a sense of beginning and closure to writing, and revise to make writing stronger.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers teach about their topics using a teaching voice rather than a telling voice. • Writers have different areas of expertise and write about different topics they know. • Writers plan and rehearse topics that teach all about. • Writers organize their ideas and categorize topics into focused parts or chapters while trying out different structures. • Writers research to become experts on their topics and to write to teach even more about their topics.
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<p>Unit Learning Bends</p>	<p>Bend I: Writing Teaching Books with Independence</p>	<p>In this bend, students will learn how to make a basic type of information book – a picture book. The bend ends with children creating multiple information chapter books, filled with elaboration, interesting text elements, and pictures that supplement the teaching of the</p>	<p>Priority Standards across the</p>
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		words. Writers will self-assess using the informational writing checklist throughout this bend.	Unit that will be addressed:
	Bend II: Nonfiction Writers Can Write Chapter Books	In this bend, students will progress toward writing chapter books. This will provide opportunities to work on structuring texts. The pace of book completion will likely slow at this bend because each individual book becomes longer. This bend will introduce common text features of nonfiction text. These will be taught in a step-by-step fashion to support the complexity of the work. This bend will also focus on elaboration strategies such as comparisons, examples, and elements of persuasion.	W.1.2 W.1.5 W.1.7 W.1.8
	Bend III: Writing Chapter Books with Greater Independence	In this bend, students will write nonfiction chapter books with increasing speed and independence. Children will take all they have learned in the previous bends to set goals and write new and better chapter books. Writers will also be introduced to research by studying photos and asking questions.	
Unit Resources	Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Sharks</i> by Anne Schreiber 		
Lesson Topics across the Unit	Lesson 1: Writers Get Ready to Write by Teaching All About a Topic Lesson 2: Writers Tell Information across Their Fingers, Sketch, then Write Lesson 3: Writers Keep Readers in Mind, Writing to Answer Their Questions Lesson 4: Nonfiction Writers Teach with Pictures as Well as Words Lesson 5: Spelling Domain-Specific Words in Nonfiction Writing Lesson 6: Nonfiction Writers Use Readers to Help Them Add and Subtract Details Lesson 7: Taking Stock: Self-Assessing and Setting Goals Lesson 8: Editing: Spelling, Capitals, and Punctuation Lesson 9: Writing Tables of Contents Lesson 10: Planning and Writing Chapters While Resolving to Get Better Lesson 11: Writers Write with Details and Help Readers Picture the Details by Using Comparisons Lesson 12: Different Kinds of Writing in Teaching Books: Chapters Can Contain How-To Writing, Persuasive Writing, and Stories Lesson 13: Introductions and Conclusions Lesson 14: Fix up Writing by Editing and Revising Lesson 15: Writers Use All They Know to Plan for New Chapter Books		

	<p>Lesson 16: Writers Do Research, Like Finding Images or Photos, to Help Them Say More</p> <p>Lesson 17: Editing “On the Go”: Varying End Punctuation to Bring Out a Teaching Book’s Meaning</p> <p>Lesson 18: Using Craft Moves Learned in <i>Small Moments</i>: Pop-Out Words and Speech Bubbles</p> <p>Lesson 19: Editing Step by Step</p>
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Unit 4: Writing Reviews

Overview	<p>Writers will be able to independently use their learning to develop opinions with multiple reasons, provide detailed descriptions, as well as strong openings and closings. By the end of this unit, writers will know how to write their opinions, give reasons for those judgements, and to organize their reasons, supplying supporting details.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When writers care a lot about something, they often write to convince others of their opinion. • Writers learn best practices for opinion writing by studying mentor texts and authors. • Writers use revising and editing to make their best writing better.
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Unit Learning Bends	Bend I: Best in Show: Judging Our Collections	In this bend, students will be introduced to writing reviews. Students will be asked to bring in a small collection of items stored in a shoebox. Students will learn how to review their items and to make choices about which item in their collection is the best. Students will also learn how to defend their judgements and convince their readers throughout their writing.	Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed:
	Bend II: Writing Persuasive Reviews	In Bend II, students will write reviews about “anything and everything” (toys, restaurants, video games, etc...). Students will understand how to write claims or opinions and give supporting reasons and explanations. In this Bend, students will study mentor texts and use the unit checklist to edit and revise their writing, focusing on the quality of good writing. Toward the end of the bend, students will gather their reviews and begin to create anthologies.	

- L.1.1a
- L.1.1g
- L.1.2b
- L.1.2d
- L.1.2e
- SL.1.1b
- W.1.1
- W.1.5
- W.2.1

	Bend III: Writing Persuasive Book Reviews	In this bend, teachers will continue to teach students how to write to persuade. Students will collect and judge books to write book reviews. Students will use what they have learned from the first two bends to summarize, evaluate, judge, and support their judgements and to convince their readers. At the end of this unit, teachers will celebrate with students speaking and convincing others to read their books.	
Unit Resources	Suggested Mentor Texts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Earrings</i> by Judith Viorst • <i>Pigeon</i> books by Mo Willems • <i>A Pet for Petunia</i> by Paul Schmid 		
Lesson Topics across the Unit	Lesson 1: People Collect Things and Write Opinions about Their Collections Lesson 2: Explaining Judgments in Convincing Ways Lesson 3: “How Do I Write This Kind of Writing Well?” Lesson 4: Opinion Writers Expect Disagreement Lesson 5: Writing for More Practice—and More Fun Lesson 6: Bolstering Arguments Lesson 7: Editing and Publishing: Making Writing “Best in Show” Lesson 8: Writing Reviews to Persuade Others Lesson 9: Talking Right to Readers Lesson 10: Making Comparisons in Writing Lesson 11: Hook Your Reader: Writing Catchy Introductions and Conclusions Lesson 12: Partners Work Together to Give Writing Checkups! Lesson 13: Making Anthologies: A Celebration Lesson 14: Using All You Know to Write Book Reviews Lesson 15: Don’t Spill the Beans: Giving Sneak Peek Summaries Lesson 16: Not Too Long, Not Too Short: Using Conjunctions Lesson 17: Review a Review: Making Sure Reviews Are Brim Full of the Best Work! Lesson 18: Book Review Talks: A <i>Reading Rainbow</i> -Style Celebration		
Unit 5: From Scenes to Series			
Overview	Writers will be able to independently use their learning to create realistic fiction books, then write a series of books that follow one character through many adventures. By the end of this unit, writers will be able to create a pretend character, recount sequences of events, and develop character traits to write fictional narratives. Students will also be able to add details to strengthen their writing using feedback from both teachers and peers.		

	<p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers use their ability to pretend to invent characters, describing their actions, thoughts, and feelings. • Writers sequence events to provide a clear beginning, middle, and satisfying ending. • Writers use what they know to spell words correctly. • Writers use checklists to set goals. 		
<p>Unit Learning Bends</p>	<p>Bend I: Fiction Writers Set Out to Write Realistic Fiction</p>	<p>In this bend, students will use what they already know about writing small moments and bringing stories to life to write realistic fiction stories. On the first day, students will learn that writers use their pretending skills to invent characters and put them in imagined scenarios. Students will name their characters, understand that characters face conflict. Students will also focus on word choice, spelling and using the narrative checklist to revise and set goals.</p>	<p>Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed:</p> <p>L.1.1g L.1.2b L.1.2d L.1.2e RL.1.1 RL.1.3 SL.1.1a SL.1.1b SL.1.1c W.1.3 W.1.5 W.2.3</p>
<p>Bend II: Becoming More Powerful at Realistic Fiction— Studying the Genre and Studying Ourselves as Writers</p>	<p>In the second bend, students will learn that series writers put their characters in more than one book and that characters have more than one adventure. Throughout this bend teachers may want to use <i>Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat</i> as a model. Students will focus on writing with details and bringing their characters to life with dialogue. Students will continue to edit their stories to prepare a boxed set of stories (a series). This bend will end with a mini-celebration to showcase their first series.</p>		
<p>Bend III: Becoming More Powerful at Realistic Fiction</p>	<p>In this bend, students will investigate the mentor text to determine what writers do to make fiction realistic. Students will focus on how to “Show not Tell” by adding tiny details to help their readers picture the story in their minds. Writers will focus on writing chapters with a clear beginning, middle and ending, and learn that writers use patterns to help elaborate their stories.</p>		

	<p>Bend IV: Getting Ready to Publish Our Second Series</p>	<p>In this last bend, students will prepare their series to be published. Students will focus on adding details to their illustrations, create a “Meet the Author” page and revise and edit their writing using punctuation. The unit will end with a celebration in which an audience will be invited into the classroom for the students to showcase their published series.</p>	
<p>Unit Resources</p>	<p>Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Henry and Mudge and the Happy Cat</i> by Cynthia Rylant 		
<p>Lesson Topics across the Unit</p>	<p>Lesson 1: Serious Fiction Writers Do Some Serious Pretending Lesson 2: Writers Develop a “Can-Do,” Independent Attitude Lesson 3: Writers Learn to Get Their Characters Out of Trouble Lesson 4: Serious Writers Get Serious about Spelling Lesson 5: Taking Stock: Writers Use Checklists to Set Goals Lesson 6: Series Writers Always Have a Lot to Write About Lesson 7: Introducing Your Character in Book One of a Series: What Does Your Reader Want to Know? Lesson 8: Writers Develop Their Dialogue Lesson 9: Saddle Up to the Revision Party—And Bring Your Favorite Writer Lesson 10: Celebrating Our First Series Lesson 11: Series Writers Investigate What Makes Realistic Fiction Realistic Lesson 12: Writers “Show, Not Tell” by Focusing on Tiny Realistic Details Lesson 13: Fiction Writers Include Chapters: Writing a Beginning, Middle, and End Lesson 14: Partners Help Writers Elaborate Lesson 15: Writers Use Their Superpowers to Work with Greater Independence Lesson 16: Punctuation Parties Lesson 17: Writers Use Illustrations to Tell Important Details Lesson 18: “Meet the Author” Page Lesson 19: Getting Ready for the Final Celebration Lesson 20: A Celebration of Series Writers: The Grand Finale!</p>		