

Elementary Writing Curriculum: Units of Study in Writing

Grade 4

Unit 1: The Arc of the Story			
Overview	<p>Students will be able to independently use their learning to create and develop stories and characters, draft and revise their writing and prepare for publication with an audience in mind.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers can find ideas for fiction stories everywhere. • Writers must use the writing process (generating ideas, rehearsing, drafting, revising, and editing) to publish a successful fiction story. 		
Unit Learning Bends	Bend I: Creating and Developing Stories and Characters that Feel Real	In this bend, writers will understand that ideas for fiction stories can be found anywhere. Writers will begin collecting ideas in their writer’s notebooks. There will be work with storytelling to partners to select a story idea. With this idea, they will learn how to develop main characters and dramatize a small moment.	<p>Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed:</p> <p>W.4.3 W.4.4 W.4.5 W.4.8 W.4.10 L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.3</p>
	Bend II: Drafting and Revising with an Eye toward Believability	In this bend, writers will focus on the “story arc.” Writers will see how stories with two-three scenes show the development of a character, plot, and setting over the course of a story. This arc will become the touchstone for drafting.	
	Bend III: Preparing for Publication with an Audience in Mind	In this bend, writers will prepare their stories for audiences through drafting, revising, and editing. Writers will also focus their attention on rethinking the evolution and conclusion of their story.	
	Bend IV: Embarking on Independent Fiction Project	In the final bend of this unit, writers will write fiction independently using the systems and skills taught in the first three bends.	
Unit Resources	<p>Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fireflies</i> by Julie Brinckloe 		

Lesson Topics Across the Unit	<p>Lesson 1: Imagining Stories from Ordinary Moments</p> <p>Lesson 2: Imagining Stories We Wish Existed in the World</p> <p>Lesson 3: Developing Believable Characters</p> <p>Lesson 4: Giving Characters Struggles and Motivations</p> <p>Lesson 5: Plotting with a Story Arc</p> <p>Lesson 6: Show, Don't Tell: Planning and Writing Scenes</p> <p>Lesson 7: Feeling and Drafting the Heart of Your Story</p> <p>Lesson 8: Studying Published Texts to Write Leads</p> <p>Lesson 9: Orienting Readers with Setting</p> <p>Lesson 10: Writing Powerful Endings</p> <p>Lesson 11: Revision: Rereading with a Lens</p> <p>Lesson 12: Making a Space for Writing</p> <p>Lesson 13: Using Mentor Texts to Flesh Out Characters</p> <p>Lesson 14: Editing with Various Lenses</p> <p>Lesson 15: Publishing Anthologies: A Celebration</p> <p>Lesson 16: Launching Independent Fiction Projects</p> <p>Lesson 17: Planning and Drafting Stories with Agency</p> <p>Lesson 18: Mining the Connections between Reading and Writing Fiction</p> <p>Lesson 19: Focusing the Reader's Gaze</p> <p>Lesson 20: Choosing Punctuation for Effect</p> <p>Lesson 21: Surveying Your Work and Planning for the Future</p>
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Unit 2: Boxes and Bullets

Overview	<p>Students will be able to independently use their learning to write to learn. They will raise the level of writing while writing personal to persuasive essays. There will be an eye toward strong evidence and how to prepare for publication with an audience in mind.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers can write a personal essay, where they support their thesis with reasons for their opinion. • A strong essay has a specific structure, including a thesis statement, evidence-supported reasons, transitional phrases, and an introduction and conclusion. • Writers consider their audience when writing an essay by supporting their thesis with relevant, sufficient, and valid evidence.
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Unit Learning Bends	<p>Bend I: Writing to Learn</p>	<p>This bend will help students develop a sense for what it feels like to write an essay in essay "boot camp." Writers will develop a thesis statement and build plans for their essays by writing about people, objects, events, etc.</p>	<p>Priority Standards across the</p>
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	<p>Bend II: Raising the Level of Essay Writing</p>	<p>This bend focuses on students writing evidence to support their reasons for their opinions. Writers will develop organizational structure and add “mini stories” and lists to support their reasons. Writers will write powerful introductions and reflect on their writing to set goals.</p>	<p>Unit that will be addressed:</p> <p>W.4.1 W.4.3 W.4.4 W.4.5 W.4.6 SL.4.3</p>
	<p>Bend III: Personal to Persuasive</p>	<p>This bend will focus on transference and raising the quality of students’ work. Writers will develop their persuasive opinions and generalize a plan for persuasive essay writing. Writers will draft essays with greater independence, include evidence and focus on revision, self-assessment, and reflection.</p>	<p>L.4.1 L.4.2 L.4.3</p>
<p>Lesson Topics across the Unit</p>	<p>Lesson 1: Essay Structure Boot Camp Lesson 2: Collecting Ideas as Essayists Lesson 3: Writing to Learn Lesson 4: Using Elaboration Prompts to Grow Ideas Lesson 5: Mining Our Writing Lesson 6: Boxes and Bullets: Framing Essays Lesson 7: Return to Boot Camp Lesson 8: Composing and Sorting Mini-Stories Lesson 9: Creating Parallelism in Lists Lesson 10: Organizing for Drafting Lesson 11: Building a Cohesive Draft Lesson 12: Becoming Our Own Job Captains Lesson 13: Writing Introductions and Conclusions Lesson 14: Revising Our Work with Goals in Mind Lesson 15: Correcting Run-On Sentences and Sentence Fragments Lesson 16: Moving from Personal to Persuasive Lesson 17: Persuasive Inquiry into Essay Lesson 18: Broader Evidence Lesson 19: Connecting Evidence, Reason, and Thesis Lesson 20: Getting Ready to Put Your Opinions into the World Lesson 21: Celebration of Writing</p>		

Unit 3: Bringing History to Life

<p>Overview</p>	<p>Students will be able to independently use their learning to write informational texts on the American Revolution. They'll write informational texts that are conglomerates, containing various genres of writing.</p> <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers understand that information texts often incorporate other kinds of formats. • Writers develop ways to organize their writing, such as including formatting with headings and subheadings. • Writers include information that is rich, detailed, and concrete. • Writers draw evidence from texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. • Writers present important information using historical details and text features. 		
<p>Unit Learning Bends</p>	<p>Bend I: Informational Books: Making a Conglomerate of Forms</p>	<p>This bend will remind students of what they know about organizing their writing in a boxes and bullets format. Using this technique, students will write two chapters, "All about the American Revolution" and then one on a more focused topic. Students will be using what they previously learned about information writing including introducing a topic, elaborating with some facts, definitions, and details. Students will write about topics they already know or those they research.</p>	<p>Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed:</p> <p>W.4.1 W.4.2 W.4.3 W.4.4 W.4.7 SL.4.4</p>
<p>Bend II: Writing with Greater Independence</p>	<p>In this bend, students will narrow their focus on a subtopic of their choosing. Using a logical structure, writers will use transition words and phrases in purposeful ways to add clarity to their writing. They will elaborate to present information in clear ways and include text features and vocabulary in thoughtful ways.</p>		
<p>Bend III: Building Ideas in Informational Writing</p>	<p>In this bend, students move from organizing information to developing their own ideas about the information. This bend is about historical interpretation. They will generate</p>		

		life lessons from their topics, generate questions and then hypothesize and research answers to those questions. Writers will edit before publishing and teach their classmates all about their topic.	
Unit Resources	<p>Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Revolutionary War</i> by Josh Gregory • <i>Liberty! How the Revolutionary War Began</i> by Lucille Recht Penner • <i>The Eve of the Revolution</i> by Barbara Burt • <i>What's the Big Idea, Ben Franklin?</i> By Jean Fritz • <i>Can't You Make Them Behave, King George?</i> By Jean Fritz 		
Lesson Topics across the Unit	<p>Lesson 1: Getting the Sense of Informational Books Lesson 2: Planning the Structure of Writing Lesson 3: Planning and Writing with Greater Independence Lesson 4: Teaching as a Way to Rehearse for Information Writing Lesson 5: Elaboration: The Details that Let People Picture What Happened Long Ago and Far Away Lesson 6: Bringing Information Alive: Stories inside Nonfiction Texts Lesson 7: Essays within Information Texts Lesson 8: Taking Stock and Setting Goals Lesson 9: Writers Plan for Their Research Lesson 10: The Intense Mind-Work of Notetaking Lesson 11: Drafting Is Like Tobogganing: First the Preparation, the Positioning...Then the Whoosh! Lesson 12: Developing a Logical Structure Using Introductions and Transitions Lesson 13: Text Features: Popping Out the Important Information Lesson 14: Quotations Accentuate Importance: Voices Chime in to Make a Point Lesson 15: Using All We Know to Craft Essay and Narrative Sections Lesson 16: The Other Side of the Story Lesson 17: Self-Assessment and Goal Setting: Taking on New Challenges Lesson 18: Information Writing Gives Way to Idea Writing Lesson 19: Digging Deeper: Interpreting the Life Lessons that History Teaches Lesson 20: Using Confusions to Guide Research Lesson 21: Questions without a Ready Answer Lesson 22: Editing</p>		
Unit: Historical Fiction Writing			
Overview	<p>Students will be able to independently use their learning to create and develop historical fiction stories with elements that are believable to the time period, draft and revise with more independence, prepare for publication with an audience in mind, and embark on independent fiction projects.</p>		

	<p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers can find ideas for historical fiction stories in research. • Writers must use the writing process (generating ideas, rehearsing, drafting, revising, and editing) to publish a successful historical fiction story. • Writers can use mentor texts to study examples of historical fiction work and borrow those craft moves for their pieces. 		
<p>Unit Learning Bends</p>	<p>Bend I:</p>	<p>Writers will draw on all that they know about narrative writing to develop possible historical fiction “seed” ideas. Writers will use their notebooks to collect and rehearse stories being sure to include characters, setting, story elements, historical events, and character perspective. Students will use story arcs, timelines, and character/setting sketches.</p>	<p>Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed:</p> <p>W.4.3 W.4.4 W.4.5 W.4.9</p>
	<p>Bend II:</p>	<p>Writers will choose one of their “seed” ideas to draft and revise outside of their writer's notebooks. Writers should focus on storytelling rather than summarizing.</p>	
	<p>Bend III:</p>	<p>Writers will choose a second “seed idea” to develop into a full story paying special attention to historical accuracy and meaning.</p>	
	<p>Bend IV:</p>	<p>For the final bend of the unit, writers will choose which of their two stories to revise and publish. This final opportunity will give writers the opportunity to lift the level of their writing by incorporating more time-period vocabulary, details, and main or secondary character development. Teachers will be sure to include opportunities for celebration.</p>	
<p>Unit Resources</p>	<p>Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Bracelet</i> by Yoshiko Uchida 		
<p>Lesson Topics</p>	<p>Lesson 1: Generating Ideas for Historical Fiction Writing Lesson 2: Looking at Historical Timelines and Facts to Generate Ideas Lesson 3: Writing Scenes to Try Different Story Ideas</p>		

across the Unit	<p>Lesson 4: Trying out Different Points of View to See Which Works Best</p> <p>Lesson 5: Developing Believable Characters</p> <p>Lesson 6: Planning the Story Arc: Fitting History and Characters Together</p> <p>Lesson 7: Orienting Readers by Developing the Setting</p> <p>Lesson 8: Using Concrete Words and Phrases and Sensory Images in Writing to Show and Not Tell</p> <p>Lesson 9: Writing Leads That Give Clues about the Story’s Problem</p> <p>Lesson 10: Revising Writing by Adding Character Thinking</p> <p>Lesson 11: Adding Transitions to Make Your Sequence of Events Clear</p> <p>Lesson 12: Editing to Make Sure Sentences Are Complete</p> <p>Lesson 13: Planning a Story Arc That Considers the Events and Character’s Thinking and Feeling</p> <p>Lesson 14: Bringing Characters to Life by Showing Their Internal and External Struggles</p> <p>Lesson 15: Building a Theme from Start to Finish</p> <p>Lesson 16: Writing a Conclusion to Your Story That Reveals the Theme</p> <p>Lesson 17: Revising Your Story to Make It Historically Accurate</p> <p>Lesson 18: Using Vocabulary from the Time Period to Make Your Setting Come to Life</p> <p>Lesson 19: Editing Your Story for Punctuation</p> <p>Lesson 20: Creating Paragraphs to Help Divide the Action</p> <p>Lesson 21: Bringing Your Secondary Characters to Life</p> <p>Lesson 22: Using Dialogue and Action to Reveal a Theme</p> <p>Lesson 23: Using Transitions to Help Mark the Passage of Time</p> <p>Lesson 24: Using Commas and Conjunctions with Compound Sentences</p> <p>Lesson 25: Unit Celebration</p>
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Unit 4: Literary Essay

Overview	<p>Students will be able to independently use their learning to...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • write structured, compelling essays where they make and support claims with evidence • write more interpretively and analytically • structure an essay and include important evidence <p>Enduring Understandings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writers can learn a lot by studying other authors and analyzing what they do that works well. • Talking about reading and writing can help writers to elaborate in their writing.
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Unit Learning Bends	Bend I: Writing about Reading: Literary Essays	In this bend, writers will learn how to write structured, compelling essays where they make and support claims with	
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		evidence. Writers will focus on arguing ideas about characters using what they know about writing essays with an introduction, conclusion, and evidence. Writers will draft and revise an essay about a familiar short text.	Priority Standards across the Unit that will be addressed:
	Bend II: Raising the Quality of Literary Essays	In this bend, writers will complete another cycle of drafting and revise an essay about a familiar short text. They will apply all they have learned while writing more interpretively and analytically. Writers will learn new, more complex ways of structuring an essay and how to mine text for evidence they need.	
	Bend III: Writing Compare-and-Contrast Essays	In this bend, writers will learn to write comparison/contrast essays in which they note how different texts approach the same theme/issue. Writers will learn to write more about point of view and to take note of the craft moves authors use. They will learn how to structure a comparison and contrast essay using text evidence in a purposeful way.	
Unit Resources	Suggested Mentor Text for the Unit: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fox</i> by Margaret Wild and Ron Brooks 		
Lesson Topics across the Unit	Lesson 1: Close Reading to Generate Ideas about a Text Lesson 2: Gathering Writing by Studying Characters Lesson 3: Elaborating on Written Ideas Using Prompts Lesson 4: Finding and Testing a Thesis Lesson 5: Using Stories as Evidence Lesson 6: Citing Textual Evidence Lesson 7: Using Lists as Evidence Lesson 8: Putting It All Together: Constructing Literary Essays Lesson 9: Writing to Discover What a Story Is <i>Really</i> About Lesson 10: Adding Complexity to Our Ideas Lesson 11: Flash-Drafting Literary Essays Lesson 12: Beginnings and Endings Lesson 13: Using Descriptions of an Author’s Craft as Evidence Lesson 14: Editing Lesson 15: Building the Muscles to Compare and Contrast Lesson 16: Comparing and Contrasting Familiar Texts		

	Lesson 17: Using Yesterday's Learning, Today and Always Lesson 18: Developing Distinct Lines of Thought Lesson 19: Exploring Commas
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