

SCHOOLWIDE

**WRITING FUNDAMENTALS
UNITS OF STUDY**

**EXTENDED PROGRAM NARRATIVE
AND RESEARCH DOCUMENT**





CORE

INTRODUCTION

Because writing matters for success in school, the community, and the workplace, Schoolwide’s Writing Fundamentals has a central mission to improve student writing and learning by increasing and enhancing the tools teachers can use to teach writing. Writing Fundamentals is a teaching resource that will help educators raise the quality of their students’ writing.

Writing Fundamentals Units of Study align to:

- Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy (CCSS)
 - Writing
 - Speaking and Listening
 - Language
- Common Core Instructional Shifts
- The Publisher’s Criteria for the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts & Literacy
- Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) Model Content Frameworks and Smarter Balance
- Depth of Knowledge (DOK) and higher-level thinking strategies

The enclosed document illustrates the aforementioned alignment in both narrative and graphical form.



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Connecting Common Core State Standards to Best Practice

Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy: Writing Strand

The Standards	Writing Fundamentals
Text Types and Purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opinion/Argument - Informational/Explanatory - Narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓
Production and Distribution of Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Produce clear and coherent writing - Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing - Use technology to produce and publish writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓
Research to Build and Present Knowledge: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conduct short as well as sustained research projects - Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources - Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ ✓ ✓
Range of Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓

The Publisher's Criteria and New Research on Text Complexity

The Criteria & Research	Writing Fundamentals
Writing provides opportunities for self-expression and exploration and a means of communicating thoughts and answering questions.	✓
Writing assignments ask students to draw on their experience, on their imagination, and most frequently on the texts and sources they encounter through reading or read-alouds.	✓
Students engage in a full range of writing practices, including writing narratives, writing to inform, and forming and writing arguments.	✓
Materials allow for flexibility in meeting the needs of a wide range of students.	✓
Anchor texts align with the complexity requirements outlined in the Common Core State Standards.	✓
All students have opportunities to encounter grade-level text.	✓
The quality of the text selections is high. They are worth reading and rereading.	✓
Mentor texts include literary and informational text.	✓
Questions and tasks cultivate students' abilities to ask and answer text-dependent questions.	✓
Materials provide opportunities for students to build knowledge through close reading of specific texts, including read-alouds.	✓
Materials offer assessment opportunities that genuinely measure progress.	✓
Materials are designed for whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction.	✓

PARCC Model Content Frameworks for English Language Arts & Literacy

The Frameworks	Writing Fundamentals
<p>The array of writing tasks equips students with critical college and career readiness skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presenting credible evidence from text; - Crafting coherent and well-developed prose; and - Writing clearly with sufficient command of academic English. 	✓ ✓ ✓
The Model Content Frameworks give special prominence to research tasks, reflecting the deep connection research has to building and integrating knowledge while developing expertise on various topics.	✓

WRITING FUNDAMENTALS: Connecting the Common Core to Best Practice

Each year in their writing, students will demonstrate increasing sophistication in all aspects of language use—from vocabulary and syntax to the development and organization of ideas—and will address increasingly demanding content and sources.

Across the grade levels, the Writing Fundamentals Units of Study provide a balance of genres and tasks that expose students to opportunities to produce writing that includes sophisticated vocabulary and varied text structures and features while also conveying clear meanings and purposes that are connected to the genres.

Specific to vocabulary and syntax, students will have explicit models of tiered vocabulary used throughout the Immersion phase of the writing process. Considerations regarding multiple-meaning, academic, and domain-specific vocabulary have been addressed across the grade levels, with specific attention to providing a scaffold of tiers depending on the grade level. Starting in our primary grade units, the foundation for academic or instructional vocabulary has been fostered through consistent use of terms that are familiar to students. Use of consistent genre-specific instructional terms, along with the names for the stages of the writing process, can be found across all units of study and across all grade levels.

The intermediate and middle school units address sentence structure through a combination of mentor texts and the use of short shared texts where students are able to recognize how sentence structure impacts the message, purpose, and impact on readers.

Students will engage in a full range of writing, including writing narratives, writing to inform, and forming and writing arguments.

- Students will write arguments to support claims as they analyze substantive topics or texts.
- Students will write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information.
- Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

The Writing Fundamentals Units of Study address all three text types that are reflected in the Common Core State Standards. For each grade level K–8, the units allow for a full range of writing across the text types. Our product sampler includes a text-type continuum and suggested curriculum calendar that reflects this comprehensive exposure across the text types and genres. Through the Immersion and Generating Ideas lessons, students will gain an understanding of the different purposes for each text type and how writers present these purposes with details that support the genre(s). Purpose and meaning play integral roles in all of

our units as students begin to write arguments, write informational pieces, and create narratives.

Each unit also provides multiple opportunities for students to practice the qualities of writing through each stage of the writing process. When students are called upon to generate ideas, they are thinking about purpose and genre. As they move into drafting, they must consider the structures and organizational features of each text type. The Revising and Editing lessons allow students to consider the voice and tone of their pieces, again reminding them of genre and purpose. As students participate in the Editing lessons, they are asked to look closely at their pieces to ensure they are conveying clear meanings that are appropriate to the genre and text type. While conventional decisions are also examined during this stage, students are again reminded to be cognizant of the text type, purpose, genre, meaning, and message.

Writing tasks will provide opportunities for self-expression and exploration and a means of communicating thoughts and answering questions.

The Interactive Read-Alouds and Mini-Lessons for each unit of study prompt student thinking and learning about writing while also providing multiple opportunities for them to explore and reflect. During the “Engage” section of the Mini-Lessons, students are prompted and encouraged to share their thinking with the entire class, their partners, or in small groups.

Students also communicate ideas that reflect their own thoughts or wonderings and/or address questions through the writing conferences that take place throughout the stages of the writing process. These conferences occur during the independent practice time of the workshop. Time allocations and instructional components of the workshop can be found in the Introduction section of each unit, along with an appendix that includes a pie chart of the components.

Teachers can pause during a lesson or discussion to allow students to formulate their thoughts in writing. Students might be asked to respond to a provocative question, identify a key piece of learning that has emerged that day, or question something they are having trouble understanding or applying.

Writing assignments will ask students to draw on their experience, on their imagination, and most frequently on the texts and sources they encounter through reading or read-alouds.

The current research reveals that writing and the writing process are best understood as complex phenomena that include not only procedural strategies for going through the writing process to generate text but also a multitude

of other strategies to develop specific schemata. These include strategies to help writers understand the context for writing, to tap into general background knowledge and reading ability, to sharpen cognitive processes for problem solving, and to create emotional dispositions and attitudes about writing, audience, genre, and topic. The aforementioned strategies are attained through the Immersion phase of the Writing Fundamentals lessons when students are guided through Interactive Read-Alouds, which often connect with their personal experiences or wonderings. The mentor authors of the texts that were selected for all of the K–8 units engage students with strong models of craft, grammatical structures, and attention to genre. Both the Interactive Read-Aloud lessons and Mini-Lessons guide teachers to not only model features of author’s craft but also provide explicit lessons that address skills and strategies connected to genre, structure, organization, tone, and style.

.....
Common Core Instructional Shift (Writing): Materials emphasize use of evidence to inform or make an argument. Students will develop writing skills through written arguments that respond to the ideas, events, facts, and arguments presented in the texts they read.
.....

The Writing Fundamentals Opinion/Argument Units of Study provide opportunities for students to create pieces that change a reader’s point of view, bring about some action on the reader’s part, and/or ask readers to accept the writer’s explanation or evaluation of a concept, issue, or problem. This is done through a balanced combination of using mentor texts and explicitly teaching and modeling this through the Mini-Lessons. The lessons guide students through the process of responding to the ideas, facts, and arguments presented in the texts they read, from their personal lives, and/or from discussion and conversation.

.....
Students will develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
.....

Writing Fundamentals Units of Study provide multiple opportunities for students to think deeply and critically about what they read and write, from analyzing author’s craft, to planning and revising their drafts, to publishing a piece of writing with evidence of purpose and audience awareness.

Included in every K–8 unit are Mini-Lessons that address the stages of the writing process. Following the Immersion experience, students will be exposed to Generating Ideas Mini-Lessons that encourage students to think, list, brainstorm, and develop entries that support the genre in which they are writing. As students transition from generating ideas, they are reminded to think about the criteria writers consider when selecting the topic or idea about which they will write. In grades 2–8, the step

of collecting information follows the step of selecting ideas to write about and allows students to research or add more to their selected ideas or topics. Once students approach the drafting stage of the writing process, the Mini-Lessons begin to address all of the organizational and structural considerations for a piece of writing.

Lessons in the revising and editing stages are geared toward encouraging students to go back to their drafts. During revision, students look at their word choices, their voice or tone, and the structure of their sentences. During editing, the Mini-Lessons address the conventional decisions each writer has made and encourage use of editing checklists for students to either use individually or with their peers. Finally, students will consider including covers, book flaps, Author Notes, and Dedication pages during the Publishing Mini-Lessons.

.....
To build a foundation for college and career readiness in language, students will gain control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively.
.....

Students will be exposed to Mini-Lessons that were created to develop micro-level skills such as spelling, transcription, and sentence construction as well as to be exposed to and develop macro-level understanding about organization of text/ideas and conventions.

In each Writing Fundamentals Unit of Study (K–8), there are multiple editing Mini-Lessons that explicitly model for students how to use peer editing and individual checklists. Teachers will be guided to teach and model Mini-Lessons that encourage students to determine if their pieces reflect proper conventional choices that are inclusive of mechanics, grammar, spelling, parts of speech, and tense.

.....
Students will use technology to produce and publish writing.
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When students are producing published pieces, they are called upon to make decisions about the appearances and formats of their pieces. Using grade-appropriate technology is an option for students. During the Nonfiction, Feature Article, Book Review, and Essay units, students are exposed to mentor texts and student exemplar pieces that reflect effective and creative uses of technology. There are lessons that explicitly demonstrate the different features of published pieces that integrate technology and/or multimedia. Varied uses of technology and digital sources (e.g., photographs) are introduced to students to demonstrate how to enhance a piece of writing for the purpose of entertaining, informing, and/or persuading readers. Multimedia is also explained to the students as a means to evoke an emotional response and further engage readers.

.....
Students will conduct research on different aspects of a topic by gathering relevant information from multiple sources.
.....

Through the Writing Fundamentals Nonfiction and Opinion Units of Study, students develop plans to conduct and organize their research in order to help readers achieve a deeper understanding of the topic. They are exposed to a variety of mentor models that demonstrate different “looks” and formats of information. That way, when the release of responsibility occurs for independent work, students will feel comfortable and confident when gathering information that supports their topic(s).

As students in grades 2–8 engage in the Collecting lessons, they are exposed to multiple examples of research. Depending on the genre, research takes on a variety of forms. If students are engaged in a Narrative Unit of Study, research encompasses a more informal approach (e.g., photo albums, conversation). As students participate in Informational or Opinion/Argument Units of Study, the collecting stage explicitly models the research process and guides students to use mentor texts, short texts, reference materials, interviews, questionnaires, the Internet, and writing to an expert as means of gathering information from a variety of sources.

.....
Students will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
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Throughout all of the Writing Fundamentals units, students will examine texts during the Immersion stages in order to gain deeper understanding of a topic, idea, or event. Through the Collecting lessons, students will use some of the evidence from the read-aloud texts to enhance the idea they have selected to research and write about. Finding this evidence supports students as readers, writers, and listeners and helps bolster their reflections, analyses, and research.

In each K–8 Writing Fundamentals unit, the students will consistently encounter quality texts (literary and informational) through both the Immersion lessons and Mini-Lessons. It is through these lessons that students will be drawing evidence from the mentor and short texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. The process of drawing on evidence may be demonstrated by modeling a writing technique that was examined and analyzed in a mentor text (e.g., a narrative) or with actual information, facts, or details encountered in a mentor or short shared text (e.g., articles).

.....
Students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through media.
.....

Throughout these units, students participate in rich, structured conversation with an adult in response to written texts that are read aloud during the Immersion phase. Students will compare, contrast, notice, analyze, and evaluate the decisions that mentor authors have made and decide whether or not to incorporate or replicate these qualities as they work on their own writing pieces.

During both the Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons and the “Engage” portion of our Mini-Lessons, there is an emphasis on building on other people’s ideas in conversation by responding to the comments of others through multiple exchanges.

Students will confirm their understanding of a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if they do not understand something.

Students will have opportunities to present their thoughts and ideas to members of the class for the purpose of sharing their ideas, gathered information, stances, opinions, and/or arguments.

.....
Students will write routinely for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences. Students will devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year.
.....

Students will spend significant time writing a variety of original pieces (a whole published piece, along with additional shorter pieces derived from content areas, notebook work, and daily practice) as teachers work toward the goal of establishing real purposes for writing and student involvement in the task. This writing occurs during many phases of the writing process. Following each Interactive Read-Aloud lesson, teachers will find that the “After the Read” portion of the lessons leads right into an independent writing task for students. During the Generating Ideas Mini-Lessons, students will not only be generating ideas but will also be using their notebooks to develop ideas. While students will be working toward publishing one piece for each unit, there are opportunities for them to go back into their notebooks for the purpose of developing entries in the genre that they are currently studying.

There will be a marked difference in time spent on isolated drills regarding “subskills” of grammar, vocabulary, spelling, paragraphing, penmanship, etc. as these skills are woven into authentic examples of literature, exemplars, notebook work, and shared writing experiences.

.....
Writing materials allow for flexibility in meeting the needs of a wide range of students.
.....

Throughout all of the units, the lessons were created in order to focus on students as individual writers so that teachers can nurture each student’s writing identity and develop a repertoire of writing skills and strategies. There are also extension suggestions that follow each Mini-Lesson for the purpose of differentiation and meeting the needs of all learners (e.g., ELL suggestions, small-group work, multisensory activities).

.....
Materials are designed for whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction.
.....

Throughout the Immersion lessons, students are encouraged to work as members of a writing community. Before, during, and after the read, students are interacting and sharing as a whole group. Following the read-aloud, teachers will find explicit suggestions on how to transition from the whole group to small-group or individual writing or response tasks. These suggestions reflect the gradual release of responsibility as the instructional model moves from the whole group to small-group sharing, discussing, noticing, and teaching followed by individual work and/or instruction. There are also specific lessons that demonstrate how to listen and respond as a member of a whole group, small group, or partnership. As teachers move from the Interactive Read-Aloud lessons during the Immersion phase, they are guided by the icons on the upper right-hand side of each lesson template. Specific minute allocations are included for the purpose of informing teachers about the approximate time allotment for each lesson type (Interactive Read-Aloud or Mini-Lesson).

The circular nature of Mini-Lessons invites teachers to begin their lessons by addressing the whole group (“Inform” phase). Following this portion, teachers present information to the whole group (“Present” phase) and then transition to smaller group modeling and sharing during the “Engage” portion. Finally, as the Mini-Lesson comes to a close through the “Reiterate” phase, students are reminded of the lesson’s teaching point and are released from the whole-group setting into individual work and/or instruction. Following each Mini-Lesson, teachers will find extension pages that reflect suggestions for partnership, small-group, guided reading, and/or differentiation activities. These extensions reflect opportunities for teachers to engage in both small-group and individual instruction while students begin their independent practice.

.....
Materials offer multiple assessment opportunities that genuinely measure progress.
.....

Each Mini-Lesson provides conference questions that will help you decide how to best support and guide your

students. This type of formative assessment allows teachers to maintain ongoing notes on their students as writers and independent learners. In addition to these conference questions, at the end of each unit there is a lesson that includes a self-reflection questionnaire, which focuses students’ attention on the work they have done and their growth as writers during the unit. As a culmination to each unit, teachers will find a lesson that includes a rubric that assesses students’ performance levels for each of the strategies and skills taught throughout the unit. This “process” rubric allows teachers to gather information that will inform their instruction and approaches to each individual student. At the back of the unit binder, teachers may decide to use a standards-based rubric that is meant to assess each student’s final published piece using CCSS grade-level expectations as the criteria. The information gleaned from these assessments helps teachers understand what their students have learned about writing and who they are as writers. It also provides a glimpse at the areas students are proficient in and areas that need to be re-taught and/or reviewed.

ANCHOR TEXTS & NEW RESEARCH ON TEXT COMPLEXITY

.....
Anchor texts align with the complexity requirements outlined in the standards.
.....

Because students can listen to much more complex material than they can read independently, the read-aloud selections that are included in Writing Fundamentals units reflect complex text(s) that contain more sophisticated academic vocabulary, lend themselves to more complex tasks, and support rich dialogue. The units in grades K–5 each come with ten mentor texts that reflect the CCSS rigor that researchers are suggesting for younger elementary school-aged students. In grades 6–8, the units contain seven mentor texts that not only reflect the rigor of the standards but also engage students in contemporary, social, historical, and environmental themes that require critical thinking and synthesizing of ideas and lend themselves to rich discourse, conversation, analysis, and debate.

Complex text is typified by a combination of longer sentences, a higher proportion of less common words, and a greater number and variety of words with multiple meanings. In addition to the aforementioned criteria, qualitative dimensions such as knowledge demands, language, text structure, and levels of meaning were strong considerations when selecting mentor texts for each unit. Text cohesion, word length, and sentence length were also analyzed when considering the quantitative dimensions. Finally, an emphasis on reader and task consideration was addressed specific to student motivation, knowledge, and experiences. In the intermediate and middle school grade levels, complex

text selection involved analyzing the content for higher levels of abstraction, more subtle and multidimensional purposes, and a wider variety of writing styles, all of which place greater demands on working memory.

.....
All students have the opportunity to encounter grade-level text.
.....

There is a balance between mentor and shared texts at students' own reading levels as well as texts with complexity levels that will challenge and motivate students in all of the Writing Fundamentals units. Texts vary in length and density, requiring students to slow down or read more quickly depending on their purposes for reading.

.....
The quality of the mentor texts is high, and the materials provide opportunities for students to build knowledge through close readings of specific texts, including read-alouds.
.....

Each Writing Fundamentals Unit of Study includes five to ten texts. These pieces of literature and/or short shared texts are used by a writing community to study craft, genre, and other aspects of writing. Each mentor text was carefully selected in order to address text complexity and scaffold the approaches needed for students to attain and build knowledge through deeper reading and understanding of content. Mentor texts have been selected from amongst a wide variety of over seventy publishers, with particular consideration given to selecting texts that represent cultural diversity with regards to author as well as content and characters.

The Interactive Read-Aloud lessons provide a clear roadmap for teachers and guide them through the process of reading the mentor texts as writers (i.e., to read like a writer) while also encouraging close readings. During the Immersion phase, close readings of Interactive Read-Aloud texts allow for and encourage careful, sustained interpretation of a brief passage of text. Such reading emphasizes the particular over the general, paying close attention to individual words, syntax, and the order in which sentences and ideas unfold as they are read.

The Interactive Read-Alouds also alert teachers (through a change of font type) when to think aloud, pose questions, discuss content, notice craft, note text type, and discuss purpose and genre characteristics.

.....
Anchor texts include literary and informational text.
.....

In each grade level, the anchor texts that are included in the units of study provide students with both literary and informational experiences. Focusing on text type and genre leads students to a rich, deep exposure to genre and sub-genre studies. In addition, the lessons focus on genre features, purposes, and structures and allow students to identify texts that blend genres (e.g., literary nonfiction, biography) and determine the author's intent when he or she wrote a text. Examples of these informational and literary texts that are found in Writing Fundamentals units include fiction, nonfiction, poetry, biographies, feature articles, memoirs, and editorials.



Grade **K**

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

This unit was created to introduce students to writing workshop, to the writing process, and to getting to know why writers write in the ways they do. The mentor texts in this unit of study will help students think about what authors and illustrators are thinking and feeling when they write and draw. They will also encourage young students to notice how authors incorporate personal experiences, emotions, and details to enhance readers' experiences. In order for a writing workshop to run smoothly, students will need to know what is expected of them. Procedural conversations such as how writing workshop will function, what writing tools are and how they will be used, where these tools will be stored, and how students will discuss and share ideas are also presented in this unit.

Personal Narrative

Text Type: Narrative

Personal narratives tell the big and small stories of our lives. Personal narratives are typically the easiest, most natural form of writing for children because the stories are already complete inside their minds, which enables the words to flow more easily onto the paper. It is this easy flow of words that supports students' efforts to produce a complete piece of writing. This allows teachers more opportunities to help students refine their writing because they better understand the heart of their pieces. As teachers surround their students with this natural, life-enriching genre, wonderful opportunities will be presented for students to make connections with themselves and others. Constructing meaningful personal narratives helps students discover important things about who they are and what they hope to be like in the future. This type of writing also helps students make sense of their life experiences and discover that others may share similar experiences, even when they may have little else in common.

Donald Crews Author Study

Text Type: Narrative

An author study is a great way for students to begin to see authors as real people whose writing styles and strategies can be emulated. Donald Crews is a particularly fine choice for a grade K author study because—like your kindergarten writers—Crews is both an author and illustrator. Crews is an especially wonderful writing mentor for the youngest writers because he writes stories around simple topics drawn from his observations and real-life experiences. His work portrays the beauty of the ordinary and familiar using pictures and words. His view of the world contains bright colors and vivid lines that draw young readers and writers into his books. When teaching young writers the importance of drawing representationally, teachers will find that Crews's books provide excellent models. His books appeal to young readers because they contain simple words with strong picture support, and students will connect easily to Crews's topics: parades, harbors, fairs, airplanes, and family. He makes students believe that the best stories come from writing what we know and feel.

Grade **K**

List and Label Books

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

Students are drawn to list and label books because of their accessibility to beginning readers and writers. These books show the youngest writers that there are published books that look similar to what they can write. List and label books contain simple structures that the youngest writers can model with confidence. The texts are usually short and have strong support from the illustrations. Students have success reading simple list and label books, and therefore they have a natural curiosity about how to compose them. Writing in this genre and then reading what they produce provides a venue for students to practice the feel and sound of list and label books from the inside out. The notion that most any topic can be written about in a list or label structure provides a powerful scaffold for young writers. Students will go beyond deciding what they will write about and realize the need to plan how they will write it. “How will this topic or idea look on the page?” becomes an important question for young writers to consider. This unit provides a powerful study for writing the types of books that emergent readers and writers enjoy.

Nonfiction: How-To

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

Because so much of early reading and writing at home and in school involves learning how-to processes, grade K students are already familiar with the structure and purpose of such writing. Therefore, it is an excellent genre for students to immerse themselves in and attempt to emulate. While all the books chosen for this How-To writing unit are instructional and informational by nature, they interpret the genre in creative ways that delight and stimulate students’ imaginations. Several of the unit books are particularly well suited to emergent writers and readers who are just learning about words and structures because they have large, vibrant illustrations with only a few bold words to provide a visual bridge to writing concepts.

FUNctional Writing

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Functional writing is real-world writing. It is practical or persuasive in purpose and intended for a specific audience. Therefore, it is an excellent genre for students to immerse themselves in because they are already involved with and surrounded by functional writing in their homes, at school, and everywhere they go. Functional writing is particularly engaging for emergent writers and readers who are learning about words and reading familiar text in their environments. Schoolwide’s FUNctional Writing unit celebrates many of the different types of functional writing from our daily lives, such as letters and cards, lists and recipes, maps and signs, schedules and invitations, and condolence and thank you notes. The mentor texts are comprised of charming stories with endearing characters, and each book helps teachers emphasize the “fun” in functional.

Grade 1

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

This unit was created to introduce your students to writing workshop, to the writing process, and to getting to know why writers write in the ways they do. The mentor texts in this unit of study will help students think about what authors and illustrators are thinking and feeling when they write and draw. They will also encourage young students to notice how authors incorporate personal experiences, emotions, and details to enhance readers' experiences. In order for a writing workshop to run smoothly, students will need to know what is expected of them. Procedural conversations such as how writing workshop will function, what writing tools are and how they will be used, where these tools will be stored, and how students will discuss and share their ideas are also presented in this unit.

Personal Narrative

Text Type: Narrative

Personal narratives tell the big and small stories of our lives. Personal narratives are typically the easiest, most natural form of writing for children because the stories are already complete inside their minds, which enables the words to flow more easily onto the paper. It is this easy flow of words that supports students' efforts to produce a complete piece of writing. This provides teachers more opportunities to help students refine their writing because they better understand the heart of their pieces. As teachers surround their students with this natural, life-enriching genre, wonderful opportunities will be presented for students to make connections with themselves and others. Constructing meaningful personal narratives helps students discover important things about who they are and what they hope to be like in the future. This type of writing also helps students make sense of their life experiences and discover that others may share similar experiences, even when they may have little else in common.

Mem Fox Author Study

Text Type: Narrative

An author study in writing workshop is the time for students to focus on one author's work. In doing this, students will have a new favorite author they will get to know. Together, teachers and students will learn about an author from a reader's and writer's point of view. Mem Fox is a great author to introduce to young writers. Fox is one of Australia's best-known children's authors, having published over thirty picture books. Half the fun of studying books written by Fox is reading them aloud because she writes using rhythm, rhyme, and repetition. Her emphasis on word and sentence fluency provides a model for the importance of word placement in text. Her books profess the importance of living life passionately. The themes of her many books include the power of a mother's love, loneliness, family relationships, curiosity, and diversity—the themes of youth. Through her books, Fox becomes a more tangible person whom students will come to know as a dear friend.

Grade 1



Nonfiction: All-About Books

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

Children are naturally curious about the world. They often question and wonder about things they see, hear, and experience. They love to learn new information and share it with their friends, family, teachers, and anyone else who is willing to listen! How often do we find ourselves listening to students tell us fact after fact after fact about their new pets, the incredible place they visited over the weekend, or their favorite toy? The information they know and the facts they learn are what have inspired the Nonfiction: All-About Books unit. The questions “Did you know that . . . ?” or “Do you want to know something really cool?” are common phrases that echo in classrooms all day long. Writing all-about texts allows students to take the information they know, gather some new “research,” and teach someone all about a topic of interest.

Fiction (w/ Book Review)

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Schoolwide’s Fiction unit (w/ Book Review included) emphasizes the imaginative nature of fiction while encouraging students to see how fiction writers often draw their inspiration and material from real life. The fiction books in this unit are especially well suited for first grade readers because they offer imaginative plots and creative casts of characters that touch on real themes to which your students will readily relate. The problems our heroes encounter and solve and the life lessons they learn are all age-appropriate experiences that mirror feelings and events first grade students are undergoing in their own lives. When young readers feel a connection between themselves and the stories they read, they are much more eager and motivated to create their own stories for others to read. In addition, because so many of the books seem to come from the minds of young protagonists, the story elements are easy for students to recognize and emulate. Teachers will be delighted to see how enthusiastically students respond to seeing their own emotions and experiences reflected in the characters, narrators, plots, and themes of these wonderful books and how confidently they respond as writers to producing texts that mirror the writing strategies and genre features covered in the unit. This unit of study will allow students to not only enjoy many popular pieces of fiction but also form opinions about the books they have read. In their book reviews, students will describe the book they have read, offer an opinion about that book, supply a reason to support their opinion, and provide some sense of closure.

Multi-Genre: A Focus on Text Type and Purpose

Text Type: Narrative, Informational/Explanatory, and Poetry

Examining and discussing the various types of texts that writers compose and why they compose them is an important conversation for writers to have. This unit gives students an opportunity to focus on why and how writers write, which will enable them to think about their own purposes for crafting texts. Additionally, it will allow young writers to analyze how writers match their texts to their purposes. In this unit students will be exposed to a variety of authors, genres, styles, and writing purposes. Students will explore their own personal connections and preferences as they think about various choices writers make. Students will have the opportunity to revisit or discover all that the genres of poetry, letters, nonfiction, personal narrative, descriptive prose, fiction, and others have to offer. Students will also consider how writers think, how they work, the kinds of texts they create, and the decisions they make about content, illustrations, and more.

Grade 2

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

This unit was created to help students understand the writing process and get to know how and why writers write in the ways they do. Students will find out all of the different reasons why we write and have the opportunity to build their own writing identities. The books in the study will help students read closely, think about the authors' purposes, and understand them as people as well as writers. The texts span multiple genres, styles, structures, and themes. The topics will allow students to connect to the authors' experiences and share their own. For a writing workshop to run smoothly, students need to know what they are expected to do. Procedural conversations—such as how the writing workshop will function, what the writing tools are and how they will be used, and what students should do if they think they're done writing—are also presented in this unit.

Personal Narrative

Text Type: Narrative

Personal narratives tell the big and small stories of our lives. Personal narratives are typically the easiest, most natural form of writing for children because the stories are already complete inside their minds, which enables the words to flow more easily onto the paper. It is this easy flow of words that supports students' efforts to produce a complete piece of writing. This allows teachers more opportunities to help students refine their writing because they better understand the heart of their pieces. As teachers surround students with this natural, life-enriching genre, wonderful opportunities will be presented for students to make connections with themselves and others. Constructing meaningful personal narratives helps students discover important things about who they are and what they hope to be like in the future. This type of writing also helps students make sense of their life experiences and discover that others may share similar experiences, even when they may have little else in common.

Gail Gibbons Author Study

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

Gail Gibbons is a wonderful writing mentor for second grade writers. Gibbons writes nonfiction, which is arguably the genre that students will encounter the most not only in their educational careers but also in their vocational careers. Her books, of which she has written over one hundred, center on her inquisitive nature, or her desire to know “why?” This natural inquisitiveness is something students will readily recognize in themselves. Her books portray the beauty and workings of the ordinary and familiar using pictures, charts, and words. Her interpretation of the world and the things in it includes brightly colored pictures and lots of explanation. Charts, graphs, and other supplemental illustrations draw young readers and writers into her books. They appeal to both young and more advanced readers because they contain a mixture of text and picture support, and they are typically an introduction to a specific topic. Students will connect easily to Gibbons's choice of topics represented in this unit: submerged ships, planet Earth, building a house, honeybees, recycling, caves, and rain forests. She will help students discover that the world around them is full of opportunities to explore, question, ponder, and investigate. Gibbons shows us that writing in order to think, question, and learn is something we should do every day.

Grade 2

Letter Writing

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Letters have been written for about as long as humans have been able to communicate through writing. Besides actual face-to-face conversation, for a long time letters were the only way to establish and maintain relationships with those who were not immediately available. Reading letters helps us learn about how lives were lived and what people believed and knew in the past. Today writers—any writers—are able to share their thoughts through emails, text messages, and posts on the Internet that reach a wider audience than a letter to a friend or even a small group of friends. And writers are able to reply instantly, keeping up a correspondence over days and changing topics. Letters can have a multitude of purposes. They can be informal when written between friends or formal when written for business purposes. They can be requests for information, offer complaints or praise, or share opinions (e.g., when sent to editors of newspapers or magazines). More formal letters can be meant to persuade a reader to action or to request the cessation of action. The need for humans to communicate has not gone away even as technology has changed modern life. As a genre, it’s likely the letter itself—in all its many forms—will be with us for a long time.

Folktales, Fairy Tales, and Fables

Narrative

Folktales, fables, and fairy tales are always fun stories to read aloud to students, as they were originally intended to be told orally and are filled with rich imagery and lots of action. As an oral art form originally, most tales use discernible patterns of language and plot that make them easy for students to remember and retell. Even a tale that is told for the first time will have a structure that is familiar and comforting to readers of all levels. The humor, adventure, and magic that typify the unit books will keep students enthralled, and the variety of stories and countries of origin represented will exemplify for your students how these tales pervade human society, culture, and history. In this unit you will find fairy tales, folktales, and fables from across the globe (e.g., Russia, Africa, Asia, America, and Western Europe). Vocabulary, regional expressions, folkways, geographical details, and place names all add life to the tales and serve to differentiate them from one another, yet they tellingly share common themes and purposes—the passing on of important values and mores. The inherently didactic purpose of these tales makes them a perfect genre to both delight and instruct your class, providing excellent examples for students to emulate in creating their own fanciful tales and adding new twists to old ones.

Grade 3

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

This unit was created to help students understand the writing process and get to know how and why writers write in the ways they do. Students will find out all of the different reasons why we write and have the opportunity to build their own writing identities. The books in the study will help students read closely, think about the authors' purposes, and understand them as people as well as writers. The texts span multiple genres, styles, structures, and themes. The topics will allow students to connect to the authors' experiences and share their own. For your writing workshop to run smoothly, students need to know what they are expected to do. Procedural conversations—such as how the writing workshop will go, what the writing tools are and how they will be used, and what students should do if they think they're done writing—are also presented in this unit.

Patricia Polacco Author Study

Text Type: Narrative

No one can tell a story like Patricia Polacco! She is a consummate storyteller who draws upon family history and ritual for many of her tales. Her books, of which she has written over one hundred, center on the stories she learned from her family. Polacco is also an artist; her illustrations portray the beauty and workings of the stories of her life and of those she cares deeply about. Her interpretation of the world and the things in it includes lush, broad, vibrant illustrations that are both humorous and poignant. Her books appeal to both young and more advanced readers because they contain a mixture of text and abundant illustrative support that will encourage them to read deeply and reflect upon the many issues addressed. Students will connect to Polacco's choice of topics represented in this unit. She will help students discover that the world around them is full of opportunities to explore, question, ponder, and investigate not only within their own communities but also within the community of the world, past and present. Polacco shows us that writing to think, question, learn, and honor is something we should do every day.

Literary Nonfiction

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

A nonfiction book can be a reference book, or it can share information through a story. This unit serves as an introduction to the purpose, style, and structure of the literary or narrative nonfiction genre. The books chosen for this unit offer excellent examples of how a variety of fact-based texts can be conceptualized, organized, developed, revised, and published. In this unit students will discover the features of nonfiction writing, including that nonfiction is fact based, has an informative purpose, uses data and specific details, involves and compiles research, uses graphics and other visual aids, and employs content-specific vocabulary. Students will also explore their own interests, passions, and areas of expertise to generate ideas for writing; use creative devices to entertain as well as inform readers; and collect information on their topics from multiple sources including books, magazines, and web sites.

Grade 3

Biography

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Biographers write about people who interest and inspire them. People they admire and respect from the past or present are worthy subjects for students' biographical writing. In this unit students will form opinions about the various people studied based on the accomplishments and attributes discussed. Students will explore the features of biographies and examine the differences and similarities between these features and how they influence readers. Students will also see how different biographers present the important events, accomplishments, struggles, and character traits of a person's life, as well as how they use word choices and tone to convey their admiration for and opinions of the people they write about. The biographies selected for this unit give students a chance to explore inspirational people who lived during various time periods, came from different cultural backgrounds, and had various influences on a variety of topics and/or issues such as sports, politics, human rights, the environment, literature, and more. The books in this unit of study can be used seamlessly within your social studies, science, art, and reading curricula, as well.

Multi-Genre: A Focus on Text Type and Purpose

Text Type: Narrative, Informational/Explanatory, and Poetry

Examining and discussing the various types of texts that writers compose and why they compose them is an important conversation for writers to have. This unit gives students an opportunity to focus on why and how writers write, which will enable them to think about their own purposes for crafting texts. Additionally, it will allow young writers to analyze how writers match their texts to their purposes. In this unit students will be exposed to a variety of authors, genres, styles, and writing purposes. Students will explore their own personal connections and preferences as they think about various choices writers make. Students will have the opportunity to revisit or discover all that the genres of poetry, letters, nonfiction, personal narrative, descriptive prose, fiction, and others have to offer. Students will also consider how writers think, how they work, the kinds of books they create, and the decisions they make about content, illustrations, and more.

Grade 4

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

For a writing workshop to run smoothly, students need to know what they are expected to do. Procedural conversations—such as how writing workshop will function, what writing tools are and how they will be used, and what to do if you think you’re done writing—are presented in this unit. Rituals and routines are necessary components of writing communities wherein students move about the classroom effectively and use their tools and time wisely. As students become familiar and comfortable with writing workshop, they will become more independent. When students are independent, it allows the teacher the time necessary to confer with individuals or small groups of students who need additional support. Writing workshop is the time when we think about how writers work so students can emulate this process. This unit was created to help students understand the writing process and get to know how and why writers write in the ways that they do. They will find out many different reasons for writing and have the chance to build their own writing identities. Fourth graders will explore new and familiar ways to use a Writer’s Notebook and be encouraged to write in their notebooks daily. At the end of the unit, students will publish a text that will provide a baseline or benchmark assessment to help monitor progress through the year. The books in the study help students read closely and think about the authors’ purposes and inspirations. The texts span multiple genres, styles, structures, and themes. The topics will allow students to connect to the authors’ experiences and share their own.

Cynthia Rylant Author Study

Text Type: Narrative

Cynthia Rylant is a renowned author with a great breadth of published works. She writes about the topics she loves most and knows best. Fourth grade writers can easily link her life to the themes in her work. These connections serve as an impetus for young writers to dive into their own rich experiences as food for thought when envisioning their pieces. Rylant is an exemplary mentor author because she inspires students to write about their passions. Fourth grade writers love her lyrical, soulful texts and heartfelt remembrances. The collection of literature in this unit models a variety of craft strategies for students to try out in their own pieces: sentence variety, description using one’s senses, interesting verbs, the choice of proper nouns over general ones, personification, and repetition to create rhythm. Rylant structures her pieces into artful forms that students can emulate. She observes people in her world to create characters and empowers others to discover their own voices. Knowing how her stories come to life becomes a lesson to fourth grade writers. Rylant’s works chant, “Listen to your life; it has stories to tell.”

Grade 4

Nonfiction

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

This unit introduces students to how nonfiction writers think, how they work, the kinds of books they create, and decisions they make about content, including illustrations and charts. Students will learn to identify common nonfiction text features—tables of contents, headings, subheadings, glossaries, bibliographies—and use one or more of these in their own writing. Students will discover and apply different structures with which to organize informational writing, including using an overarching question to explore, using a sequential list of questions to explore, using a journey structure, and using a “how-to” structure. Students will explore how to use their own voices in their nonfiction writing and discover ways to find informational topics they are interested in writing about. The books in this unit allow students to examine both text structures and writer’s craft. Students will research, learn, and then impart knowledge to their readers.

Feature Article (w/ Editorial)

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Feature articles are informative, explanatory pieces that profile people, examine a topic, analyze events, explore trends, evoke an emotional response, and cover in-depth stories. Feature article writers begin with an introduction that captures readers’ attention, provide a unique point of view or perspective, often state an opinion or make an argument, employ a variety of research (books, reference materials, interviews, etc.), and end with a concluding section that provides a sense of closure or finality. In this unit students will determine the purpose of feature articles as well as their prevalence and importance in our world. Students will read and analyze the characteristics of feature articles and then publish a clear and coherent feature article of their own. Following publication of their feature articles, students will then write an editorial essays, thereby replicating a familiar real-world process in which feature articles often appear in newspapers, in magazines, or on web sites and then prompt subsequent editorials in which the editorial writers state their own opinions, claims, and/or arguments.

Grade 5

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

For a writing workshop to run smoothly, students need to know what they are expected to do. Procedural conversations—such as how writing workshop will function, what writing tools are and how they will be used, and what to do if you think you’re done writing—are presented in this unit. Rituals and routines are necessary components of writing communities wherein students move about the classroom effectively and use their tools and time wisely. As students become familiar and comfortable with writing workshop, they will become more independent. When students are independent, it allows the teacher the time necessary to confer with individuals or small groups of students who need additional support. Writing workshop is the time when we think about how writers work so students can emulate this process. This unit was created to help students understand the writing process and get to know how and why writers write in the ways they do. They will find out many different reasons for writing and have the chance to build their own writing identities. Fifth graders will explore new and familiar ways to use a Writer’s Notebook and be encouraged to write in their notebooks daily. At the end of the unit, your students will publish a text that will provide a baseline or benchmark assessment to help monitor their progress throughout the year. The books in the study help students read closely and think about the authors’ purposes and inspirations. The texts span multiple genres, styles, structures, and themes. The topics will allow students to connect to the authors’ experiences and share their own.

Memoir

Text Type: Narrative

Memoir is a short recounting of a portion of a person’s life (unlike a biography, which is usually the story of a person’s whole life). A memoir can be told in retrospect but is almost always told in the first person. This unit will introduce students to what memoir is all about, how memoir writers think, how they work, the kinds of books they create, and decisions they make about content, illustrations, and more. In this unit students will identify how authors use their own life experiences, interests, and observations of the world to generate memoirs; discover the features of memoir writing, such as reflection, use of memories, and sharpening of focus to a brief period of time; publish their own memoirs while studying mentor texts; and identify and discuss the similarities and differences among cultures, experiences, emotions, and ideas as conveyed through memoirs.

Grade 5

Biography

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

Biographers choose their subjects with a variety of purposes and intentions, often selecting people who interest and inspire them. The grade 5 Biography unit focuses on purpose and audience, research, integrating facts and opinions, and well-crafted language. Students will explore the features of biographies. As students closely read the mentor texts, they will examine the differences and similarities between these features and how they influence readers. Students will also see how different biographers present the important events, accomplishments, struggles, and character traits of a person's life, as well as how they use word choices and tone to convey their admiration for and opinions of the people they write about. The biographies selected for this unit give students a chance to explore inspirational people who lived during various time periods, came from different cultural backgrounds, and had various influences on a variety of topics and/or issues, such as sports, science, politics, literature, and the arts.

Persuasive Essay

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Perhaps more than any other genre, essay will be required writing throughout students' educational careers. Essays can be written to explain, explore, or argue ideas on a specific topic. An essay genre study creates the opportunity to familiarize students with the features of essays and helps them build confidence with and knowledge about the genre. Some of these features include clear organizational form, including a thesis statement and introductory sentence; tight focus on a topic; details and facts to support the writer's point of view or claim; and a concluding statement or section. Critical to the study of any genre is taking time to explore, enjoy, and respond to the genre as readers. Essays are written to be read and reacted to. The experience of reading essays and responding to them naturally is crucial to appreciating and internalizing their features and functions. In addition, developing an appreciation for essays and essay writers will help entice students to want to write essays of their own. In this unit students will listen to and read essays, identify features of essays, gain an appreciation for the forms and functions of essays, and publish a persuasive essay of their own.

Multi-Genre: A Focus on Text Type and Purpose

Text Type: Narrative, Informational/Explanatory, and Poetry

This unit will introduce students to how writers think, how they work, the kinds of books they create, and decisions they make about content, genre, and purpose. As writers (and readers), students will be delighted by the books in this collection. The texts will help students imagine various possibilities for their writing and encourage them to take on new identities as writers. This unit asks students to think about why writers write and then asks them to begin to craft a text based on their own intent as writers. In this unit students will describe different intentions that authors have for writing (to instruct, inform, persuade, express emotion, and entertain), discover the possibilities of using their own voices and experiences in their writing, demonstrate an awareness that writing is crafted for multiple purposes and audiences, generate topics for writing (using strategies such as brainstorming and composing research questions), and begin to develop precision with wording (using specific and descriptive details and making deliberate vocabulary choices).

Grade 6

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

This unit was designed to help middle school students understand the writing process and examine how and why writers write the way they do. They will have opportunities to apply those observations to their own writing while exploring different genres, text types, and purposes for writing. In this unit students will understand the rituals and routines of writing workshop, learn how to keep a Writer's Notebook, examine mentor texts, discover craft techniques, apply techniques to their own writing, and strengthen their writing by revising and editing. At the end of the unit, students will publish their first text, which will provide a baseline for their writing and help monitor their growth throughout the year.

Personal Narrative

Text Type: Narrative

We all have stories to tell. Personal narrative writing is a form of writing in which the writer retells an event, incident, or experience in his or her own life. Personal narratives allow writers to share their lives with others and re-create experiences for readers to feel. It can also help the writers relive a meaningful moment from their lives. Personal narratives are generally written in the first person and tell a story, big or small, from the author's life. They help the writer make sense of life experiences and uncover universal truths, discover lessons learned, or gain insight into the experience. Constructing personal narratives also helps writers learn important things about who they are and who they would like to be. In this unit students will identify several ways authors gather ideas for personal narratives; recognize different features of personal narratives, such as flashbacks, inner thoughts, and attention to a brief period of time; understand the connection between storytelling and writing; write their own personal narratives, experimenting with techniques learned from the mentor texts; and learn about themselves through listening to, discussing, and writing personal narratives.

Feature Article

Text Type: Informational/Explanatory

Feature articles are a type of nonfiction. They cover true or real information just like other informational or explanatory texts, but they have some unique characteristics. Feature articles begin with an introduction designed to grab readers' attention, provide a unique point of view or perspective, often state an opinion or make an argument, and end with a concluding section that provides a sense of closure or finality. Feature articles often appear in magazines, newspapers, newsletters, web sites, reference works, and collections of writing. In this unit students will discover the characteristics of feature articles, including that feature articles are informative and entertaining, include facts and details, use research and expert opinion, use interviews, profile people, explore events or trends, and illuminate intriguing aspects of a topic; identify the strategies employed by feature article writers; and apply those strategies in their own writing. They will use their own expertise and areas of interest to generate ideas for writing, employing a variety of research (books, reference materials, interviews, etc.) to inform readers and/or entertain readers with intriguing and unusual approaches to topics. They will also develop plans to write and organize their research and writing to help readers achieve a deeper understanding of the topic.

Grade 6

Persuasive Essay

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Writers write for a variety of reasons. They write to entertain, inform, and communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas to their readers. In persuasive essay writing, the author shares his or her personal thoughts about issues important to him or her. More specifically, the goal is to be influential and align readers with the author's way of thinking. The books in this unit of study offer various forms of persuasive writing, from authors sharing personal stories about issues they care about to communicating opinions on global topics like war and the environment. Students will identify current issues and themes in persuasive writing; learn to recognize the author's opinion, argument, or claim in a piece of writing; generate ideas for their own persuasive essays; become familiar with the structure and organization of persuasive essays; strengthen their writing as needed by revising and editing; and realize their opinions are important and can influence other people's views.

Grade 7

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

This unit was designed to help middle school students understand the writing process and examine how and why writers write the way they do. They will have opportunities to apply those observations to their own writing while exploring different genres, text types, and purposes for writing. In this unit students will understand the rituals and routines of writing workshop, learn how to keep a Writer's Notebook, examine mentor texts, discover craft techniques, apply those techniques to their own writing, and strengthen their writing by revising and editing. At the end of the unit, students will publish their first texts, which will provide a baseline for their writing and help monitor their growth throughout the year.

Memoir

Text Type: Narrative

Memoir is a short recounting of a portion of a person's life rather than a biography, which is a chronological telling of someone's life from childhood to adulthood. A memoir is usually told in the first person and is often how one remembers one's own life. This unit of study will introduce students to what memoir is all about, what memoirists write about, where they find their ideas, and what kinds of texts they create. The mentor texts in this unit can serve as inspiration. Some of them are collections of individual memoirs written by one author or several different authors, and some are picture books, collections of poems, or informational books about memoir. In this unit students will identify how authors use their own life experiences, interests, and observations of the world to generate memoirs; recognize features of memoir writing, such as reflection and change, use of memories, point of view, use of vivid and authentic details, and a focus on a brief period of time; apply what they have learned to their own writing; find similarities in experiences and emotions across cultures as expressed in memoirs; and identify variations of style and structure in memoir writing to help them make decisions about their own memoirs.

Grade 7

Photo Essay

Informational/Explanatory

Why Photo Essay?

The current age of technology exposes us to multiple visual images throughout our day. Middle school students are called upon to react to and/or interpret what we see in these split-second bursts of time. With the evolution of technology and the Internet has come the ability to capture images much more easily. This ability, combined with the skill of interpreting these images, leads to the exciting creation of photo essays.

A photo essay (or “photographic essay”) is a collection of images that are placed in a specific order to tell the progression of events, emotions, or concepts. As with a written essay, the elements of a photo essay should be structured in a way that easily conveys a story to the viewer. Each individual photo contributes to the overall story, theme, and emotions of the essay. Photo essays can be sequential in nature, intended to be viewed in a particular order, or they may consist of non-ordered photographs which may be viewed all at once or in an order chosen by the viewer. The photos that are chosen for the photo essay must not only be compositionally and artistically strong, but also informative and educational.

Writers often use the essay form to try out new ideas or explore things they are interested in. The word essay comes from the French word “to try,” so it makes sense that student writers would be exposed to this type of writing when working with informational or explanatory text. In this photo essay unit, we also want students to experience the ability to capture or locate images for the purpose of interpretation, appreciation, new learning, sharing information, telling a story, or attaining deeper understanding of topics. We want them “to try” out this genre as a means to meet the demands of our ever-changing, technologically savvy world, while also practicing and applying their skills in a variety of text types, or forms of writing.

Grade 7

Book Review

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Book reviews introduce a reader’s opinion on a piece of literature to a general audience. When reviewing the literature, the goal is not simply to recite details from the work but rather to convince the reading audience of one’s opinion about the piece. Book reviews require ample research, organized thinking, and strong voice. Book reviewers must garner followers of their craft, building an audience who depends on them to let them know which extraordinary texts have been published and which texts might be avoided. In that spirit book reviewers discuss the accuracy of the facts presented in a book, the flow of the written piece, and the author’s overall presentation of the text. This unit of study will allow students to enjoy many popular pieces of literature and form independent opinions of the books they have read. They will describe the book(s) they have read; consider and reflect on the author’s opinions and intentions; and fact-check and review the accuracy of the author’s work. Students will explore the issues their books raise and relate those issues to larger issues. They will develop critical reviewing skills and strong opinions about what they like, and perhaps dislike, about a text. With the many different forms of reviews out there today, whether it be blogs, televised opinions, etc., it is very important that teachers provide students with the basic processes and structures necessary to form an educated opinion or make an argument. It is also important for students to have the opportunity to talk about their opinions in a group setting so that they can gain experience sharing some of the issues they have with the literature they read and are able to confidently discuss their thoughts in a safe and respectful place. In this unit students will identify various approaches to book reviews; recognize the different elements contained in a book review; understand the importance of including facts and supporting ideas and presenting the book review in a strong, passionate voice; write their own book reviews, experimenting with various techniques they learned from the mentor texts; and learn about themselves as readers and writers by listening to, discussing, and writing book reviews.

Grade 8

How Writers Work

Text Type: Launching

The writing process will be explored thoroughly in this unit, beginning with “seed planting,” in which students generate ideas for their pieces. After being guided through selecting a topic, genre, and form for writing, they will learn to collect ideas to use in their first drafts. Then they will be guided to strengthen their pieces using revision techniques; to edit their pieces, focusing on grade-level grammatical errors; and to publish final copies. A culminating activity has the students assessing their own work. The texts in the unit cover a broad spectrum of genres and forms of writing as well as age- and grade-level appropriate topics that adolescents will find intriguing. These touchstone texts will serve as “mentors” throughout the unit and will be revisited again and again during the steps of the writing process. Students will read, reflect on, and analyze each mentor author’s purpose as well as the deeper reason why the piece was written—the author’s message or theme. In this unit students will learn how to work in a writing workshop environment by following the structures, routines, and procedures of the unit; become part of a community of writers who listen to, share, and respond to each other’s thoughts, writing, and ideas; explore their own interests as writers by creating lists of possible topics and the types of writing they would like to research; become aware of where published authors get their ideas; understand the different reasons for writing and become familiar with different genres and forms; learn how to keep a Writer’s Notebook; select a topic, genre, and form and create a first draft; read mentor texts to discover revision techniques and apply them to their own writing; refine their pieces by editing for grade-level grammatical errors; and create a published piece of writing.

Multi-Genre Memoir

Narrative

Why Multi-Genre Memoir?

It is human nature to have a desire to talk about our past. Middle school students are no different. They love to tell stories about their summer experiences, trips far or near, and ill-fated friendships. When these stories take on a certain poignancy because of a pivotal change, or even, personal growth, we call them memoir.

Memoirs are narratives which typically focus on a period of time in an author’s life, reflecting on the implications of this time or experience. This unit of study demonstrates how memoirs can be presented in different genres or forms of writing, while giving your eighth graders time to explore meaningful topics and publish a memoir with purpose and audience in mind.

The books that were chosen for this unit of study reflect a wide variety of interests and content. They also represent genres that will engage students to learn from and emulate. Careful thought was put into selecting books that will be shared with the whole class: photo essay, short story, graphic novel, picture book and novel. It is through the lens of these multiple genres that students will be able to select the form that they feel best reflects their purpose while also strongly considering their audience. As with any kind of memoir study, students will also consider how memoir helps them to determine how to make sense of who they are, who they once were, and what values, people and experiences have helped to shape them.

Grade 8

Research Report Informational/Explanatory

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Persuasive Essay (Content Areas)

Text Type: Opinion/Argument

Persuasive pieces in the content areas usually revolve around passion for a particular topic. In this unit students will explore many social issues in their world. They will discuss racism, anti-Semitism, war, bullying, animal rights, protecting the environment, and other serious and important topics. Content area persuasive writing requires ample research, organized thinking, and strong voice. It also requires the writer to be respectful of readers—winning them over using facts and details as well as thoughtfulness and empathy. It is important for eighth grade students to get the opportunity to first talk about these issues amongst their peers and teachers in a safe and respectful place. The classroom will become a sanctuary where students can share their own personal experiences with these serious topics as well as their thoughts about how the world around them responds to these issues. In this unit students will identify various strategies for gathering ideas for content area essays; recognize the different elements and techniques contained in a piece of writing that effectively makes an argument; understand the importance of supporting claims and ideas with facts and details; write their own content area persuasive essays, experimenting with various techniques they learned from the mentor texts; and learn about themselves as readers and writers through listening to, discussing, making arguments, and writing content area persuasive essays.



Grade K

Common Core Correlation Grade K Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade K	Donald Crews /Author Study	Nonfiction: How-To	FUNctional Writing
	Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
1. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose opinion pieces in which they tell a reader the topic or the name of the book they are writing about and state an opinion or preference about the topic or book (e.g., <i>My favorite book is . . .</i>).		●		●
2. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to compose informative/explanatory texts in which they name what they are writing about and supply some information about the topic.	●		●	
3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events, tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.	●			
Production and Distribution of Writing				
5. With guidance and support from adults, respond to questions and suggestions from peers and add details to strengthen writing as needed.	●	●	●	●
6. With guidance and support from adults, explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.		●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge				
7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of books by a favorite author and express opinions about them).		●	●	
8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.	●	●	●	●

Grade 1



Common Core Correlation Grade 1 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 1	Personal Narrative	Nonfiction: All About	Fiction Genre Study (w/Book Review)
	Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about, state an opinion, supply a reason for the opinion, and provide some sense of closure.				●
2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.	●		●	
3. Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.	●	●		●
Production and Distribution of Writing				
5. With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed.	●	●	●	●
6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.		●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge				
7. Participate in shared research and writing projects (e.g., explore a number of “how-to” books on a given topic and use them to write a sequence of instructions).			●	
8. With guidance and support from adults, recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.	●	●	●	●

Grade 2

Common Core Correlation Grade 2 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes		How Writers Work Grade 2	Personal Narrative	Gail Gibbons Nonfiction Author Study	Letter Writing
		Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
<p>1. Write opinion pieces in which they introduce the topic or name the book they are writing about; state an opinion, supply reasons that support the opinion, use linking words (e.g., <i>because</i>, <i>and</i>, <i>also</i>) to connect opinion and reasons, and provide a concluding statement or section.</p>					●
	<p>2. Write informative/explanatory texts in which they introduce a topic, use facts and definitions to develop points, and provide a concluding statement or section.</p>			●	
	<p>3. Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.</p>	●	●		●
Production and Distribution of Writing					
<p>5. With guidance and support from adults and peers, focus on a topic and strengthen writing as needed by revising and editing.</p>		●	●	●	●
	<p>6. With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.</p>		●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge					
<p>7. Participate in shared research and writing projects. (e.g., read a number of books on a single topic to produce a report; record science observations).</p>			●		
	<p>8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.</p>	●	●	●	●

Grade 3

Common Core Correlation Grade 3 Writing Standards



Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 3	Patricia Polacco Author Study	Literary Nonfiction	Biography
	Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce the topic or text they are writing about, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure that lists reasons. b. Provide reasons that support the opinion. c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., <i>because, therefore, since, for example</i>) to connect opinion and reasons. d. Provide a concluding statement or section. 	●			●
	●			●
	●			●
	●			●
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Introduce a topic and group related information together; include illustrations when useful to aiding comprehension. b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, and details. c. Use linking words and phrases (e.g., <i>also, another, and, more, but</i>) to connect ideas within categories of information. d. Provide a concluding statement or section. 			●	●
			●	●
			●	●
			●	●
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally. b. Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations. c. Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order. d. Provide a sense of closure. 	●	●		
	●	●		
	●	●		
	●	●		
Production and Distribution of Writing				
4. With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)	●	●	●	●
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 3.)	●	●	●	●
6. With guidance and support from adults, use technology to produce and publish writing (using keyboarding skills) as well as to interact and collaborate with others.	●	●	●	●

Grade 3



Common Core Correlation Grade 3 Writing Standards

Research to Build and Present Knowledge		How Writers Work Grade 3	Patricia Polacco Author Study	Literary Nonfiction	Biography
		Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge about a topic.				●	●
8. Recall information from experiences or gather information from print and digital sources; take brief notes on sources and sort evidence into provided categories.		●	●	●	●
Range of Writing					
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.		●	●	●	●

Grade 4



Common Core Correlation Grade 4 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 4		Cynthia Rylant Author Study		Nonfiction		Feature Article	
	Text Type: Launching		Text Type: Narrative		Text Type: Informational/Explanatory		Text Type: Opinion/Argument	
1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.							●	
a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which related ideas are grouped to support the writer's purpose.							●	
b. Provide reasons that are supported by facts and details.							●	
c. Link opinion and reasons using words and phrases (e.g., <i>for instance, in order to, in addition</i>).							●	
d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.							●	
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.					●		●	
a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; including formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.					●		●	
b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.					●		●	
c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., <i>another, for example, also, because</i>).					●		●	
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.					●		●	
e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.					●		●	
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.	●			●				
a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.	●			●				
b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of character to situations.	●			●				
c. Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.				●				
d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.	●			●				
e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.				●				

Grade 4



Common Core Correlation Grade 4 Writing Standards

Production and Distribution of Writing	How Writers Work Grade 4	Cynthia Rylant Author Study	Nonfiction	Feature Article
	Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)	●	●	●	●
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 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.	●	●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge				
7. Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.		●	●	●
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.	●	●	●	●
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	●	●	●	●
a. Apply <i>grade 4 Reading standards</i> 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]").	●	●	●	●
b. Apply <i>grade 4 Reading standards</i> to informational texts. (e.g., "Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text").			●	●
Range of Writing				
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.	●	●	●	●

Grade 5



Common Core Correlation Grade 5 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 5	Memoir	Biography	Persuasive Essay
	Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
1. Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.				●
a. Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer's purpose.				●
b. Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.				●
c. Link opinion and reasons using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., <i>consequently, specifically</i>).				●
d. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.				●
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.			●	●
a. Introduce a topic clearly, provide a general observation and focus, and group related information logically; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.			●	●
b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.			●	●
c. Link ideas within and across categories of information using words, phrases, and clauses (e.g., <i>in contrast, especially</i>).			●	●
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.			●	●
e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.			●	●
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.	●	●		
a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.	●	●		
b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.	●	●		
c. Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.	●	●		
d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.	●	●		
e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.	●	●		

Grade 5



Common Core Correlation Grade 5 Writing Standards

	Production and Distribution of Writing			
	How Writers Work Grade 5 Text Type: Launching	Memoir Text Type: Narrative	Biography Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Persuasive Essay Text Type: Opinion/Argument
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)	●	●	●	●
5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 5.)	●	●	●	●
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 two pages in a single sitting.	●	●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge				
7. Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.			●	●
8. Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; summarize or paraphrase information in notes and finished work, and provide a list of sources.	●	●	●	●
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	●	●	●	●
a. Apply <i>grade 5 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or a drama, drawing on specific details in the text [e.g., how characters interact]”).	●	●	●	●
b. Apply <i>grade 5 Reading standards</i> to informational texts (e.g., “Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular point in a text, identifying which reasons and evidence support which point[s]”).			●	●
Range of Writing				
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.	●	●	●	●

Grade 6



Common Core Correlation Grade 6 Writing Standards

	Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 6				Personal Narrative		Feature Article		Persuasive Essay	
		Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument		
1.	Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.										
	a. Introduce claim(s) and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.										●
	b. Support claim(s) with clear reasons and relevant evidence, using credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.										●
	c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to clarify the relationships among claim(s) and reasons.										●
	d. Establish and maintain a formal style.										●
	e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the argument presented.										●
2.	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.										●
	a. Introduce a topic; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful for aiding comprehension.							●			●
	b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.							●			●
	c. Use appropriate transitions to clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.							●			●
	d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.							●			●
	e. Establish and maintain a formal style.							●			●
	f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from the information or explanation presented.							●			●
3.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-constructed event sequences.	●									●
	a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.	●									●
	b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.	●									●

Grade 7



Common Core Correlation Grade 7 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 7	Memoir	Photo Essay	Book Review
	Text Type: Launching	Text Type: Narrative	Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Text Type: Opinion/Argument
1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.				
a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.				●
b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.				●
c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), reasons, and evidence.				●
d. Establish and maintain a formal style.				●
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.				●
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.			●	
a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect; and include formatting (e.g., headings), aiding graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to comprehension.			●	
b. Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.			●	
c. Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.			●	
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.			●	
e. Establish and maintain a formal style.			●	
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.			●	
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.	●			
a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.	●	●		

Grade 7



Common Core Correlation Grade 7 Writing Standards

	How Writers Work Grade 7	Memoir	Photo Essay	Book Review
Text Types and Purposes				
b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.	●	●		
c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.		●		
d. Choose precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.	●	●		
e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.		●		
Production and Distribution of Writing				
4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)	●	●	●	●
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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 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.		●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge				
7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.			●	
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.			●	
9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	●	●	●	●
Range of Writing				
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.	●	●	●	●

Grade 8



Common Core Correlation Grade 8 Writing Standards

Text Types and Purposes	How Writers Work Grade 8		Multi-Genre Memoir		Research Report		Persuasive Essay Content Areas	
	Text Type: Launching		Text Type: Narrative		Text Type: Informational/Explanatory		Text Type: Opinion/Argument	
1. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.								
a. Introduce claim(s), acknowledge and distinguish claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence logically.					●		●	
b. Support claim(s) with logical reasoning and relevant evidence, using accurate, credible sources and demonstrating an understanding of the topic or text.					●		●	
c. Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.					●		●	
d. Establish and maintain a formal style.					●		●	
e. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.					●		●	
2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.								
a. Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information into broader categories; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.					●		●	
b. Develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.					●		●	
c. Use appropriate and varied transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.					●		●	
d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.					●		●	
e. Establish and maintain a formal style.					●		●	
f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.					●		●	
3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.		●		●				
a. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.		●		●				
b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.		●		●				

Grade 8



Common Core Correlation Grade 8 Writing Standards

	Text Types and Purposes			
	How Writers Work Grade 8 Text Type: Launching	Multi-Genre Memoir Text Type: Narrative	Research Report Text Type: Informational/Explanatory	Persuasive Essay Content Areas Text Type: Opinion/Argument
<p>c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.</p> <p>d. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.</p> <p>e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.</p>	●	●		
Production and Distribution of Writing				
<p>4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)</p> <p>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. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 8.)</p> <p>6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.</p>	●	●	●	●
Research to Build and Present Knowledge				
<p>7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p>			●	●
Range of Writing				
<p>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.</p>	●	●	●	●

WRITING FUNDAMENTALS: Foundational Research

Because writing matters for success in school, the community, and the workplace, Schoolwide’s Writing Fundamentals has a central mission to improve student writing by increasing the tools teachers can use to teach writing.

Writing Fundamentals is a teaching resource that helps educators raise the quality of their students’ writing. Writing Fundamentals is a series of Units of Study, each consisting of:

- Anchor/Mentor Texts (5–10)
 - High-quality literature and short texts
- Interactive Read-Aloud Lessons (5)
- Mini-Lessons (15–20)
- Conference Questions
- Appendices
- Lesson Extensions
 - Includes ELL Extensions
- Student Benchmark Pieces
- Authentic Assessments and Scoring Rubrics

Writing Fundamentals provides teachers with the instructional support and resources necessary to teach and explore the qualities of good writing with their student writers, from prewriting to revising and publication.

WRITING PROCESS APPROACH

The process approach for teaching writing was developed in the latter part of the twentieth century, primarily from the work of Donald Graves (1983), Donald Murray (1984), Nancie Atwell (1987), and Lucy Calkins (1983, 1986, 1994). Subsequent research in the United States and New Zealand provides further support for the importance of this methodology to improving the quality of writing content, mechanics, and students’ view of themselves as capable writers (Elley, Barham, Lamb, & Wylie, 1979; Smith & Elley, 1997; and Hillocks, 1986).

One of the major findings from the research about teaching writing through the process approach is that student achievement is higher than when students are instructed through a traditional method (Parson, 1985; Holdzkom, et al., 1982; Hillocks, 1984, 1986; Wesdorp, 1983; Amiran, 1982; Keech & Thomas, 1979; ERIC Clearinghouse, 1984). Moreover, research has shown that emphasizing writing improvement and writing to improve learning in all subject areas is crucial to the success of schools with high achievement, high minority enrollment, and high poverty levels (Reeves, 2004).

The ultimate goal of the writing workshop is to “change how writers compose by helping them employ more sophisticated composing processes” (Graham, 2006; see also Graham & Harris, 1996). The writing workshop process approach is advocated across grade levels in order to induce more sustained and thoughtful writing behaviors. The development of more effective writing pedagogies is attained in a writing workshop by carefully structuring the workshop environment as a pleasant, supportive, and collaborative space. It is designed so that writing assignments serve a real purpose. It is a place where students share their work with each other, where choice and ownership are emphasized, where a predictable classroom routine is established, and where students are encouraged to plan, revise, and edit their papers (Graham, 2006). The process approach to writing is recognized in educational theory and practice.

What is most prevalent in writing process research is how the process approach has not only altered how writing is taught but also the age at which writing instruction is introduced (Berninger & Winn, 2006). Furthermore, research has shown early and continued experience with different genres provides a foundation of knowledge about those genres from which children draw upon when reading, writing, and discussing literature (Pappas, 1991). Research conducted by Duke and Kays (1998) found that exposure to and meaningful opportunities with multiple literacy experiences in their earliest schooling experiences provides students with greater literacy knowledge and dexterity within those genres. Data from research indicates that a few rereadings of a particular book can support children’s use of genre characteristics, and continued exposure most likely contributes to even greater facility with those elements in their literacy lives (Donovan & Smolkin, 2006).

Notably, the process approach for the teaching of writing is explicitly mentioned in state and national standards and by national organizations that support education and teachers. The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association “validated the writing process approach in 1992 when they defined Content Standard 5 for the English Language Arts, K–12, stating: Students are expected to use writing process elements strategically” (De La Paz, 1999).

In January 2002, the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation was signed into law with the intent to close the educational achievement gaps between students. Students’ progress in the subjects of literacy and

mathematics is now monitored by standardized tests. In response to NCLB, many departments of education across the country designed comprehensive approaches to literacy, defining clear and principled approaches to literacy instruction from kindergarten to twelfth grade. The Department of Education's approach to literacy learning worked to incorporate research-based reading and writing methodologies with best practices informed by effective classroom instruction.

Building on the excellent foundation of standards the states laid, in 2010 the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices and Council of Chief State School Officers published the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts. The Common Core State Standards clearly communicate what is expected of students at each grade level, allowing teachers to be better equipped to know exactly what they need to help students learn and establish individualized benchmarks for them. The Common Core State Standards focus on core conceptual understandings and procedures starting in the early grades, thus enabling teachers to take the time needed to teach core concepts and procedures well—and to give students the opportunity to master them. The Common Core State Standards for Writing make explicit reference to the writing process approach:

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.5 – Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach; and
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.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 tasks, purposes, and audiences.

With the objective in mind of linking standards and best practice with effective classroom instruction, Schoolwide has introduced Writing Fundamentals.

WRITING FUNDAMENTALS

Learning to write is often an intimidating and frustrating process for students and teachers who fear their lack of experience or skill will be a hindrance to success. Many teachers who teach writing are not writers themselves, and they may struggle with the process approach to writing. Strickland and Strickland (2002) report that the “teaching of writing in American schools is still stuck in a traditional mode focused on the alignment of a completed theme or essay with what is considered standard, edited English. This traditional method of teaching writing

focuses on the product—the finished piece, the composition, fixated with the format of the essay and research paper, and obsessed with the polite usage and correct style” (p. 79).

The gap between the process approach to writing and the more traditional approach needs to be filled with powerful instructional materials designed to aid teachers and students in moving forward with writing practice and application.

Writing Fundamentals was designed to provide support materials, including the mentor texts—a key to the instructional parameters of the process approach. It is the goal of Schoolwide, through Writing Fundamentals, to build that vital bridge between research on best practice and implementation in the classroom.

Knowing that writing is a complex, recursive process, experts have described and outlined the writing process in stages that reflect the true nature of the act of writing (Graves, 1983, 1994; Calkins, 1991; Harwayne, 2000; Murray, 1993; Fountas & Pinnell, 2001; and Atwell, 1985, 1999).

Writing Fundamentals provides students with multiple opportunities for learning (and practicing) writing skills and strategies through a wide variety of instruction in each unit of study. In fact, direct instruction of strategies and guided practice are an important component of Writing Fundamentals, as is explicit focus on, and close readings of, high-quality text (e.g., Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Cramer, 2001; Honeycutt & Pritchard, 2005; Poindexter & Oliver, 1998–1999).

Teachers are provided with interactive read-aloud lessons, mini-lessons, lesson extensions, and appendices to implement and sustain units of study and are given modeling suggestions for effective instruction and to increase student engagement. The lessons in each unit support a structured environment and routine that is conducive to student writing improvement.

The structure of the process approach used in Writing Fundamentals is: Immersion, Generating Ideas, Collecting (more information), Selecting (an idea), Drafting, Revising, Editing, Publishing, and Assessment (including multiple performance rubrics and a student self-reflection).

Schoolwide recognizes that knowledge about writing is only complete with an understanding of the complexity of the procedural actions in which writers engage as they produce texts. Such understanding is twofold. First,

facility with writing includes the development, through extended practice over years, of a repertoire of routines, skills, strategies, and practices for generating, revising, and editing different kinds of texts. Second, writing skills must grow in concert with the development of reflective abilities and meta-awareness about writing. Living a “writerly life” is, as much as possible, instructionally geared toward making sense within the literacy curriculum so that students have ample room to grow as individuals and writers (NCTE, 2004).

INTERACTIVE READ-ALOUD LESSONS, MINI-LESSONS, & MODELING

By providing teachers with interactive read-aloud lessons and mini-lessons to implement and sustain units of study, Writing Fundamentals helps teachers create a structured environment and routine in their classroom that is conducive to student writing improvement. Throughout the read-aloud lessons and mini-lessons in all the units of study, teachers model for students via close readings of mentor texts how to read like writers, use a variety of writing strategies, and interact with texts (Atwell, 1987; Calkins, 1986; Cramer, 2001; Honeycutt & Pritchard, 2005; Poindexter & Oliver, 1998–1999).

Modeling through the use of sample language to support instruction is a foundational part of Writing Fundamentals. Because the lessons have been developed with effective instruction that encourages deeper study of the writing process, students can learn about a structured process that is broken into manageable pieces through highly scaffolded writing lessons, thus reducing the stress associated with text production. The predictable and recursive (and reflective) components of the Writing Fundamentals writing process mirror the structure of the units from pre-writing generation of ideas through publication and meta-cognition of the work undertaken. The lessons for each unit prompt student thinking and learning about writing and provide plentiful practice through the writing process and over time.

TEACHER TALK & TEACHER WALK

Writing Fundamentals recognizes that not every teacher is an expert in every genre (nor are teachers familiar with every children’s literature author), so the developers have created important introductory materials to support instruction in every unit of study. The “Immersion” section of each study introduces the teacher to the genre or text type through definitions, helpful preparation for teaching,

charts with features of the genre or text type, interactive read-aloud lessons (to support the initial study of a genre during Immersion), and extensions and appendices to create a strong foundation for learning about a genre. Author studies are similarly supported through materials for Immersion—with information about the featured author and connections between the works being studied in that unit.

The developers of Writing Fundamentals believe that when teachers have authentic voices, their students have them, too (Graves, 1993, p. 3). When using Writing Fundamentals, teachers demonstrate their thought process as they model good writing for students. By thinking aloud as they consider the different writing strategies suggested, teachers model the critical thinking skills necessary for students to succeed in all areas of their learning lives.

COLLABORATION & CONFERRING

A collaborative environment in which students can learn—working together in partnerships, small groups, and with teacher-guided practice—is another mainstay of Writing Fundamentals. In fact, in all Writing Fundamentals mini-lessons, time is set aside for students to talk with and listen to one another about their work, to talk in general about their interests (which may lead to self-selected topics for writing), and to engage in discussions with the whole group.

Writing Fundamentals values the fact that writers often converse in order to rehearse the language and content that will go into what they write. Conversation during the writing workshop provides an impetus or occasion for writing. Writing Fundamentals knows it is helpful for writers to discuss with peers what they have done, partly to get ideas from their peers and, to a certain extent, to see what they, the writers, say when they try to explain their thinking.

Writing conferences are also very helpful uses of talk during the writing process as well as opportunities for teachers to informally assess students. Therefore, conference questions, wherein student writers respond to inquiries about their work, provide teachers an opportunity to make suggestions or reorient what the writer is doing through conferring with students individually or in small groups. Conference questions are offered in every mini-lesson to further opportunities for talking one-on-one with students.

THE COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS, SEMINAL RESEARCH, & WRITING FUNDAMENTALS

The authors of Writing Fundamentals have investigated seminal research and, in 2012, completed an analysis of the Common Core State Standards for Writing, Speaking and Listening, and Language to ensure that Writing Fundamentals is in compliance with our customers' needs educationally, instructionally, and philosophically.

Our selection of units of study for grades K–8 is expansive and based on the three text types explicitly noted in the CCSS: narrative, informational/explanatory, and opinion/argument. Furthermore, the accompanying mentor texts meet the CCSS criteria with regards to content, cultural diversity, and text complexity.

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