

Mendham Township School District  
Writing Curriculum  
Grade 1

**Grade 1 Unit 1: Launching with Small Moments**

Stage 1: Desired Results

Writing Level Benchmark: Narrative Continuum 3

Unit Goals:

- First grade writers see themselves as authors, valuing small moments from their lives.
- First grade writers develop writing stamina by gradually increasing the amount of writing time each day.
- Writers get an idea of what it is like to go through the writing process and publish a piece at the end.
- Writers know the structures and routines of writing workshop.
- Writers rehearse their writing prior to drafting by making a movie in their mind, telling stories one part at a time across fingers, touching each page and saying what happens, and sketching (NOT DRAWING) across pages in booklets (booklet pages have a box above for sketching and lines below for writing; sketches are done across pages first then students draft).
- Writers engage in partner work to improve their writing.
- Writers think of small moments from their lives to write about.
- Writers write several small moment personal narrative stories.

Essential Questions:

- What are the routines of writing workshop?
- How do writers write stories?
- What is the writing process? (collecting, rehearsing, drafting, revising, editing, publishing, celebrating)
- What are small moment personal narratives?
- How do writers solve problems on their own during writing workshop?
- How do writers get ideas for small moment stories?
- How do writers rehearse their stories?
- How do writers draft their stories?
- How do writers revise their stories?
- How do writers discuss their work with their writing partner?
- What are the steps to publishing a piece?

Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to write stories independently during writing workshop.
- Students will be able to generate topics for small moments on their own.
- Students will be able to sketch their stories before drafting.
- Students will be able to use strategies for spelling unknown words.
- Students will be able to focus their stories on a small moment in time and produce at least a 3-page booklet that has a beginning, middle, and end.

- Students will be able to use strategies for rehearsing their stories.
- Students will be able to draft their stories by unfolding the events bit-by-bit from the movie in their mind.
- Students will be able to use strategies for revising their stories.
- Students will be able to engage in conversation with their partners about their writing.
- Students will publish a piece of writing and present it to the class.

Common Core Standards for ELA:  
 W.1. 3, 5, 6  
 SL. 1. 1-6

### Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations  
 Writing Conferences  
 Writing Pieces  
 Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

### Stage 3- Learning Plan

Teaching Points:

#### Immersion

- Reading aloud small moment stories
- Oral storytelling
- Pulling out a small moment from a narrative story
- Reading aloud stories and deciding if it is a small moment- or not
- Writing class stories about shared “small moment” experiences

Structures and Routines-*Some of these can be taught during mid-workshop interruptions and/or share time.*

- To write a true story, one thing that writers can do is to think of something that they do, get a picture in their mind, and draw the story of what they did on their paper. Then, they write that story (we think, we draw, we write) (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).
- Writers have a saying: ‘When you’re done, you’ve just begun.’ When they finish one story, they get to work by adding more to the picture or to the words—and sometimes they get a new piece of paper and start a new story. Writers keep working on their writing for the whole time during writing workshop (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).
- Writers, like carpenters and doctors, have special tools and special places to keep their tools. They always keep their tools in the same place so that when they get a good idea for a story, they don’t have to waste time looking for a pen or paper or their writing folder (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).
- Writers begin with an idea for a story, and then put that idea on the paper. (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).
- Writers don’t give up when they have an ‘uh-oh’ feeling because they aren’t sure how to draw

something (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).

- Writers use both pictures *and* words when they write. Some writers write words and labels beside the picture, and some write sentences at the bottom of the page but every writer writes with pictures *and* words (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).
- When writers want to write a word, they stretch that word out like a rubber band, saying it really slowly. They say it again and again, listening for the first sound. When they hear that sound, they put the letter that makes the sound onto the paper. If they don't know that letter, they put a little mark on the paper. Then they say the word again and listen for the next sound and put another letter on the paper for that sound" (*Launching the Writing Workshop*).
- Writers use word walls to write words in a snap when writing stories. (*Small Moments: Personal Narrative Writing*).
- Writers resist interrupting conferences by...
  - o asking a writing partner for help and getting right back to work.
  - o knowing what is an emergency and what can wait until the teacher is free. (go over examples)
  - o knowing what are problems they can solve on their own, such as sharpening pencils, getting more paper, etc.
  - o checking the classroom resources such as charts or word walls

### Collecting

- Writers get an idea for a small moment story by...
  - o Writing the big idea on the watermelon and the smaller ideas on the seeds. Then they pick one of the seeds and write a story about just that one time.
  - o thinking of one time they (or looking at their list of one time they)
    - were with a special person
    - were doing something they loved
    - were at a special place
    - did something for the first time

### Rehearsing (formerly called planning/"writers rehearse before writing like actors rehearse before performing)

- Writers get started writing a small moment by...
  - o planning out a story that happened to them across a storyboard. They do this by making a movie in their mind and sketching everything that happened first, next, next, etc. across pages (NO DRAFTING AT THIS TIME).
  - o picking out the most important part from their storyboard. Then they make a movie in their mind and think of everything that happened during that one moment and sketch it out across another storyboard.
  - o Telling their story (from small moment boxes above) across the pages. They draw one event or glue each picture on each page and just write about that part.
  - o Touching the pages, saying what will go on that page, sketching a quick picture on each page to hold the idea, and then writing words to go with each picture. (*Touch, Say, Sketch, Write Method*)
- Writers work with writing partners to plan their stories out loud.
- When working with writing partners, writers read their stories in two ways: first by telling the story,

using big and beautiful language, and then reading all that they have written, touching the words as they read them.

- Writing partners sit hip-to-hip, holding the booklet between them.
- Writers act out parts of their story with their writing partners.

### Drafting

- When writers finish rehearsing in at least two different ways, they then add words to their stories by unfolding the movie in their mind bit by bit. (NOTE: The process of rehearsing and drafting is continued automatically as students complete writing pieces; it is expected that students may be rehearsing while others are drafting, and vice versa; Continue this process when moving on to revising. At that time, some students may be rehearsing, while others are drafting and/or revising).

### Revising

- Writers need to read their writing as though they have never read it before, asking themselves, “Does this make sense? Is this clear?” And, if it doesn’t or it’s not, then they revise their writing to make sure it does make sense.
- Writers write their stories with more details, telling more about each and every step as the story moves forward. They put themselves back in the shoes of the character and think, “What is the very next thing that happened?” Then they write it. They do this again and again as they write stories from beginning to end.
- When writers write endings to their stories, they don’t have to stray far from what’s actually happening in their story. Writers know that they will usually get a better ending if they stay *close-in to the moment*. One way writers do this is to say what they thought or felt (inside the story) during that moment (*Small Moments: Personal Narrative Writing*).
- Writers have actual conversations with their partners when they meet. They can say the following things to each other:
  - “Let me show you what I did in my writing.”
  - “This is what I did today...”
  - “Listen to my story.”
  - “This is what I am working on...”

Partners can respond by saying:

- “I like the part...”
  - “I like how you...”
  - “It makes me feel...”
  - “It reminds me of...”
- Writers revise their story by adding an ending that reflects back with a thought or feeling about what happened instead of telling the next thing that happened.
  - Writers revise their stories by taking away parts that are not about the small moment. They do this by thinking what is the one time my story is all about? Then they read their story and ask themselves, is this part about that one time? If not, then they take it out.
  - Writers add dialogue to their stories by rereading their pieces, and thinking back to the moment they are writing about. They think of the actual words that someone said (or might have said). Then, go back into their stories and add in the exact words (*The Craft of Revision*).
  - Writers rewrite the most important page in their story by taking smaller and smaller steps through the events and thoughts on that one page.

### Editing

- Writers edit their stories by...
  - re-reading their piece and checking for spacing between words.
  - re-reading their piece and checking to make sure letters are formed correctly.
  - Re-reading their piece and checking to make sure sentences begin with capital letters.
  - Re-reading their piece and checking to make sure sentences end with a punctuation mark.

### Publishing

- Writers reread completed pieces and select one to fancy up and publish.
- Writers make sure words are written neatly and they may add color to their sketches.
- Writers add covers to published pieces that include a title, author's name, and date.

### Celebrating

- Writers share their published piece with the writing community.

### Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer.

### Resources- Various Mentor Texts

Strategic Writing Conferences; *Smart Conversations that Move Young Writers Forward*, Carl Anderson, 2008.

*A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1; Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011

Launch a Primary Writing Workshop; *Getting Started with Units of Study for Primary Writing, Grades K-2*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2010

## Grade 1 Unit 2: Writing for Readers

### Stage 1: Desired Results

Writing Level Benchmark: Narrative Continuum 3

#### Unit Goals:

- First grade writers are challenged to write in such a way that readers can read their writing.
- First grade writers will show a command of end punctuation, spell common patterned words, and will be resourceful and phonetic in spelling unknown words.
- First grade writers will write more readable small moment personal narratives.

#### Essential Questions:

- Why should writing be readable to readers?
- How do writers write readable pieces?
- How do writers spell unknown words?
- How do writers use word walls to help them write words in a snap?
- How can partners help writers write readable pieces?

#### Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to distinguish between readable and non-readable pieces.
- Students will be able to use strategies to write unknown words.
- Students will be able to use the word wall to write words in a snap and therefore improve writing fluency.
- Students will be able to peer edit for missing words, spelling and punctuation.
- Students will be able to write focused small moment pieces that readers can read.

#### Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 3, 5, 6

SL. 1. 1-6

### Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations

Writing Conferences

Writing Pieces

Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

### Stage 3- Learning Plan

#### Teaching Points:

*\*Students will continue writing small moment personal narratives during this unit.*

*\*Refer to “Writing for Readers: Teaching Skills and Strategies” in Lucy Calkins’ Units of Study for Primary Writing*

### **Part 1: Inspiring Children to Write for Readers**

- Writers get inspired to work harder and in new ways so that others can read their writing (I).
- Writers look at their writing to determine which pieces are more- and less-, readable, noting the qualities of each (II).
- Writers set goals for themselves to improve their writing.

### **Part 2: Recording Sounds, Words, Silences and Meanings**

- Writers listen for and record more sounds in the words they write (III).
- Writers rely on sight words, not just stretching words and recording the sounds, to write with more fluency (IV).
- Writers leave a finger-sized blank space when they do not hear any more sounds in a word (V).
- Writers focus their narratives on small moments (VI).

### **Part 3: Focusing on High Frequency Words**

- Writers learn to spell more words and write words in a snap, without sounding them out (VII).
- Writers use their individual copies of the word wall as a resource when they write (VIII).
- Writers need to write one story each day, across three pages, with a picture and a sentence or two on each page, while at the same time writing so others can read it (IX).

### **Part 4: Writing with Partners**

- Writers write so others can read it, and writing partners will try to read their work (X).
- Writers have writing partners to help them find and fill in missing words (XI).
- Writers help each other include more letters in each word, making their writing easier to read (XII).
- Writers help each other spell word-wall words correctly and easily when they write (XIII).
- Writers help each other write with at least a sentence on each page and periods at the end of the sentence (XIV).

### **Part 5: Preparing for Publication**

- Writers sort their writing into two piles (easy-to-read and hard-to-read) (XV).
- Writers choose a piece to publish from their easy-to-read pile. Writers fancy up that piece by adding coloring and a cover page (XV).
- Writers share their stories with guests and classmates (XVI).

#### **Differentiation:**

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer.

#### **Resources: Various Mentor Texts**

Strategic Writing Conferences; *Smart Conversations that Move Young Writers Forward*, Carl Anderson, 2008.

A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1; *Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011

Launch a Primary Writing Workshop; *Getting Started with Units of Study for Primary Writing, Grades K-2*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2010

## Grade 1 Unit 3: Procedural Writing: How-to Books

### Stage 1: Desired Results

#### Writing Level Benchmark:

#### Unit Goals:

- Writers will identify the difference between writing that tells a story (narrative writing) and writing that teaches (procedural writing).
- Writers will generate many ideas for how-to books.
- Writers will write out steps that will teach readers how to do something.
- Writers will draw illustrations that will help teach readers how to do something.
- Writers will work with partners to determine the accuracy of their how-to's.
- Writers will use transitional words to help readers follow the steps in their how-to's.

#### Essential Questions:

- What is a how-to book?
- How do I generate ideas for how-to books?
- How do I practice telling the steps in a how-to book?
- How do I write out the steps in a how-to book?
- How do I draw pictures that will help readers understand the steps in my how-to book?
- How can a partner help me make my how-to book clearer?
- What words can I use to help readers follow the steps in my how-to book?
- What words can I use to give readers warnings or cautions in my how-to book?
- How do I make an introduction page for my how-to book?
- How do I make a materials list for my how-to book?
- How do I make an ending page for my how-to book?
- What other strategies that I have already learned in Writing Workshop can I use to emphasize certain parts of my how-to book to the reader?

#### Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to use different strategies to generate how-to book ideas.
- Students will be able to sketch the steps to their how-to books across the page.
- Students will be able to practice writing their how-to's by saying the directions that they will write out loud.
- Students will be able to draw illustrations that will help teach the reader.
- Students will be able to work with partners to help make their how-to's clearer and more specific.
- Students will be able to act out their how-to's to help them write down the steps in the procedure.
- Students will be able to revise the parts of their how-to books where their directions don't quite work.
- Students will be able to write an introduction page for their how-to books.
- Students will be able to write a materials list for their how-to books.
- Students will be able to write an ending page for their how-to books.
- Students will be able to use the writing around the classroom and chunking strategies to spell words.
- Students will be able to use either a period or exclamation mark at the end of each sentence in their how-to books.

#### Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 2, 5, 6, 7, 8  
SL. 1. 1-6

## Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations  
Writing Conferences  
Writing Pieces  
Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

## Stage 3- Learning Plan

Teaching Points:

### Collecting/Rehearsing:

*In this portion of the unit, students should be generating tons of how-to book ideas and rehearsing several of them with the strategies listed below. Later in the unit, students will select one (or two) of these ideas to take further through the writing process.*

1. Writers immerse themselves in mentor how-to books and notice how authors write them.
2. Writers collect ideas for how-to books by thinking about something that they know how to do, or that they are “experts” on, that they would like to teach others how to do.
3. One way writers can come up with these ideas is by thinking of different people and what they could teach them (Ex. Parents, friends, teachers, siblings, younger children, older adults, pets, etc.)
4. (Optional lesson for those who need help generating more ideas) Another way that writers can come up with ideas for how-to books is by gathering objects that they like to use in the classroom (or the objects they use at home) and thinking about how they could teach someone else how to use them (these objects can also spark ideas for how-to’s on classroom or home procedures like, “How to get ready for lunch,” “How to organize your desk,” “How to make your bed,” or “How to feed your goldfish.”)
5. When writers have gathered some ideas that they like, they can practice sketching the steps to their books out on paper.
6. Writers can plan out how-to books but touching the boxes for each step and rehearsing their teaching words out loud (to themselves), perhaps changing them a little each time they rehearse, so they are sure to teach their readers exactly how to do the thing they want them to do.
7. Writers act out the steps to their how-to’s, writing down each step exactly as they act it out.
8. Writers make sure their directions will work by reading them to a partner, having the partner act out the steps, and adding more words to their writing when the directions don’t quite work.
9. Writers add clear and precise pictures and words to each step of their how-to books to help their readers understand their directions. They can make pictures that zoom in to show a specific action, and they can choose specific action or describing words so the reader knows exactly what to do.

### Choosing a Seed/Drafting:

*Before students start to draft, they should each choose a seed idea that they want to work on throughout the rest of this unit. This seed should be chosen from all of the sketches and rehearsal that they did previously in the unit. If students finish revising, editing, and publishing this how-to before the rest of the class, they can always go back and select an additional seed to take through the remainder of the writing process.*

10. Just like mentor authors, writers add special features or supports to their how-to books to help readers, such as a titles, a list of things the reader will need, numbers for each step, and pictures that help teach

specific steps.

11. Writers use specific words to help their readers follow the steps in their how-to's such as "first, next last, finally," and words that give warnings such as, "always, be careful to, don't ever, or never."
12. Writers can create introduction pages for their how-to's that introduce the topic, tell people why they might care about learning how to do this thing, and invite or persuade readers to try something new (Ex. "Have you ever wanted to try...?").
13. Writers can create ending pages that sound like a send-off to the readers, wishing them well (Ex. "Now you can..." or "Have fun doing...").
14. Writers can use all they know about writing to help them teach in how-to books, such as making speech bubbles to show dialogue in pictures, adding labels to make their pictures clearer, or making letters bold to emphasize something to the reader.

#### Revising/Editing:

15. Before writers publish their pieces, they work with partners to make sure that they have taught the reader everything they need to in each step, that each step makes sense, and that they have done all that they can to teach their audience what they are trying to teach them.
16. Writers reread their how-to books, making sure that they have tried their best to spell hard-to-spell words. They read their books word by word, find those that don't quite look right, and then look around the room to see if they can find it written somewhere. If not, they say the word again slowly, look at each part of it, and write the parts or spelling patterns they know.
17. Writers reread each step in their how-to books and listen for the places where their sentences end. They can put periods at the end of sentences that sound like telling and exclamation marks at the end of sentences that sound exciting or like urgent warnings.
18. Writers can use a colon just before they list a bunch of things such, as a list of ingredients for a recipe or a list of materials a person needs do something.

#### Publishing:

*Depending on the time left in the unit or how you choose to run your workshop as a grade level, students may either celebrate their writing at this point or take the time to copy over their piece so that all of their revisions are included in a "published" version.*

#### Celebrating

#### Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer.

Resources: Various Mentor Texts

Strategic Writing Conferences; *Smart Conversations that Move Young Writers Forward*, Carl Anderson, 2008.

*A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1; Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011

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# Grade 1 Unit 4: Informational Books: All About Books Incorporating How-to and Opinion Based Writing

## Stage 1: Desired Results

### Writing Level Benchmark:

#### Unit Goals:

- Writers will notice the differences between story writing (narrative), how-to writing (procedural), informational writing, and opinion writing.
- Writers will teach others about a topic by writing informational books.
- Writers will organize the information in their books into chapters (or subtopics).
- Writers will create illustrations that help the reader learn about the topic.
- Writers will include how-to writing in their informational books.
- Writers will include opinion writing in their informational books.
- Writers will meet with partners to help them generate topic ideas, revise their books, and edit their final pieces.

#### Essential Questions:

- What is an informational book?
- How do we generate ideas for informational books?
- How do we organize the information in our books into chapters?
- What is a table of contents?
- How do we make a table of contents for our book?
- How do we create illustrations that help readers learn from our books?
- How do we include a how-to chapter in our informational book?
- What is an opinion?
- How do we include our opinions in our informational books?
- How can partners help us generate ideas for informational books?
- How can partners help us revise and edit our informational books?

#### Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to use strategies to generate ideas for informational books.
- Students will be able to write independently during the Writing Workshop by generating more topics, starting new books, and revising old books.
- Students will be able to draw pictures that help teach the reader.
- Students will be able to organize their information into chapters.
- Students will be able to make a Table of Contents for their book.
- Students will be able to choose the appropriate text features and paper that will best help readers learn from their books.
- Students will be able to include a how-to section in their informational book.
- Students will be able to state their opinion about a topic and say why they feel that way.
- Students will be able to revise their books by using specific words to stretch their ideas.
- Students will be able to work with partners to help them generate ideas, revise their writing, and edit their pieces.

#### Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8

SL. 1. 1-6

## Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations

Writing Conferences

Writing Pieces

Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

## Stage 3- Learning Plan

*\*How this unit takes shape depends on how you, as a grade level, want to run your Writing Workshop. Calkins suggests that students in this unit create many info books, coming up with ideas, writing across the pages of all-about booklets quickly, and then writing about a different idea in another booklet. As the unit progresses, she suggests students work in almost a spiraling fashion where they continue to generate new books that include the new strategies that they are learning, as well as revisiting and revising old books to include these new strategies. Eventually, they choose one to publish. I have written this unit with that procedure in mind. However, you can easily have students choose the topic that they want to work on (from all of the ideas and sketches that they have generated) much earlier in the writing process. Then, they will just use the strategies solely for the revision of that one piece, rather than for writing new pieces and revising a number of old ones. It's up to you.*

*Note: Calkins calls them “informational books” or “info books” rather than “all-about books” because they are really a combination of several writing genres. They are all-about books, but they include how-to sections and opinion sections. Just didn't want to cause any confusion.*

Teaching Points:

Collecting/Rehearsing:

1. Writers immerse themselves in mentor all-about books, noticing how authors write them, and what information is included in them.
2. Writers come up with ideas for informational books by thinking about the topics that they are experts on, the things they know so much about that they could teach others about it. One way they can do this is by thinking about the people they know all about, the places they go, and the things they do.
3. Writers come up with ideas for informational books by talking with friends and people that know them well to help them realize all of the things that make them unique.
4. When writers find a topic that they want to write about, they say everything they know about topic across their fingers, and then write all about that topic across the pages of a booklet.
5. When writers finish an informational book, they can choose to generate more topic ideas, write another info book, or go back and revise info books that they have already written.

Drafting:

6. Writers make teaching pictures to help readers learn from their info books. Teaching pictures have labels, zoom in on the important parts of objects, show actions using arrows, or have captions that explain the picture, so that readers learn not only from the words of the book but also from the illustrations.
7. Writers notice how mentor informational texts are organized with titles, how-to pages, chapters, headings, and/or a table of contents. Writers need to organize their info books by sorting their information into categories and writing these categories (or chapters) in a table of contents (if writers are working on several books at the same time, they can go back into the books they have already written, reorganize the information into chapters, and make a table of contents).

8. Writers think carefully about what text features will help them teach the reader about their topic and select the type of paper that will support this text feature (for example, if a student is writing about bicycles, he/she may want to select diagram paper to make a diagram of the parts of a bicycle, types-of paper to write about all of the places he/she likes to ride the bike, and/or how-to paper to write about how-to ride a bike).
9. Writers often include one or more how-to sections in their info books. To write this how-to section, writers look at the charts around the room to recall all that they learned about writing how-to's in the last unit.

#### Revising:

10. Writers revise their info books and add more to each page by thinking, "What more can I say about that?"
11. Writers revise their info books and add more to each page by trying to start an additional sentence with words like "all, most, some, many, and few." (Example: If a student is writing about bicycles and they wrote "Bicycles have wheels," they could add a line that says, "All bicycles have two wheels," "Some bicycles have thick wheels and some have thin wheels," or "Many bicycles have places where you can attach training wheels.")
12. Writers revise their info books by thinking about what questions readers might ask them about their topics and answering those questions. They can ask a partner to read their info book and ask them questions about places in their books that are confusing.
13. Writers revise their info books and add more to each page by using comparisons (similes) to describe new information that the reader might need help picturing (Example: "A bicycle wheel looks like a big donut with a huge hole and thin sides).
14. Writers include one or more chapters that include their opinions about the topic. First, they say their opinion. Then, they say why they think that (Example: "I think the best place to ride a bicycle is on Patriot's Path. When you ride there, you feel like you're on an adventure in the woods. Also, the path is bumpy, so you feel like you're on a rollercoaster as you're riding through.").

#### Editing/Publishing:

*If students are still working on more than one piece at this point in the unit, now is the time that they must commit to publishing one. If they are selecting their seed now, the first lesson in this section should be reviewing all of the drafting and revising strategies you have taught so far using the charts around the room to "spruce up" that final piece (because they may not have used some of the strategies on the piece that they are choosing). If the students have only been working on one piece for a while, they can move on to editing.*

15. Writers edit their pieces by asking themselves, "Are all my word wall words spelled correctly? Did I put finger spaces between words? Did I use periods at the end of sentences?" Then, they make changes to make their pieces easier to read.
16. Writers can edit their pieces with partners by going on a word wall word hunt, a lowercase letter hunt, a punctuation hunt, or a sound hunt so that it is easier to read.
17. Writers make their books look the best they can before they put them out into the world. They can add color to their pages, make a cover with a creative title, and/or add an "About the Author" page.

#### Celebrating

##### Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer.

Resources: Various Mentor Texts

Strategic Writing Conferences; *Smart Conversations that Move Young Writers Forward*, Carl Anderson, 2008.

A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1; *Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011

Launch a Primary Writing Workshop; *Getting Started with Units of Study for Primary Writing, Grades K-2*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2010

## Grade 1 Unit 5: Realistic Fiction

### Stage 1: Desired Results

Writing Level Benchmark:

Unit Goals:

- Writers write realistic fiction stories by creating characters with realistic problems.
- Writers include problems and solutions in their realistic fiction stories.
- Writers use many strategies to revise their fiction stories to ensure that their stories make sense to the reader.
- Writers stretch out the problems in their realistic fiction stories to draw the reader in and to create suspense.
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Essential Questions:

- What is realistic fiction?
- How do writers write realistic fiction stories?
- What kinds of problem might characters in realistic fiction face?
- How do writers revise to make their stories even better?
- How do realistic fiction writers stretch out the problem in the story?

Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to write realistic fiction stories that include characters, setting, problem and solution.
- Students will be able to create characters that are like themselves or like people they know.
- Students will be able to problem solve with their writing partners to make their stories the best they can be.
- Students will be able to use strategies for spelling difficult words correctly.
- Students will be able to use strategies to revise their writing to include more details.
- Students will be able to show their characters' feelings instead of telling how their characters feel.
- Students will be able to craft different leads for their stories.
- Students will be able to use mind movies to help them unfold the detail when drafting.
- Students will be able to write powerful endings.

Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 3, 5, 6

SL. 1. 1-6

## Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations  
Writing Conferences  
Writing Pieces  
Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

## Stage 3- Learning Plan

Teaching Points:

### **Part One: Writers Draw on Everything We Know to Write Realistic Fiction Stories**

- Writers get ready to write stories by dreaming. They dream about the possible stories they might one day write. When they get to their writer's desk, they start by writing just the first page to the books that they might someday write. After they have written a bunch of first pages, they choose one to write completely.
- Writers also dream up the characters they want to include in their stories. The characters might be just like them or like other people. They create the character's family life, school life, hobbies, etc.
- Writers imagine different kinds of problems their characters might face and put those characters into those moments of trouble. Then they write lots of first pages to different story ideas that they'll later turn into books.
- Sometimes writers get ideas for their stories by thinking of the books they love and how they might change them around to make them their own.
- Once realistic fiction writers have lots of ideas for a story, they imagine a few different ways their story may go and then decide on one way they like best. One way writers do this is with a planning booklet (see instruction in text on how to set up this booklet).
- Writing partners get together and share their stories by talking about other possible ways the stories could go. They get together and act out different versions of their stories and then ask their partners to help them decide which one is best.
- Realistic fiction writers do not use I, we, my. They use the character's name, or he, she, they, their.
- When writers finish one story, they quickly begin another, imagining how their stories will get stronger and more realistic each time. One way writers can make their next story even better is to think about what their character likes and doesn't like and how this might lead to the problem and solution in their story.
- Another way writers make their stories stronger and more realistic is to think about problems that they have faced in their own lives and then giving their character a new way to solve those problems.

### **Part Two: Lifting the Qualities of Effective Fiction Writing**

- Writers use everything they know about writing to make their stories the best they can be such as...using different kinds of punctuation so their reader's voice changes with the story, making sure handwriting is clear and easy to read, including more sounds as new words are spelled, and using the word wall to spell words in a snap. Other ways writing can be the best is by reading stories aloud with partners and making sure they make sense. Writers decide which strategies they know really well and which ones they'll want to work especially hard on as they write their next story (have students set goals).
- Realistic fiction writers stop and think about the important parts of their stories such as when the character first realizes the problem, when the character faces trouble or something that gets in the way of solving the problem, or when the character finally solves the problem. Writers go back to those

parts and slow them down to make sure that they are showing not telling the character's feelings, using lots of dialogue, action, and thinking.

- Realistic fiction writers remember everything they know about storytelling to help them write well. They know to start with a lead, reveal details about the setting, and storytell what the character is saying or doing in each part of our story. They can act out the scene or close their eyes and picture how the character is moving, what he or she is saying, thinking, and feeling.
- Realistic fiction writers can begin their stories in different ways by telling about the weather, or beginning with the main character doing or saying something very specific.
- When writers write stories, they picture, step by step, what the main character is doing. Sometimes they actually move their bodies a little to help them think about small things the character might do. For example, 'Julissa looked at her book in the mud. She knelt down to pick it up. She scraped the big pieces of mud off of the book. She held it away from her dress as she walked toward school.'" (As you read, demonstrate doing these actions.)

### **Part Three: Stretching out the Problem and Imagining Creative Solutions to Stories**

- Another way realistic fiction writers make stories stronger is by stretching out the problem and not giving the solution away too quickly. They think about what trouble will get in their character's way to make the problem hard to solve." Tip: To make these important parts stand out for the reader, writers use words like... all of a sudden; suddenly; well; just then; before long; all at once; before he/she knew it; and If....wasn't enough.... These phrases let the reader know that something is going to happen.
- Another way writers stretch out the problem in their stories is by showing how the main character reacts to the problem, including what he/she says, thinks, and does. Tip: The main character isn't the only one who reacts to the problem. Other characters may react to the problem in different ways.
- Realistic fiction writers write powerful endings. They try writing one ending that will solve the problem to satisfy the reader, or they may try another ending that will leave the reader wondering. They might even try a third ending where the problem doesn't get solved, but instead the character changes and decides that the problem no longer matters to him or her.
- Realistic fiction writers need to make sure their endings make sense. They get together with their writing partners and ask, "Would that really happen?" or "What would a character have to think or do to make that happen?" Then writers can revise the way the problem gets solved to make sure their stories are realistic.

### **Part Four: Choosing Our Best Work to Revise and Publish**

- Writers always revise. They can go back to the pieces in their folders, adding or taking away parts to push themselves to make their stories even better. One way they add or remove parts to their stories is by using paper flaps or strips. Another way is to take apart their booklets with a staple remover and then adding or removing pages to make their books longer or shorter in certain places.
- Writers work with partners to think of what to add in and what to take out of their stories. Writing partners help them figure out what is missing and which parts need more information.
- To revise their writing, writers think about how their characters are feeling. Writers show how their characters feel when they write the details that describe what those feelings might look like; either on a character's face or in the way the character moves his or her body.
- Another way writers revise is to make mind movies of their exact story and imagine they are the main character, living through each part. They try to write down, bit by bit, exactly what they are imagining so their readers can picture it, too. They know the tiniest details help their readers out a lot.
- Another way writers revise their stories is by thinking, "Which page is the most important? Where in

my story does the main character have the biggest feelings?’ Then, they can rewrite that page from top to bottom, using a flap or a new blank page, this time stretching out the moment even more, including details that show feelings and slow down the actions.

- Another way writers revise is by rereading the parts of their stories, like the beginning or ending, and think about what they want their readers to picture in their minds. Then they can ask, ‘Did I do a good job here?’ and ‘Does this help the reader get a clear picture?’ If not, they rewrite it a few different ways using setting, action, or dialogue, and then choose the best version. Tip: Have students look at mentor texts to see how they begin.
- Another way writers can use their favorite realistic fiction books as mentors is by looking at their just-right books and asking, “What are ways this writer stretched out the problem?” “What are ways this writer developed the character?” and then think about which of those things they could try in their own writing.
- Writers know it’s important that their stories make sense to their readers. Often, they go back and make sure their writing sounds like they want it to. They reread, adding anything that they forgot or needs fixing. They use extra strips of paper to add what’s missing.
- Writers reread to make sure what they have written is clear and easy to follow. They know how to add in words that they forgot and punctuation they haven’t used.
- Writers make sure their stories are easy to read. One way to help their readers is to do their very best when spelling new words. They make sure word wall words are spelled correctly and sometimes if longer words are tricky to spell, they spend extra time thinking about them. They can try to write the word in different ways, listening for the sounds and thinking about possible ways to write those sounds, or they can close our eyes and imagine what the word might look like. Then, they look across the ways they’ve spelled the word and pick the best one.

#### Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer.

#### Resources: Various Mentor Texts

Strategic Writing Conferences; *Smart Conversations that Move Young Writers Forward*, Carl Anderson, 2008.

A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1; *Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011

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## Grade 1 Unit 6: Opinion Letters

### Stage 1: Desired Results

#### Writing Level Benchmark:

#### Unit Goals:

- Writers will recognize the difference between writing that tells a story, writing that teaches you facts, and writing that persuades.
- Writers will write letters with the purpose of persuading the reader.
- Writers will include lists of reasons to make their writing more persuasive.
- Writers will include mini-stories (anecdotes) to make their writing more persuasive.
- Writers will write their letters as if they are talking to the reader (voice).
- Writers will write with a specific audience in mind and include the details that would pertain to that audience.

#### Essential Questions:

- What does “persuade” mean?
- What is an opinion?
- What is the letter-writing format?
- How do I generate ideas for persuasive letters?
- How do I make my letters more convincing?
- What is audience?
- How do I make my writing sound like I am talking to the reader?
- How does who I am writing my letter to affect how I write my letter?
- How do I make my letters as readable as possible?

#### Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to generate topics for persuasive letters about things that they want.
- Students will be able to generate topics for persuasive letters about things that will make the world a better place.
- Students will be able to identify the audiences of their letters.
- Students will be able to make their writing sound like they are talking to the reader.
- Students will be able to list reasons to make their writing more convincing.
- Students will be able to include mini-stories to make their writing more convincing.
- Students will be able to add details to certain parts of their mini-stories to make their writing more convincing.
- Students will be able to include possible solutions to the issues they write about.
- Students will be able to write a letter with proper formatting.
- Students will be able to use editing strategies to make their letters as readable as possible.

#### Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8

SL. 1. 1-6

### Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations

Writing Conferences

## Writing Pieces

Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

### Stage 3- Learning Plan

*\*Calkins suggests that students write many persuasive letters as they work through this unit, drafting, revising, and editing as they go. Essentially, she wants students to continuously write with vigor while we as educators understand that their earlier products may not include the same depth and craft as their later products. However, you could decide as a team that you want the entire class to pause at one point, pick the letter they want to work on for the rest of the unit, and then take that one letter through the rest of the process making it the best it can be. It's up to you.*

*\*This unit can be done as a pen pal unit, although students would have to pick topics that they would want to convince their pen pals about. You might want to pick just one or two persuasive letters that the students write with their pen pals in mind for them to send while they continue to write letters to other audiences.*

*\*Calkins does not include any lessons on how to format a letter in this unit. You could do these lessons separately before or during the unit, or you could do them when students write their "get-to-know-you" letters to pen pals.*

#### Teaching Points:

##### Collecting/Rehearsing/Drafting:

1. Writers can collect ideas for writing opinion letters by thinking of a part of their lives and asking themselves, "What do I want that would make this part of my life better?" (Ex. School- "I want to have a longer time to eat lunch." Home- "I want to have my own television in my room." Classroom- "I want to be able to sit next to my friends in class.")
2. Persuasive writers don't just write about things they want. Writers also use writing to ask or argue for things they think might make the world a better place. To do this, they look closely at the world around them in order to see issues and problems they want to address (Ex. "Mendham should have more sidewalks for us to walk on." "Everyone in America should have a home to live in.").
3. As writers write persuasive letters, they think not only about what they want to argue for, but also about to whom they will write their letter to. They might ask themselves, "Who can help me solve this problem?" and then include details in their letters that would matter to that person.
4. Writers write letters that sound like they are talking to the reader. To do this, writers first say in their minds what they are going to write. Then, they touch the part of the page on which they will write and say out loud what they are planning to write. Last, they write it down.
5. Another way that writers can write letters that sound like they are talking to the reader is by pretending that their partners are the people they are writing to. Then, they say out loud what they want to say in the letter. They can practice saying it in a few different ways so they know exactly what they will write when they put the words on the page.
6. Before writers send their letters, they must make sure that they have done everything they can do to make it as easy to read as possible. They reread their letters to find places where they may have left out a word or idea, and then they add the missing parts. They also use the charts around the room (or a writer's checklist) to help them check that they have edited their writing to make it the best it can be.

##### Revising:

7. Writers add lists of strong reasons to their persuasive letters so that their readers will be more likely to listen to what they have to say. If writers get stuck when thinking of reasons, they can say, "One reason this is important to solve is..." and "Another reason this is important to solve is..."
8. Another way that writers can make their letters more persuasive is by including a short small moment story (or mini-story) about the problem so the reader has a clear picture of what they hope to solve

(Ex. In a persuasive letter about wanting to have more time to eat lunch, students could write mini-stories about times when they were so hungry and were told that they had to clean up before they had time to finish their food).

9. Writers add lots of details to the most important parts of their mini-stories to help readers see exactly what the issue is (Ex. In the mini-story about not having time to finish their lunch, students could add details about how they could hear their stomachs rumbling and feel their heads aching when they were told that lunch was already over).
10. Writers add the possible solutions to the problems and issues they want to solve right into their letters. First they think of exactly what they want the reader to do, and then they write that in their letters.

#### Editing/Publishing:

11. Writers continue to use charts and checklists to fix up their writing before they send their letters. Another thing they must look for when editing is that they use capital letters not only at the beginning of every sentence but also as the first letter in a person's name.
12. Writers make their writing readable by using punctuation to help the reader understand what they are trying to say. They use periods at the ends of telling sentences, question marks when they are asking the reader questions, and exclamation marks at the ends of really exciting sentences.

#### Celebrating

#### Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer.

Resources: Various Mentor Texts

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## Grade 1 Unit 7: Authors as Mentors; Personal Narrative with an Emphasis on Volume & Stamina

### Stage 1: Desired Results

Writing Level Benchmark: Narrative Continuum 4

#### Unit Goals:

- Writers look closely at the work of one published writer and learn to let that writer function as a mentor.
- Writers embark on a life of noticing craftsmanship and then applying that craft to their own work, lifting the quality of their writing by doing so.
- Writers write with increased stamina and productivity (first graders will be writing approximately four booklets, each with 3 pages and several sentences per page, during this unit).

**\*A word of caution:** This unit is about strengthening narrative craft. It is *not* a unit for writers to craft adaptations of an author's book. If you are studying Kevin Henkes as a mentor author, your writers will *not* walk away with eight to ten versions of "Sammy Worried" stories where they themselves worry and worry themselves into a tither, only to find a best friend with similar issues and find a place in the world.

#### Essential Questions:

- What is a mentor? What is a mentor text?
- How can writers use mentor texts to improve their own writing?
- What craft techniques do writers use?
- How do writers increase stamina and productivity?

#### Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to identify craft techniques in writing by published authors.
- Students will be able to include a variety of writing crafts in their small moment personal narratives.
- Students will be able to use strategies that increase stamina and productivity (refer to revision charts from previous units).

#### Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 3, 5, 6

SL. 1. 1-6

### Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations

Writing Conferences

Writing Pieces

Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

### Stage 3- Learning Plan

#### Teaching Points:

**NOTE:** Before beginning the unit, decide on a mentor author and one or two mentor texts by that author (Recommended first grade mentor authors... Donald Crews, Ezra Jack Keats, Angela Johnson).

\*Refer to “Authors as Mentors” in Lucy Calkins’ *Units of Study for Primary Writing*

- Writers notice that published authors write about small moments too.
- Writers jot down small moment topic ideas into their tiny notepads.
- Writers rehearse their stories by telling their story across three to five fingers to a partner.
- Writers study mentor texts to learn craft techniques (Ellipses create dramatic tension).
- Writers apply craft techniques to their own writing (Writing with ellipses).
- Writers study mentor text to learn craft techniques (Comeback lines).
- Writers apply craft techniques to their own writing (Writing comeback lines).
- Writers revise by adding research details, as the mentor writer has done.
- Writers revise to include craft techniques that they did not originally use.
- Writers notice additional text structures in their mentor texts (A Many Moment Story).
- Writers try to write stories using the many moment text structure.
- Writers write a many moment story with details.
- Writers seek out additional authors to serve as mentors and look for craft techniques that can be applied to their own writing.
- Writers edit using an editor’s checklist (develop a checklist based on the editing skills taught in prior units; students are held accountable for all editing skills taught in prior units).
- Writers include “About the Author” blurbs.

Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer

Resources: Various Mentor Texts

Strategic Writing Conferences; *Smart Conversations that Move Young Writers Forward*, Carl Anderson, 2008.

A Curricular Plan for the Writing Workshop, Grade 1; *Common Core Reading and Writing Workshop*, Lucy Calkins, Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, Columbia University, 2011

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## Grade 1 Unit 8: Poetry; Powerful Thoughts in Tiny Packages

### Stage 1: Desired Results

#### Unit Goals:

- Poets write many poems using poetry elements such as line breaks, beat, patterning, repetition, and figurative language.
- Poets include figurative language such as similes and metaphors in their poems (Poets paint with words).
- Poets select a few of their favorite poems from their collection to present to an audience.

#### Essential Questions:

- What are the elements (ingredients) of poems?
- How are poems different from other genres of writing?
- How do poets paint with words? (similes, metaphors)

#### Skills/Knowledge:

- Students will be able to distinguish between poetic, narrative, and expository text.
- Students will be able to write poems using line breaks, beat, and repetition.
- Students will be able to use figurative language to create images for their readers.
- Students will be able to use the strategy, *showing, not telling*, to convey feelings in their poems.

#### Common Core Standards for ELA:

W.1. 3, 5, 6

SL. 1. 1-6

### Stage 2-Assessment Evidence

Observations

Writing Conferences

Writing Pieces

Scored Published Piece (using appropriate rubric)

### Stage 3- Learning Plan

#### Teaching Points:

*Begin by immersing students in poetry and have students identify the elements of poetry. Create the chart... What are the elements (or ingredients) of poems?*

*\*Refer to “Poetry” in Lucy Calkins’ Units of Study for Primary Writing*

- Poets get ideas for their topics by thinking about special people and places, big feelings, and things they love.
- Poets get ideas for poems by looking back into their Tiny Topic notepads and their small moment stories to see if these stories can be turned into poems.
- Poets also get ideas by jotting down moments that happen during the day that can be turned into poems later on.

- Poets see daily objects in fresh, new ways, and write poems with that new vision.
- Poets sometimes find the ingredients for their poems by listing what that meaningful something looks like, feels like, sounds like, smells like, or tastes like.
- Poets write using line breaks.
- Poets reread their poems making their voice support the meaning in them.
- Poets choose subjects that matter to them as poem topics.
- Poets convey strong feelings by creating images (showing, not telling).
- Poets take a look at poet's they admire and ask themselves, "What does this poet do that I could try?"
- Poets invigorate their poems with poetic language and voice.
- Poets reach for words that exactly match what they are trying to say.
- Poets use repetition and other structures to support meaning.
- Poets use comparisons to express big feelings (similes).
- Poets use comparisons and artful language to convey sounds, images, observations, and ideas (metaphors).
- Poets stay with and develop their comparisons (sustaining a metaphor).
- Poets revise their poems by reading them aloud to themselves and to their partners. They listen for music and beat. Small words can be removed (such as...like, is, a, the, etc.).
- Poets allow their writing partners to help them revise. Partners ask..."Why did you choose to add a line break here?" "Where is the big feeling in this poem?" "What are you trying to show us?" "Have you thought of using this word instead?"
- Before poets share their poems with the world, they think "How can I fix this up? What else can I try?" They look back at the charts in the room and see if these charts give them any ideas for fixing their writing or trying new things.
- Poets use everything they know about editing to edit their poems.
- When poets get ready to celebrate their poems, they practice reading them and rereading them, asking themselves "How do I want my voice to sound? Should I speed up here? Slow down here?" This way they can make sure their voice matches the feelings and meaning behind their poems.
- Poets present their favorite poems to an audience.

Differentiation:

- The unit includes presentation of material through multiple modalities such as visual, auditory, and kinesthetic to address the unique learning styles of all students.
- Assign, assess and modify if necessary to address the specific needs of the learner.
- The teacher will individually conference with each student to address specific needs of the writer

Resources: Various Mentor Texts

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