

Unit 1: Launching Writing Workshop (4 weeks)

Rationale

Why is this unit important and appropriate for this grade level and at this time of the year?

During this unit, students work on learning the routines and structures of writer’s workshop that will encourage independence. Incorporating additional time for oral storytelling gives students the opportunity to develop and organize stories using a rich vocabulary and details, while developing a narrative voice.

Learning Outcomes

What do we expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit?

Students will:

- Learn the routines, structures, and environment necessary to work independently
- Generate ideas for personal narratives
- Begin to build writing stamina

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Finding/storing/taking care of materials
- Learning workshop structure – minilesson, independent writing, share
- Learning the routines and practices of conferring
 - What is the teacher doing?
 - What are the students doing?
- Learning the routines and practices of guided writing
 - What is the teacher doing?
 - What are the students doing?
- Generating ideas
 - How do writers grow ideas?
 - Where can writers find inspiration?
- Working with storytelling partners
 - What does it look like?
 - What does it sound like?
 - What is the listener’s job?
 - What is the storyteller’s job?
 - What questions/prompts can the listener ask after listening to his partner’s story?
 - What are the criteria for telling stories aloud?
 - Telling stories in first person
 - Telling stories in sequence
 - Telling stories with details, emotions, and dialogue
- Setting up writing paper with name, date, title
- Sketching stories across pages/booklet as part of the planning process
- Trying out different types of writing paper
- Drawing pictures with details (e.g., setting, characters with facial expressions, character talk/think

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- bubbles)
- Using classroom visuals and supports to write words (e.g., familiar ABC chart, word wall, anchor charts)
- Stretching out words and writing down the sounds heard
- Spacing between words
- Adding ending punctuation
- Rereading stories to know what you wrote
- Rereading stories to make sure they make sense
- Labeling objects in illustrations
- Writing stories with details, emotions and dialogue
- Adding sentences to stories
- Stretching out stories across several pages or a booklet
- Editing for punctuation, capitalization, grammar (See Common Core Language Standards for grade level expectations)

Notes/Tips:

- Refer to the District Conventions Continuum to determine appropriate convention objectives (punctuation, capitalization, syntax) to teach during the unit. Copies are available in the grade level literacy binders and on the district website http://ww3.mamkschools.org/ela/Units_of_Study.html.
- Analyze student writing to assess whole class, small group and individualized needs.
- Begin guided writing groups as a way to differentiate instruction.
- Add a storytelling block (5-15 minutes) to the instructional schedule so students have frequent opportunities to practice generating and telling stories.
- Consider having students bring in artifacts to generate ideas for stories and to support oral storytelling.
- Create a print rich room. Use interactive writing to have students involved in labeling objects in the classroom. Display an interactive word wall and include students names on the wall.
- Have different types of paper available so students have paper choice for independent writing.
- Interactive writing and shared writing are essential daily balanced literacy components that allow teachers to demonstrate strategies repeatedly for planning, illustrating, and writing stories. Many teachers use interactive writing to teach strategies such as spacing between words, strategies for spelling words, ending punctuation, etc. Many teachers use shared writing to model the genre of writing being studied. Through shared writing the class can compose “mentor” stories that reflect the unit of study. (Teachers use chart paper for shared writing.) These mentor texts are referred to during writing workshop minilessons to model the day’s teaching point. Shared writing texts developed by the class are excellent because all students can be involved in the composing (students share ideas orally and teacher scribes) and also because they reflect the type of writing students will be expected to do. It is highly recommended that teachers use class shared writing texts in addition to published mentor texts to teach a unit of study.
- Include different kinds of label books and picture dictionaries in the classroom library. Model for students how writers use these resources to support their writing.
- Have alphabet charts available for students to use when stretching out words in their writing. Explicitly model for students how to use the alphabet charts.
- Think about ways to help students organize and plan their writing (pre-stapled booklets of varying lengths, writing folders, clearly labeled and easily accessible area for writing tools to promote independence).
- Create anchor charts with icons to promote student independence (e.g., “What do I Do If I think I’m Done Writing?”, “Where Do Writers Get Ideas for Stories?”).
- **To view Grade 1 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 1 reading/writing page. Select “Resources” from the top nav bar. To access the units of study website use the link http://ww3.mamkschools.org/units_of_study/.**
- Chart Chums is a great online resource for creating interactive, clear and visually rich anchor charts. To view use the link <http://chartchums.wordpress.com/>.
- Additional resources of sample anchor charts for reading and writing units of study include the following: <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-charts/first-grade.html>
- To view samples of student writing across genres and grade levels use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/student-writing/first-grade.html>.

Professional Resources

What professional resources will be helpful in planning the unit?

- *The Common Core Writing Book* by Gretchen Owocki
- *Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grade 1* by Lucy Calkins et al
- *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project 1st Grade Writing Curricular Calendar 2010-2011*
- *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing: Grade 1* by Jaime Margolies and Pam Allyn (Chapters 1-3)
- *Launching the Writing Workshop* by Lucy Calkins and Leah Mermelstein
- *First Grade Writers* by Stephanie Parsons (Chapter 1)
- *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K-6* by Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli
- *Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results* by Lori D. Oczkus
- http://ww3.mamkschools.org/ela/Units_of_Study.html (See the District Conventions Continuum)