

Unit 3: Realistic Fiction (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 engage their imaginations and storytelling abilities through writing realistic fiction stories. The parallel unit in reading workshop which focuses on character will support the writing work of students. Through the instruction students will learn to transfer the strategies of narrative writing to their realistic fiction pieces.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students will:

- Learn how to write stories following a fiction story structure
- Write many stories about a single character
- Use a variety of strategies to show not tell
- Use a storyteller's voice - write with an audience in mind
- Build writing stamina

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Developing a character that is like yourself
- Thinking about a character's appearance, personality, and behaviors
- Brainstorming problems that first graders encounter and using these ideas to list problems for story characters
- Identifying multiple ways the character could solve a problem
- Choosing problems and solutions for the character to encounter that matches his/her personality
- Use third person (not first person) when telling and writing stories about their character
- Orally rehearse stories about the character with a storytelling partner (Review storytelling routines and prompts from Unit 1)
- Using graphic organizers to plan out story
 - Graphic organizer to chart character information (name, age, external traits, internal traits, likes, dislikes, friends, etc.)
 - Graphic organizer to plan a story across the story elements (characters, setting(s), problem, solution)
 - Graphic organizer to list problems and multiple ways to solve each problem
- Identifying internal vs. external conflicts
- Using own experiences to add emotions and realism to stories
- Show not tell (in illustrations and text) by adding
 - Dialogue
 - Internal thinking
 - Emotions
 - Body gestures
 - Sensory details

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- Choosing interesting and precise language to describe character, problem, solution
- Sketching illustrations as a way to plan out a story
- Writing stories across booklets (3,5, 7 page booklets)
- Adding more text to each page
- Rereading stories to make sure they make sense
- Stretching out words and writing down the sounds heard
- Using classroom visuals and supports to write words (e.g., familiar ABC chart, word wall, anchor charts)
- Using punctuation, capital letters (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.
- Have guided writing groups as a way to differentiate instruction.
- 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.
- Read aloud picture books with familiar well developed characters. Make sure some of these characters appear in a series to match the work the students will be doing. Recommendations include Knufflebunny series by Mo Willems, Kevin Henkes Little Box of Treats, Peter books by Ezra Jack Keats, Henry and Mudge by Cynthia Rylant, David series by David Shannon, etc.
- Create a class character who should be similar in age to the students in the class. Brainstorm and chart a name, internal and external traits of the character. List possible problems the character could encounter. Brainstorm and chart multiple ways the character could solve each problem.
- Use daily shared writing to draft several stories about the class character.
- Use drafts during minilessons to a variety of revising and editing strategies.
- Create graphic organizers with icons (use the same story element icons as those on the story strings/cards shared in reading workshop) to support students in the planning process.
- Connect the work between the reading and writing workshop by asking students during independent reading to notice, mark with a Post-it and share with their reading partner the problem/solution a character in their text had.
- Differentiate the unit by teaching more proficient writers to have characters attempt but fail to solve a problem initially. Or model for students how characters may encounter more than one problem in a story.
- Have students create their own characters using art supplies during choice time. Students are often motivated to write when they have a model of their character to look at during independent writing time.
- Students will develop a character and write many stories about that same character. This will support students in really getting to know their character and creating problems and solutions that match the personality of the character. As students get to know their character better their writing volume and stamina will increase.
- Incorporate the character work into homework. Have them bring home their character model at night.
 - Tell someone in your family about the character you developed. Make sure you tell them about the problems your character may encounter.
 - Jot down what your character ate with you last night for dinner.
 - Jot down what you and your character did afterschool.
 - Jot down what your character’s favorite television show/book/sport is.

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- Create anchor charts with visuals to record the strategies taught and promote student independence. For example, keep track of the story elements of books read during read aloud.

What we are noticing about realistic fiction!				
Title	Characters	Setting	Problem	Solution

- **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
- *Reading and Writing Literary Genres* by Kathleen Buss and Lee Karnowski
- *First Grade Writers* by Stephanie Parsons (Chapter 5)
- *In Pictures and in Words* by Katie Wood Ray
- *Craft Lessons* by Ralph Fletcher and Joann Portalupi (K-2 Section pp. 19-43)
- *The Revision Toolbox* by Georgia Heard
- *Wondrous Words* by Katie Wood Ray
- *6+1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide for Primary Grades* by Ruth Culham (Chapters 5, 6)
- *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)