

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 will understand that writers transfer their repertoire of strategies across genres. Students will use the strategies they learned for writing personal narratives to their realistic fiction pieces. This unit will also support students in increasing their writing stamina as the genre of realistic fiction is a favorite for young writers and therefore provides motivation for all students.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students will:

- Develop a realistic character to write many stories about him/her
- Write stories using the story elements (character, setting, problem and solution)
- Use details to show not tell
- Build writing stamina

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Planning stories as part of the writing process (oral storytelling, storyboards, story maps)
- Developing a fictional character
 - Using their own experiences and other people around them to create a fictional character
 - Using descriptions so the reader can picture the characters (external traits of character such as age, hair and eye color, height)
 - Describing characters' inner world (thoughts, feelings, conflicts)
- Thinking about the characters' relationships with family, friends, etc.
- Thinking about the character and choosing settings that reflect the characters' experiences, problems, etc.
- Developing the setting(s) where the character will "live"
 - By looking at photographs or maps
 - By using sensory descriptions (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch)
 - To create a mood
- Brainstorming problems that the character would encounter and possible solutions
 - Using the identified internal traits (likes, dislikes, fears, etc.) of the character brainstorm possible problems the character may encounter
- Brainstorm multiple ways the character may choose to resolve each problem
- Rehearsing story by orally storytelling with partner
- Planning stories across the story elements by using a graphic organizer
- Planning the scenes of a story by sketching scenes on a storyboard
- Writing stories across pages/booklets
- Using consistent verb tense throughout the story
- Showing not telling
 - Using dialogue
 - Using internal thinking
 - Using characters' feelings

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- Describing characters' facial expressions, body gestures
- Using precise, descriptive word choice to describe setting, characters' actions and reactions, characters' predicaments, etc.
- Using temporal words to signal event order
- Writing many stories about the same character
- Using punctuation and capitalization appropriately (See Common Core Language Standards for grade level expectations)

Notes/Tips:

- Students edit their pieces daily. 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.
 - Many second graders struggle to keep a consistent verb tense throughout the story. Students often lose control midway through their piece and begin alternating between present and past tense. Therefore it is recommended that during shared reading students' attention be drawn to verb tense and during shared writing students' develop class stories with this in mind. Minilessons focused on this aspect of grammar is also recommended.
- Have guided writing groups as a way to differentiate instruction.
- It is not recommended that second graders use writing notebooks. Paper choice for each unit of study along with writing folders are developmentally appropriate for writers at this age level.
- Immerse students in genre through realistic fiction read alouds (e.g., *When Sophie Gets Angry* and *Ruby the Copycat*).
- Choose mentor texts from a series that focus on one character (e.g., *Knuffle Bunny*, *Henry and Mudge* by Cynthia Rylant, *Pinky and Rex* by James Howe, Peter in Ezra Jack Keats' books).
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 TV show/book/sport is.

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- Create anchor charts of story elements from daily read alouds.

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

- Teachers may encourage students to publish writing using word processing tools such as Word or other online publishing tools
- **To view Grade 2 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 2 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/second-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 2* by Lucy Calkins et al
- *Teachers College Reading and Writing Project 2nd Grade Writing Curriculum Calendar 2010-2011*
- *Craft Lessons Teaching Writing K-8* by Ralph Fletcher and Joann Portalupi
- *First Grade Writers* by Stephanie Parsons
- *Reading & Writing Literacy Genres* by Kathleen Buss and Lee Karnowski
- *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)