

Unit 3: Opinion Paragraph (3 weeks)

Rationale

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

During this unit, students study paragraph structure and learn how paragraph writing helps writers organize thoughts clearly and concisely in all types of genres. Students will write persuasive paragraphs about topics or texts read supporting a point of view with reasons which aligns with the Common Core Standards expectation that students engage in opinion writing. Many teachers may encourage students to write opinion pieces related to the concurrent science or social studies units. Students may also choose to write opinion pieces about expository articles and/or works of literature read during reading workshop.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students will:

- Identify paragraph features/structures
- Develop opinions/claims about topics or texts
- Provide reasons that support an opinion
- Compose several persuasive paragraphs about topics or texts
- Incorporate elements of craft in written pieces

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Noticing how, why and when an author uses paragraphs by studying mentor texts
 - Collect samples of writing with paragraphs across genres (book reviews, expository articles, essay, typed short story)
 - Study and annotate use of paragraphs
 - Size
 - Shape
 - Transitional/linking words
 - Create an anchor chart of purposes for paragraphs in different genres
- Identifying the features and structures of paragraphs
 - Topic sentence/main idea/claim
 - Supporting details/evidence/examples
 - Summarizing/closing statement
- Taking a stance/stating an opinion about a topic or text read
- Crafting an opinion/claim as a statement for a paragraph
- Using text evidence and details to support an opinion
- Researching to gather reasons that support an opinion
 - Using online library databases
 - Using texts, articles, primary sources
- Making sure the reasons supplied support the opinion
- Using an organizational structure that lists and develops reasons
- Using linking words and phrases to connect the opinion and reasons
 - Because
 - Therefore
 - For instance

2014-2015 Grade 3 Writing Units of Study

- For example
- Another example
- One reason
- Another reason
- Since
- Introducing the topic or text
- Providing a sense of closure with a concluding statement
- Revising paragraphs with strategies learned in earlier units of study
 - Using voice to engage reader
 - Using precise language to teach and persuade the reader
 - Being aware of the audience by knowing the likes, desires, concerns, fears of the audience and using them to appeal to the audience and persuade
- Drafting a variety of paragraphs on a range of topics and texts read
- Selecting paragraphs to revise, edit and publish
- Editing writing to reflect grade level expectations for grammar, punctuation, capitalization (see Common Core Language Standards)

Notes/Tips:

- ***By the end of the unit, students should be writing independently for 35+ minutes.***
- 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.
- Students should be encouraged to continue writing in their notebooks after meeting the goal of the day's lesson.
- Students should take the notebook home every night in order to continue practicing the strategies taught and accumulate entries.
- Analyze student writing to assess and plan for whole class, small group and individualized needs.
- Meet with guided writing groups consistently as a way to differentiate writing instruction.
- It is important to implement shared writing into the instructional schedule for the intermediate grades. By having shared writing 2-3 days a week, teachers are able to model for students the type of writing that will be discussed during workshop minilessons. Shared writing is critical as it reflect the gradual release of responsibility and is a separate instructional practice from the workshop. During shared writing the teacher can scribe class texts (based on the current writing unit of study). These texts can be used as mentor texts for the writing workshop minilessons.
- Remind students of the classroom routine of revisiting the writer's notebook as a way to mine ideas for the paragraph writing.
- Students will write a variety of paragraphs during this two week study.
- Teachers may want to have students practice writing paragraphs about familiar read alouds, shared reading, just right texts, etc.
- Supporting evidence can be taken from the texts students are reading
- Use shared reading to share mentor paragraphs about topics or texts. Color coding (highlighter tape) and labeling each section of the shared piece helps students see the different components of paragraphs.
- Students will be expected to transfer their knowledge of paragraphing to other genres written in follow up units of study including nonfiction article, essay, realistic fiction, etc.
- Students are encouraged to publish writing using word processing tools such as Word or other online publishing tools.
- **To view Grade 3 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 3 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/.**
- To view sample unit specific anchor charts for various units of study in reading and writing use the following link: <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/classroom-charts/third-eighth-grade.html>
- To view samples of student writing across genres and grade levels use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/student-writing/third-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 3* by Lucy Calkins et al
- *The Complete Year in Reading and Writing: Grade 3* by Pam Allyn
- *Mentor Texts: Teaching Writing Through Children's Literature, K-6* by Lynne R. Dorfman and Rose Cappelli
- *Study Driven* by Katie Wood Ray (p. 258-259)
- *Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results* by Lori D. Oczkus
- http://ww3.mamkschools.org/ela/Units_of_Study.html (See the District Conventions Continuum)