

Unit 8: 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 keenly observe their lives and learn the process for which fiction writers become inspired. They will develop meaningful, multi-dimensional characters and plot lines that are realistic and appropriate to their lives and experiences. In this unit, students will take on the role of narrator and make craft choices that enable their readers to infer about their characters.

Learning Outcomes

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

Students will:

- Create realistic stories that includes the story elements
- Write stories that are fictional but realistic
- Developing a multidimensional main character
- Draft several stories about a single character

Minilessons/Notes/Tips

What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?

Possible Minilessons:

- Gathering ideas for realistic fiction pieces by
 - Using experiences from your life as inspiration for your own stories
 - Imagining books you wish already existed to inspire ideas for your own stories
 - Using stories you like to read as inspiration for your own stories
- Thinking about the message the writer wants to convey with his/her story
- Developing a character in depth to write many stories about
 - Identifying internal traits of character
 - Identifying external traits of character
- Thinking about the character developed and drafting a variety of plots (scenarios) that the character could fit into
 - Taking into consideration the type of person the character is (internal traits) and choosing problems that he/she might encounter
 - Determining possible ways the character may attempt to resolve the problem based on the type of person the character is
 - Brainstorming multiple ways the character could attempt to solve the problem
- Developing a realistic plot line that is most reflective of who the character is and what his/her life would be like
 - Some characters may encounter multiple problems
 - Some characters may attempt but fail to solve a problem and therefore need to make a second or third attempt to solve problems
 - Some characters problems may go unresolved

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- Developing an authentic setting
- Does the setting make sense with the plot?
- Does the setting help add tension to the story?
- Does the setting(s) help the reader understand the movement through time?
- Planning out the story
- Storytelling with a partner
- Sketching out scenes of story using a story board as a way to plan the story
- Envisioning and writing each scene as a small moment
- Using a narrative voice to tell the story (third person)
- Drafting across page//booklet using a single page for each scene of the story
- Studying and trying out a variety of published leads to write several possible leads and then choose one that is most effective
- Action lead
- Grabber lead
- Sound effect lead
- Foreshadowing lead
- Using temporal words and phrases to signal event order
- Using a variety of craft moves to enhance each scene of the story
- Using sensory details to show not tell
- Using varied sentence structure
- Using setting to show tension
- Using internal thinking to elaborate
- Using precise word choice to describe the action, character movement, character feeling, setting etc.
- Using dialogue to elaborate
- Is the dialogue purposeful?
- Does the dialogue move the plot along? Develop the character?
- Writing an ending with sense of closure
- Is the ending a satisfying one?
- Is the ending close to the moment?
- Does the ending highlight the big idea the writer was trying to convey
- Drafting a variety of possible endings and choosing the one that fits best
- 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 40+ minutes.***
- On Demand Writing #3: To assess students' ability to compose a realistic fiction piece independently the teacher administers an on demand writing piece at the end of the unit (e.g., after students have published a process piece for the unit). Over the course of two consecutive writing workshops students will independently compose a piece that reflects the writing process and fiction writing. Since students will be expected to write a realistic fiction story the teacher will craft a prompt that reflects this type of writing. The teacher will analyze student writing to identify the strategies students have internalized and are able to transfer to new pieces of writing. Resources (e.g., Aussie rubric) to guide assessment can be found in the District Literacy Binder
- Students should be encouraged to continue writing in their notebooks after meeting the goal of the day's lesson.
- Students should take home their notebook nightly to practice the strategies previously taught and to accumulate entries.
- Analyze student writing to assess and plan for whole class, small group and individualized needs.

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- Meet with guided writing groups consistently as a way to differentiate writing instruction.
- 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.
- During read aloud, teachers read several books across a character series. Suggested series include *The Clementine Series* by Sarah Pennypacker. It is best to read shorter texts to allow for multiple texts in a series to be shared.
- Use shared reading to analyze read aloud texts up close and to annotate and highlight the features of realistic fiction. It is best for students to have typed copies of these texts so as a way to annotate and keep track of strategies taught.
- 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.
- Use shared writing to develop a class character to write about. Brainstorm and chart key information about the character (e.g., age, name, internal, external traits, relationships, etc.) Create a chart of potential problems the character may encounter. For each problem brainstorm and jot ways the character may attempt to solve the problem.
- Use class planning charts to compose a shared writing piece about the class character over multiple share writing sessions. Use the text created to model the various teaching points during the workshop minilessons.
- Students will write several stories about a character.
- Published stories should become part of the classroom library.
- 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>.

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
- *Units of Study for Teaching Writing Grades 3-5* by Lucy Calkins and M. Colleen Cruz) (Writing Fiction: Big Dreams, Tall Ambitions, Volume 4)
- *Reading & Writing Literacy Genres* by Kathleen Buss and Lee Karnowski
- *Craft Lessons* by Ralph Fletcher
- *What a Writer Needs* by Ralph Fletcher
- *Live Writing: Breathing Life into Your Words* by Ralph Fletcher
- *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)