

Unit 4: Literary Essay (4 weeks)
Rationale
<i>Why is this unit important and appropriate for this grade level and at this time of the year?</i>
<p>Students will connect their reading and writing lives by studying the craft and structure of a literary essay. During this unit, students will apply their knowledge of the essay structure to compose a literary essay. Students will think critically about the text(s) they are reading to develop sophisticated supported opinions related to the text(s).</p>
Learning Outcomes
<i>What do we expect students to know and be able to do at the end of the unit?</i>
<p>Students will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the components of a literary essay • Develop and support a thesis statement/claim related to text(s) • Demonstrate an ability to collect evidence from one or more text(s) to support the thesis/claim • Use a variety of craft strategies to enhance the literary essay • Cite sources using EasyBib
Minilessons/Notes/Tips
<i>What minilessons will lead to student learning outcomes?</i>
<p>Possible Minilessons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying and annotating mentor literary essays (including student examples) to identify the components/structure/features of literary essays • Looking back at a read aloud text(s) and brainstorming a list of significant ideas. • Turning and talking with a partner about an interesting idea from a familiar read aloud and stretching out the idea • Revisiting texts being read as part of the reading workshop unit of study to look for possible big ideas about texts • Rereading notes (Post-its, graphic organizers, reading notebook entries) recorded during independent reading and/or reading partnerships about texts read to find an idea to write about • Rereading texts closely looking for details that may spark larger ideas <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Looking for provocative ideas about texts read by asking, “What is this text really about?” • Gathering possible ideas by studying the subject of their texts such as character to grow significant ideas about texts read • Using own life experiences to understand and develop ideas about texts • Elaborating on writing ideas using conversational prompts such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I think this is important because... ○ This makes me realize... ○ The reason for this is... ○ I see (the item you are discussing), and then a similar thing happens (in this place); I think this is repeated because... ○ I used to think... but now I’m realizing... ○ This is giving me the idea that... ○ This is important because... • Finding and testing out a thesis statement to make sure it is supported by the whole text/set of texts

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- Revising thesis statement as necessary
- Collecting evidence from text(s) to support thesis
 - Angled mini-stories (i.e., storytelling/retelling bits of the text to illustrate their idea)
 - Lists (i.e., using repetition to add sound to essay and appeal to reader's ear)
 - Summaries (i.e., paraphrase or quote a section of the text)
 - Descriptions of author's craft (i.e., how does the author convey the deeper meanings in a text)
- Reflecting on notes and annotations as a way to:
 - Push one's thinking
 - Determine the relevancy of information as it relates to the thesis
 - Identify where evidence is missing or weak
- Modeling how to purposefully select evidence from previously collected notes and annotations to clarify and support the thesis
- Creating a cohesive draft by logically ordering reasons that are supported with details and examples from the text
- Linking reasons using words, phrases and clauses
 - For instance
 - In addition
 - For example
 - Consequently
 - Specifically
- Writing a conclusion that shows a new insight the writer has gained
- Revising to use an authoritative tone by using precise language
- Using several additional carefully selected revision strategies from previous units which may include
 - Varied sentence length (simple, compound, complex sentences)
 - Powerful leads
 - Providing sense of closure
- Citing sources using EasyBib
- Editing writing to reflect grade level expectations for grammar, punctuation, capitalization (see Common Core Language Standards)

Notes/Tips:

- **By this time students should be writing independently for 45+ minutes.**
- On Demand Writing #2: Post unit assessment. To assess students' ability to compose a literary essay independently the teacher will administer 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, specifically a literary essay. Since students will be expected to write a literary essay as an on demand writing piece the teacher may have students read a short typed text (e.g. short story from Cynthia Rylant's *Every Living Thing*, typed text of picture book such as Eve Bunting's *Fly Away Home*). The teacher will craft a prompt that pushes student to write a literary essay. 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 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 whole class, small group and individualized needs.
- Meet with guided writing groups consistently as a way to differentiate writing instruction.
- As students prepare for this unit, they should annotate many short texts and have many opportunities to discuss ideas about the text with a partner.
- This unit includes information, fluency and technology learning outcomes that lend themselves to a collaboration between classroom teacher and librarian.
- Use shared writing to model composing a class literary essay (based on a familiar read aloud) in addition to the modeling the genre during writing workshop minilessons. Use the class shared piece as a mentor text during the workshop minilessons.

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- Teachers can make the process tactile for students by using envelopes and index cards as an organizational tool. Students write the topic sentence for each of their three arguments on the front of an envelope. They use index cards to jot their supporting statements then keep each index card in the appropriate envelope. Students are then able to see which arguments need additional support. They can construct their essay by laying out the envelopes and index cards as a prewriting exercise.
- Possible literature for students to read and write about include:
 - *Baseball In April and Other Stories* by Gary Soto
 - *Every Living Thing* by Cynthia Rylant
 - *Hey World, Here I Am!* by Valerie Worth
 - *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* by Sandra Cisneros
- Powerful, rich picture books are also recommended for students to read and write about. Authors such as Eve Bunting, Cynthia Rylant and Jacqueline Woodson have written picture books that are filled with possibilities for literary essays.
- To view samples of student writing across genres and grade levels use the link <http://readingandwritingproject.com/resources/student-writing/fifth-grade.html>. For additional samples of student writing view the Units of Study for Teaching Writing Grades 3-5 by Lucy Calkins and Kathy Collins (Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM).
- Students are encouraged to publish writing using word processing tools such as Word or other online publishing tools.
- **To view Grade 5 archived artifacts for the unit please visit the Grade 5 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>.

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 5* by Lucy Calkins et al
- *Writing in Response to Reading* by Janet Angelillo
- *Units of Study for Teaching Writing: Grade 3-5* by Lucy Calkins and Medea McEvoy (Literary Essays: Writing About Reading, Volume 5)
- *Thinking Through Genre: Units of Study in Reading and Writing Workshops Grades 4-12* by Heather Lattimer
- *100 Ideas for Writing* by Linda Rief
- *My Quick Writes for Inside Writing* by Donald Graves and Penny Kittle
- *Guided Writing: Practical Lessons, Powerful Results* by Lori D. Oczkus
- http://ww3.mamkschools.org/ela/Units_of_Study.html (See the District Conventions Continuum)