GRADE FIVE

Sample Sessions

UNITS OF STUDY

in Opinion, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

LUCY CALKINS *with* COLLEAGUES *from the* READING AND WRITING PROJECT

Heinemann
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™

GRADE FIVE Components

Four Units of Study

- The units offer all of the teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work needed to teach a comprehensive workshop curriculum.
- Each session within the units models Lucy and her colleagues' carefully crafted teaching moves and language.
- The Grade 5 set includes one unit each in opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing, and one additional narrative unit.
- Each unit provides 4-6 weeks of instruction.

If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction

- The *If… Then…* book offers seven additional abbreviated units of study that teachers may choose to teach before, after, or in between the core units to meet specific instructional needs.
- This helpful resource also includes dozens of model conferring scenarios to help teachers master the art of conferring.

A Guide to the Writing Workshop, Intermediate Grades

- The *Guide* introduces the principles, methods, classroom structures, and instructional frameworks that characterize effective workshop teaching.
- It provides the information teachers need to prepare to teach the units, and offers guidance on how to meet the needs of all students.

Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions

- This practical assessment system includes learning progressions, on-demand writing prompts, student checklists, rubrics, student writing samples, and exemplar pieces of writing.
- The tools in *Writing Pathways* help teachers set all students on trajectories of growth.

Anchor Chart Sticky Notes

- Preprinted, large-format sticky notes feature each key teaching point and help teachers evolve anchor charts across the units.

Online Resources

- This treasure chest of resources includes reproducible checklists, pre- and post assessments, learning progressions and rubrics, videos and web links, Spanish translations for various resources, and more!

Trade Book Pack

- Includes books that are used as demonstration texts for the teacher to model the skills and strategies students will try. Recommended optional purchase.

For complete details, please visit **unitsofstudy.com/K5writing**

At the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, we have been working for more than three decades to develop, pilot, revise, and implement state-of-the-art curriculum in writing. This series—this treasure chest of experiences, theories, techniques, tried-and-true methods, and questions—brings the results of that work to you.

—LUCY CALKINS

Welcome to the Grade 5 Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing Sampler. This booklet includes sample sessions from each of the four units of study for this grade level plus the additional unit (available separately). These sessions were chosen to broadly represent the range of work that students will do and to provide a snapshot view of how instruction develops across the school year.

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(Note: This unit is not included in the grade-level set but may be purchased separately.)

UNIT 4 **The Research-Based Argument Essay**

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Narrative Craft

LUCY CALKINS • ALEXANDRA MARRON

With this unit you'll be retraveling the now-familiar ground of narrative writing with the goal of raising the level of student work to new, highly sophisticated levels. You will emphasize that writers make decisions based on their plans for a piece of writing, their assessment of the draft, and everything they know about life and the world. Most of all, you will emphasize the importance of meaning, of significance, in writing.

In an effort to help students write stories that have significance and that are shaped like true stories, not chronicles, you'll start this unit by teaching some new strategies for generating a personal narrative, as well as reminding students of strategies they already know. For example, you may teach your students that when we want to write a powerful personal narrative, we might write about the first (or last) time we did something or about a time we learned something or about a turning point of some kind.

In Bend II, students will choose a seed idea to develop into a full piece of writing. You'll help students draw on all the narrative crafting techniques they have ever learned, and your emphasis will be on teaching students that craft and revision are always driven by an effort to communicate meaning. Deciding on a good lead, for example, requires the writer to think, "What is my story really about?" As part of this teaching, you will help students learn that the same story can be told differently, depending on the theme the writer wants to bring out. By the end of Bend II, students will have written two entire drafts (and been reminded that it usually helps to draft quickly, letting velocity create cohesion and bring voice to the piece) and will have revised their best draft extensively.

In Bend III, students will begin anew with a second personal narrative. This time, you'll help them progress with more independence. You'll also encourage them to learn from a close reading of a mentor text, the narrative section of Sandra Cisneros's "Eleven." Students will develop their skills at analyzing and annotating mentor texts and emulating the craft moves of a published author. As children do so, you will remind them of the importance of dramatizing a scene in order to capture the unfolding experience on the page. You'll help writers relive the experience so as to recapture its truth. Children will have much to draw on from their first round of writing and will continue to evaluate their work and set goals for moving forward.

Welcome to Unit 1

BEND I ✦ Generating Personal Narratives

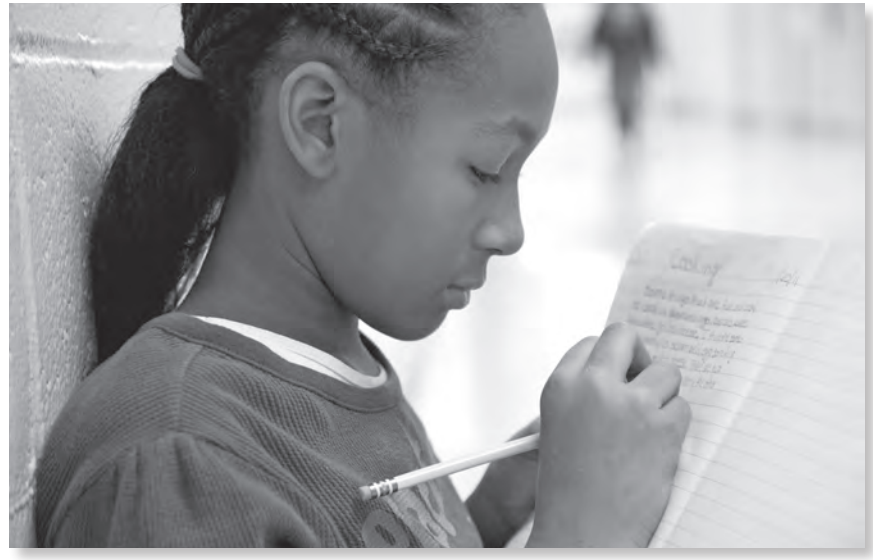
1. Starting with Turning Points
2. Determining the Dream of the Story
3. Letting Other Authors' Words Awaken Our Own
4. Telling the Story from Inside It
5. Taking Stock and Setting Goals

BEND II ✦ Moving Through the Writing Process: Rehearsing, Drafting, Revising and Editing

6. Flash Drafting: Putting Our Stories on the Page
7. What's This Story Really About?: Redrafting to Bring Out Meaning
8. Bringing Forth the Story Arc
9. Elaborating on Important Parts
10. Adding Scenes from the Past and Future
11. Ending Stories
12. Putting On the Final Touches

BEND III ✦ Learning from Mentor Texts

13. Reading with a Writer's Eye
14. Taking Writing to the Workbench
15. Stretching Out the Tension
16. Catching the Action or Image that Produced an Emotion
17. Every Character Plays a Role
18. Editing: The Power of Commas
19. Mechanics
20. Reading Aloud Your Writing: A Ceremony of Celebration
21. Transferring Learning: Applying Narrative Writing Skills across the Curriculum



GRADE 5 ◆ UNIT 2 ◆ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

The Lens of History

Research Reports

LUCY CALKINS • EMILY BUTLER SMITH

In the first part, or bend, of this unit you'll ask your students to write a full draft of a research report very quickly, organizing information in subsections and using all they have already learned about informational writing. These are often called "flash-drafts" because they are written so quickly. Next you will lead students through a series of lessons on how to revise their flash-draft by looking at it through various lenses. Writers might look for patterns, questions, and surprises, or consider the way historians think about geography or timelines, or hypothesize. After several lessons that teach students to reconsider and revise their flash-draft thinking and writing, students write a new and improved draft of their research report. Their aim in this second draft is to use the revision approaches you've taught. It can be quite exciting to see how much students have progressed in a relatively short time. You'll see, for instance, that this second draft is much more elaborated than the first. The celebration of these revised reports marks the end of the first bend.

In the second bend, you will teach your students to turn their attention to writing more focused research reports. This means that instead of writing about all of westward expansion as they did in the first bend of the unit, they will write about a more focused topic, such as the Pony Express or the Oregon Trail or the Erie Canal. In addition, you will teach students to focus their attention on writing these reports well. That is, you will teach your students to write reports with an attention to the qualities of good information writing, qualities aimed at delivering information and engaging readers. Bend II focuses on learning from other informational texts and then teaching others this information in engaging ways. Students will learn to use primary sources in their informational writing. By setting students up to write a second draft, you give them opportunities to transfer and apply what they have learned in Bend I about developing and revising their reports.

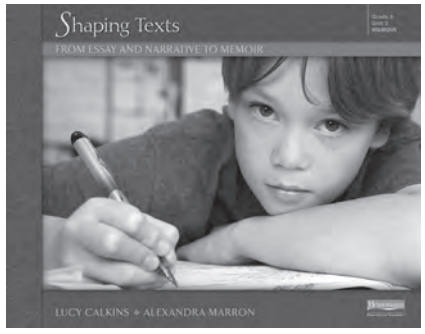
Welcome to Unit 2

BEND I ✦ Writing Flash-Drafts about Westward Expansion

1. Organizing for the Journey Ahead
2. Writing Flash-Drafts
3. Note-Taking and Idea-Making for Revision
4. Writers of History Pay Attention to Geography
5. Writing to Think
6. Writers of History Draw on an Awareness of Timelines
7. Assembling and Thinking about Information
8. Redrafting Our Research Reports
9. Celebrating and Reaching Toward New Goals

BEND II ✦ Writing Focused Research Reports that Teach and Engage Readers

10. Drawing Inspiration from Mentor Texts
11. Primary Source Documents
12. Organizing Information for Drafting
13. Finding a Structure to Let Writing Grow Into
14. Finding Multiple Points of View
15. Creating Cohesion
16. Using Text Features to Write Well
17. Crafting Introductions and Conclusions
18. Mentor Texts Help Writers Revise
19. Adding Information Inside Sentences
20. Celebration



GRADE 5 ◆ UNIT 3 ◆ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Shaping Texts

From Essay and Narrative to Memoir

LUCY CALKINS • ALEXANDRA MARRON

In the first bend of this unit, you will teach children to use their notebook to collect both focused entries and idea-based writing. That is, they will learn that writers write both "big" and "small," writing about broad ideas or theories and then zooming in to write about one time when that idea was true. Students could be familiar with this sort of work from the fourth-grade unit, *Boxes and Bullets*, and we recommend pulling out charts and mentor texts from that unit to support this one. After a bit of collecting, children will be ready to select one of these entries as a seed idea to be cultivated into a fully grown memoir.

Bend II begins with a study of memoir structures, exposing children to the variety of forms a memoir can take: narrative with reflection, essaylike structure, listlike structure, and more. Then you will prompt students to choose the form that best suits the idea they wish to put forth. After a day of rehearsal and flash-drafting, students will spend time revising their first drafts. This revision will focus on ways to strengthen both the expository and the narrative portions of their writing. Opportunities to reflect, assess, and set goals using writing checklists will help students write in more interpretive and purposeful ways.

In Bend III, children will briefly return to their notebook to collect ideas, then quickly choose a new seed idea for a second memoir. Some children will choose an entirely different topic, while others will try the same topic (a brother leaving for middle school, say), this time using a different structure. The important thing is that students transfer all they have learned from working on their first piece of writing to this second piece. Be sure they revise this text in very significant ways, embarking on more ambitious, large-scale revisions

Welcome to Unit 3

BEND I ✦ Generating Ideas about Our Lives and Finding Depth in the Moments We Choose

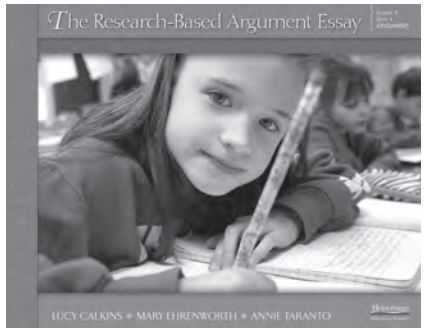
1. What Makes a Memoir?
2. Interpreting the Comings and Goings of Your Life
3. Writing Small about Big Topics
4. Reading Literature to Inspire Writing
5. Choosing a Seed Idea
6. Expecting Depth from Your Writing

BEND II ✦ Structuring, Drafting, and Revising a Memoir

7. Studying and Planning Structures
8. The Inspiration to Draft
9. Becoming Your Own Teacher
10. Revising the Narrative Portion of a Memoir
11. Editing for Voice

BEND III ✦ A Second Memoir

12. Seeing Again, with New Lenses: Interpreting Your Own Story
13. Flash-Drafting
14. Revising the Expository Portion of a Memoir
15. Reconsidering the Finer Points
16. Rereading Your Draft and Drawing on All You Know to Revise
17. Metaphors Can Convey Big Ideas
18. Editing to Match Sound to Meaning
19. An Author's Final Celebration: Placing Our Writing in the Company of Others



GRADE 5 ◆ UNIT 4 ◆ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

The Research-Based Argument Essay

LUCY CALKINS • MARY EHRENWORTH • ANNIE TARANTO

At the start of the unit, students investigate and write an argument essay about whether or not chocolate milk should be served in schools. As students explore this issue, they read texts, both digital and print (included in the Online Resources). You will teach them that in order to develop a solid argument, they need to research both sides of an issue, postponing a conclusion until the evidence is accumulated and reviewed. Once students have studied texts that advance different perspectives on the issue, you will teach them to consider the warrant behind the arguments in those texts, reading critically. Students then begin to plan and write their own arguments and draft a letter to the principal on this topic. As part of this work, you will coach students to make decisions about which information to quote, which information to paraphrase, and ways to present the context for the evidence they ultimately decide to include in their letter.

The second bend begins with a response from the principal in which she invites students to craft a position paper, or argument essay, to be presented to panels of administrators, parents, and cafeteria workers. Their charge set, students return to research, thinking about possible note-taking systems they might employ and selecting the one that works best for them. They also look at the research with a more critical eye. They are more knowledgeable about the topic, more adept at noticing the author's perspective.

As students move toward drafting, they will evaluate the data they have gathered, deciding which evidence they will use to bolster their claims. They'll look for flaws in their logic and revise their work to make their arguments more sound. Students will also entertain counterclaims, stating and debunking the other side's arguments, and will attend carefully to the perspectives of their audience.

For the final bend of the unit, writers draw on all they know about writing to take a stand in the world. They write another argument essay, this time about a topic of their choosing, in order to contribute to a public conversation. Students think about what they want to change in the world or what they want people to think differently about and embark on their research, uncovering new texts and perhaps conducting interviews or surveys of their own. With their deadline in mind, students outline the work they need to do and how they intend to get it done. They apply all they have learned about writing an argument essay. They also carry their knowledge of narrative writing into argument, using anecdotes to make their points where necessary. They learn to portray the data accurately to make an effective case.

Welcome to Unit 4

BEND I ✦ Establishing and Supporting Positions

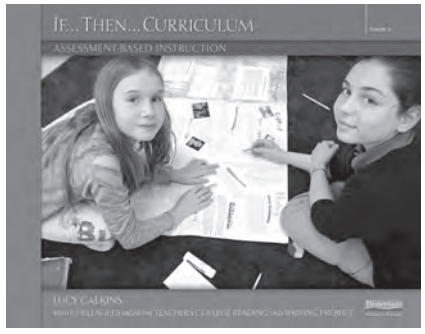
1. Investigating to Understand an Argument
2. Flash-Drafting Arguments
3. Using Evidence to Build Arguments
4. Using Quotations to Bolster an Argument
5. Redrafting to Add More Evidence
6. Balancing Evidence with Analysis
7. Signed, Sealed, Delivered

BEND II ✦ Building Powerful Arguments

8. Taking Arguments Up a Notch
9. Bringing a Critical Perspective to Writing
10. Rehearsing the Whole, Refining a Part
11. Rebuttals, Responses, and Counterclaims
12. Evaluating Evidence
13. Appealing to the Audience
14. A Mini-Celebration: Panel Presentations, Reflections, and Goal Setting
15. Argument across the Curriculum

BEND III ✦ Writing for Real-Life Purposes and Audiences

16. Taking Opportunities to Stand and Be Counted
17. Everyday Research
18. Taking Stock and Setting Writing Tasks
19. Using All You Know from Other Types of Writing to Make Your Arguments More Powerful
20. Evaluating the Validity of Your Argument
21. Paragraphing Choices
22. Celebration: Taking Positions, Developing Stances



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If... Then... Curriculum
Assessment-Based Instruction

LUCY CALKINS • WITH COLLEAGUES FROM THE TEACHERS COLLEGE READING AND WRITING PROJECT

The *If... Then... Curriculum* offers additional, abbreviated units teachers can use before, after, or in between the core curriculum based on students' needs. This resource also includes conferring scenarios that help teachers plan individual and small-group instruction.

INTRODUCTION Fifth-Grade Writers and Planning Your Year

PART ONE Alternate and Additional Units

The Personal and Persuasive Essay: Creating Boxes and Bullets and Argument Structures for Essay Writing

IF your students did not have the opportunity to cycle through this unit of study last year or if their on-demand opinion writing shows significant gaps, THEN we recommend teaching this unit before venturing onto Shaping Texts: From Essay and Narrative to Memoir *and* The Research-Based Argument Essay.

Information Writing: Feature Articles on Topics of Personal Expertise

IF your fifth-graders have not been part of writing workshops prior to now and have not had any experience writing information texts, THEN you may want to teach this unit, because it invites youngsters to write feature articles in ways that align with all the Common Core State Standards for fifth grade.

Information Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas

IF you imagine a writing unit of study in which students are engaged in research projects, THEN you will probably want to teach this unit either before or after The Lens of History: Research Reports.

Literary and Comparative Essays

IF you want to give your students more experience in opinion writing, helping them transfer all they've learned about essay writing to writing about texts, THEN you might want to teach this unit, which will instruct children in defending claims about literature using text-based evidence.

Poetry Anthologies: Writing, Thinking, and Seeing More

IF you want to ready your students for the CCSS' expectations for close reading of complex texts and teach your students to become more conscious of the crafting and language decisions that writers make, THEN you might want to teach this unit.

Journalism

IF you want to help your students learn to write information texts quickly, to revise purposefully and swiftly, and to write from positions of thoughtful observation within their community, THEN you might want to teach this unit after the foundational information units for this grade.

Fantasy

IF you want your students to synthesize many of the writing skills they have been honing all year, as well as push themselves past their comfort zones into new areas of growth in narrative writing, THEN you might want to teach this unit as a transformative and challenging capstone unit for students this year.

PART TWO Differentiating Instruction for Individuals and Small Groups: If... Then... Conferring Scenarios

NARRATIVE WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the story lacks focus . . .
If the story is confusing or seems to be missing important information . . .
If the story has no tension . . .
If the story has no real or significant ending . . .
If the writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .
If the writer does not use paragraphs . . .

Elaboration

If the writer has created a story that is sparse, with little elaboration . . .
If the story is riddled with details . . .
If the story is swamped with dialogue . . .
If the writer has written the external story but not the internal story . . .
If the writer struggles to identify and convey a deeper meaning . . .
If the writer is ready to use literary devices . . .
If the writer summarizes rather than story-tells . . .

Language

If the writer struggles with spelling . . .
If the writer struggles with ending punctuation . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer has "nothing to write about . . ."
If the writer's notebook work does not represent all she can do . . .

The Process of Drafting

If the writer has trouble maintaining stamina and volume . . .
If the writer struggles to work independently . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer does not seem to be driven by personal goals as much as by your instructions . . .

The Process of Editing

If the writer does not use what she knows about editing while writing . . .

INFORMATION WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the writer has not established a clear organizational structure . . .
If there is no logical order to the sequence of information . . .
If information in various sections overlaps . . .
If the writer is ready to experiment with alternative organizational structures . . .
If the writer has chosen a topic that is too broad . . .
If the piece is lacking an introduction and/or conclusion . . .

Elaboration

If each section is short and needs elaboration . . .
If the writer elaborates by adding fact upon fact . . .
If the writer goes off on tangents when elaborating . . .
If the writer does not elaborate on information from outside sources . . .

Language

If the writer incorporates quotes, facts, and statistics but does so awkwardly . . .
If transitions from section to section sound awkward . . .
If the writer does not incorporate domain-specific vocabulary . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer chooses topics about which she has little expertise and/or that are difficult to research . . .
If the writer simply copies facts into the notebook . . .

The Process of Drafting

If the first draft is not organized . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer is "done" while revising . . .
If the writer does not have a large repertoire of strategies to draw from . . .

The Process of Editing

If the student has edited but has missed several mistakes or would otherwise benefit from learning to partner-edit . . .

OPINION/ARGUMENT WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the introduction does not forecast the structure of the essay . . .
If supports overlap . . .
If supports are not parallel or equal in weight . . .
If the writer is new to writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .
If the writer has a number of well-developed reasons but they all blur together without paragraphs or transitions . . .
If the writer is ready to consider counterarguments . . .

Elaboration

If the writer is struggling to elaborate (1) . . .
If the writer is struggling to elaborate (2) . . .
If the writer's evidence feels free-floating or disconnected from the argument at hand . . .
If the piece is swamped with details . . .
If the writer has provided evidence, but it does not all support the claim . . .

Language

If the writer uses a casual, informal tone when writing . . .
If the writer struggles with spelling . . .
If the writer struggles with comma usage . . .

The Process of Generating Ideas

If the writer struggles to generate meaningful topics worth exploring . . .
If the writer is exploring opinions that are overly simple or without dimension . . .

The Process of Drafting

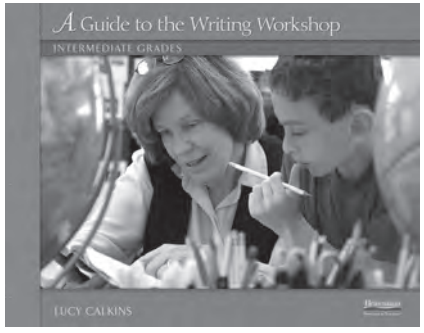
If the writer has a clear plan for her writing but loses focus and organization when drafting . . .

The Process of Revision

If the writer has a limited repertoire of revision strategies . . .

The Process of Editing

If the writer "edits on the run," investing little time or effort in the process . . .



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A Guide to the Writing Workshop
Intermediate Grades

LUCY CALKINS

This important resource describes the essential principles, methods, and structures of effective writing workshop instruction.

A Note to My Readers

A New Mission for Schools and Educators

What Do State Standards Say about Writing, and What Does This Mean for Us?

The Essentials of Writing Instruction

Upper-Elementary-Grade Writers and the Writing Process

Provisioning a Writing Workshop

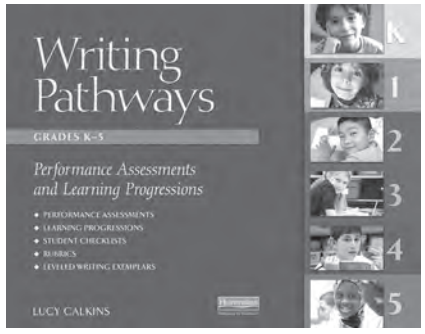
Management Systems

Inside the Minilesson

Differentiated Feedback: Conferring with Individuals and Small Groups

Supporting English Language Learners

Building Your Own Units of Study



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Writing Pathways
Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades K–5

LUCY CALKINS

This powerful assessment system offers learning progressions, performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars—everything the teacher needs to provide students with continuous assessment, feedback, and goal setting.

PART ONE About the Assessment System

A Brief Overview of the Assessment System

The First Step: On-Demand Performance Assessments

The Norming Meeting: Developing Shared Expectations

Harvesting Information to Differentiate Instruction

Introducing Students to the Self-Assessment Checklists

Adapting the Assessment System to Support Students with IEPs

Teaching Youngsters to Use Checklists to Set Goals for Themselves

Making Sure Self-Assessment Supports Changes in Practice

Designing a Record-Keeping System

Using Leveled Writing Samples

Conferring and Small-Group Work, Informed by the Learning Progressions

Supporting Transference of Learning across Content Areas

Designing Performance Assessments for Writing about Reading

PART TWO The Assessment Tools

Opinion Writing

Learning Progression, PreK–6
On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt
Opinion Writing Checklists, Grades K–6
Student Writing Samples, Grades K–6
Annotated Opinion Writing, K–6

Information Writing

Learning Progression, PreK–6
On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt
Information Writing Checklists, Grades K–6
Student Writing Samples, Grades K–6
Annotated Information Writing, K–6

Narrative Writing

Learning Progression, PreK–6
On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt
Narrative Writing Checklists, Grades K–6
Student Writing Samples, Grades K–6
Annotated Narrative Writing, K–6

Writing Process

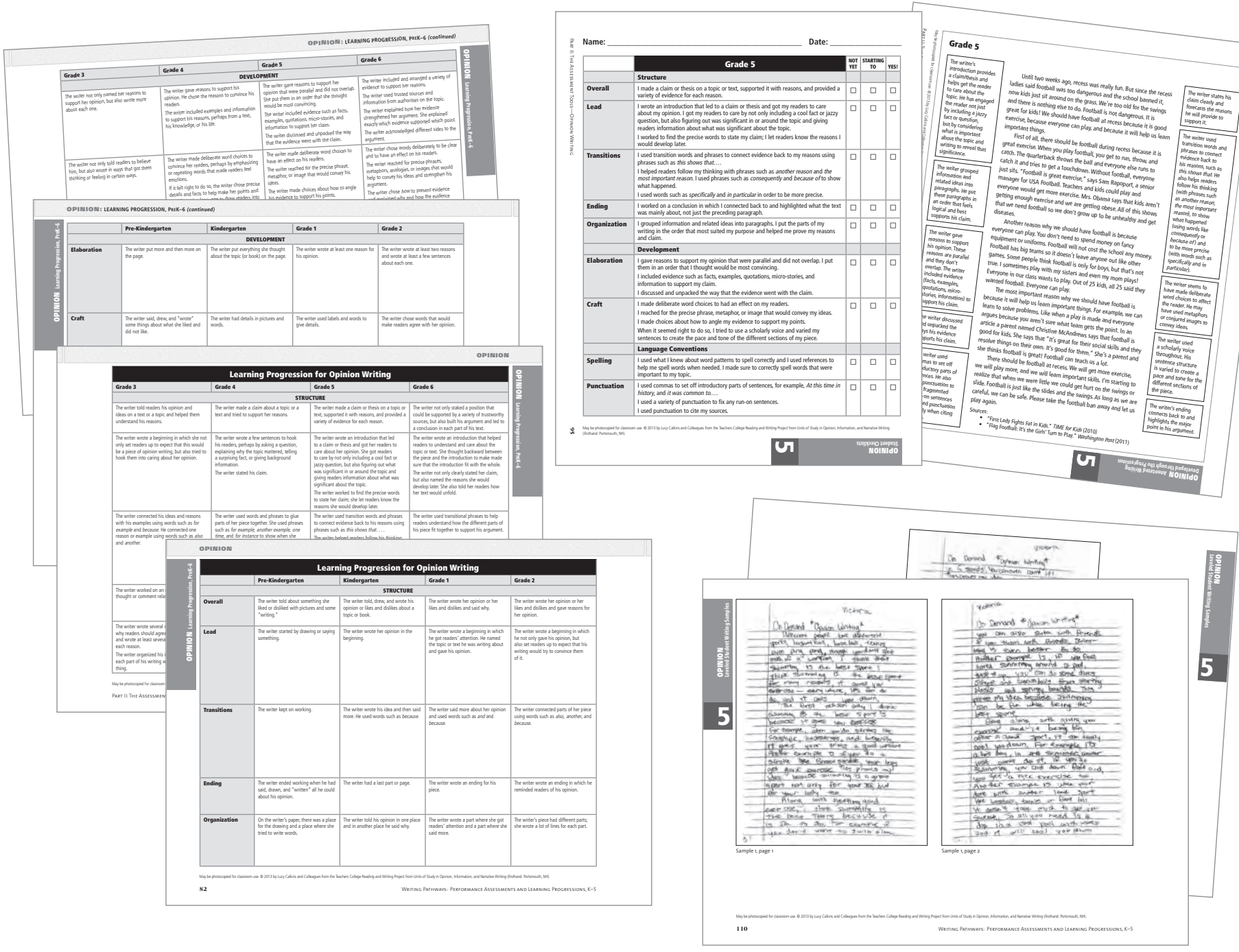
Learning Progression, K–5

Additional Performance Assessments

Sample On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt for Writing about Reading, Grade 2

Sample On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt for Writing about Reading, Grade 5

Suggestions for Conducting, Grading, and Responding to the Performance Assessments



OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PREK–6 *(continued)*

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
DEVELOPMENT			
The writer not only named her reasons to support her opinion, but also wrote more about each one.	The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. He chose the reasons to convince his readers. The writer included examples and information to support his reasons, perhaps from a text, his knowledge, or his life.	The writer gave reasons to support her opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. She put them in an order that she thought would be most convincing. The writer included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support her claim. The writer discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.	The writer included and arranged a variety of evidence to support her reasons. The writer used trusted sources and information from authorities on the topic. The writer explained how her evidence strengthened her argument. She explained exactly which evidence supported which point. The writer acknowledged different sides to the argument.
The writer not only told readers to believe him, but also wrote in ways that got them thinking or feeling in certain ways.	The writer made deliberate word choices to convince her readers, perhaps by emphasizing or repeating words that made readers feel emotions. If it felt right to do so, the writer chose precise details and facts to help make her points and [illegible] readers into	The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey his ideas. The writer made choices about how to angle his evidence to support his points.	The writer chose words deliberately to be clear and to have an effect on his readers. The writer reached for precise phrases, metaphors, analogies, or images that would help to convey his ideas and strengthen his argument. The writer chose how to present evidence and explained why and how the evidence

OPINION Learning Progression, PreK–6

OPINION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, PREK–6 *(continued)*

	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
DEVELOPMENT				
Elaboration	The writer put more and then more on the page.	The writer put everything she thought about the topic (or book) on the page.	The writer wrote at least one reason for his opinion.	The writer wrote at least two reasons and wrote at least a few sentences about each one.
Craft	The writer said, drew, and "wrote" some things about what she liked and did not like.	The writer had details in pictures and words.	The writer used labels and words to give details.	The writer chose words that would make readers agree with her opinion.

OPINION Learning Progression, PreK–6

OPINION

Learning Progression for Opinion Writing

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
STRUCTURE			
The writer told readers his opinion and ideas on a text or a topic and helped them understand his reasons.	The writer made a claim about a topic or a text and tried to support her reasons.	The writer made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.	The writer not only staked a position that could be supported by a variety of trustworthy sources, but also built his argument and led to a conclusion in each part of his text.
The writer wrote a beginning in which she not only set readers up to expect that this would be a piece of opinion writing, but also tried to hook them into caring about her opinion.	The writer wrote a few sentences to hook his readers, perhaps by asking a question, explaining why the topic mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving background information. The writer stated his claim.	The writer wrote an introduction that led to a claim or thesis and got her readers to care about her opinion. She got readers to care by not only including a cool fact or jazzy question, but also figuring out what was significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic. The writer worked to find the precise words to state her claim; she let readers know the reasons she would develop later.	The writer wrote an introduction that helped readers to understand and care about the topic or text. She thought backward between the piece and the introduction to make made sure that the introduction fit with the whole. The writer not only clearly stated her claim, but also named the reasons she would develop later. She also told her readers how her text would unfold.
The writer connected his ideas and reasons with his examples using words such as *for example* and *because*. He connected one reason or example using words such as *also* and *another*.	The writer used words and phrases to glue parts of her piece together. She used phrases such as *for example, another example, one time*, and *for instance* to show when she	The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons using phrases such as *this shows that . . .* The writer helped readers follow his thinking	The writer used transitional phrases to help readers understand how the different parts of his piece fit together to support his argument.
The writer worked on an [illegible] thought or comment rela[illegible]			
The writer wrote several [illegible] why readers should agre[illegible] and wrote at least severa[illegible] each reason. The writer organized his [illegible] each part of his writing w[illegible] thing.			

OPINION Learning Progression, PreK–6

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PART II: THE ASSESSMEN[illegible]

OPINION

Learning Progression for Opinion Writing

	Pre-Kindergarten	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2
STRUCTURE				
Overall	The writer told about something she liked or disliked with pictures and some "writing."	The writer told, drew, and wrote his opinion or likes and dislikes about a topic or book.	The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and said why.	The writer wrote her opinion or her likes and dislikes and gave reasons for her opinion.
Lead	The writer started by drawing or saying something.	The writer wrote her opinion in the beginning.	The writer wrote a beginning in which he got readers' attention. He named the topic or text he was writing about and gave his opinion.	The writer wrote a beginning in which he not only gave his opinion, but also set readers up to expect that his writing would try to convince them of it.
Transitions	The writer kept on working.	The writer wrote his idea and then said more. He used words such as *because*.	The writer said more about her opinion and used words such as *and* and *because*.	The writer connected parts of her piece using words such as *also, another*, and *because*.
Ending	The writer ended working when he had said, drawn, and "written" all he could about his opinion.	The writer had a last part or page.	The writer wrote an ending for his piece.	The writer wrote an ending in which he reminded readers of his opinion.
Organization	On the writer's paper, there was a place for the drawing and a place where she tried to write words.	The writer told his opinion in one place and in another place he said why.	The writer wrote a part where she got readers' attention and a part where she said more.	The writer's piece had different parts; she wrote a lot of lines for each part.

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82 WRITING PATHWAYS: PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENTS AND LEARNING PROGRESSIONS, K–5

OPINION Learning Progression, PreK–6

Name: _____ Date: _____

	Grade 5	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
	Structure			
Overall	I made a claim or thesis on a topic or text, supported it with reasons, and provided a variety of evidence for each reason.	☐	☐	☐
Lead	I wrote an introduction that led to a claim or thesis and got my readers to care about my opinion. I got my readers to care by not only including a cool fact or jazzy question, but also figuring out was significant in or around the topic and giving readers information about what was significant about the topic. I worked to find the precise words to state my claim; I let readers know the reasons I would develop later.	☐	☐	☐
Transitions	I used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to my reasons using phrases such as *this shows that . . .* I helped readers follow my thinking with phrases such as *another reason* and *the most important reason*. I used phrases such as *consequently* and *because of* to show what happened. I used words such as *specifically* and *in particular* in order to be more precise.	☐	☐	☐
Ending	I worked on a conclusion in which I connected back to and highlighted what the text was mainly about, not just the preceding paragraph.	☐	☐	☐
Organization	I grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. I put the parts of my writing in the order that most suited my purpose and helped me prove my reasons and claim.	☐	☐	☐
	Development			
Elaboration	I gave reasons to support my opinion that were parallel and did not overlap. I put them in an order that I thought would be most convincing. I included evidence such as facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, and information to support my claim. I discussed and unpacked the way that the evidence went with the claim.	☐	☐	☐
Craft	I made deliberate word choices to had an effect on my readers. I reached for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image that would convey my ideas. I made choices about how to angle my evidence to support my points. When it seemed right to do so, I tried to use a scholarly voice and varied my sentences to create the pace and tone of the different sections of my piece.	☐	☐	☐
	Language Conventions			
Spelling	I used what I knew about word patterns to spell correctly and I used references to help me spell words when needed. I made sure to correctly spell words that were important to my topic.	☐	☐	☐
Punctuation	I used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences, for example, *At this time in history*, and *it was common to . . .* I used a variety of punctuation to fix any run-on sentences. I used punctuation to cite my sources.	☐	☐	☐

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OPINION Student Checklists 5

Grade 5

The writer's introduction provides a claim/thesis and helps get the reader to care about the topic. He has engaged the reader not just by including a jazzy fact or question, but by considering what is important about the topic and writing to reveal that significance.

The writer grouped information and related ideas into paragraphs. He put these paragraphs in an order that feels logical and best supports his claim.

The writer gave reasons to support his opinion. These reasons are parallel and they don't overlap. The writer included evidence (facts, examples, quotations, micro-stories, information) to support his claim.

The writer discussed and unpacked the ways his evidence supports his claim.

The writer used commas to set off introductory parts of sentences. He also used punctuation to fix fragmented or run-on sentences and punctuation correctly when citing sources.

Until two weeks ago, recess was really fun. But since the recess ladies said football was too dangerous and the school banned it, now kids just sit around on the grass. We're too old for the swings and there is nothing else to do. Football is not dangerous. It is great for kids! We should have football at recess because it is good exercise, because everyone can play, and because it will help us learn important things.

First of all, there should be football during recess because it is great exercise. When you play football, you get to run, throw, and catch. The quarterback throws the ball and everyone else runs to catch it and tries to get a touchdown. Without football, everyone just sits. "Football is great exercise," says Sam Rapoport, a senior manager for USA Football. Teachers and kids could play and everyone would get more exercise. Mrs. Obama says that kids aren't getting enough exercise and we are getting obese. All of this shows that we need football so we don't grow up to be unhealthy and get diseases.

Another reason why we should have football is because everyone can play. You don't need to spend money on fancy equipment or uniforms. Football will not cost the school any money. Football has big teams so it doesn't leave anyone out like other games. Some people think football is only for boys, but that's not true. I sometimes play with my sisters and even my mom plays! Everyone in our class wants to play. Out of 25 kids, all 25 said they wanted football. Everyone can play.

The most important reason why we should have football is because it will help us learn important things. For example, we can learn to solve problems. Like when a play is made and everyone argues because you aren't sure what team gets the point. In an article a parent named Christine McAndrews says that football is good for kids. She says that "It's great for their social skills and they resolve things on their own. It's good for them." She's a parent and she thinks football is great! Football can teach us a lot.

There should be football at recess. We will get more exercise, we will play more, and we will learn important skills. I'm starting to realize that when we were little we could get hurt on the swings or slide. Football is just like the slides and the swings. As long as we are careful, we can be safe. Please take the football ban away and let us play again.

Sources:

- "First Lady Fights Fat in Kids." *TIME for Kids* (2010)
- "Flag Football: It's the Girls' Turn to Play." *Washington Post* (2011)

The writer states his claim clearly and forecasts the reasons he will provide to support it.

The writer used transition words and phrases to connect evidence back to his reasons, such as this shows that. He also helps readers follow his thinking (with phrases such as another reason, the most important reason), to show what happened (using words like consequently or because of) and to be more precise (with words such as specifically and in particular).

The writer seems to have made deliberate word choices to affect the reader. He may have used metaphors or conjured images to convey ideas.

The writer used a scholarly voice throughout. His sentence structure is varied to create a pace and tone for the different sections of the piece.

The writer's ending connects back to and highlights the major point in his argument.

OPINION Annotated Writing Developed Through the Progressions 5

OPINION Leveled Student Writing Samples

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Sample 1, page 1

Sample 1, page 2

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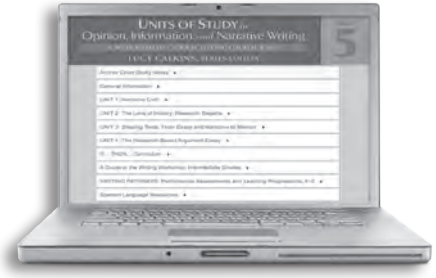
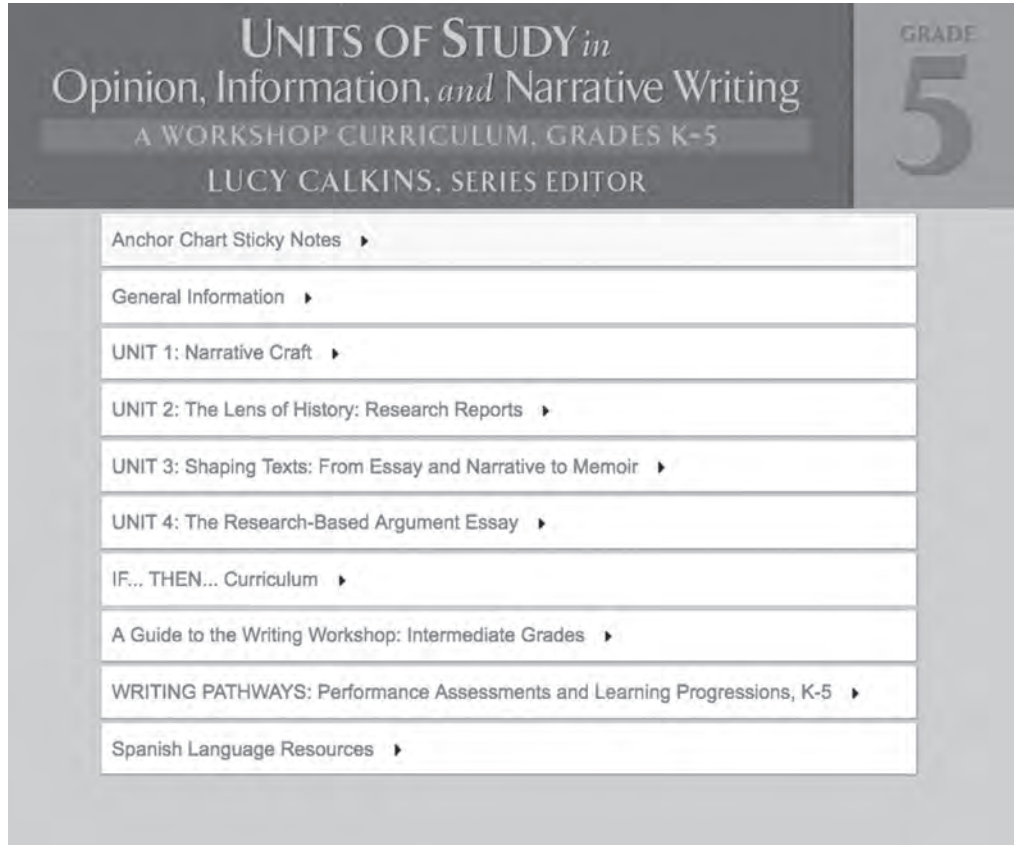
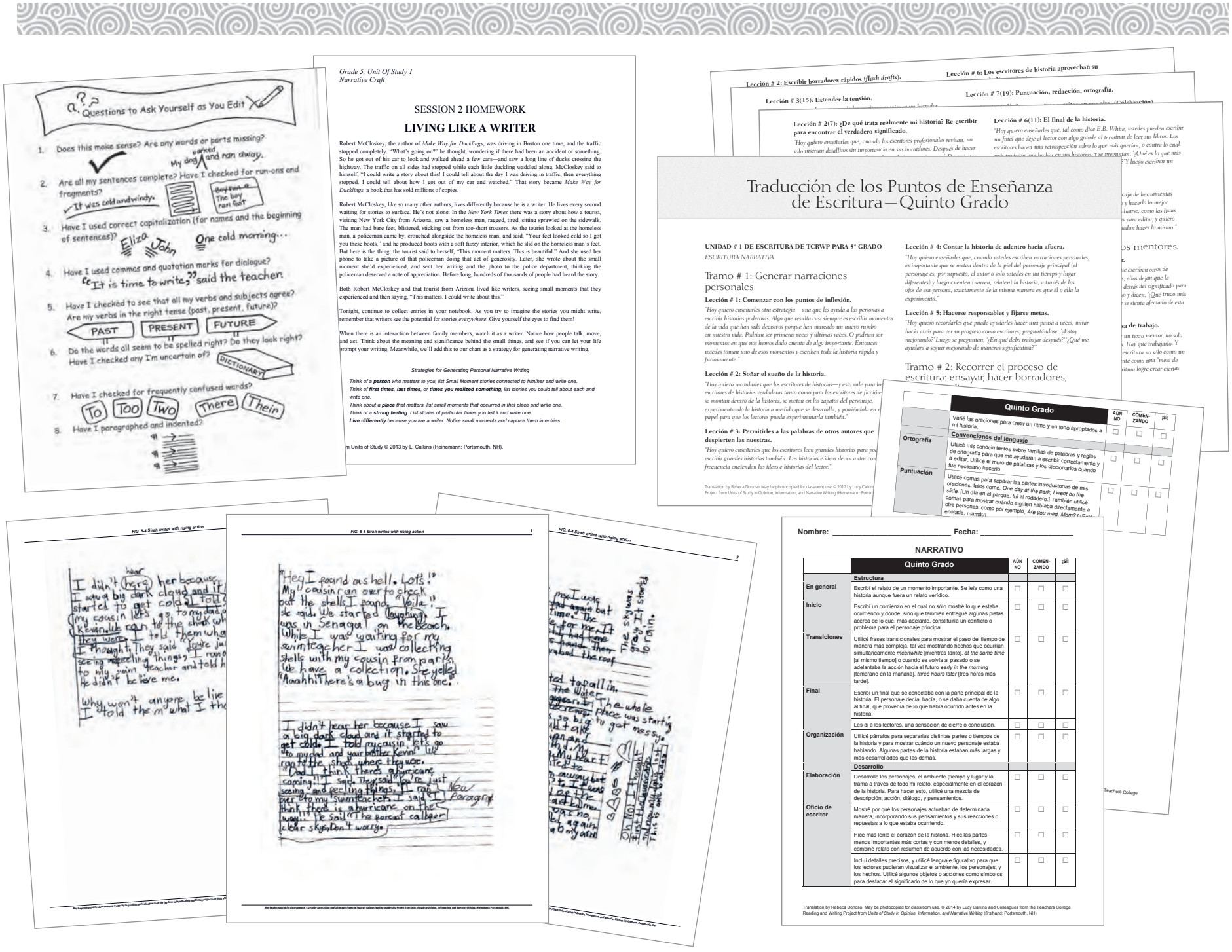


Online Resources for Teaching Writing

Grade-specific online resources support teaching throughout the school year. This rich assortment of instructional tools includes downloadable, printable files for anchor charts, figures, student exemplars, checklists, Spanish translations of many resources, and more.





Questions to Ask Yourself as You Edit

1. Does this make sense? Are any words or parts missing?
2. Are all my sentences complete? Have I checked for run-ons and fragments?
3. Have I used correct capitalization (for names and the beginning of sentences)?
4. Have I used commas and quotation marks for dialogue?
5. Have I checked to see that all my verbs and subjects agree? Are my verbs in the right tense (past, present, future)?
6. Do the words all seem to be spelled right? Do they look right? Have I checked any I'm uncertain of?
7. Have I checked for frequently confused words?
8. Have I paragraphed and indented?

Grade 5, Unit Of Study 1
Narrative Craft

SESSION 2 HOMEWORK

LIVING LIKE A WRITER

Robert McCloskey, the author of *Make Way for Ducklings*, was driving in Boston one time, and the traffic stopped completely. "What's going on?" he thought, wondering if there had been an accident or something. So he got out of his car to look and walked ahead a few cars—and saw a long line of ducks crossing the highway. The traffic on all sides had stopped while each little duckling waddled along. McCloskey said to himself, "I could write a story about this! I could tell about the day I was driving in traffic, then everything stopped. I could tell about how I got out of my car and watched." That story became *Make Way for Ducklings*, a book that has sold millions of copies.

Robert McCloskey, like so many other authors, lives differently because he is a writer. He lives every second waiting for stories to surface. He's not alone. In the *New York Times* there was a story about how a tourist, visiting New York City from Arizona, saw a homeless man, ragged, tired, sitting sprawled on the sidewalk. The man had bare feet, blistered, sticking out from too-short trousers. As the tourist looked at the homeless man, a policeman came by, crouched alongside the homeless man, and said, "Your feet looked cold so I got you these boots," and he produced boots with a soft fuzzy interior, which he slid on the homeless man's feet. But here is the thing: the tourist said to herself, "This moment matters. This is beautiful." And she used her phone to take a picture of that policeman doing that act of generosity. Later, she wrote about the small moment she'd experienced, and sent her writing and the photo to the police department, thinking the policeman deserved a note of appreciation. Before long, hundreds of thousands of people had heard the story.

Both Robert McCloskey and that tourist from Arizona lived like writers, seeing small moments that they experienced and then saying, "This matters. I could write about this."

Tonight, continue to collect entries in your notebook. As you try to imagine the stories you might write, remember that writers see the potential for stories *everywhere*. Give yourself the eyes to find them!

When there is an interaction between family members, watch it as a writer. Notice how people talk, move, and act. Think about the meaning and significance behind the small things, and see if you can let your life prompt your writing. Meanwhile, we'll add this to our chart as a strategy for generating narrative writing.

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing

*Think of a **person** who matters to you, list Small Moment stories connected to him/her and write one.*
*Think of **first times**, **last times**, or **times you realized something**, list stories you could tell about each and write one.*
*Think about a **place** that matters, list small moments that occurred in that place and write one.*
*Think of a **strong feeling**. List stories of particular times you felt it and write one.*
***Live differently** because you are a writer. Notice small moments and capture them in entries.*

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Lección # 2: Escribir borradores rápidos (*flash drafts*).

Lección # 3(15): Extender la tensión.

Lección # 6: Los escritores de historia aprovechan su

Lección # 7(19): Puntuación, redacción, ortografía.

Lección # 2(7): ¿De qué trata realmente mi historia? Re-escribir para encontrar el verdadero significado.

"Hoy quiero enseñarles que, cuando los escritores profesionales revisan, no solo insertan detallitos sin importancia en sus borradores. Después de hacer

Lección # 6(11): El final de la historia.

"Hoy quiero enseñarles que, tal como dice E.B. White, ustedes pueden escribir un final que deje al lector con algo grande al terminar de leer sus libros. Los escritores hacen una retrospección sobre lo que más querían, o contra lo cual

Traducción de los Puntos de Enseñanza de Escritura—Quinto Grado

UNIDAD # 1 DE ESCRITURA DE TCRWP PARA 5° GRADO
ESCRITURA NARRATIVA

Tramo # 1: Generar narraciones personales

Lección # 1: Comenzar con los puntos de inflexión.

"Hoy quiero enseñarles otra estrategia—una que les ayuda a las personas a escribir historias poderosas. Algo que resulta casi siempre es escribir momentos de la vida que han sido decisivos porque han marcado un nuevo rumbo en nuestra vida. Podrían ser primeras veces y últimas veces. O podrían ser momentos en que nos hemos dado cuenta de algo importante. Entonces ustedes toman uno de esos momentos y escriben toda la historia rápida y furiosamente."

Lección # 2: Soñar el sueño de la historia.

"Hoy quiero recordarles que los escritores de historias—y esto vale para los escritores de historias verdaderas tanto como para los escritores de ficción—se montan dentro de la historia, se meten en los zapatos del personaje, experimentando la historia a medida que se desarrolla, y poniéndola en el papel para que los lectores pueda experimentarla también."

Lección # 3: Permitirles a las palabras de otros autores que despierten las nuestras.

"Hoy quiero enseñarles que los escritores leen grandes historias para poder escribir grandes historias también. Las historias e ideas de un autor con frecuencia encienden las ideas e historias del lector."

Lección # 4: Contar la historia de adentro hacia afuera.

"Hoy quiero enseñarles que, cuando ustedes escriben narraciones personales, es importante que se metan dentro de la piel del personaje principal (el personaje es, por supuesto, el autor o solo ustedes en un tiempo y lugar diferentes) y luego cuenten (narren, relaten) la historia, a través de los ojos de esa persona, exactamente de la misma manera en que él o ella la experimentó."

Lección # 5: Hacerse responsables y fijarse metas.

"Hoy quiero recordarles que puede ayudarles hacer una pausa a veces, mirar hacia atrás para ver su progreso como escritores, preguntándose, '¿Estoy mejorando? Luego se preguntan, '¿En qué debo trabajar después?' '¿Qué me ayudará a seguir mejorando de maneras significativas?'"

Tramo # 2: Recorrer el proceso de escritura: ensayar, hacer borradores,

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Project from Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing (Heinemann: Portsm

	Quinto Grado	AÚN NO	COMEN-ZANDO	¡SÍ!
	Varié las oraciones para crear un ritmo y un tono apropiados a mi historia.	☐	☐	☐
	Convenciones del lenguaje			
Ortografía	Utilicé mis conocimientos sobre familias de palabras y reglas de ortografía para que me ayudaran a escribir correctamente y a editar. Utilicé el muro de palabras y los diccionarios cuando fue necesario hacerlo.	☐	☐	☐
Puntuación	Utilicé comas para separar las partes introductorias de mis oraciones, tales como, *One day at the park, I went on the slide.* [Un día en el parque, fui al resbadero.] También utilicé comas para mostrar cuándo alguien hablaba directamente a otra personas, como por ejemplo, *Are you mad, Mom?* [¿Estás enojada, mamá?]	☐	☐	☐

Teachers College

FIG. 5-4 Sirah writes with rising action

FIG. 5-4 Sirah writes with rising action 1

FIG. 5-4 Sirah writes with rising action 3

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Nombre: _____ **Fecha:** _____

NARRATIVO

	Quinto Grado	AÚN NO	COMEN-ZANDO	¡SÍ!
	Estructura			
En general	Escribí el relato de un momento importante. Se leía como una historia aunque fuera un relato verídico.	☐	☐	☐
Inicio	Escribí un comienzo en el cual no sólo mostré lo que estaba ocurriendo y dónde, sino que también entregué algunas pistas acerca de lo que, más adelante, constituiría un conflicto o problema para el personaje principal.	☐	☐	☐
Transiciones	Utilicé frases transicionales para mostrar el paso del tiempo de manera más compleja, tal vez mostrando hechos que ocurrían simultáneamente *meanwhile* [mientras tanto], *at the same time* [al mismo tiempo] o cuando se volvía al pasado o se adelantaba la acción hacia el futuro *early in the morning* [temprano en la mañana], *three hours later* [tres horas más tarde].	☐	☐	☐
Final	Escribí un final que se conectaba con la parte principal de la historia. El personaje decía, hacía, o se daba cuenta de algo al final, que provenía de lo que había ocurrido antes en la historia.	☐	☐	☐
	Les di a los lectores, una sensación de cierre o conclusión.	☐	☐	☐
Organización	Utilicé párrafos para separarlas distintas partes o tiempos de la historia y para mostrar cuándo un nuevo personaje estaba hablando. Algunas partes de la historia estaban más largas y más desarrolladas que las demás.	☐	☐	☐
	Desarrollo			
Elaboración	Desarrolle los personajes, el ambiente (tiempo y lugar y la trama a través de todo mi relato, especialmente en el corazón de la historia. Para hacer esto, utilicé una mezcla de descripción, acción, diálogo, y pensamientos.	☐	☐	☐
Oficio de escritor	Mostré por qué los personajes actuaban de determinada manera, incorporando sus pensamientos y sus reacciones o repuestas a lo que estaba ocurriendo.	☐	☐	☐
	Hice más lento el corazón de la historia. Hice las partes menos importantes más cortas y con menos detalles, y combiné relato con resumen de acuerdo con las necesidades.	☐	☐	☐
	Incluí detalles precisos, y utilicé lenguaje figurativo para que los lectores pudieran visualizar el ambiente, los personajes, y los hechos. Utilicé algunos objetos o acciones como símbolos para destacar el significado de lo que yo quería expresar.	☐	☐	☐

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Session 1

Starting with Turning Points

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that to come up with ideas for personal narratives, it can help to think of turning-point moments.

GETTING READY

- ✔ The first minilesson assumes that just prior to it, you gave your children an on-demand, narrative writing assessment.
- ✔ Each child will need his or her own writer's notebook and a writing tool.
- ✔ On large chart paper, titled "Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing," chart the first bullet ahead of time (see Connection). You'll have asked students (or their teachers) to report on collecting strategies they learned in the preceding year. If they do not seem to have a repertoire of strategies for generating narrative writing, alter the minilesson so that you do not refer to this background knowledge.
- ✔ Prepare your own example of a first time, last time, or time when you realized something important to include in your list of turning-point moments (see Teaching).
- ✔ Markers for writing on the chart
- ✔ Prepare your own example of a time when writing worked for you and a time when it was difficult (see Share).

WHEN I WAS YOUNG, every evening I rode my bike around Windover Drive, calling "Games in the circle at seven, games in the circle at seven" like a young Paul Revere. As day turned to dusk, whoever "it" was would kick the can and we'd scatter to hide. Some would be found, then the dusk would deepen, lights would go on in the houses, and mothers would appear in doorways to signal kids home. The final call would go out: "All-y, all-y in free, all-y, all-y in free. Come out, come out, wherever you are." Kids would drop from low-hanging branches and emerge from the back seat of the farm jalopy and from the bushes that lined the farmhouse.

That call—"All-y, all-y in free, come out, come out, wherever you are," happens whenever we teach writing. Young people come to us and they are hiding. Fifth-graders, especially, are hiding. They enter our classrooms on the brink of adolescence, writing in tiny scrawl, elbows covering their pages. Reading what they've written, I often find myself wanting to call, "Come out, come out, wherever you are."

Today, as you launch the fifth-grade writing workshop, you will call your students out of hiding. To do this, you will need to take the risk of reading your own writing aloud to your students, signaling to them that there is something powerful about putting oneself on the page. Throughout the workshop, you'll help youngsters write with honesty and voice. On the first day of his fifth-grade writing workshop, Roy wrote an entry that began, "One bright Saturday morning, my team played in the soccer finals and I almost made the winning goal."

In a conference, I told Roy about the writer James Merrill, who once said, "The words that come first are anybody's words. You have to make them your own." I told him that his soccer game story could have been anyone's story: one day I played soccer, I made (or did not make) the winning goal. "The end." I added, "Your job when writing is to put your story, your true, lived experience of that day, onto the page. Think about that day, and think about the story you haven't told."

"As you launch the fifth-grade writing workshop, you will call your students out of hiding."

We sat in silence for a moment, and I watched as he flipped through a mental rolodex of memories. Then he shook his head, ever so slightly, as if shaking away a memory, and said, "Nah." I knew better, and pressed him to tell me the story he'd just shaken off.

Roy told me this story.

> That Saturday, my dad said he wanted to drive me to my game and I thought, "Whoa. That's different" because other kids' dads drive them to the games all the time and sit in the bleachers cheering their heads off, but my dad was always working. So it was a big thing that he wanted to drive me. I could have carpooled but I knew he wanted to be nice, so I said great. When we got to the soccer field, he had work, so I got out of the car and started to walk towards the field.
>
> Then my dad called, "Son . . . " I turned back and as I walked to the car, I thought, "This is when he is gonna give me that little pep talk, those words to keep you going." And when I got to the car, Dad opened the window and leaned his head out and looked at me. Then he put his finger up, like to say, "One reminder." And he said, "Don't blow it." Then my dad rolled up the window and drove away, leaving me standing there, stunned. I walked back onto the field and all I could think was, "What was that?"

After telling this story, Roy reread his old draft—the perfectly okay draft about what happened at the soccer game. And he realized that the real story wasn't the game, wasn't the score—the real story was about his dad. So Roy rewrote that first draft. He didn't just add a line or two to his draft, or fix his lead. Instead he folded up the first draft, and wrote a version of the story he'd just told me. And this time, he tried to make the story his own.

When Roy wrote this next draft, and read it to the class, you could hear a pin drop in the room. Something changed in that classroom, that moment. It was as if his story has issued the call, "Come out, come out, wherever you are." Children became present in a way they hadn't been, and the year's writing workshop was launched.

Today and tomorrow, you'll hope to accomplish something similar. The actual sessions may not be the most important parts of your teaching. Instead, it will matter tremendously that you wear a love for writing on your sleeve. And your absolute respect for your students as writers, and confidence in their willingness to invest themselves, heart and soul, in writing will matter.

The year ahead will be a fast-paced, demanding year for both you and your students. They are on the brink of middle school, and the expectations for their writing will accelerate quickly. During the upcoming weeks, you'll teach them to angle their writing to advance a theme, to work within the confines of story structure, to regard time in their texts as flexible, using backstory and foreshadowing to forward meaning.

It may be tempting to ready yourselves for the onslaught of new expectations, for the accelerating speed and scale of it all, by bypassing any effort to create a trusting community, hurrying past any effort to help students write the truth of their lives. Don't do that! Bypassing those essentials would be a big mistake. Your students are, in the end, no different than you and I. They are eager to work with heart and soul on projects that matter, but they need to know their contributions carry significance, their efforts and ideas and their lives are important. You'll convey that through the content of your teaching, and also through the values you embody.

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MINILESSON

Starting with Turning Points

CONNECTION

Support children's identities as writers by telling them that you've already begun to study their writing.

"Writers, yesterday during the on-demand assessment, when you wrote an entire story in just one writing workshop, I watched your pens rushing down the page and thought, 'This is a class of *writers*.' I took your stories home last night, curled up on my couch with a blanket, and began reading. Some of your pieces made me laugh; others made me want to cry. I jotted notes about each one of you, as a writer, listing the things you already know how to do. So now, looking out at you, I feel as if I know each of you already.

"An American writer named John Jakes once said: 'Be yourself. Above all, let who you are, what you are, what you believe, shine through every sentence you write, every piece you finish." It seems to me that each of you is well on your way to becoming just that kind of writer—the kind of writer who lets your true self shine through every sentence you write."

Acknowledge that students already know strategies for generating narrative writing. Reference the year's new chart, encouraging them to make personal charts of strategies, sharing what they know.

"Today, as you begin to work on new pieces of writing, I want to remind you that *you already know* strategies for coming up with stories that make readers sigh and laugh and pull in to read more. I've hung a chart from last year, 'Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing,' front and center in our classroom, because we'll draw on it all the time, and we'll add to it as we learn more. As writers, you each carry with you an invisible backpack full of all the strategies you've ever learned, and I know you are accustomed to pulling those strategies out as needed.

"I have *already* listed one strategy on our class chart. Many of you told me you already use this first strategy to come up with ideas for true stories. Right now, read this first bullet to the person sitting near you and signal to each other to show yes (thumbs-up) if you *have* used this strategy as a way to come up with ideas for true stories, and no (thumbs-down) if you *haven't* ever used this strategy to come up with ideas for true stories. Go!"

◆ COACHING

Today the important thing will be that you show students how to use strategies to more powerful effect, keeping in mind that the goal is not just to produce text, but instead, the goal is to write well. This is not just a unit on writing personal narratives. It is a unit on raising the level of narrative writing. From the first day, you ask students to reach toward the goal of writing powerful stories—stories that will make readers gasp or laugh aloud or blink back tears.

Sometimes I see teachers disguising the fact that children will recycle, in this unit, the same process they experienced in previous years. Don't downplay this! Instead, seize on the important opportunity you have to teach students to draw on earlier teaching as they continue their work. Until they learn to do this, they can't be independent writers. The image of an invisible backpack is one I use again and again.

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing

- Think of a **person** who matters to you, list Small Moment stories connected to him/her and write one.

"I saw a few of you going like this." I shrugged and lifted my hands up in an exaggerated 'whaaaaat?' way. "It is totally okay if you haven't already learned this strategy, because there are lots of kids all around you who can show you how to use the strategy if you are ever stuck on what to write about.

"How many of you have *other* strategies that work for you when you need a strategy for coming up with true stories?" Many children signaled that they did. Although some started to list these, I quelled that so I could continue. "I'm thinking, then, that you may each want to make your own private 'Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing' chart, and you can tape it into your notebook or find a way to prop it up on your desk when you write. The important thing is that always, when writing, you use whatever is already in your invisible backpack of strategies to help you write as much as you can."

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you another strategy—one that helps people write *powerful* stories. It usually works to jot moments that have been turning points in your life. These might be first times or last times, or they might be times when you realized something important. Then you take one of those moments and write the whole story, fast and furious."

TEACHING

Demonstrate the step-by-step sequence of using the strategy. In this case, generate ideas for personal narratives by listing first times, last times, or times when you realized something.

"Let me show you how I use these strategies—thinking of first times I did something, thinking of last times I did something, and thinking of times when I realized something important, because these are all ways for me to think of turning-point stories. Pay careful attention because then you'll get a chance to try this work in just a minute."

In order to come up with a first or last time, I take something—anything—that I do all the time. So, I'll pick ice-skating. Then I think, 'When is the *first time* I ice-skated?' And suddenly I remember a time (it might not have been the very first time, but it was an early time) when I skated out to an island, pushing a little red chair in front of me so I wouldn't fall. I write that time on my list, knowing I might come back and tell the story of it later. And writers, the exciting thing is that when I start to think of the first time I did one, usually a dozen other 'firsts' will just pop into my head and I can list of few of them, knowing that I can return to this list." I jotted quickly on the white board, scrawling a fast list.

Notice that I do not phrase the teaching point like this: "Today we will think of turning-point stories." That wording would have simply assigned children a task and that is not my goal! A minilesson is not a forum for telling children what you want them all to do in the upcoming workshop. Instead, it is a place for explicitly teaching children the skills and strategies of good writing—skills and strategies you want them to call upon as needed, not only today, but always. In today's minilesson, I am hoping to teach children one more technique that they can carry with them in their invisible backpacks of strategies.

For today, it will be especially important to convey to students that you hope they draw on strategies for generating narrative writing that they learned during previous writing workshops. Of course, as soon as children develop facility with these strategies, the strategies will become internalized, and the work of generating ideas will increasingly happen outside of the writing classroom, as people's lives become a giant form of rehearsal. As this unit unfurls, you should see that before long, your students enter your classroom already mulling over possible writing projects.

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Turning Points

✓ **The first time** I went ice-skating and wobbled out on the ice, so scared I would fall.
✓ **The first time** I held my new puppy in my arms. I scanned the other puppies in the room and worried whether I would love mine.
✓ **The first time** we moved into our house. I walked around, so excited for what it would look like once all our furniture was in place.

As I worked, I said, "Doing this quickly is part of doing it well. The important work is not the listing, but choosing one of the times to write as a story. See how my hand is zooming down the page?"

So, see how I've got a bunch of first times here that could all make great stories? And I can go through the same process to think of story ideas if I push myself to think of last times, or times I realized something. In order to come up with a last time I did something, for example, I go through the same steps . . . and this time, I end up remembering the last time I saw my grandfather, on a visit to the hospital."

The last time I visited my grandfather at the hospital and said a sad, confused goodbye.

Debrief quickly, pointing out the replicable moves you have made and then continue demonstrating quickly coming up with an idea for a time you realized something.

"Writers, I can also think, 'What moment can I recall when suddenly I realized something important?' That's harder! But sometimes it helps to think about times when I've felt strong emotions and learned a lesson as a result. I do remember this one time. I was *so* angry, stomping around my house and yelling and crying. My mom didn't yell at me or punish me, though. Instead, she gave me a big hug and helped me calm down. In that moment, I realized that no matter what happens, no matter what I do, my family will always be there for me."

The time I was acting terrible and my mom gave me a big hug. I realized she would always be there for me.

Debrief. Remind children of the purpose for the strategy. In this case, remind them that thinking of turning points can help them generate ideas for personal narratives.

"When I want to pick a topic for a personal narrative that will make a really good story, one that will have the shape of a story—a beginning, a middle, and an end—and one that matters, it often helps to think about turning-point moments. And now you've seen that to do this, I sometimes brainstorm first times, last times, and times when I realized something important. My brainstorming leads to a list, and then I choose one moment from the list that I believe is the most significant to write about in detail."

Although I am not explaining this to students now, the truth is that I have found turning-point stories tend to turn out to be especially shapely. The writer tells what happened before, during, and after, and things are different from before to after.

Another way to generate turning-point stories is to list an interest that you care about—like teaching writing, for example—and then jot possible turning points.

Don't bypass this lesson! It works like a charm to ask children to think about first times, last times, and times when they realized something important. When children think about these turning points, they automatically generate story ideas that have a before and an after, or a beginning, middle, and end. In other words, finding topics in this way helps children build a story arc because the arc is inherent in the story. This is most obvious in the "times when I realized something" stories. For example, a child might tell about how he'd always taken his dad for granted. Then a turning point happened, and he appreciated him. Another child may have thought a particular teacher would be terrifying, but then a turning point happened and the child realized his fears were unfounded. Last- and first-time stories also often have a before and an after, or a beginning, middle, and end. This way of finding topics puts a tension into the personal narrative—an element so many good stories contain—even though the writer may not yet be completely conscious of crafting to create the tension.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Set children up to try the strategy.

"So now I want you to try it. Open to the first page of your notebook, and just like I did, make a quick list of the first and last times or times you realized something. Remember not to plan on telling the whole story but instead, try to really zoom in on an intense part of that time, just like I did."

After a moment, I asked for children's attention. "Notice this: for each time, I mentioned what I was doing specifically, the actions." I underlined that part on my three items. "And I mentioned what I was feeling some of the time, too." I circled that part on each item. "See if you can add what exactly you were doing and feeling to at least one of your items." Some children finished before others, so I signaled for them to do this work for their entire list.

As children worked, I voiced over, coaching into their work. "When you record an episode, it usually works to write more words. Not *getting my puppy* but *when I held Emma in my arms and I scanned the other puppies and worried whether I would love mine*. When you write more words, you figure out what exactly it is that you remember about that time."

Demonstrate and support thinking about moments in which you realized something, pointing out that realizations often occur during first and last times. Channel students to do this, first alone, quietly, and then by talking.

"It is harder to recall when you *realized something* important, but here is a trick. Lots of times, those realizations are right there in the first and last times. Like, the *last time* I saw my grandfather, I realized he was going to die, and only later, I realized that when people die, they are really truly with you still. (There's a whole story of me having to go up on stage, long after he died, and being afraid, and feeling my grandfather with me, but that is for another time.) My point now is that those first and last minutes are often times when you realize things. See if that's true for the moments on your list. If you realized something during those moments, or after them, jot that in the margins of your list. Or you might have other moments in your life where you realized things. If so, jot those. Do this jotting quietly for now, and then you can talk with each other."

Debrief. Remind children that whenever they want to write powerful true stories, they can use the strategy of listing turning-point moments and then select one to write.

"Writers, I hope you are seeing that when you want to pick a topic for a personal narrative that will make a really good story—and that will be a story that matters—it often helps to think about turning-point moments."

Keep your suggestions simple. Your goal is for children to be able to prompt themselves the way you are now prompting them. For a strategy to be useful, the writer has to be able to use it independently, without a teacher, later. Therefore make sure your prompts are the sort that kids can internalize and use for themselves.

Scanning students' work, I noticed most had generated first and last times and not times when they realized something, so I decided to insert another prompt and this time to provide a more concerted push to get them also considering times they realized something. You always want to enter this portion of a minilesson ready to adapt your plans based on what you notice when you do a quick assessment of your students' work.

Don't underestimate the importance of leaving little pools of silence after each injunction. Give children time to think and to jot. One way to do this is to have your notebook on hand, and to take a second after each injunction to do your own very quick thinking and jotting.

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LINK

Remind children that writers draw from a repertoire of strategies to get themselves writing. Channel students to start writing, and meanwhile, add to the chart.

"So, writers, you carry with you an invisible backpack full of strategies for generating personal narratives, and that backpack includes this new strategy we have just learned and also all the strategies you have learned in your years in writing workshops. What has worked for you in the past might help you get started today. You may want to start writing by taking one of your turning-point moments and writing that story, fast and furious. That story will probably be at least a page, and I expect you will have time to start another story as well. If you end up writing a second story today, maybe that will be another turning-point story from today's list, and maybe that story will come from another strategy you know for generating ideas for true stories. For right now, while we sit here together, the important thing is that we write. So let's get started."

For a few moments, I ducked my head and gave full concentration to my own writing, not looking up to eye the group. Once I could feel that most children had begun writing, I silently signaled for those who were especially engrossed, one by one, to return to their seats and continue writing.

After three quarters of the class had dispersed, I convened the group of children who hadn't gotten themselves started and this time suggested a less open-ended version of the strategy. "You could write about first or last times you did anything," I said, "but lots of kids like to think about a first—or a last—time they had with a person, an animal, a place, a favorite activity. I'll help get you started. Right now, think about a person who has come into your life in the last few years—a friend, a sports coach, a relative. Jot that person down."

One child had no one, so I said, "Jot me down. You can write about meeting me on our first day."

Then to the group I said, "So turn and tell the person next to you the whole story of how you first met this person or first had contact with the person. Before you talk, think of where you were and what you were doing. If you can't remember it exactly, pretend, or choose a recent moment you spent with this person. Okay, after you thought of what you did or said first, think, what did you see or say or do next? Start by telling that and then keep going, bit-by-bit." As I heard one child and then another get started storytelling, doing so with momentum, I paused the talk and said to the storyteller, "Write that down." When possible, I dictated the first sentence from the account to the writer, who recorded it, and then gestured for the child to continue, whispering, "That's beautiful. Go off and write."

Once members of the group were launched, I added a few lines to the chart, displaying the second bullet point, so now the chart looked like this.

Today, and always, you will want to remind children that they carry a repertoire of strategies and that each day's learning is cumulative. Writers needn't go off and do exactly what you've taught in today's minilesson. Instead, teach children to be their own job captains, evaluating the strategies at their disposal and applying them to the work at hand.

It often pays to take a few extra minutes in the Link to make sure all your writers are launched and ready to go. You will not want to make this a habit, as you'll quickly want to teach children strategies they can use to launch themselves. *For now, however, it ensures that all children will be a part of a productive, writing-filled workshop.*

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing

- Think of a **person** who matters to you, list Small Moment stories connected to him/her and write one.
- Think of **first times**, **last times**, or **times you realized something**, list stories you could tell about each and write one.

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Helping Writers Sustain Energy for Writing

BECAUSE YOU WILL WANT TO BE SURE the start of any new unit creates a burst of new energy for the upcoming writing, it helps to scan the day's plans in advance, asking, "What problems can I anticipate the children might encounter today?"

If most of the children in the class have participated in writing workshops during previous years, those children will probably not encounter much difficulty today because they'll be accustomed to generating ideas and writing narrative entries. If many children haven't had this prior experience, they'll be more uncertain and more in need of support. Either way, however, you are apt to find that despite all your efforts in the minilesson, some students will want to spend the entire workshop simply listing possible story ideas. This minilesson was designed to counter that tendency, but you may need to enforce the fact that lists should contain no more than three or four possible topics so that writers can get started writing.

Then too, you will probably find that some of your writers are not yet able to carry on without some cajoling. Although one-to-one conferences will be very important eventually, for now you probably can't afford the luxury of talking for five minutes with one individual and then another. To help all your students work productively,

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Voiceovers to Keep Writers Writing**

Today you will want to push your writers to keep writing without interrupting their flow. To do so, you might use voiceovers to encourage and validate your writers as well as to raise the level of their work. Think of yourself as a personal trainer encouraging someone next to you to keep doing push-ups without stopping what he or she is doing. One way to give voiceovers that are encouraging to all writers is to look for what one student has done well (or is starting to do well) and compliment that writer in front of the class. Guaranteed, all of your students will want to follow that writer's lead. Another time you will find yourself wanting to say the same thing to five or six writers. Turn that comment into a voiceover from which the whole class can benefit.

Some possibilities for voiceovers:

"Claudia already has five lines written! How fantastic! I'm betting she'll have half a page in no time at all!"

"I'm admiring how Henry just checked the chart to get another strategy for writing! How smart!"

"Writers, you should all be halfway down the page by now, writing furiously."

"Keep going, keep pushing yourself. Shake out your hand and keep going!"

"I love how when Amelia finished one story, she reached for another idea from on her list and started another story! I hope all of you will follow her lead!"

How many of you already have a page or more written? Give yourself a pat on the back and push yourself to try to get to a page and a half!"

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you'll probably find yourself acting like the circus man who needs to get all his plates spinning in the air at once, racing around the room, catching one plate as it starts to wobble, sending it spinning, and then rushing to another that is wobbling. To move swiftly from one writer to another, you'll need to accept approximation—on your part and theirs. No one's work will be perfect right now. Don't worry just yet about whether the students' sentences are punctuated or the entries detailed. You can address those concerns in another day or two. For now, your goal is for kids to work hard, writing as much as they can. And you will want to teach writers how to be more resourceful problem solvers, finding ways to keep themselves going.

As soon as the small group of reluctant writers that stayed with you after the minilesson has been sent off to work independently, we recommend you move among all your students, using mostly nonverbal signals to celebrate and support their work. To one child, give a decisive thumbs-up sign, whispering "Love that you have five lines done already!" To another, admire the smart "revision" that is implied in three efforts to start an entry. Whisper, "I love that you are revising your lead!" although actually the child may not be doing anything quite so fancy. Look askance at the writer who hasn't gotten started, making a "What's going on?" gesture. Leave a folded note on another youngster's desk. After you move on, the child will unfold your note, and read, "Aim for a page and a half today." The important thing is that you realize that you can effect change with a decisive tap on one writer's page, a smile in the margin of another writer's page, a note—folded twice—that says, "You look like a professional writer!" or "Your hard work is amazing!"

Another method of keeping writers going and touching base with multiple writers is through table compliments. Look for what one writer is doing well at a table and compliment that writer, letting your voice carry to the others around her. "Yvette, I love how you are checking your list to grab another story idea to write about. It's so smart to realize that you should push yourself to start a new story once you finish the first. I hope all of the writers in this room will want to push themselves to always keep writing, just the way that you do! Writers," and this time eye the rest of the children at the table as you finish this compliment, "do you think you might be able to try something similar?" You'll find that they immediately jump to follow Yvette's lead.

SHARE

Learning from Best and Worst Writing Times

Convene the writers in the meeting area, compliment them on their work today, and then give them a chance to discuss their work together and talk to them about the importance of building writerly lives.

"I've got to confess that I stopped teaching at one point today and just stood, watching you. It was actually a bit thrilling. I've said it before and I'll say it again: This is a class of *writers.* Because of that, I realized that we shouldn't just talk about the particular entry you have on hand. Instead, we should shop talk. You know—when you get a group of wrestlers together, or skiiers together, or teachers together—people talk shop. Wrestlers talk about the special chalk they use, skiiers, about the snow conditions. And writers talk about how that day's writing went. So right now, will you think about how writing time was for you today?" I left a few seconds for children to think about that question, then pressed on. "Now I want to ask you a really important question: 'How do you think writing time will go for you this year?' Again, I gave students a moment to think.

"I didn't ask you this because I want you to be fortune tellers, but because I want you to author writing lives that work for you. You've got to make writing work for you. You are the author not just of your writing, but also of your writing life. And it is up to you to make it work. Each one of you has a choice. You can make a writing life for yourself where writing is the pits, or you can make a life for yourself where writing is the best it can be."

Let writers know that one strategy to build a writerly life is to think back on best and worst writing times and learn from them.

"Right now, I'm going to ask you to think of a time when writing really *didn't* work for you." I left some silence. "What was it about that time that made it not work?" Again, I left some silence. "Will you tell the person beside you what you are thinking and talk about how you can avoid that problem this year?"

I let the children talk. Noticing that some needed a model, I said, "When I was in fifth grade, a lot of the girls in my class kept diaries. They wrote what they did each day, dutifully, so I thought I should do that too. Every night I sat there, cranking out the story of my day: 'I did this and then I did that and then I did this.' I knew it was terrible writing. That was a time when writing was the pits for me. So I know for sure that I can't use my notebook to just write reports of a day—I need to try to write well, about stories that matter to me, or I'm bored.

"But there have been other times that writing has been the best it can be. The important thing is to ask, 'What was it, *exactly*, that made writing so great?' And most importantly, 'How can I make it great again this year?'"

"Right now, think about what makes writing the pits for you and what makes it wonderful for you. Then push yourself to think about how you can make your writing life the best it can be. Jot what you are thinking."

As students leaned low over their notebook pages, scribbling away, I added, "We aren't going to share these right now, writers. Instead, keep working on this at home tonight so that you can make writing resolutions for yourself."

SESSION 1 HOMEWORK

MAKING RESOLUTIONS

Tonight, continue to think about times when writing has been the pits and times when it has been the best it can be. Then, take a step back and ask, "What can I do, this year, to make writing the best it can be?" Begin an entry with the line: "To make writing the best it can be, I will . . ." and then write about your resolutions for the new year.

As part of this, think about the sources for your writing ideas, and think about whether you can imagine yourself coming to a stage where your life, itself, is rehearsal for writing. When Cynthia Rylant was asked about how she gets her ideas, she said, "We are talking about art, thinking about art, and creating art every single day of one's life. This is about going fishing as an artist, having relatives over for supper as an artist, and walking the aisles of Woolworth's as an artist" (1994). Rylant lives her life as a writer—opening her notebook and writing the story of shopping for slippers, spilling coffee on her wrist, or of other tiny events that make up her life.

For many writers, being a writer changes the way they see the world. Every second carries the potential for stories. Tonight, after thinking a bit about your past and your future as a writer, will you go ahead and live this one evening as a writer? See if you can come to school tomorrow bursting with ideas and ready to write.

The homework is meant to be distributed to students, not read aloud.

Session 5

Writing to Think

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that when writers are researching, they think about the information they are learning and come up with new ideas. One of the ways writers do this is by asking questions and then figuring out answers to those questions.

GETTING READY

- ✔ A demonstration passage that contains geographical facts, enlarged for students to see (see Teaching)
- ✔ Students' Westward Expansion map (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✔ "Writing to Think" prompts listed on chart paper (see Active Engagement)
- ✔ Your demonstration text from Session 4, with more writing added on, enlarged for students to see (see Active Engagement)
- ✔ "Information Writers" chart (see Active Engagement)
- ✔ "Researchers Write and Revise By . . ." chart (see Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✔ Chart paper and marker (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)

CHANCES ARE GOOD that students grasped the point that you made in yesterday's minilesson. They got the idea that historians include details about places, and they were able to do that—especially after they were encouraged to use a map as a resource and after they began to share ideas with each other about the kinds of revisions they could make. It was probably exciting for your youngsters to realize that if they were writing about a journey from one side of the nation to the other, their writing could be made much stronger simply by listing the geographical features that the settlers encountered—copying the names of specific rivers and mountain ranges from the map to their notes. And chances are good that children who were writing about events—say, the making of the Erie Canal—were able to locate the event geographically. Simply using the scale on the map could allow students to record the number of miles traversed or encompassed—how satisfying! Chances are good that yesterday, your students' nearly scrawny reports began to grow. Best of all, the additions are in line with what is valued by historians!

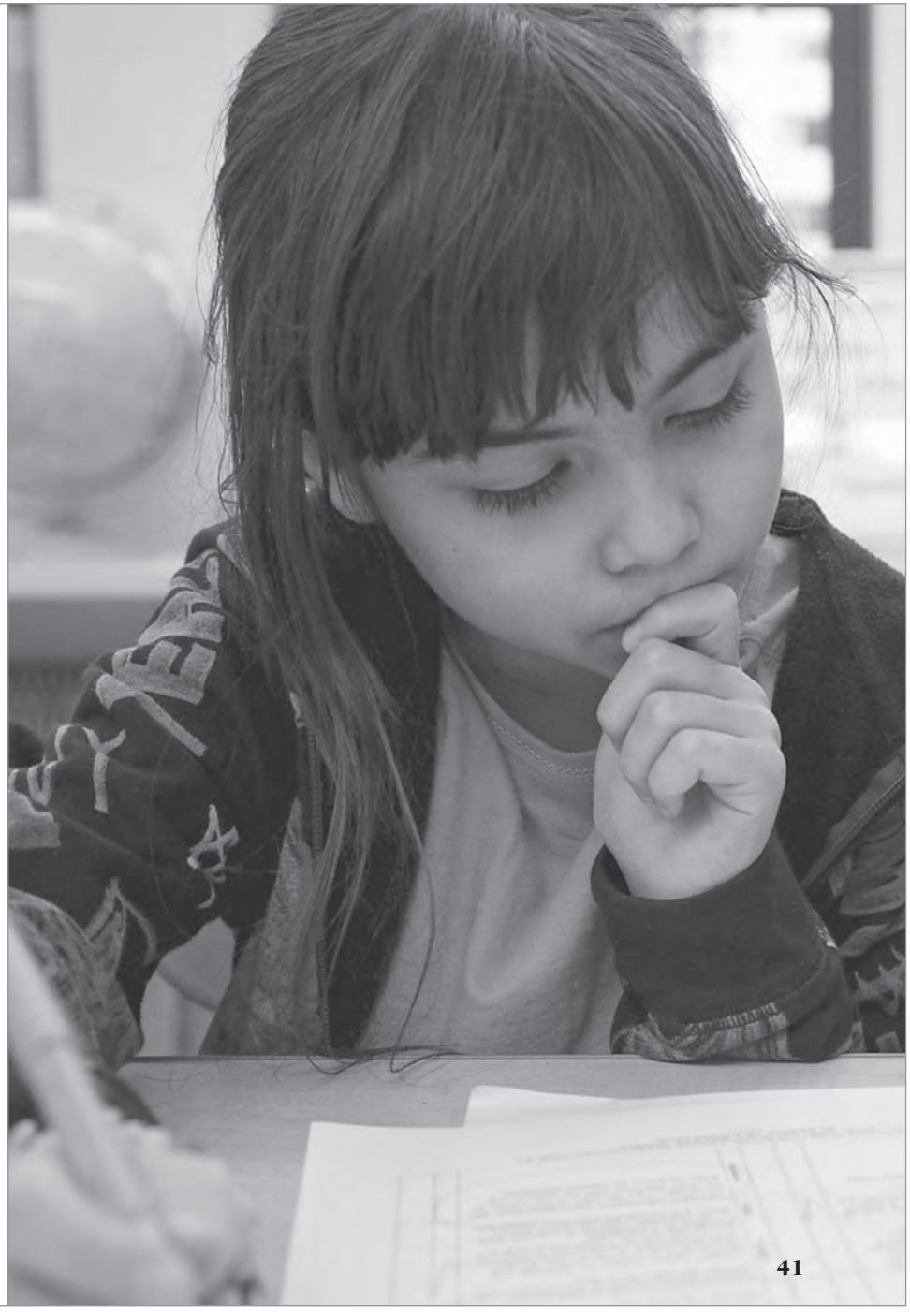
The good news is that it absolutely is the case that historians value the specific details of place names, the names of geographical features, the estimated number of miles. And, soon you will be teaching students about other lenses they can use to read their writing and bring out yet more information: before you know it, they'll begin embedding dates all over their pages. When they do that work, they will be doing the same work that my son was taught to do before his Advanced Placement history exams. His high school teachers literally told him to use parentheses to embed mention of dates in as many places as possible!

The bad news is that adding times and places hardly represents an ideal of great writing. But then again, students will only become at home with terms such as the *Great Plains*, the *Rocky Mountains*, and the *Pacific Coast*, or dates such as 1803 (the Louisiana Purchase), 1825 (the completion of the Erie Canal), and 1849 (the California Gold Rush) if they begin to use those dates and place names. And if at first it feels a bit like they are walking around in their parents' clothes, pretending to be grown-up, is that so different than the way that any of us learn anything?

If a review of yesterday's work shows that students mostly added sentences of geographical facts into their little reports, you'll want to recognize this as a step forward, and be glad for what they have done. But it is also important for you to recognize that if they are simply tucking facts into their reports and not venturing onto the thin ice of surmising, speculating, figuring things out, asking questions, or making connections, then there is still some extremely important work to be done. You absolutely cannot be satisfied as long as your students think that information writing about history is simply a matter of moving information from a published source onto their own pages.

"The good news is that it absolutely is the case that historians value the specific details of place names, the names of geographical features, the estimated number of miles."

One of the important things you will be doing is helping students to understand how to think with information. You'll be supporting analytic thought. You will also help students to imagine information writing that includes sentences that begin like these: "I notice that—This makes me think—I wonder if—Could it be that?" Of course, it may not only be the *students* who need to feel comfortable with that sort of writing—*you* may need to become comfortable with it as well. There are lots of reasons to support that sort of writing—not the least of which is that students are doing this information writing in the service of learning, and the writing they do should accelerate that learning.



MINILESSON

Writing to Think

CONNECTION

Set the children up to see the significance, the long-range importance, of learning to pursue their own ideas in their ongoing academic work.

"Students, I want to tell you about a famous researcher at Harvard University. This professor, whose name is Eleanor Duckworth, teaches a very well-known course. In this course, she tells her students that they will be writing a ten- to fifteen-page paper about the moon, and tells them they must study the moon by observing it every night for six weeks. They don't read any books on the moon, or watch any videotapes, or listen to any lectures: they instead become moon-watchers. Every night at the same time, they are supposed to observe the moon, to record what they see, and to think about what ideas this helps them develop. And in the end, they write a report on the moon.

"Let's pretend we are Harvard University students, and it is 9:00 at night on Monday. And we have our notebooks, and we are going to observe the moon. What sorts of things do you suppose you would record?

"When I talked to people who had taken that course, they said that it was really hard for them at first because they'd sit there with their notebooks open, ready to write down what the moon did—and the moon just sat there, shining. And so they'd think, 'What do I write?' and 'I don't have anything to say.' They especially felt stuck because the professor wouldn't let them go to books and write down the information from books. They were supposed to do their own research.

"What happened, in the end, is that they started to notice little things—like that one night the moon was in one place, and the next night, in a very different place, and they started coming up with theories for why that might be the case. That is, they started not just staring up at the moon but figuring things out. And that was the real lesson that the Harvard professor had wanted to teach people all along. She had asked them to study the moon so they could learn what it is to have, to pursue, and to grow their own wonderful ideas.

"I told you this because, really, that is what I want to teach you today."

◆ COACHING

Imagine being asked to write a 15-page paper for a Harvard University course and the paper must draw only on your observations and analyses from watching the moon! Wouldn't you feel empty-handed? I know I would. I'd want to go get books on the topic and to take notes on what they say. Eleanor Duckworth knows what she is doing when she insists students rely on their own data and insights. She is wanting students to know the joy of having one's own wonderful ideas. We want that in this unit, too. So channel students toward poring over just a map, or just a timeline, so as to glean a lot from those tools.

Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that when you are researching something, you need to not just move facts from someone else's book to your page. You also need *to think*, to come up with your own ideas. And one of the best ways to do this is to ask questions and then to find your own answers to those questions, even if your answers are tentative: 'Maybe it's because . . . ' 'I think it is because . . . ' 'I wonder if perhaps . . . '"

This session harkens back to and builds off of Session 3 where students were taught to ask questions and notice patterns to come up with ideas. You will again be supporting analytic thought.

TEACHING

Prioritize ideas, suggesting students regard them as clues that can be assembled in ways that help them gain insight into the mystery of what life was like during historical times.

"When you are writing about an event in history—like, say, the trip west that we wrote about earlier, the map can tell you facts. And those facts are a very big deal for historians, so it is great you have added them.

"But, historians care about the facts because those facts give them ideas about how things were back then. And those ideas aren't on the map—only the facts are on the map. So what you need to do is to collect geographical facts, and then treat them like clues that can help you solve the mystery of what life was life back then. You have to figure out—you have to speculate, or guess—how the facts about the place shaped the way people lived back then, providing challenges and supports for them.

"I'm going to try to show you how historians *think about facts about places*, piecing them together like clues to help them understand the mystery of what life was like back then. You already know that a detective assembles facts: a bit of broken glass at the scene of the crime and a fingerprint, say, and then speculates, saying, 'Hmm, . . . I notice—I'm wondering—Could it be that . . . ?'"

Recruit children to join you in reading a passage that already contains geographical facts. This time demonstrate how to assemble the facts and let them spark ideas.

"That's how historians think, too. Let me show you. We'll read this passage and trace the events we read about on the map, and we'll collect clues about those places to help us figure out what life was like back then."

The students' Westward Expansion Map is in the online resources.

> The settlers traveled from what is now Missouri toward the west in covered wagons. It was a long–more than 2000 miles–and hard trip. Many of them traveled through (what is now) Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Washington before they stopped. They had to cross many rivers like the Platte River and others. . . .

I paused, and looked around. "Your finger should have traveled west, across all those states, and now be parked on the edge of the Platte River. You're trying to put clues together to think about what life was like for the settlers. Think about what you might have felt or thought about as you faced that river. Hmm, . . . What are you thinking?"

Kids called out that people probably wanted to go around the river. "You are right—but let's see how long the river is, and think whether that would have been possible." Soon, using the scale, the class had determined that the Platte is over 300 miles long. "So what might that mean to the people who are standing on the bank of the river? Turn and talk. What can you surmise about life back then?"

Soon I added, "Most of you are using phrases like this: *They probably . . . It must have been . . . For example . . . Perhaps they . . .* Those are exactly the sorts of phrases I would expect you to use."

After a bit I stopped the talk. "I heard some of you point out that if they tried to go around the Platte, winter might come and that would be as deadly as crossing the river. That's good thinking. And I heard some of you wondering whether there were ferries, and if so, how did people get word of where the ferryboats were."

Channel students to capitalize on the new thinking they've done to revise the original passage from the shared history report.

"So now that we've used the geographical facts to piece together something about the mystery of what life was like back then, we can go back to the passage about the trip west and add what we thought. Partner 2, write in the air, telling your partner what you would add." As the children did this, I worked with a child sitting close to me and started to add this passage (completing the writing later). As I did this, I underlined phrases I'd suggested students use.

> The settlers traveled from what is now Missouri toward the west in covered wagons. It was a long–more than 2,000 miles–and hard trip. Many of them traveled through (what is now) Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Washington before they stopped. They had to cross many rivers like the Platte River and others.
>
> The rivers <u>must have</u> given people some of their hardest challenges. <u>They probably thought</u> about going around those rivers, but <u>for example</u> the Platte is 300 miles long. Going around it would mean the settlers had to go really far north, where the winters were worse. That detour would have slowed the trip in big ways. <u>Probably after a while</u>, some people became ferrymen, charging money to help people cross the river, but other times, when settlers reached the side of the river, they probably stayed there for a while and built themselves a raft. <u>It must have been</u> scary to drive your covered wagon that held everything you owned onto a homemade raft, hoping it wouldn't flip over or sink!

You could extend children's thinking, if you wanted, by saying something like, "Researchers, you've got me thinking that as more and more people traveled west, eventually there probably were a bunch of people who decided they'd stop traveling and stay in one place, with their jobs being to service the people who passed through. There were probably shopkeepers as well as ferrymen." But this teaches concepts about how civilization develops that kids will soon be discovering, so you could also wait and allow children to come to that insight on their own.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Return to previous sample text with embedded geographical information, to practice thinking about information again. Support students' efforts to grow ideas using thinking prompts.

"Let's try this same work with the Erie Canal passage we wrote earlier. The passage is 'just the facts.' This time, try thinking about what the facts mean to life back then. Piece one fact together with another. Think about everything you know, and see if you can grow some ideas about how the things you know about the geography of the canal can help you think about its role in life back then. I'll read the passage aloud, and then please turn and talk with your partner."

> The Erie Canal connected the Atlantic Ocean to Lake Erie. Before the Erie Canal was built, boats could travel from New York City in the south to Albany in the north using the Hudson River. The Erie Canal added a branch to the Hudson River going west, which meant that people could travel over 350 miles from Buffalo to Albany on the canal. Now boats could travel from New York City to other cities like Syracuse and Buffalo. Now boats could travel across and up and down New York!

"Writers, you've been talking together about what these facts might mean to life back then. Now, stop talking and instead, write. You might use sentences like these." I flipped to a new sheet of chart paper, where I had jotted sentence prompts—some new ones from this session, and others we've used for a while.

Writing to Think

"This makes me think . . . "

"I'm realizing . . . "

"This might be important because . . . "

"I wonder if . . . "

"Could it be that . . . "

"Probably they . . . "

"It must have been . . . "

"For example . . . "

"Probably after a while . . . "

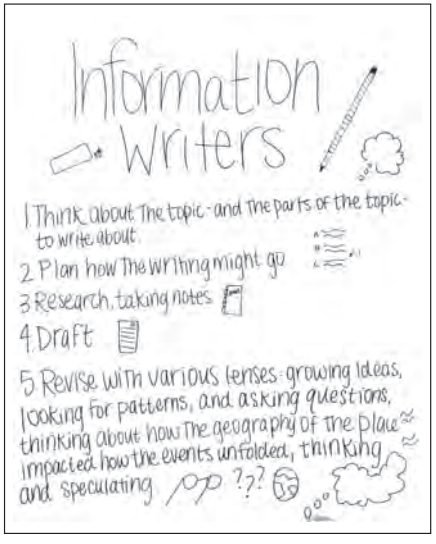
After a few minutes, I called out, "Oh, my goodness! I love the way you are surmising (great word, isn't that?)—I love the way you are surmising that people may have traveled west and the fur traders may have carried their furs along this great waterway. And I agree that towns grew up alongside it. One of you pointed out that the Thruway now goes right where the canal used to go and that is probably not an accident. Who can help us write a new paragraph at the end of our section about the Erie Canal?" Soon the class had constructed this paragraph:

> When the canal was finally built, that meant that people could get on a boat and travel all the way from New York City to Chicago, with just one or two detours between the Great Lakes. People traveling west probably began to travel this way. Fur traders probably used this waterway to carry their furs back to the big cities. Towns grew up along this route.

"Let's pause here to add this latest point to our chart. This is another way we can revise. I'm going to add 'thinking and speculating' to remind you of what you're learning."

Information Writers

1. Think about the topic–and the parts of the topic–to write about.
2. Plan how the writing might go.
3. Research, taking notes.
4. Draft.
5. Revise with various lenses: growing ideas, looking for patterns, and asking questions, thinking about how the geography of the place impacted how the events unfolded, **thinking and speculating.**



LINK

Remind students of the teaching point and set them up for their independent work.

"Writers, you are learning to not just carry information from one place to another, and to not just repeat information you have read, but to *make ideas*. Today, will you go right back over the writing you have been doing over the past few days, and notice whether your writing is 'just the facts'? If so, see if you can push yourself to grow ideas. Remember that this is just one of the ways that you have learned to revise. Refer to our class chart as a reminder for other work you might do today."

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

From Recording Facts to Growing Ideas

DON'T BE SURPRISED if you find that your students need additional coaching to apply the work introduced in this session's minilesson. Thinking takes work, and your students may need support to become more independent. Coach them to take some time to study the geographical features, and then pause to think, writing what they figure out.

I knew a small group of students was having trouble with the work of the minilesson. They were recording facts, but not their thinking. I overheard Maria saying, "The Rocky Mountains are very big and long. They are in"—she began to count states on the map—"seven states, I think."

Then Henry added, "And they go down the map very far. They're almost like a fence or wall that blocks the way to the West."

I seized this moment to jump in. Talking to all the children in the small group, I said, "What Maria and Henry are beginning to do is just what researchers do. They notice

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Questions that Often Lead to Insights**

"If you are having a hard time figuring out what you think, there are three questions that I find helpful—questions that nudge me to go beyond just recording facts toward actual thinking. These are the questions." I turned and quickly jotted these questions onto a sheet of chart paper.

What are the surprising parts about this?

So what?

How does this connect with other things I know?

"When you ask the first, 'What's surprising about what I have just read or just recorded?' you are really asking, 'What part of this information fits with the ideas I already had and what part of the information changed my thinking?' That's a helpful question to ask because the things that surprise you are things that make your knowledge of a topic grow.

"When you ask, 'So what?' you are asking, 'What might these facts have meant to people? Why might this fact (or that one) have been important to the people? What difference would this have made?'

"And the last question—'How does this connect with other things I know?'—allows you to bring two areas of knowledge together, and that is as important to thinking as the Erie Canal was to Westward Expansion! Link part of your topic to one of many other topics—and all of a sudden, your mind grows new ideas! Try it. Think about the Erie Canal in relationship to the Transcontinental Railroad. Give me a thumbs up if you are having ideas. Think about it in relationship to New York City—or Boston. Thumbs up if ideas are forming in your mind.

"Now try those questions with your writing. First, point to a section of your flash-draft where you found a lot of geographical information. Now—reread that section, and as you do, ask one of those questions." I left an interval of silence for thought. "Now write—right onto the ending of whatever section you just read. Take one of those questions, and run with it. You can use these questions whenever you need to push yourself to think about information, from now on."

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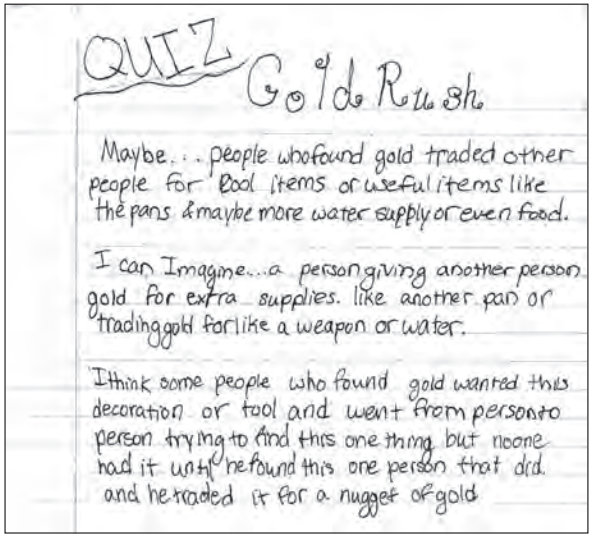
as much as they can about a subtopic—in this instance, the Rockies—using the resources they have." I then asked others to try doing that with one of their geographical features. "Start by noticing, then think, 'What does this show?'" Soon children were studying rivers, lakes, oceans, and plateaus saying, "I see . . . " and "This shows that . . . " and "Until now, I'd never noticed that. . . ."

After urging a few other students to make observations, I moved toward helping them connect what they noticed about the Rocky Mountains to the topic at hand, Westward Expansion. "I love the way you are being attentive to the details," I said. "But here's the thing. . . ." I leaned in, as if to share a secret. "A map will never tell you what to think. A map will give you the cold, hard facts, but it is your job as a writer to let those observations lead to ideas. Sometimes it can help to use phrases like:

> This must have meant that . . .
> This gives me the idea that . . .
> This makes me wonder if . . .

"Let's try a bit together." I gestured for children to begin talking.


QUIZ Gold Rush

Maybe. . . people whofound gold traded other people for Rool items or useful items like the pans & maybe more water supply or even food.

I can Imagine...a person giving another person gold for extra supplies. like another pan or trading gold for like a weapon or water.

Ithink some people who found gold wanted this decoration or tool and went from person to person trying to find this one thing but noone had it until he found this one person that did. and he traded it for a nugget of gold

FIG. 5–1 Danielle's Gold Rush entry shows the way she attempted to grow ideas.

Jack excitedly chimed in. "I know! Henry said the Rocky Mountains are like a wall. They are like a big castle wall that blocks the West." He glanced at the prompts I'd posted. "This gives me the idea that it must have been hard for Lewis and Clark to get around."

"Yah," added Maria, "the map in my Lewis and Clark book shows that they went right over the mountains. Maybe it would have been too long to go all the way around." She drew a line around the southern edge of the Rockies on the map with her finger. "But it must have been really hard to go over those mountains because they are so tall and wide."

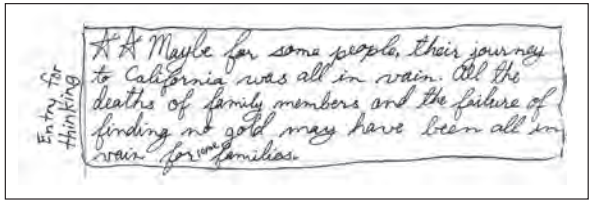
"Let's make sure we are specific with our details," I prompted. "Go back to the map. How tall and wide were the mountains?" Maria returned to the map, gathering the information she needed to continue. "They were 3,000 miles long, so it would have been too hard to go around them. One part is 8,020 feet tall and another part, the tallest part, is 14,440 feet tall."

The kids were silent, so I prompted, "So what might they have felt, thought, or done?"

Chris added on, "So Lewis and Clark probably looked for a lower part that they could climb over."

"That might be worth researching!" I said. "So remember that as researchers, it is important for you to notice a lot about the topic you are studying. It can help to zoom in on one small part (like the Rocky Mountains), list out what you see, and then use this information to add to and revise your research."

Then I said, "Do you see that thinking about the role of place means that you end up writing about ideas that you are not sure of? These aren't wild ideas; they come from looking at the map and your information and trying to put them together. To be a good researcher, you have to do that sort of thinking." (See Figures 5–1, 5–2, and 5–3.)


Entry for Thinking

★★ Maybe for some people, their journey to California was all in vain. All the deaths of family members and the failure of finding no gold may have been all in vain for some families.

FIG. 5–2 Gabriela's Gold Rush entry shows she empathized with the travelers.

SHARE

Using Discussion Groups to Bring about New Thinking

Group your students based on similar topics and channel them to participate in conversations to share insights.

"A researcher named Alan Purves once said, 'It takes two to read a book,' and I have always found that his comment is a wise one. When I read a book with someone else, all of a sudden I see so much that I would otherwise have flown past. I'm telling you this because I also think it takes two—or even four—to read a map, and more than that, to do the hard imaginative thinking of bringing what you see on any old map to bear on your thoughts about Westward Expansion.

"So I'm going to organize some quick discussion groups, and set you up to spend just ten quick minutes really thinking and learning from each other. Let me see if I can orchestrate things.

"Those of you who have been studying and writing about the Louisiana Purchase, thumbs up." A few so indicated, so I sent them to meet at one of their tables. "How many of you have been thinking about the Gold Rush?" Again, I channeled those children together. Soon many children were grouped with others who had been studying something similar. "You absolutely want to listen to and learn from the ideas others have developed, and to put all you learn into a revision of your writing. So some of you will end up writing three drafts of one of your passages, and that is totally fine.

"Let's return to these powerful questions we used earlier—you can use these again in your discussion groups right now." I referred the students to the questions listed on the chart paper. "And afterward, I'll give you a few minutes to add to your drafts.

> What are the surprising parts about this?
> So what?
> How does this connect with other things I know?

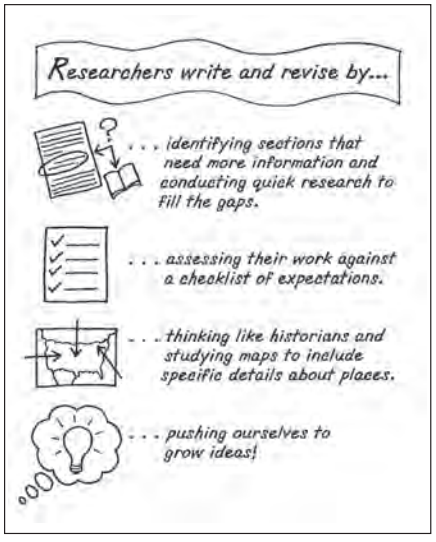


FIG. 5–3 "Researchers Write and Revise By . . ." chart—the graphics are often as helpful as the words.

SESSION 5 HOMEWORK

REVISING AFTER DISCUSSION

After discussing your topics in your research teams during today's share session, you will almost certainly find that there are gaps, or holes in your writing. People will have shared new or different information today, information that you think would make your writing more powerful, or that made you think about your topic differently. Tonight, please go back to your drafts and, using the information you learned in your discussion groups today, revise your writing. If your discussion today didn't help you think more about a topic, have a discussion tonight with someone that will fuel revisions.

Session 6

Expecting Depth from Your Writing

WHEN I STUDIED MATH, I found that my math midterms weren't difficult because the courses were cumulative. Each new unit built on the material I learned in earlier units, thus keeping that earlier learning alive. My hunch is that all good education is cumulative—that in a well-taught history course, as students study the Great Depression they learn about ways that financial and social disaster compares and contrasts with the depression of 1832.

A yearlong curriculum to support children's growth as writers should also be cumulative. Writers should constantly revisit skills and strategies they learned earlier in the year, using these in the service of more complex, multifaceted operations. This session aims to revisit the earlier sessions in ways that help students write thoughtfully.

Of course, there's no easy sequence of steps that you can lay out for young writers. Compliance will never produce depth of thought! For this reason, you summon children to join you in an investigation. "Which strategies lead to deeper, more insightful writing?" you ask. Writers will profit from approaching writing with an intention to go deep. Your hope is that this session (and this unit) will help them approach a page, wanting not just to fill the page but also to discover new insights, to surprise themselves by saying something they never knew they knew.

I remember working with one first-grade child years ago, who decided that Angela Johnson had taught her, above all, that on every page of her writing, she needed to do something beautiful. This intention, alone, changed everything about that child's writing. In this session, your hope is that students come away resolving that in every entry they will write something that is deep and true and important. You hope, too, that children will approach their writing with a spirit not of compliance but of adventure, willing to climb every mountain until they find their dream.

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers of memoir dive deep into their topics by studying how other authors write with depth.

GETTING READY

- ✔ Example of writing that contains several small moments (see Teaching)
- ✔ Example of writing that asks and explores important questions about a Life Topic (see Active Engagement)
- ✔ List of strategies or qualities that pertain to "writing-to-learn" (see Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✔ Example of writing that explores a topic using quotes, a memory, a poem, or statistics (see Share)
- ✔ "Strategies for Writing with Depth" chart (see Share)

MINILESSON

Expecting Depth from Your Writing

CONNECTION

Point out to students that they have graduated from focusing on strategies for generating writing to focusing on strategies for writing with depth.

"Now that you have narrowed your focus and chosen your seed ideas, the time has come for you to think.

"Have you ever watched a duck swimming across the surface of a lake? It swims along very peacefully for a while, and then suddenly the duck tips its head down and dives deep underwater. Writers are like ducks, in a way. Writers often swim along the surface of a subject for a while, and then all of a sudden, they make a deep dive. I'm hoping you've begun to figure out a bunch of strategies that you can use to help you take deep dives as writers, and that you'll continue inventing and using those strategies throughout this unit and for the rest of your lives."

Name the teaching point.

"Today, I want to teach you one way that memoirists learn to write with depth. They study the work of other authors who have used writing to discover deep insights—classmates, published authors, any writer—and they try to name the ways that writer developed deep insights.

TEACHING

Remind students that to learn about the characteristics of any kind of writing, it is important to study an example and ask, "What has the author done here that I can do as well?"

"When you want to learn to write an essay, you read essays. When you want to learn to write information books, you read information books. I'm telling you this because when you want to learn to write with depth, to dive deep, you can study the work of an author who has done just that. As you study that author's writing, you ask, 'What has the author done here?' Then you try it yourself." (See the following list.)

◆ COACHING

I am deliberately beginning this minilesson by requesting children's help in an inquiry that will thread through much of this unit. The query I pose here is, "What strategies can writers use to write with depth?" For now, I will share a few tentative answers, but I also want to set the stage for kids to be collaborators in this inquiry.

Demonstrate how you study a mentor text, modeling a replicable process for children.

"Let's study an entry in which Max uses writing to think interpretively about his own entries. You'll see that Max first reread his own entry. Then he wrote this entry in which he has second thoughts about that entry."

I read the first portion of an enlarged copy of Max's entry (see Figure 6–1) emphasizing some of his sentence starters with an underline.

> Whenever I used to read the entry I wrote about getting injured on the boardwalk, I thought it was about safety. Now I realize it's also about pressure.

"I'm noticing that Max is focusing in on one entry, one moment, and returning to uncover new themes and insights. But he doesn't settle on the first thought that pops into his mind. He pushes himself to have more than one idea about his life story." I returned to Max's entry.

> My sister pressured me into wearing shoes. I didn't have to listen, but I was pressured.

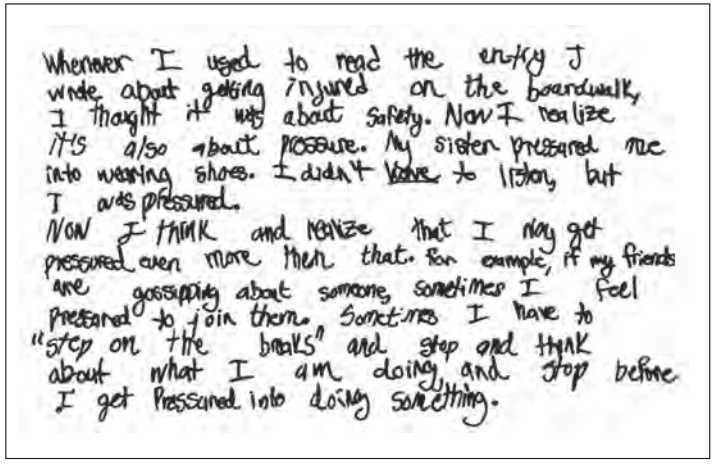

Whenever I used to read the entry I wrote about getting injured on the boardwalk, I thought it was about safety. Now I realize it's also about pressure. My sister pressured me into wearing shoes. I didn't have to listen, but I was pressured.
Now I think and realize that I may get pressured even more than that. For example, if my friends are gossiping about someone, sometimes I feel pressured to join them. Sometimes I have to "step on the breaks" and step and think about what I am doing and stop before I get Pressured into doing something.

FIG. 6–1 Max's entry, in which an idea dawns on him as he writes

As I continued reading, my intonation suggested that Max was once again rethinking his original entry.

> Now I think and realize that I may get pressured even more than that. For example, if my friends are gossiping about someone, sometimes I feel pressured to join them.

Then I said, "Listen up, because after thinking the original entry is about one issue—safety—then another—pressure from his sister—and then yet another—pressure from his friends, Max now starts thinking about that issue, that theme."

> Sometimes I have to step on the brakes and stop and think about what I am doing and stop before I get pressured into doing something.

"To think about how pressure makes him do things, Max talks about stepping on the brakes. He's comparing stopping pressure to stepping on the brakes."

I revealed a list on which I'd recorded the ways Max used writing to think deeply and interpretively about his entry—and his experience.

Revisit Entries, Looking for Themes and Issues

- Look back over other entries and ask, "Are there other examples of this theme/issue in my life?" Search for patterns.
- Push yourself to think otherwise, to interpret the entry differently.
- Think and write about the issue/theme. What ideas do you have? What is this similar to? Different from?

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Ask children to try some strategies in their own pieces, coaching them through Max's moves step-by-step.

"Now that you've studied Max's work, why don't you try some of these same strategies in your own writing? Right now, will you take out your notebooks and open to a clean page?" I waited. "Start with Max's first move. Look over your most recent entry or two and ask, 'What is the issue that's hiding here? What's this really about?' You might borrow Max's phrase to help you get started: 'When I used to read this entry, I thought it was about . . . Now I realize it's also about . . .'"

I gave the students a few minutes to write before interrupting to channel them yet again. "Now push yourself to see that same entry from another perspective. You might try, 'This moment is about . . . But it is also about . . .'"

Again, after a minute or two, I interjected. "Try another move that Max made. What are other moments that connect to this issue? For instance, Max was not just pressured by his sister but also by friends."

I called out another tip. "Max was able to help us understand the difficulty of resisting pressure by comparing it to putting on the brakes. Similarly, Sandra Cisneros described growing older as being like an onion, with each layer (or year) growing and concealing the one beneath it. Is there a comparison you can make to help illustrate something significant about your life?"

"Finally, take the key word or phrase—the big idea or issue that you are exploring. Write about this." Again I gave the students a moment to write. "What can you compare this to?" The room was filled with the scratching of pens.

LINK

Remind writers that their goal is to generate *thoughtful, interpretive* writing. Encourage them to draw from their full repertoire of strategies for doing this.

"Writers, I can teach you strategies for generating narrative or essay writing, but our goal is not just to generate writing. It is to generate thoughtful writing. Our goal is to write like ducks, who may swim along the surface of a subject for a time but who then dive deep. Part of what this means is that you need to approach the page hoping for and reaching

If Grandma is so strong how is it that she looks in need for the first time in a while in the hospital? She has never made me cry before. And as a matter of fact, I've never seen her in bed before. And her hair feels so soft and warm. She can't stay awake while she speaks to us, and she looks so bad, it makes me so sad. She always knew how to keep strong, and supported us to do that. But she isn't speaking now and I have trouble keeping strong. Those drafted movies always make you think that when you are in a hospital bed with tubes going into your body, you are going to die.

Those were the thoughts going through my head. I found it my duty to stay beside her making her strong as she does for me. But I had a problem. She had never really explained how to keep yourself strong. I never thought it important because, when would I need to do so? I was just a happy little kid with a good life.

FIG. 6–2 Max's entry about his grandma

If Grandma is so strong, how is it that she looks in need for the first time in a while in the hospital? She has never made me cry before. And as a matter of fact, I've never seen her in bed before. And her hair feels so soft and warm. She can't stay awake while she speaks with us, and she looks so bad, it makes me so sad. She always knew how to keep strong, and supported us to do that. But she isn't speaking now and I have trouble keeping strong. Those drafted movies always make you think that when you are in a hospital bed with tubes going into your body, you are going to die.

Those were the thoughts going through my head. I found it my duty to stay beside her, making her strong, as she does for me. But I had a problem. She had never really explained how to keep yourself strong. I never thought it was important because when would I need to do so? I was just a happy little kid with a good life.

for depth. My hunch is that you need to write with a spirit of adventure and to be willing to risk going off the beaten path. But when this feels hard, and it will feel hard sometimes, one thing to do is to unearth the strategies that other writers have found successful, and try them.

"Today and always, take charge of your writing. Do whatever you need to do so that your writing leads you to surprise, to discovery, to significance. I'll hang our chart on the easel so you can you use it as you write. Off you go."

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Naming Specific Goals and Then Tracking Student Progress Toward Them

YOUR STUDENTS WILL BE WRITING A SMALL COLLECTION OF ENTRIES about their seed ideas. Some will be stories such as those they collected earlier this year during the narrative unit—only now, the stories will cluster around an issue or theme that has emerged. Other entries will be reflective, and you may find it helpful to think of these as the material that can be developed, in time, into miniature essays.

You may want to focus your conferring today on the reflective writing. To do this, spend a bit of time before class looking at your students' work and jotting notes about the qualities of good writing you see—and wish you'd see.

You may want to make yourself a little chart, with student's names along the top and a list of qualities down the left-hand margin. Then when you confer with children, the list you've generated can remind you of things to compliment and things to teach. The list of qualities you are conferring towards could be drawn from the fifth-grade Opinion Writing Checklist, or you could make a checklist specifically for this unit.

If I were to make such a list, I'd probably decide to start by focusing on qualities of thoughtful, deep writing. I would start with *honesty*, and this would be one important thing to watch for, to compliment, and to teach toward. I think it is all too easy to write with clichés. When I hold myself accountable for writing the exact truth, my writing is much more apt to take me to surprising places. Specifically, I'd look for evidence that a writer understands that the process of writing involves a writer working toward the goal of putting the truth into words. I'd celebrate any evidence I saw that a writer tried one way to say something, felt dissatisfied, and then tried another way to say that message.

I'd look for *length*, too. As Peter Elbow, the great writing researcher, once said, "Writing is like water. You need to let it flow for a while before it runs clear." There are lots of ways for writers to write longer.

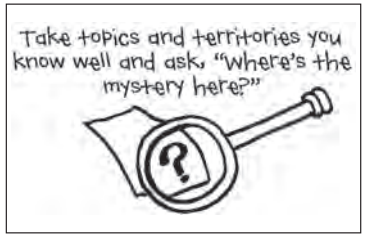
One is to be sure that ideas are elaborated upon. Prompts from the essay unit such as 'The important thing about this is . . .' might help.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Finding the Mystery in a Topic**

"Writers, can I have your attention for a moment? Eudora Welty, a famous memoirist, once taught me a strategy that she uses to write with depth. She gave me this advice, 'Write what you *don't know* about what you *know*.'

"She is suggesting that we take a topic we know well and ask, 'What *don't* I know about what I know?' Ask, 'Where's the mystery in this topic?' For example, I could take the topic of fitting in, and I could ask, 'Where is the mystery for me in this topic?' Maybe I'd end up writing about the transition I made when I was going between wanting to fit in and wanting to be out-of-the-box. One thing that is mysterious to me is this: 'Why do I write so often about fitting in when it doesn't matter to me much?'

"You may want to borrow Eudora Welty's strategy. Ask yourself, 'What don't I know about what I know?' Ask, 'Where's the mystery here?' And then write to discover. I'll add this strategy to our chart."



When helping students write about abstract ideas, I'd want to channel them to sort and categorize. They might benefit from thinking about the parts, the reasons, the kinds. They will certainly benefit from thinking of similarities and differences.

But, most importantly I would want to encourage children to be writers with *purpose*, writing toward the goal of learning more and understanding more. "Remember," I might say, "you are in charge of your own writing process. You need to think about how you can gather entries that will help you to write about the issues and themes of your life. What will you do next? Don't wait for me to tell you what to do, because you are the author of your writing life."

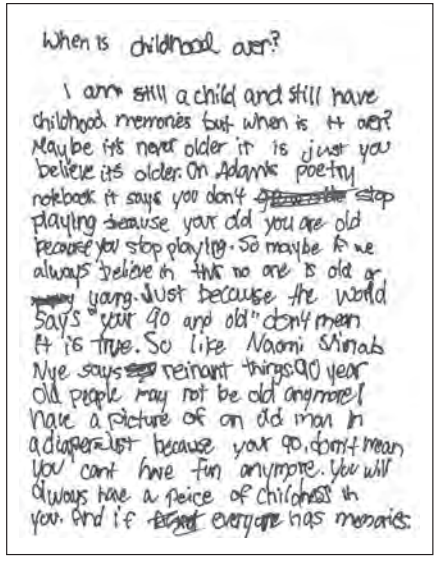
SHARE

Building Bridges from One Idea to Another

Offer one student's writing up for study. Ask children to find, with a partner, something in the writing they could all try to do as well.

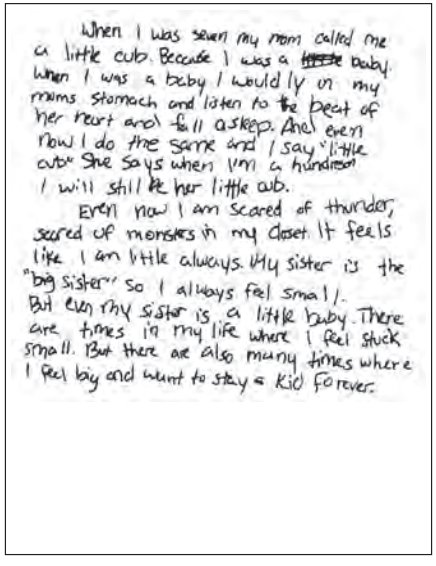
"I've made copies of an entry that one of your classmates has written (see Figure 6–3). I thought that we'd try to look together at this entry, asking, 'What exactly has this writer done that the rest of us could do as well?' Read over your copy of Emily's entry, and then make marginal notes showing your observations."

> I am still a child and still have childhood memories but when is it over? Maybe it's never over, it is just you believe it's over. On Adam's poetry notebook it says you don't stop playing because you are old–you are old because you stop playing. So maybe if we always believe in this, no one is old. Just because the world says, "You are 90 and that's old" doesn't mean it is true. So like Naomi Shihab Nye says, "Reinvent things." 90 year old people may not be old anymore. I have a picture of an old man in a diaper. Just because your 90, don't mean you can have fun anymore. You will always have a piece of childness in you. And if everyone has memories.
>
> When I was seven, my mom called me a little cub. Because I was a baby. When I was a baby I would lie on my mom's stomach and listen to the beat of her heart and fall asleep. And even now I do the same and I say, "little cub." She says when I'm a hundred I will still be her little cub. Even now I am scared of thunder, scared of monsters in my closet. It feels like I am little always. My sister is the "big sister" so I always feel small. But even my sister is a little baby. There are times in my life where I feel stuck small. But there are many times when I feel big and want to stay a kid forever.



When is childhood over?

I am still a child and still have childhood memories but when is it over? Maybe it's never older it is just you believe it's older. On Adam's poetry notebook it says you don't stop playing because you are old you are old because you stop playing. So maybe if we always believe in this no one is old or young. Just because the world says "your 90 and old" don't mean it is true. So like Naomi Shinab Nye says reinvent things. 90 year old people may not be old anymore. I have a picture of an old man in a diaper. Just because your 90, don't mean you cant have fun anymore. You will always have a peice of childness in you. And if everyone has memories.



When I was seven my mom called me a little cub. Because I was a baby. When I was a baby I would ly on my moms stomach and listen to the beat of her heart and fall askep. And even now I do the same and I say "little cub" She says when I'm a hundred I will still be her little cub.

Even now I am scared of thunder, scared of monsters in my closet. It feels like I am little always. My sister is the "big sister" so I always feel small. But even my sister is a little baby. There are times in my life where I feel stuck small. But there are also many times where I feel big and want to stay a kid forever.

FIG. 6–3 Emily's entry

Collect observations from the class and add some to the class chart.

Children talked with their partners about their observations, and then I asked a few children to say aloud what they'd noticed.

Jonah pointed out that in Emily's entry, as in the entry that Max wrote that the class studied earlier, Emily thinks about a topic in one way, then in another way, then in yet another way. José said that he starts with his idea, and then goes from that idea to one example, one thought, one quote, and another. "You can all do this same sort of work," I said to the class and added several strategies for writing with depth to the chart.

CONTINUING TO THINK ABOUT TOPICS FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

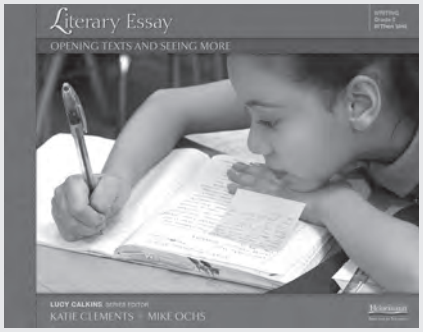
Writers, when you were younger and less experienced as writers, you probably thought that the content of writing depended upon the subject. But you're older and more sophisticated as writers now, and so you've probably come to realize that as a writer, you can take a topic and then choose the way you write about that topic. We've talked a lot about the fact that a writer needs to decide whether the story about a ride on the Ferris wheel is a story about a child overcoming a fear of heights or a story about a child not wanting to outgrow childish pleasures, for example. As a writer, you need to decide what it is you want to show in a story and then highlight that meaning.

In memoir, the understanding that a story can be told in different ways to highlight different meanings is very important. You can take an incident, for example, and write what you used to think it was about. Then you could write about how something happened to change the way you understood things—perhaps time passed, or perhaps you came to a new realization, or perhaps someone made a passing comment that changed your thoughts—but one way or another, you can write that you came to a new understanding of the situation.

There are other ways to write from different perspectives.For example, maybe you and your friend had an argument, and at the time, you felt angry. You could re-create the argument from that perspective. Then later, looking back, you can recall the entire sequence of events, and from your more distant perspective, you can understand your friend, sympathize with that person, and regret your own role. You could write the story of the argument twice, each time from a different perspective.

To do this sort of work, you will probably want to start by rereading your notebook, looking for an entry that pertains to the territory you've selected. The entry will probably capture one way of thinking about an event or a topic. You may need to recall a time when your perspective on that topic or that incident changed so that you can write from another perspective. You might start your first entry by saying, "At the time, I was mad . . . ," and then write another entry by saying, "But now, looking back, I realize . . . "

For additional information visit **www.UnitsofStudy.com**



QUICK LOOK

Literary Essay
Opening Texts and Seeing More

KATIE CLEMENTS • MIKE OCHS

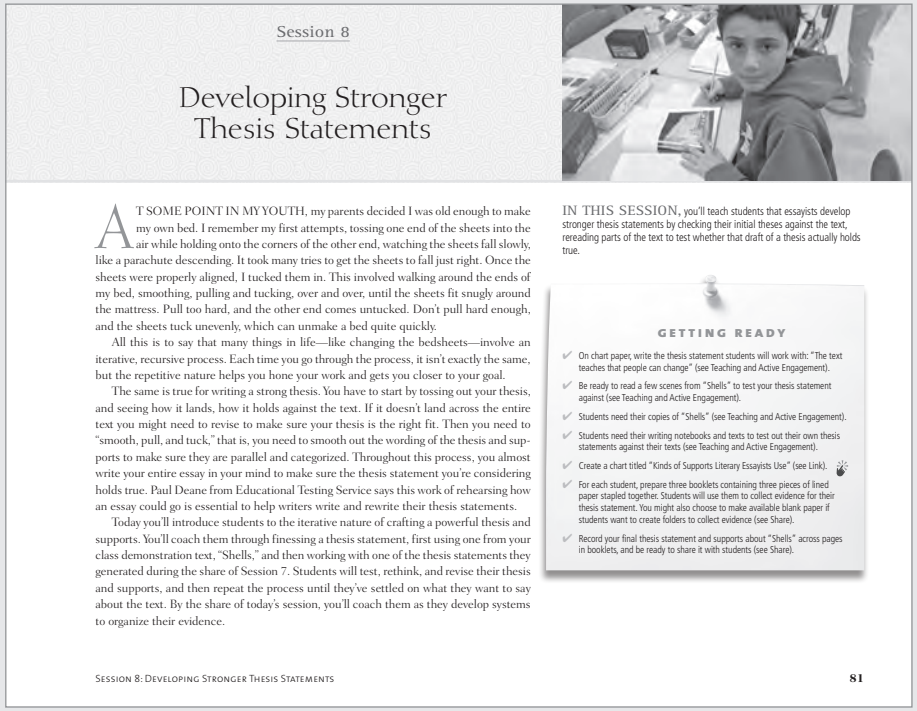
LUCY CALKINS • SERIES EDITOR

This additional unit presents students with a crystal clear path to help them craft structured literary essays. Across the unit, you'll teach students strategies to read analytically and grow strong interpretations grounded in the text. You'll help them craft claims and then develop those claims across their essays, drawing on varied techniques to do so. This unit prepares students to read, reread, and rethink the text in increasingly sophisticated ways—to notice things they might otherwise pass by and to have new and original thoughts about it. These skills are important, not only for high-stakes tests, but also for other challenging academic work students will do throughout their lives.

Fit with the Core Units of Study

This unit provides a solid foundation for the essay writing students will do in Units 3 and 4 in the core units of study set.

Note: *This unit is not included in the grade-level set of units, but is a recommended optional purchase. For complete details on this and other additional units of study, visit* **UnitsofStudy.com**.



Session 8

Developing Stronger Thesis Statements

AT SOME POINT IN MY YOUTH, my parents decided I was old enough to make my own bed. I remember my first attempts, tossing one end of the sheets into the air while holding onto the corners of the other end, watching the sheets fall slowly, like a parachute descending. It took many tries to get the sheets to fall just right. Once the sheets were properly aligned, I tucked them in. This involved walking around the ends of my bed, smoothing, pulling and tucking, over and over, until the sheets fit snugly around the mattress. Pull too hard, and the other end comes untucked. Don't pull hard enough, and the sheets tuck unevenly, which can unmake a bed quite quickly.

All this is to say that many things in life—like changing the bedsheets—involve an iterative, recursive process. Each time you go through the process, it isn't exactly the same, but the repetitive nature helps you hone your work and gets you closer to your goal.

The same is true for writing a strong thesis. You have to start by tossing out your thesis, and seeing how it lands, how it holds against the text. If it doesn't land across the entire text you might need to revise to make sure your thesis is the right fit. Then you need to "smooth, pull, and tuck," that is, you need to smooth out the wording of the thesis and supports to make sure they are parallel and categorized. Throughout this process, you almost write your entire essay in your mind to make sure the thesis statement you're considering holds true. Paul Deane from Educational Testing Service says this work of rehearsing how an essay could go is essential to help writers write and rewrite their thesis statements.

Today you'll introduce students to the iterative nature of crafting a powerful thesis and supports. You'll coach them through finessing a thesis statement, first using one from your class demonstration text, "Shells," and then working with one of the thesis statements they generated during the share of Session 7. Students will test, rethink, and revise their thesis and supports, and then repeat the process until they've settled on what they want to say about the text. By the share of today's session, you'll coach them as they develop systems to organize their evidence.

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that essayists develop stronger thesis statements by checking their initial theses against the text, rereading parts of the text to test whether that draft of a thesis actually holds true.

GETTING READY

- ✔ On chart paper, write the thesis statement students will work with: "The text teaches that people can change" (see Teaching and Active Engagement).
- ✔ Be ready to read a few scenes from "Shells" to test your thesis statement against (see Teaching and Active Engagement).
- ✔ Students need their copies of "Shells" (see Teaching and Active Engagement).
- ✔ Students need their writing notebooks and texts to test out their own thesis statements against their texts (see Teaching and Active Engagement).
- ✔ Create a chart titled "Kinds of Supports Literary Essayists Use" (see Link).
- ✔ For each student, prepare three booklets containing three pieces of lined paper stapled together. Students will use them to collect evidence for their thesis statement. You might also choose to make available blank paper if students want to create folders to collect evidence (see Share).
- ✔ Record your final thesis statement and supports about "Shells" across pages in booklets, and be ready to share it with students (see Share).

SESSION 8: DEVELOPING STRONGER THESIS STATEMENTS 81

MINILESSON

Developing Stronger Thesis Statements

CONNECTION

Share a social example to illustrate how people get an initial idea and then test it out to make sure it works. Connect this to the work essayists do.

"Writers, will you imagine this with me for a minute? You're getting dressed for an important occasion, and you find a fabulous scarf or tie to wear. You hold it up, and it seems perfect! You just love it. It's got brilliant colors, and it makes you feel snappy. You're pretty sure it's exactly what you want to wear today.

"Then you put on the rest of your outfit. Are you all set then, ready to head out the door?" I looked around the room, pausing dramatically. "I'm pretty sure that there's not a one of you who would just throw on the rest of the outfit and head out the door. No way. And you know why? Because you need to make sure that snappy tie or scarf *goes with* the rest of your outfit. Am I right?" Heads nodded.

"Here is my point. When you get dressed to do something important, you've got to test your tie or your scarf to make sure it works with the rest of your outfit. It might be a great splashy tie or scarf on its own, but it might look *awful* against your plaid shirt. This process of hypothesizing that a particular tie or scarf will work—and then double-checking your hunch—is a process that essayists know very well."

Name the teaching point.

"Writers, today I want to teach you that essayists don't just settle with their first rough draft of a thesis; they revise that thesis statement over and over to make it stronger. One way for you to revise your thesis is to check it against the evidence."

TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Explain that writers develop thesis statements by holding an initial idea against the text and reading and rereading to determine whether their claim fits with the text.

"Remember that when you check whether your tie or scarf works with your whole outfit, you take a step back and look at the tie, the scarf, and at the whole outfit, and you ask yourself, 'Do these fit together? Do they go?'

◆ COACHING

In Bend I, when you first asked students to write thesis statements, you used a similar metaphor about a shopper trying on clothes. Your connection today harkens back to that earlier instruction and helps kids see that the more sophisticated thesis work is not just finding a thesis that could *fit a text. It's finding a thesis that* perfectly *fits a text and matches what you want to say.*

"That's just what writers do. Of course, you may have a bunch of possible thesis statements (some kids I know call them PTSs—Possible Thesis Statements). Choose one. Then hold it up against the text, asking 'Does what I have claimed about this book actually go with the text? Does it actually ring true?'

"To check this out, it's important to actually reread parts of the text, thinking 'Does *this* part of the text go with what I'm claiming about the book? Does *this* part?'"

Guide students as they reread a text with a shared thesis statement in mind, considering whether scenes precisely fit their thesis or whether their thesis has to be revised in light of their rereadings.

"Ready to try it? Let's take one of our possible thesis statements about 'Shells' and test out whether it holds true when we go back to reread the story, thinking more carefully about whether what we are saying about 'Shells' is really truly true *and* is the important thing we want to say about the story."

I pointed to the chart paper on which I'd written one of the thesis statements we'd generated:

The text teaches that people can change.

"Let's reread a few scenes in 'Shells' and test out whether this thesis holds true for those scenes. Let's see . . ." I drew my finger down the page of the short story, illustrating that the first step is to skim for a relevant section. "Let's start with the scene we studied yesterday, the one where Michael and Aunt Esther are on the couch talking. And as you reread, ask yourself, 'Now that I'm checking with the actual details of the story, does the story *really* match my claim, my thesis? Is this the truest and most important thing I can say?'" I projected the relevant section of text. "Let's reread and check."

Then she flopped down on the couch beside Michael.

"Oh, what would your mother think, Michael, if she could see this mess we've gotten ourselves into!"

She looked at Michael with a broad smile, but it quickly disappeared. The boy's eyes were full of pain.

"Oh, my," she whispered. "I'm sorry."

Michael turned his head away.

Aunt Esther, who had not embraced anyone in years, gently put her arm about his shoulders.

"I am so sorry, Michael. Oh, you must hate me."

Michael sensed a familiar smell then. His mother's talc.

He looked at his aunt.

"No, Aunt Esther." He shook his head solemnly. "I don't hate you."

"Well, what do you think, writers? Does this part of the text go with what we're claiming about the text? Look at the actual details of the story to make sure they really match our thesis. Turn and study this part with your partner."

This is challenging work. One way you're weaving in extra support for students during today's lesson is by asking them to work with a familiar section of the text, such as the one you used in the minilesson yesterday.

Coach partnerships as they reread, pushing them to see more nuances in the text. Demonstrate for students how you discuss the way lines from the text fit with a claim.

I knelt down next to Walden and Kiara. "I guess part of it fits," Walden said. "That part where it says, 'Aunt Esther, who had not embraced anyone in years, gently put her arm about his shoulders.' That's showing she's changing."

I listened to another partnership and noticed they were also restating lines from the text without really explaining them, so I voiced over the hum of voices, speaking to the whole class. "I notice that many of you are choosing particular lines in the passage that provide evidence that yes, your claim, your thesis, is supported in the text. Thumbs up if you have isolated a line or two that make your point." Many signaled that they'd done this; other thumbs were rocked back and forth, suggesting not yet, perhaps, sort of.

"Great. Now the key thing to remember is that you can't just point to a line in the text and say, 'See, that supports my point.' You actually need to spell out *how* the line fits with the claim, to discuss the way the line goes with your claim. So if the claim is that the short story teaches that people can change, and you have shown Aunt Esther not talking on the phone, you need to say something like this (listen carefully to how I *discuss* the line I have chosen from the text)."

Aunt Esther usually never has time for Michael. She is usually too busy talking on the phone. (See, I basically just repeat what happens in the line.) It might not seem like a big thing that she isn't on the phone now but this is a change and *her* change makes a big difference because now she and Michael end up talking about that crab, and that becomes a big part of the story. It shows that people can change because she changes. (Now I talk about why this line is a big deal and how it fits with the claim that she is changing.)

"Keep working, this time not just finding lines that support your thesis, but also discussing them." I gave students another minute to talk.

Debrief, naming the transferable work that students did, and discuss ways to extend the work further.

"Writers, this process is just getting started, but I think you're already seeing how it works. You start with your PTS, your Possible Thesis Statement, and then you hold it up against the text, rereading parts and asking, 'Does *this* part of the text go with what I'm claiming about the text? Does *this* part?' When lines fit, you discuss them, explaining *how* the line fits the claim. And, when you find lines that don't fit, that will usually lead you to revise your thesis."

Rally writers to try this again in their own texts. Channel them to reread parts of a story with a Possible Thesis Statement in mind, and to test those parts against the claim. Coach into their work.

"Are you ready to try this with your text? Choose one of the Possible Thesis Statements you tested last night for your text, maybe the one you ranked as strongest. Once you've got that in mind, will you start rereading? Read just a passage with your PTS—your claim—in mind, thinking, 'Does *this* part of the text go with what I'm claiming about the text?' Remember, it's not enough to name what fits. You also have to be able to explain *how* it fits. And be ready to discover

Not only will you want to coach writers by challenging them directly to be sure their thesis matches the supports and vice versa, you'll also want to coach partners to push each other *to make sure that their claim fits with their supports, that their supports go with the claim. We want to support students to be strong partners to one another, to listen closely, and to hold one another's ideas accountable to what is stated in a text.*

When students need additional support, it helps to have a model ready to share how the work could go. We've used a different scene from "Shells" here so as not to do the work for students.

parts that *don't* fit. If you find one of those, you might need to revise your thesis. Get started, writers!" I coached students as they got started.

After a few minutes, I voiced over with a reminder. "Be sure to check more than one part of the text to make sure your PTS holds true. Holding your thesis statement up to a few parts of the text will help you check to see if it really holds true across the text and if it's the *most important thing* you want to say about the text."

I gave students another minute to work, and then called for their attention. "Share what you found with your partner. Does what you've claimed about the book actually hold true across the text? Don't just say, 'Yeah, it does.' Instead, point to *specific lines* in the text that hold true and talk about how they fit (or don't fit) with your PTS."

LINK

Emphasize the iterative nature of this process. Set students up to reread, rethink, and revise their thesis statements. Explain that students might also consider crafting their supports as they reread.

"Writers, this is work you can do often, whether you're trying to make sure your scarf or tie matches just right with your outfit, or whether you're working to develop a thesis statement that more precisely captures what the text is *really* about. Essayists carry possible thesis statements with them to a text, reading and rereading passages from the text with that thesis in mind, seeing what fits and revising when parts of the text don't quite fit.

"This is a cycle. You start with a thesis, then you reread—and what you reread leads you to revise; you get a new thesis, and then you reread with that new thesis in mind, and so on.

"Can I give you one more tip before you head off? Here's the thing: to write a thesis, you've got to think about what your boxes and bullets will be. As you test out Possible Thesis Statements today, will you also be alert to how your supports could go? You've done this for one literary essay already, so you're getting to be experts at this. What kinds of supports will you use? Will you back up your thesis statement with times? reasons? kinds? characters? Or, will you back your claim with a problem and a solution?" I revealed a one-day chart that captured the kinds of supports literary essayists often use.

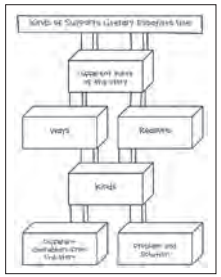
Kinds of Supports Literary Essayists Use

- Different parts of the story
- Ways
- Reasons
- Kinds
- Different characters from the story
- Problem and solution

"You've got a busy day of rereading and rethinking and revising in front of you writers. Get to it!"

While students are testing their Possible Thesis Statements, be on the lookout for students who could benefit from additional support. Instead of coaching individual students, consider voicing over tips to the entire class, so that everyone benefits from the suggestions. For example, you might voice over a tip about how to reread a scene closely to make sure each detail fits. Or, you might remind students to hold their thesis against multiple parts of the text to make sure it's true.

Notice that in this link, we not only repeat the teaching point, but also harken back to the clothes analogy we used in the connection and in Session 3. Repeating your teaching point and your references across a unit creates a narrative thread that can help students make connections between your teaching and their learning.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Lifting the Level of Thesis Statements

TODAY, you'll want to focus your conferring and small-group work on supporting students with strengthening their thesis statements. If you notice students who are exhibiting some of the predictable problems with their thesis statements, look back to the conferring and small-group work section in Session 3 for ideas of how to support students. There you'll find suggestions for how to support students who are writing thesis statements with supports that are overlapping, supports that are too specific, and supports that are not parallel, among others.

Revise thesis statements to make them more precise.

For students who have solid thesis statements already backed up by logical supports, you'll want to think about ways to support them in making their thesis statements even stronger. One way is to teach them to make their thesis statements more precise, to find the perfect wording to capture what they're trying to say.

To address this need, you might gather a small group of students. You could start by naming your teaching point, saying, "Writers, literary essayists search for the precisely right words to capture their ideas about a text. One way they do this is by reaching for the precise phrase, metaphor, or image to capture what they're trying to say about the text." Then, you could model for students how you try this work using a shared text, either "Shells," the "Panyee Football Club" video, or "Little Red Riding Hood." For instance, you might lay out a simple but accurate thesis statement and show students how you revise the thesis to make it more precise. You could show students how you move from "'Shells' teaches that people can change over time" to "'Shells' teaches that people can come out of their shells over time." Then, you can rally students to try this work with their thesis statements while you coach.

Be ready to coach student with tips as they work. You might coach one student to try out different wordings, searching for six or seven different ways of saying something before studying them and choosing the best one. You might coach another student to reread, looking to see if there's a precise phrase, metaphor, or image already used in the text that she could use in her thesis. You might coach a third student to reread the text with his revised thesis in mind, checking to see if it is precisely right.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Rethinking by Studying Parts that Don't Fit**

Students were confidently choosing parts that fit their claim, so I gave another push. "Writers, readers, are you ready for another challenge? Sometimes—often, even—the really thoughtful reader will find parts of your text that *don't* fit your thesis, that even make you think your first draft thesis wasn't exactly, perfectly accurate. When that happens, try to pay close attention to ways that your thesis (like your tie, your scarf) doesn't exactly *go with* your text, and get ready to change your thesis. Often you don't throw the thesis out, you just tweak it a little. This is the hardest part of essay writing, and it is crucially important. Try doing some of that hard work now. Jump to a scene you think doesn't quite fit, or reread a scene with parts that don't fit that you might have skipped over." I gave students a few minutes to reread a scene while I circulated around the room.

"Talk with your partner. What parts don't quite fit? How might you tweak your thesis so it also fits those parts?" I coached kids while they talked.

Rafael and Imani were talking about *The Stranded Whale*. Rafael said, "My thesis was '*The Stranded Whale* teaches that sometimes things don't go the way you planned.' But I can't think of a part that doesn't fit."

"Look back at the text. Scan through the different scenes on the lookout for one that might not fit," I coached.

Imani looked at her text for a minute and then said, "What about at the end when Mom is angry? The kids knew she'd be angry. They said it in the first line. So, I think that doesn't quite fit because that's the way the kids planned she'd act." I encouraged them to reread the scene and then moved on to coach another partnership.

"Writers, by today's Share, you should settle on what, precisely, you want to say about your text. Back to work!"

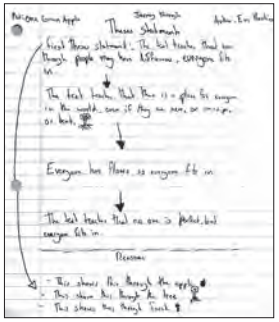


FIG. 8–1 Emmy experiments with a few ways her thesis statement could be worded to find the best possible wording.

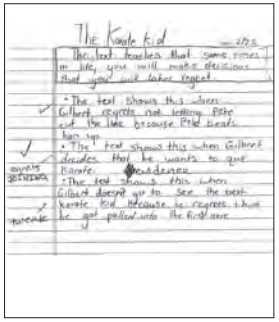


FIG. 8–2 Alexandra tests each of her supports to determine which hold true to the text and which she should tweak.

SHARE

Setting Up for Collecting Evidence

Celebrate your students' work with thesis statements, and remind them that they need to set up a system for collecting and sorting the evidence they'll gather to support their thesis statements.

"Your thesis statements have changed in major ways today. They're getting so much stronger! Quick, share with your partner your original thesis statement from today. Then share your new thesis statement with your supports, the one you worked really hard to revise." I gave students a minute to share.

Walden was reading "Last Kiss." He said, "I think my thesis will be 'The text teaches that things can change in an instant. The text teaches this through the dad, and it teaches this through the mom.'"

Julia shared her thesis for *The Stranded Whale*. She said, "I decided on 'Sally learns that you can't solve every problem. The text shows this through the rescue workers, through the kids trying to save the whale, and, most of all, through the whale dying.'"

"Now that you've got solid thesis statements, you'll need a system to help you collect and sort through all your evidence. During our last bend, many of you collected your examples and mini-stories on booklets of paper stapled together, and some of you developed your own systems. If you have a system that works well for you, you can certainly use that one here. But because writing literary essays is especially intense work, I'm recommending that you all use booklets again for this next round of essay writing."

Share your own example to remind students of how booklets can be used as a system to collect and organize writing.

"Let me remind you how booklets work." I showed children my first booklet for collecting and organizing my writing about "Shells." "On the top of each booklet, you'll recall, there is a box, and inside that box I write my thesis and one support—one bullet. Then I leave a few pages behind that support so I have room to add in my evidence." I read it aloud.

> "Shells" teaches that things get better if you change.
> - This is true for Sluggo.

"Now let me show you support two." I showed the class that, again, on the top of the booklet, there was the stem of my thesis and my second bullet. I read it aloud.

> "Shells" teaches that things get better if you change.
> - This is true for Aunt Esther.

Then, I showed the class the blank pages after that support page that would be reserved for different kinds of evidence. After that, I picked up my third booklet and again read it aloud.

> "Shells" teaches that things get better if you change.
> - Most of all, this is true for Michael.

"Writers, each of these additional pages allows me to gather information that will help me write a strong draft. It's easy to add more pages or take away a page. I simply rip out a page, or I remove the staple to add a page and restaple the booklet again. This makes it easy for me to revise even as I'm collecting information. So, take these booklets I've prepared for you, and, after you receive yours, begin right away setting up your booklets with your boxes and bullets. You'll need one booklet for each support. You'll recall during the last bend you only had a page or two for each support, but this time around, I imagine you'll collect *lots* more evidence, and so I'm encouraging you to use one booklet for each support.

"Of course, if you have another system that works well for you, you can use that instead. Tonight you'll begin gathering the evidence for each bullet or subsection of your essay, and you'll continue that work tomorrow."

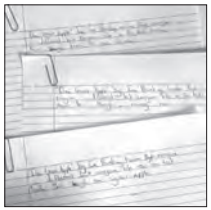


FIG. 8–3 Saul creates booklets to collect evidence for each of his supports.

SESSION 8 HOMEWORK

SETTING UP FOR COLLECTING QUOTES

Instead of doing a lot of writing tonight, do a bit more reading instead. Take the text you have been reading and growing ideas from, and this time, reread it closely with the boxes and bullets you created today as a lens. Take a highlighter or a pen, and mark up the places in your text that *really show* evidence of your bullets, the supports for your claim. You might highlight a paragraph, a couple of lines, and/or some dialogue from the text. You'll be using this evidence for your work tomorrow.

Session 5

Redrafting to Add More Evidence

Dear Teachers,

One question you will want to ask yourself in your teaching of writing, again and again, is "Are the students doing enough writing?" That is to say, it can be easy to get wrapped up in teaching students to add a little of this or a little of that, only to find that several days later they have only done just that—added a few sprinkles of text that don't substantially lift the level of their drafts. Ensuring that children have enough opportunities to write becomes even more complex in a unit like this one, where reading and research are integral to the process.

In the end, we know that stronger writing comes from repeated practice, and you'll want to offer children as many opportunities to draft letters (and later, essays), as possible. Today you will ask students to redraft their rough draft letters, incorporating the new evidence they've acquired over the past two days. In this way, you give them the opportunity to practice letter writing yet again, while simultaneously teaching them to write in ways that incorporate a wealth of information and research. You'll find as well that when students start fresh, they may be more likely to integrate new learning into their new drafts, as opposed to sprinkling in little bits here and there that give their writing a sort of patchwork feel.

MINILESSON

You'll probably want to begin by rallying children's excitement for today's writing. With older children, we often find that explaining the *why* of a particular lesson or strategy, the reason for the work of the day, helps garner a bit more excitement and engagement. You might begin with a small story. "Writers, a young man I know recently told me that he will be climbing Mount Denali in Alaska. Denali is the highest mountain peak in all of North America and climbs 20,320 feet above sea level! Can you imagine?" Continue on, "Here's the thing, though. Evan is not just going to climb the mountain by himself. He'll

be dragging a sled full of 130 pounds of supplies he'll need to survive. And carrying a heavy pack." Pause, allowing the children to ooh and aah a bit over this. "It's one thing to climb a mountain. It's another thing entirely to do it with all those pounds of extra weight."

You might explain to children how writing a research-based essay can be a bit like mountain climbing. A few days ago they were only carrying a few pounds of weight—a few quotes, a bit of text evidence—and so the writing was much easier. Now, they are carrying pounds and pounds of evidence and quotes, gathered from their work across the past two days, and this makes writing their argument letters a bit more arduous—maybe not exactly like climbing a mountain dragging 130 pounds, but close!

Why the hyperbole? We want students to approach the task of drafting and redrafting with grit and energy rather than with frustration. We want them to see that starting again, rather than being a step back, is actually a step forward.

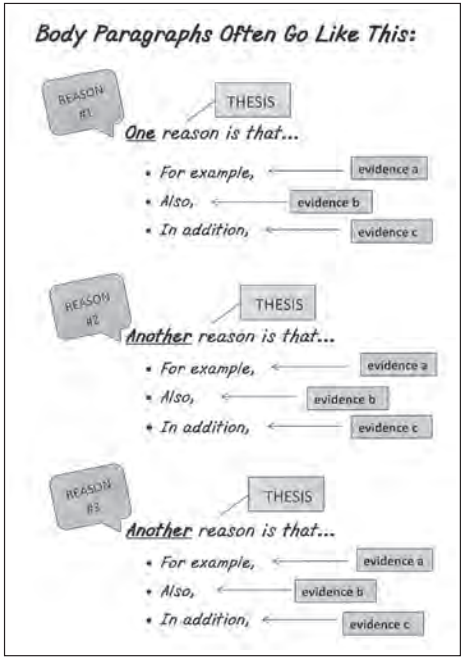
For your teaching point, you might say something like, "When you are not just writing a letter, but writing a letter in which you carry the cargo of evidence, you're doing ambitious, challenging work. It is not likely that your first draft will be your best effort. Chances are you'll want to reread that draft, decide what parts of it work and what parts don't work, and then plan and write another draft."

We recommend teaching through guided practice today, keeping your teaching time as short as possible so that students have ample time to draft. "Right now, you're going to get yourselves set up to begin new drafts," you might begin. "You could make the new draft practically the same as the old one, keeping the same reasons and the same structure for the draft, but you have a lot of new evidence to fit into your essay, and presumably you have some new thinking as well. So take some time to rewrite your claim and to rethink your reason. Write your claim in at least four other ways—just to push yourself to imagine that it could be said differently."

As students work, give them some tips. "Usually, a claim is better if it is bold and clear. It takes a strong position. A claim is better if you figure out exactly what you have to say." Again, let the students work, then consider giving another bit of coaching. "To write a strong claim, you need to think ahead to your evidence. You almost need to write the whole letter, in your mind, to make sure you have the goods you need to support your claim."

After students work a bit on their claim, you can channel them to do similar work with the plan for reasons that support their claim. "Writers often start this process by laying all of their evidence before them and sorting it into reasons that support their claims. The reasons you've developed may have changed as you've collected more evidence, or your evidence may now seem to better support slightly different reasons. One thing is for sure: it's worth it to rethink and revise your reasons—both what they are and their order. Will you do a drumroll, saving the most important reason for last? Or will you go for shock value, putting the most surprising reason first? Right now, will you take a few minutes to sort your reasons and evidence?" You'll want to make sure the students have enough room to lay their quotes, notes, and other evidence before them, so they can survey the terrain and prepare to rehearse.

As your students begin this process, give them tips to help nudge them along. "Writers, I've put our chart, 'Body Paragraphs Often Go Like This,' up in the meeting area to help you. You might make a little



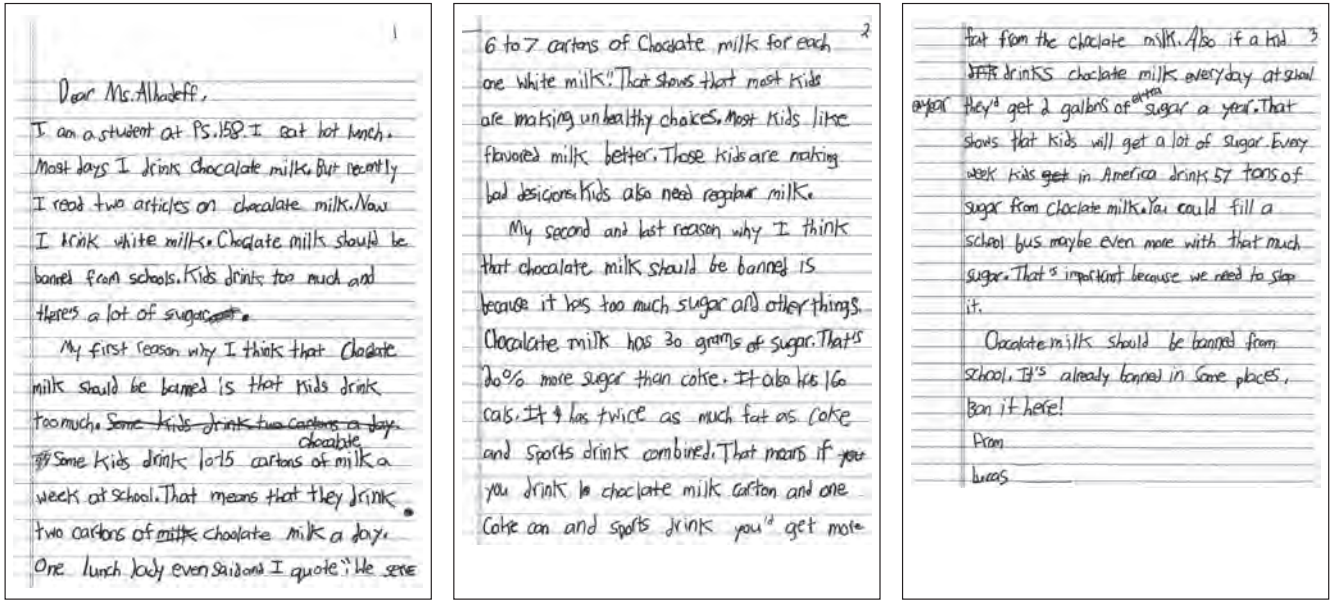
system for yourself, one that will help you keep track of which notes are going where. So, for instance, you might put a little *1* next to anything that will go in body paragraph number one, a 2 next to anything that will go in body paragraph number two, and so on. That's just one way to get yourselves organized. You might have another way. That's great! Just make sure that you are using some kind of system."

You might coach, saying, "Students, don't just grab any ol' reasons and pile them into your letter. All reasons are not equally important. You'll want to have a pile of rejected reasons lying beside you as you sort through possibilities and end up with only the very strongest."

After giving students a few minutes to re-sort and categorize the information they've gathered, you may want to channel them into a bit of rehearsal. As with any other writing genre, the students' writing will be infinitely more cohesive if you give them an opportunity to rehearse it orally before putting their pens to paper.

One option is to have students rehearse with partners, taking turns saying aloud the first body paragraph of their essay. If you choose this option, encourage partners to be helpful coaches, not just passive listeners, reminding their partners to carry forward all they know about good opinion writing, including using transition words, beginning new paragraphs with topic sentences, and tying evidence back to their opinion.

Rehearsing with partners takes some time, however, and it will be more efficient to coach writers to "talk to their paper," saying their essay aloud as they draw their finger down a sheet of loose leaf.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Dear Ms. Alhadeff,

I am a student at PS.158. I eat hot lunch. Most days I drink chocolate milk. But recently I read two articles on chocolate milk. Now I drink white milk. Choclate milk should be banned from schools. Kids drink too much and theres a lot of sugar.

My first reason why I think that Choclate milk should be banned is that kids drink too much. Some kids drink lots 15 cartons of chocolate milk a week at school. That means that they drink two cartons of chocolate milk a day. One lunch lady even said and I quote: "He seve

2

6 to 7 cartons of Choclate milk for each one white milk." That shows that most kids are making unhealthy choices. Most kids like flavored milk better. Those kids are making bad desicions. Kids also need regular milk.

My second and last reason why I think that chocolate milk should be banned is because it has too much sugar and other things. Chocolate milk has 30 grams of sugar. That's 20% more sugar than coke. It also has 160 cals. It has twice as much fat as Coke and sports drink combined. That means if you drink 1 choclate milk carton and one Coke can and sports drink you'd get more

3

fat from the choclate milk. Also if a kid drinks choclate milk everyday at school they'd get 2 galons of sugar a year. That shows that kids will get a lot of sugar. Every week kids in America drink 57 tons of sugar from choclate milk. You could fill a school bus maybe even more with that much sugar. That's important because we need to stop it.

Choclate milk should be banned from school. It's already banned in some places. Ban it here!

From

Lucas

FIG. 5–1 As Lucas drafted fast and furiously, he reread his piece for clarity, crossing out errors and rewriting as needed.

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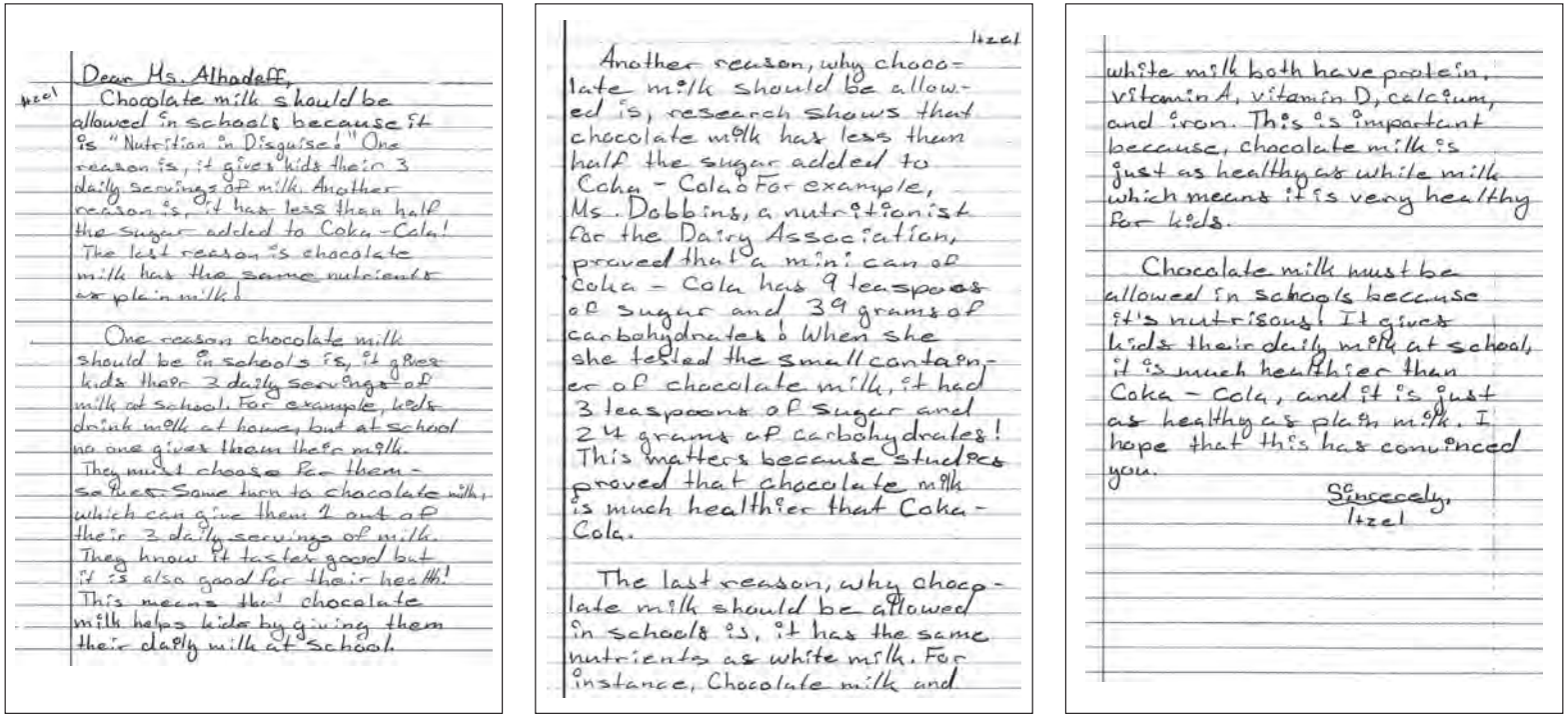

Dear Ms. Alhadeff,

Itzel

Chocolate milk should be allowed in schools because it is "Nutrition in Disguise!" One reason is, it gives kids their 3 daily servings of milk. Another reason is, it has less than half the sugar added to Coke-Cola! The last reason is chocolate milk has the same nutrients as plain milk!

One reason chocolate milk should be in schools is, it gives kids their 3 daily servings of milk at school. For example, kids drink milk at home, but at school no one gives them their milk. They must choose for them-selves. Some turn to chocolate milk, which can give them 1 out of their 3 daily servings of milk. They know it tastes good but it is also good for their health! This means that chocolate milk helps kids by giving them their daily milk at school.

Itzel

Another reason, why choco-late milk should be allow-ed is, research shows that chocolate milk has less than half the sugar added to Coke - Cola. For example, Ms. Dobbins, a nutritionist for the Dairy Association, proved that a mini can of Coke - Cola has 9 teaspoons of sugar and 39 grams of carbohydrates. When she tested the small contain-er of chocolate milk, it had 3 teaspoons of sugar and 24 grams of carbohydrates! This matters because studies proved that chocolate milk is much healthier that Coke-Cola.

The last reason, why choco-late milk should be allowed in schools is, it has the same nutrients as white milk. For instance, Chocolate milk and white milk both have protein, vitamin A, vitamin D, calcium, and iron. This is important because, chocolate milk is just as healthy as white milk which means it is very healthy for kids.

Chocolate milk must be allowed in schools because it's nutrisous! It gives kids their daily milk at school, it is much healthier than Coke - Cola, and it is just as healthy as plain milk. I hope that this has convinced you.

Sincerely,
Itzel

FIG. 5–2 Itzel uses comparative data to show chocolate milk is healthy, putting its nutritional value beside that of other drinks.

Once students have rehearsed the first half of their second drafts, you'll want to send them off to write quickly and efficiently. "Writers," you might say, "you've laid out and surveyed your newest research. You've planned and rehearsed for how your new drafts will go. You have a lot of new evidence to add as well, including specific quotations, snobby language, and transitions. Now, it's time to draft! I don't want to take up another second of your writing time!" Then, with a sense of urgency, send children off to redraft their letters, fast and furious on loose leaf paper.

CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

You won't want to interrupt children's writing today, but instead use this opportunity to survey the terrain and take note of what students are doing, to help you make informed decisions down the road. You might begin by listing a few predictable problems you anticipate children having. The learning progression will be helpful in informing some of what you might look for. We recommend making a simple chart for yourself, perhaps like this.

• The writing is sparse. Writer struggles to elaborate.	• The student's piece is not organized. Paragraphs overlap, repeat, or are a jumble of unrelated information.	• The writer's evidence does not align to the writer's claim.
• The essay is swamped with an overabundance of evidence.	• The writer's piece feels clunky and could benefit from transitional words and phrases.	• The writer rambles on about an idea, including too much of his or her personal thinking.

We recommend circulating around the room with this chart in hand, jotting children's names in the boxes that apply to them. So, for instance, if you notice Ari is writing long, convoluted paragraphs and could use a bit of work on organization, jot his name in the box along with others who need the same. In this short period of time, you've set yourself up for the small-group teaching you'll do tomorrow and throughout the unit.

Remember to study your strong writers as well, so you'll be ready to coach them. You might have a second chart like this:

• The writing is long and elaborated, but all parts are treated equally, as if of the same importance.	• The work is beginning to address a specific audience, and the writer is ready to designate that focus and rethink examples and direct address.
• The writer adds in a sense of the bigger context, and is ready to study how to embed the context and related research questions without overwhelming the piece.	• The writer shifts verb tense in the essay, naturally presenting evidence that is historical in past tense and evidence that is current in present. Writer is ready to study mentor texts for how writers shift tense and why in argument writing.

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MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

We recommend using today's mid-workshop teaching time to support stamina and velocity. Instead of one interruption, you may decide instead to coach children with a few purposeful voiceovers. "You should be on your second body paragraph by now," you might say. Or, "Don't just dive into a new body paragraph. Instead, begin by telling your reader what it will be about." And later, "Don't leave your evidence behind! You've collected all these beautiful quotes and worked to paraphrase particularly strong pieces of evidence. Make sure your evidence ends up in your draft!"

SHARE

For today's share, you might divide the children into four groups, one in each corner of the room, and in each corner, ask one or two children to read their letters aloud. You'll want to choose these children strategically, deciding on students who have written drafts that feel particularly strong and persuasive. The focus for the last few days has been evidence-based arguments, so you'll want to be sure that the children you select are, in fact, using evidence to bolster their claims. Because the students in this class had heard Claire's bare-bones flash draft a few days ago, she was one of the students we suggested might share now. You might look for children like Claire, with visible growth in their work due to planning and evidence.

Ask the children who are listening to be *active listeners*. You may want to give them a copy of the Opinion Writing Checklist, channeling them to listen for ways a classmate achieves all the goals on that checklist and using it to give specific feedback. Of course, the real reason to do this is that by viewing another writer's work in relation to the checklist, writers themselves internalize those goals. Here is Claire's draft (see Figure 5–3).

After hearing this draft, Norah complimented, "I notice that you restated your reasons and your claim in the conclusion. You also added a little twist by saying that kids could slurp up the hidden nutrition. It was a cool image. It strengthened your position."

Ari noted that Claire used a variety of evidence to support her claim. "I see a quote and a list of nutrients and then some numbers," he said. "I think that I only use quotes. Maybe I could try a few things, like you did."

Ivan said, "I like your set-up, 'Melissa Dobbins, the Director of Nutrition Affairs at the Midwest Dairy Council.'"

As your students hear from other writers, they, much like Ari, will start to grow ideas for how they might revise their current drafts. Encourage them to write their ideas down so that they remember to do that work on future days. Before the workshop ends, encourage them to take out their notebooks and jot self-assignment boxes or note on the checklist what they plan to work on in their pieces.

Draft # 2

Chocolate milk should be served in schools. It sholud be served because it helps children meet their nutritional needs. In addition, It should be served because more children drink milk because of the great taste.

One reason why chocolate milk should be served in schools is because children who drink flavored milk meet more of their nutritional needs. "Children who drink flavored milk meet more of their nutritional needs, do not consume more added sugar, calories, and fat and are not heavier than non-milk drinkers" says Melissa Dobbins the Director of Nutrition Affairs at the Midwest Diary Council. She also said that chocolate milk provides protien, Vitamins A, Vitamin D, and Calcium. When children drink chocolate milk, they are getting lots of nutrition.

Another reason why chocolate milk should be served in schools is because children will drink more milk because of the great taste. According to a study, when chocolate milk was dropped from shchool districts milk consumption dropped 50%. When chocolate milk is taken away children are not getting the nutrition from milk they need. Chocolate milk should be served in schools. Children won't be able to get the protien they need without it. Chocolate milk is hwy many children drink milk and slurp up the nutrition that is hidden inside of it.

FIG. 5–3 In her second draft, Claire uses quotes, facts, and statistics to support her claim.

HOMEWORK

You might say, "Writers, you have a new draft. Your work tonight is to get started revising it. You know so many revision strategies now. There are lots of different ways you could get started with this work. One thing to keep in mind is that revision strategies aren't genre-specific—meaning, as you revise your letters you might want to try using revision strategies that you used when you were revising other genres. You might, for example, read your letter as though you are a stranger, noticing places a stranger might scratch her head and say, 'Huh?' and then try to fix those places. You might instead (or also) try rereading to find 'the heart' of your piece. Instead of looking for the heart of the story, this time, you're looking for the heart of your letter. You might have a conversation with someone about the love of chocolate milk, and try out your reasons and evidence, listening for what seems particularly common in your conversations and for the questions that are raised. I'm sure you can remember other useful revisions strategies, too."

Good luck!

Lucy, Mary, and Annie

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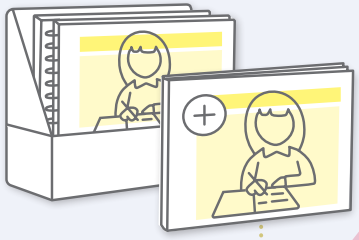

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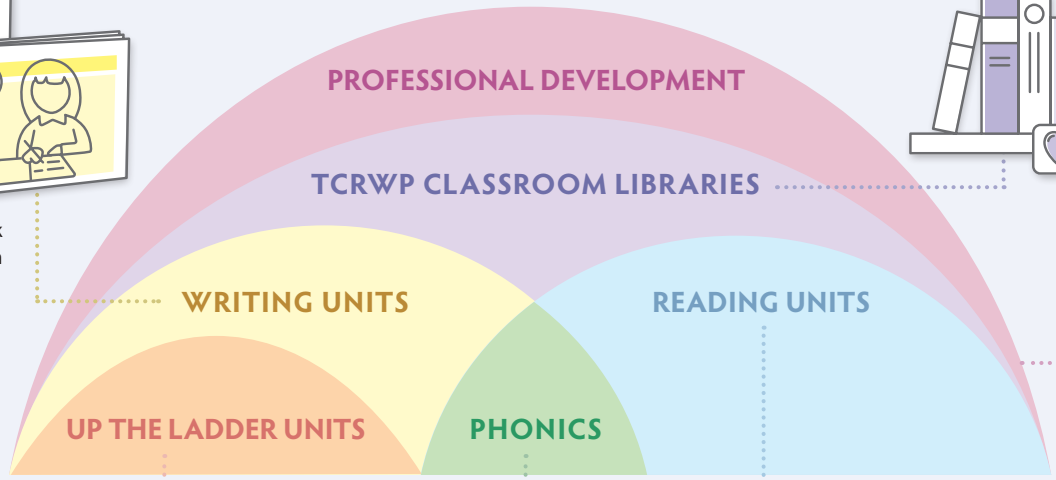
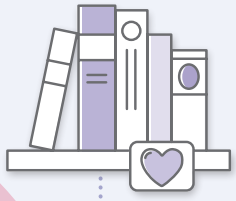


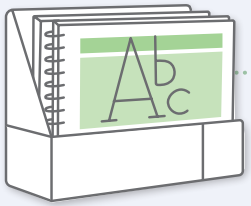


TCRWP Classroom Libraries

Each of the TCRWP Classroom Libraries is a miniature version of a great bookstore—if you can imagine a bookstore run by the country's greatest readers and the country's greatest teachers—and where every collection has been carefully and thoughtfully designed to lure kids into reading and to move them up levels of complexity.

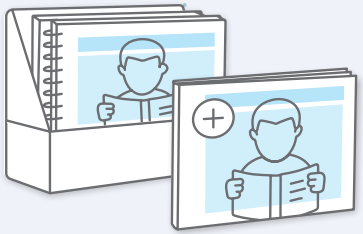
Up the Ladder Units

The *Up the Ladder* units give less experienced writers opportunities to engage in repeated successful practice and to move rapidly along a gradually increasing progression of challenges. Although designed to ramp kids up to the work they will do in the grades 3–6 writing Units of Study, these units can be helpful in any setting where students need a boost in foundational elements of writing workshop.



Units of Study in Phonics

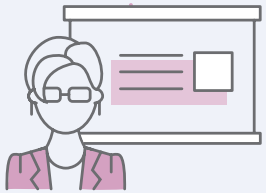
These lean, engaging phonics units are deeply grounded in best-practice research—and are also kid-friendly and fun. Lessons synchronize instruction across the reading and writing Units of Study, allowing opportunities to revisit high-leverage phonics skills across the day in ways that help students become stronger readers and writers.



Reading Units

The Units of Study for Teaching Reading offer a framework for teaching that:

- provides a comprehensive, cross-grade curriculum in which skills are introduced, developed, and deepened
- supports explicit instruction in reading skills and strategies and offers extended time for reading
- provides strategic performance assessments to help teachers monitor progress, provide feedback, and help students set clear goals for their reading work
- gives teachers on-the-job guidance in powerful reading workshop teaching



Professional Development & Professional Books

The Project provides a wide range of professional development services to keep teachers, literacy coaches, and building leaders current on best practices to support literacy instruction. Options include in-school staff development devoted to implementation of reading and writing workshops and content-area literacy instruction, day-long workshops, week-long institutes, and year-long study groups.

In addition, Lucy and her TCRWP colleagues have written many professional books to support study groups and individual learning. For a complete list of titles, visit **UnitsofStudy.com**.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Lucy Calkins is the Founding Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. In that role, Lucy's greatest accomplishment has been to develop a learning community of teacher educators whose brilliance and dedication shine through in the Units of Study books, which have become an essential part of classroom life in tens of thousands of schools around the world. Take in the sheer excellence of their work, and you will understand why Lucy tells everyone that the Project is as dear to her as her own two sons, Miles and Evan Skorpen.

Lucy is the Robinson Professor of Children's Literature at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she co-directs the Literacy Specialist Program. She is the author, coauthor, or series editor of the Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grades K–8; Up the Ladder: Accessing Grades 3–6 Writing Units of Study; Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades K–8 series; and Units of Study in Phonics, Grades K–2; as well the lead curator of the TCRWP Classroom Libraries, Grades K–8 (all published by Heinemann); and has authored scores of other professional books and articles.

Kelly Boland Hohne, EdD, is a Writer-in-Residence and Senior Research Associate at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Kelly was part of the leadership team for a think tank sponsored by the Council of Chief School Officers, in which researchers from both CBAL (the research arm of Educational Testing Service) and TCRWP studied learning progressions in argument writing. In all of her work, Kelly draws on her experience as a classroom teacher at PS 6, one of TCRWP's mentor schools. Kelly is coauthor of several books in the units of study for reading and writing series, among them, *Changing the World* (Grade I), *Boxes and Bullets* (Grade 4), *Argument and Advocacy* (Grade 5), and *The Art of Argument* (Grade 7). She also curated the Grades 5–6 "High-Interest Nonfiction" shelves in the TCRWP Classroom Libraries collections.

Mary Ehrenworth (EdD) is Deputy Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Through that role, she supports literacy-based school reform in schools across New York City and the nation and in a handful of other countries, and she is a frequent keynote speaker at Project events and national and international conferences. Mary's interest in critical literacy, interpretation, and close reading all informed the books she has authored or coauthored in the Units of Study series (both reading and writing), as well as her many articles and other books, including *The Power of Grammar* and *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement.*

Alexandra Marron was a Staff Developer, Researcher, and Writer-in-Residence at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Her responsibilities included leading a yearlong study group for master teachers, presenting at conferences, teaching at summer institutes, and above all, helping teachers and principals in dozens of schools lead state-of-the-art reading and writing workshops. She is coauthor of numerous books in the Reading and Writing Units of Study series including *Writing About Reading; The Literary Essay; Narrative Craft, Shaping Texts; Interpretation Book Clubs;* and *Reading Pathways*. Ali has played a leadership role in developing learning progressions in argument writing, and participates in a study group on the subject, sponsored by the Council of Chief School Officers, involving Educational Testing Service and TCRWP. Prior to this work, she taught at PS 6, and while there, contributed to the book *Practical Punctuation: Lessons on Rule Making and Rule Breaking in Elementary Writing* (Heinemann 2008).

Annie Taranto is a Senior Staff Developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, and a graduate of the Literacy Specialty Program at Teachers College. Annie works with teachers, coaches, and principals in a score of schools in New York City and across the nation, as well as in Asia. She has a deep interest in helping teachers tap into their powers as readers and writers and is especially known for her summer institute sessions and conference days. Annie is co-author of *The Research-Based Argument Essay* (Grade 5) and *The Art of Argument: Research Based Essays* (Grade 7) in the writing Units of Study series.

Heinemann
Dedicated to Teachers™

For more than thirty years the **Teachers College Reading and Writing Project** *(readingandwritingproject.org)* has been both a provider of professional development to hundreds of thousands of educators and a think tank, developing state-of-the-art teaching methods and working closely with policy makers, school principals, and teachers to initiate and support school-wide and system-wide reform in the teaching of reading and writing.

The Teachers College Reading & Writing Project

ISBN 978-0-325-10513-0
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