



GRADES 6–8
Sample Sessions

UNITS OF STUDY

in Argument, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

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

Heinemann
DEDICATED TO TEACHERS™

GRADES 6–8 Components

Three 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.
- ◆ Each of the grades 6, 7, and 8 sets includes one unit each in argument, information, and narrative writing.
- ◆ Each unit provides 4-6 weeks of instruction.

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

- ◆ The *If... Then...* book in each grade-level set offers 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, Middle School Grades

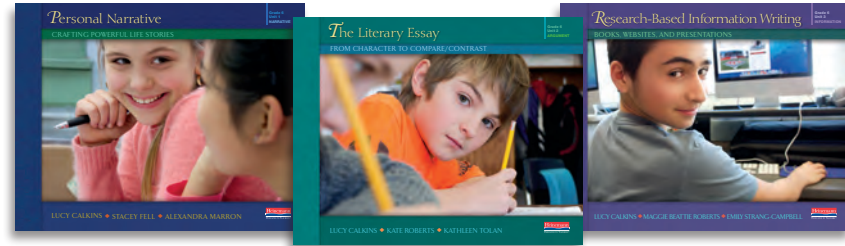
- ◆ The *Guide* introduces the principles, methods, classroom structures, and instructional frameworks that characterize effective workshop teaching.
- ◆ It provides the information teachers need to prepare to teach the units, and offers guidance on how to meet the needs of all students.

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.

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!



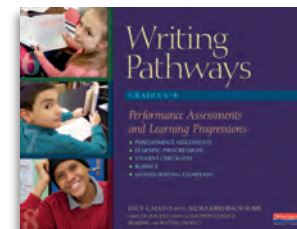
Grade 6 Units



Grade 7 Units



Grade 8 Units



“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 middle school grades Units of Study in Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing Sampler. This booklet includes sample sessions for these grade levels, chosen to broadly represent the range of work that students will do and to provide a snapshot view of how instruction develops across the series.

SAMPLER CONTENTS

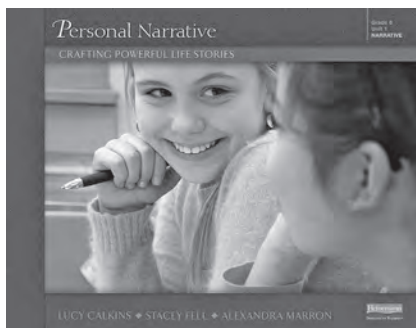
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GRADE 6 ♦ UNIT 1 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Personal Narrative *Crafting Powerful Life Stories*

LUCY CALKINS • STACEY FELL • ALEXANDRA MARRON

In the first bend of this unit, you will ask students to generate ideas for personal narratives based on meaningful places or moments in their lives. Students will practice stretching out key episodes, choosing meaningful details and exact dialogue, and writing from a consistent point of view. You'll ask students to write at least one two-page flash-draft personal narrative each day, and more for homework. Day by day, the quality of their flash-draft narratives will improve as they apply what they are learning. Next, you'll teach students ways to learn writing techniques from a close reading of a mentor text—for example, "Everything Will Be Okay" by James Howe. You will teach them that writers read texts not only to experience the story, but also to admire, study, and select writing moves to emulate.

In Bend II, after you've asked students to select one of their stories to revise for publication, your emphasis will be on teaching students that revision is driven by the writer's effort to communicate meaning. For example, when students plan their leads, you will teach them that writers think, "What is my story really about, and how can I hint at that from the very beginning?" In the same way, you will teach students that a story can be told in different ways, depending on the theme the writer

wants to explore. You'll remind students that flash-drafting an entire personal narrative in one sitting can help writers create cohesion and bring voice to their pieces. As students revise, you will teach them to use their writer's notebooks to deliberately practice writing techniques and skills. They might practice elaborating on certain parts or incorporating meaningful flashbacks. By the end of Bend II, students will have revised one piece of writing extensively, and in doing so, they will have gained the sense of self-efficacy that comes with trying out strategies and working toward clear goals.

Bend III emphasizes increased initiative and independence as sixth graders begin writing new personal narratives. You'll rally students to take charge of their writing processes and plans, reminding them to draw on everything they know how to do, yet keeping their eyes on their goals. You'll continue to support students as they develop their skills at emulating the craft moves of a published author—perhaps drawing attention to ways writers pace their stories, build tension, or create resolutions that connect to the hearts of their stories. At the end of the unit, students will publish their work by reading aloud their final personal narratives to groups of students and invited guests.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Launching Independent Writing Lives and Generating Personal Narratives

1. Setting Up to Write
2. Calling On All Strategies to Write Up a Storm
3. Starting from Moments that Really Matter
4. Telling the Story from the Narrator's Point of View
5. Reading Closely to Learn from Other Authors
6. Taking Stock: Pausing to Assess and Set Goals

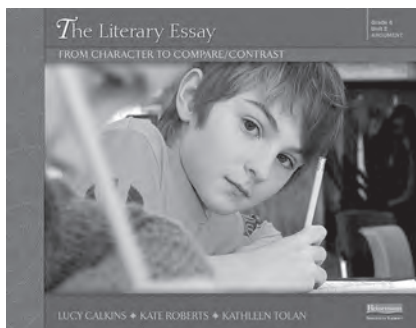
BEND II ♦ Moving through the Writing Process and toward Our Goals

7. Experimenting with Beginnings
8. Flash-Drafting: Get the Whole Story on the Page
9. Using Writer's Notebooks for Mindful, Goal-Driven Work
10. Re-Angling and Rewriting to Convey What a Story Is Really About
11. Elaborating on Important Scenes and Adding New Ones from the Past
12. Using All Available Resources to Aid with Final Touches

BEND III ♦ Writing a Second Personal Narrative with New Independence

13. Taking Charge of the Writing Process: Deciding Where to Begin and How to Revise from the Get-Go
14. Slowing Down and Stretching Out the Story's Problem
15. Ending Stories in Meaningful Ways
16. Editing Sentences for Rhythm and Meaning
17. Publishing and Celebrating as a Community of Writers





GRADE 6 ♦ UNIT 2 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

The Literary Essay *From Character to Compare/Contrast*

LUCY CALKINS • KATE ROBERTS • KATHLEEN TOLAN

Bend I of this unit begins as you coach your writers through the intense process of drafting an entire essay in one day. This writing “boot camp” will reveal to you some of what your students already know about essay writing and will also allow you to introduce your students to some key essay-writing moves. As you move through this bend in the unit, you will help students revise their initial drafts, teaching them first ways writers read closely and develop claims about characters—by finding the details that illuminate those characters and by considering their motivations and desires. You will also teach students ways essayists develop claims and articulate them, ways they plan an essay’s structure and analyze evidence from a text. Then, you will show your students ways to explain how their evidence supports their thinking, a move essential to essay writing and one of the more exciting and challenging sessions in this bend. By the end of this bend, your students will have learned the skills to draft and revise an essay about character.

In Bend II, you will ask students to repeat this cycle, this time angling their essays to consider a theme of a text. Along the way, you will be

teaching them new essay-writing skills—from crafting powerful introductions and conclusions to incorporating quotes smoothly and accurately. You will also be supporting students in writing their second essays with greater independence and ease. You will ask them to reflect on their writing throughout, using assessment checklists as well as mentor essays.

Finally, in Bend III, you will teach your students ways to consider the similarities and differences in how two texts deal with an issue and to write a comparative essay about what they find. You will help your writers apply all they have learned so far in this unit—and in others—to their current work, and you will help them to write with even more independence than before, setting their own writing goals and using their skills strategically to revise and edit their writing. At the end of the unit, your writers will publish and celebrate their completed essays—you might hold a character dress-up party in which characters discuss problems they’ve faced or you might publish essays on a literary blog or wiki.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Writing Strong Literary Essays

1. Essay Boot Camp
2. Growing Big Ideas from Details about Characters
3. Writing to Discover What a Character Really Wants
4. Crafting Claims
5. Summarizing, Storytelling, and Quoting
6. Studying a Mentor Text to Construct Literary Essays
7. Revising Essays to Be Sure You Analyze as Well as Cite Text Evidence

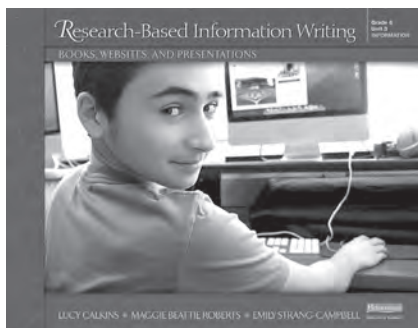
BEND II ♦ Elevating the Complexity of Literary Essays

8. Looking for Themes in the Trouble of a Text
9. Drafting Using All that You Know
10. First Impressions and Closing Remarks
11. Quoting Texts
12. Editing Inquiry Centers

BEND III ♦ Writing Compare-and-Contrast Essays

13. Building the Muscles to Compare and Contrast
14. Comparing and Contrasting Themes across Texts
15. Applying What You Have Learned in the Past to Today's Revision Work
16. Identifying Run-Ons
17. Celebrating Literary Essays





GRADE 6 ♦ UNIT 3 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Research-Based Information Writing *Books, Websites, and Presentations*

LUCY CALKINS • MAGGIE BEATTIE ROBERTS • EMILY STRANG-CAMPBELL

In Bend I of this unit, you will teach students to write research-based informational essays on a whole-class topic, such as teen activism. You'll begin by teaching students how writers present big, important ideas and how they organize and structure parts of their writing. You will teach students that writers read and analyze a wide variety of sources in order to develop a big-picture view of a topic, and you'll teach them that writers analyze information in order to discover key points and ideas. At the end of the bend, you'll ask students to flash-draft an entire informational essay, relying on the plan they've created with your coaching.

In Bend II, your students will join the ranks of authors who write informational books. You'll invite them to choose a compelling issue to write about—such as the fight against child labor or the campaign for the preservation of the environment—by following a trail of research. Next you'll coach them that writers envision several possible tables of contents before they select the right structure for their topic. Throughout this bend, you'll teach students that writers strengthen their credibility by

incorporating solid evidence into their writing, including accurate quotes, supportable facts, and clear statistics. In addition, you'll teach students how to elaborate on their key points with emblematic, concrete details to create an accurate picture of the topic for readers. You'll help students refine their writing by teaching them ways writers employ complex sentences and incorporate useful text features.

In Bend III, you'll teach students how to use the writing expertise they've developed to create websites and digital presentations. You will teach them that writers decide which information is most important in order to hone it and shape it for digital formats. You will coach students how to frame and reframe their work for delivery in multiple ways, including visually. Students will practice revising as they work, with your coaching, correcting errors with an editor's speed and accuracy. Finally, students will unveil their work to a select online community, promoting awareness and activism for the issues they've chosen.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Writing Research-Based Informational Essays

1. Becoming Engaged with a Topic
2. Reading for a Wide View of a Topic: Teen Activism
3. Preparing to Write Informational Essays: Finding and Supporting Key Points
4. Structure Sets You Free—Using Prior Knowledge to Flash-Draft Essays

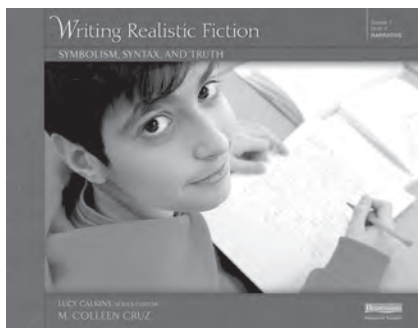
BEND II ♦ Drafting and Revising Information Books on More Focused Topics

5. The Trail of Research: Pursuing Information and Focusing In on Topics
6. Envisioning Structures to Plan an Information Book
7. Constructing Texts with Solid Bricks of Information
8. Research: Gathering Specific Information and Creating Meaning
9. Writing with Detail
10. Lifting the Level of Sentence Complexity
11. Using Text Features to Strengthen Writing
12. Planning Ready to Go Chapters
13. Quoting with a Purpose in Mind
14. Celebrating with a Book Exhibit Tour

BEND III ♦ Digital Writing Projects: Sharing Expertise Online

15. Studying Digital Mentor Texts
16. Revising to Fit Digital Formats: Determining Importance
17. Pouring into Digital Forms...and Publishing
18. Celebration: Presentations, Feedback, Reflection





GRADE 7 ♦ UNIT 1 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Writing Realistic Fiction *Symbolism, Syntax, and Truth*

M. COLLEEN CRUZ

As you begin Bend I, you will teach students how to see the world as fiction writers, how to examine their lives for moments that could be turned into compelling fictional stories. Through a one-day writing-intensive “boot camp,” you will show them how to develop scenes, the bedrock of fiction writing. You’ll also teach them some techniques for creating believable characters—such as exploring characters’ motivations and obstacles, quirks and passions, and internal and external lives. You will then guide students in ways to shape their stories by using story arcs and by tracing the journey on which they take the reader.

In Bend II, students move into drafting and revising, drawing on everything they already know about narrative writing. You will call on students to consider what they know from reading and studying fiction and to bring it into their own repertoire of moves as writers. You will teach students ways to craft compelling leads to their stories and ways to ground their scenes in dialogue, action, and setting. Finally, you will show students ways writers write solid endings that give their works of fiction satisfying conclusions.

Finally, in Bend III, you will guide students in getting their works of fiction ready for audiences through deep revision work and editing. In this bend, you will focus students on ways writers revise the meaning and messages behind their stories. You will teach students ways writers develop imagery and use symbols and other literary devices, such as foreshadowing, in their writing work. You will also teach students to rethink the evolution of their stories and to create endings that are worthy of their beginnings—and of their aspirations. At the end of the unit, fiction writers celebrate by publishing their work in a class short story anthology and share reviews of their work.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Creating and Developing Meaningful Stories and Characters

1. Imagining Stories from Everyday Moments
2. Imagining Stories You Wish Existed in the World
3. Developing Believable Characters through Scene Boot Camp
4. Giving Characters Struggles and Motivations that Mirror Real Life
5. Plotting with Tools (Story Arcs, Timelines, Story Boards, Mentor Texts)

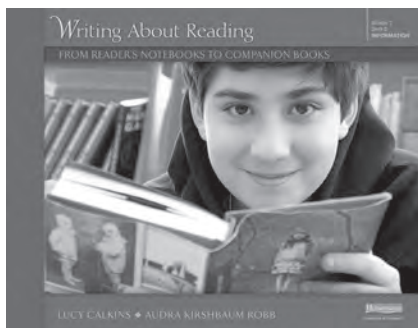
BEND II ♦ Drafting and Revising with an Eye toward Meaning

6. From 2-D to 3-D: Planning and Writing Scenes by Including Evidence
7. Stepping into the Drama of the Story to Draft
8. Studying Published Texts to Write Leads
9. Grounding Dialogue in Scenes
10. Writing Endings that Make Readers Swoon

BEND III ♦ Meticulous Revision and Precise Edits with Audience in Mind

11. Reading Drafts like Editors
12. Revision: Weaving in Symbolism and Imagery to Bring Out Meaning
13. Conducting the Rhythm of Language: Creating Cadence and Meaning through Syntax
14. Using Mentor Texts to Help Match Authorial Intent with the Page
15. Economizing on the Sentence and Word Level
16. Editing with Lenses and Independence
17. Publishing Anthologies: A Celebration





GRADE 7 ♦ UNIT 2 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Writing About Reading *From Reading Notebooks to Companion Books*

LUCY CALKINS • AUDRA ROBB

In Bend I, students will learn that one way readers can better understand what they are reading is to write about it. Students will collect, develop, and justify their ideas about the texts they read as they generate extended and varied entries in their writer's notebooks. You will teach students that writers can analyze texts not only by extended writing, but also by creating visuals—charts, pictures, and diagrams. Midway through this first bend, you will introduce students to companion books. You'll teach them that writers set up to write their own companion books by devising a writing plan that will showcase their most insightful, important thoughts about the stories. You will show them also ways writers of companion books explain and elaborate on important points and details, cite evidence from the story, and incorporate direct quotations from the text. At the end of this bend, students will participate in a museum walk as they share with their classmates their completed drafts of their companion books.

In Bend II, you take students deeper into the writing cycle, moving from generating writing and drafting into revision. You'll continue to teach ways to read, analyze, and present information about texts, but now students will learn to write too about the crafting techniques that the authors they are studying use. You will teach students ways that fan fiction writers write extensions of a story, improvising new scenes that fit the original or that make the original flow in a different direction. You will also teach students ways writers develop and include perspectives of different characters in a story. At the end of this bend, you will teach students ways writers craft introductions that hook readers and preview important sections, and ways they craft memorable conclusions. Finally, students celebrate their learning by inviting other writers, friends, and family to read and enjoy their completed companion books.

Welcome to the Unit

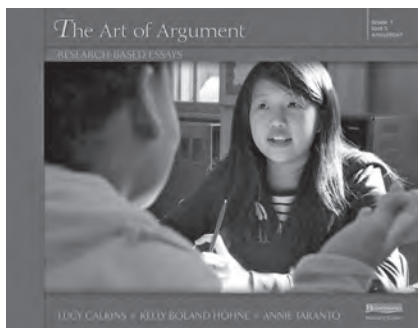
BEND I ♦ Planning and Drafting Companion Books

1. Writing about Reading with Voice and Investment
2. Using Graphics to Think and Rethink about Literature
3. Thinking Big, Thinking Small
4. Explaining Thinking
5. Close Reading and Analytic Writing
6. Letting the Book Teach You How to Respond
7. Working Toward a Companion Book
8. Incorporating Evidence from the Text as a Means to Elaborate
9. Reflection and Goal-Setting Using the Information Writing Checklist— and a Mini-Celebration

BEND II ♦ Writing to Deepen Literary Analysis

10. Reading Like Writers—and Writing about It
11. Writing about Symbolism in Texts
12. Analyzing Structure in a Text
13. Writing Inside the Story: Improvisations and Fan Fiction
14. Writing Inside Perspectives
15. Writing Introductions and Conclusions
16. Final Edits and a Celebration





GRADE 7 ♦ UNIT 3 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

The Art of Argument *Research-Based Essays*

LUCY CALKINS • KELLY BOLAND HOHNE • ANNIE TARANTO

Bend I of this unit takes your seventh-graders through a cycle of debate, and in it you'll teach them how to evaluate the evidence behind existing arguments, and you'll teach them ways to rehearse and compose their own positions on a controversial issue. You'll teach students that when taking a side on an issue, it's important to state a claim, give reasons to back up that claim, and give evidence to support each and every reason. You'll teach students ways to sort and rank their evidence, deciding which evidence matches each point and which evidence is most compelling. Then, you will teach students that writers use analysis of the evidence to help readers follow the path of the argument. At the end of this bend, students will self assess by looking back at their work to see how it might be improved and by looking forward to ask how they can bring all that they have learned to their future writing.

You will coach students to compose more focused and nuanced arguments in Bend II. You'll begin by teaching them to study one topic or issue with the goal of identifying the crux of the matter. Students will learn how to read with a critical eye, looking for contradictions among

sources, and paying careful attention to the author's perspective. You will give students an opportunity to present their arguments orally, in order for them to determine what new evidence they must gather in preparation for writing. You'll teach students how to craft an introduction that will set up their argument well and how to introduce and refute counterarguments. With your instruction, students will learn ways that writers match the tone of their writing to its purpose and audience. This bend concludes with a symposium, a formal opportunity for students to present their arguments and learn from the responses and ideas they get from others.

In Bend III, students cycle through the process of writing a research-based argument once more, this time on a topic of their own choosing. You'll teach students how to identify issues that matter to them, to form cause-focused groups around those issues, to conduct their own research, to revise their argument by qualifying their claims, and to analyze the logic of their arguments. At the end of the unit, students share their arguments with a global audience using social media.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Establishing and Supporting Argument Positions

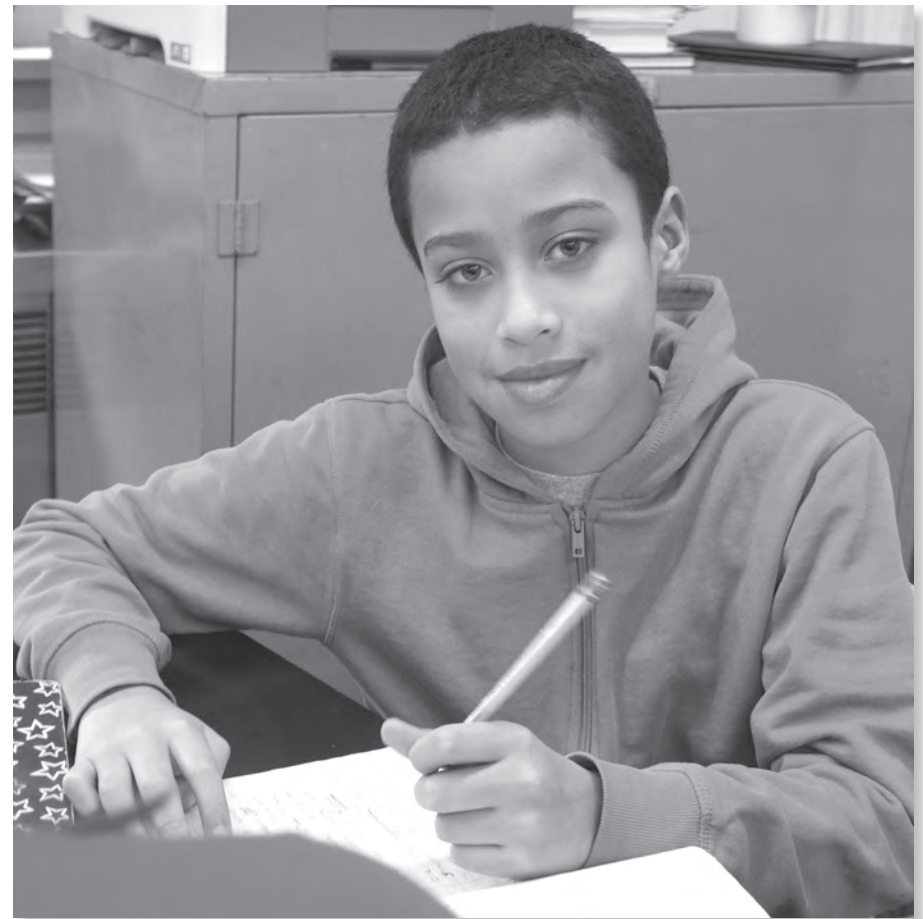
1. Weighing Evidence to Form Considered Positions
2. Take Your Argument into a Scrimmage: Debating to Test and Strengthen a Position
3. Bam! Bolstering Positions by Adding Relevant Evidence
4. Stay with Me Now: Balancing Evidence with Analysis
5. Taking Stock

BEND II ♦ Composing More Focused and Nuanced Arguments

6. Forming Coalition Groups
7. Bringing a Critical Perspective to Your Research
8. Debating to Prepare to Draft
9. Introducing and Writing Your Argument
10. Self-Assessment with an Eye Toward Counterargument
11. Studying Author's Craft, Including Rhetorical Devices
12. When Company Comes: Knowing When and How to Maintain a Formal Tone
13. Celebration: Symposium

BEND III ♦ Taking Arguments to a Global Audience

14. Taking Opportunities to Stand and Be Counted
15. Revising by Qualifying Your Claim
16. Revising with Logical Fallacies in Mind: Evaluating Evidence
17. Cyberactivism





GRADE 8 ♦ UNIT 1 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Investigative Journalism

MARY EHRENWORTH • CORNELIUS MINOR

In Bend I, you will teach your students that journalists discern the small dramas around them and shape newscasts to bring the news concisely to their readers. Like professional journalists, students will learn to be on the lookout for the out-of-the-ordinary, for heightened emotion, or for a storyline that occurs underneath the obvious stream of events. In contrast to personal narrative, you will teach students to write in the third person, reporting facts and maintaining a journalistic tone. Finally, to make short writing powerful and engaging, you will teach students techniques journalists use to make their short writing more powerful, such as using striking details, keeping a tight focus on what a story is really about, and writing delightful or clever endings. By the end of this first bend, students will publish their first works of journalism on a class website and you will invite them to offer thoughtful comments on their peers' work.

In Bend II, you will teach students how to craft narrative nonfiction to illuminate social issues and stir their readers to action. You will teach them ways journalists delve more deeply into topics they know well, drawing on everything they know about narrative writing—such as

the skills of developing action, dialogue, setting, details—to tell a compelling true story and grab readers' attention. You'll teach students how journalists use tension to push readers toward that truth, and how they elaborate multiple perspectives to reveal complicated stories. This bend ends with another round of publication, as students share their work with one another.

In Bend III, you will teach students ways journalists conduct the in-depth research necessary to support a complex piece of investigative journalism. You'll help students understand that investigative journalists research the context and causes of underlying issues; trace possible implications; and collect facts, statistics, and expert quotes to support their stories. You will help students expand their repertoire of research tools by teaching them how to interview, to create surveys, and to use print and digital texts to gather information for their stories. Finally, you'll teach students ways writers organize pieces into logical sections and ways to craft endings to call readers to action. At the end of the unit, students will finalize their pieces and explore ways to publish in venues such as blogs, class news magazines, or local publications.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ Reporting the Real Story: Newscasts

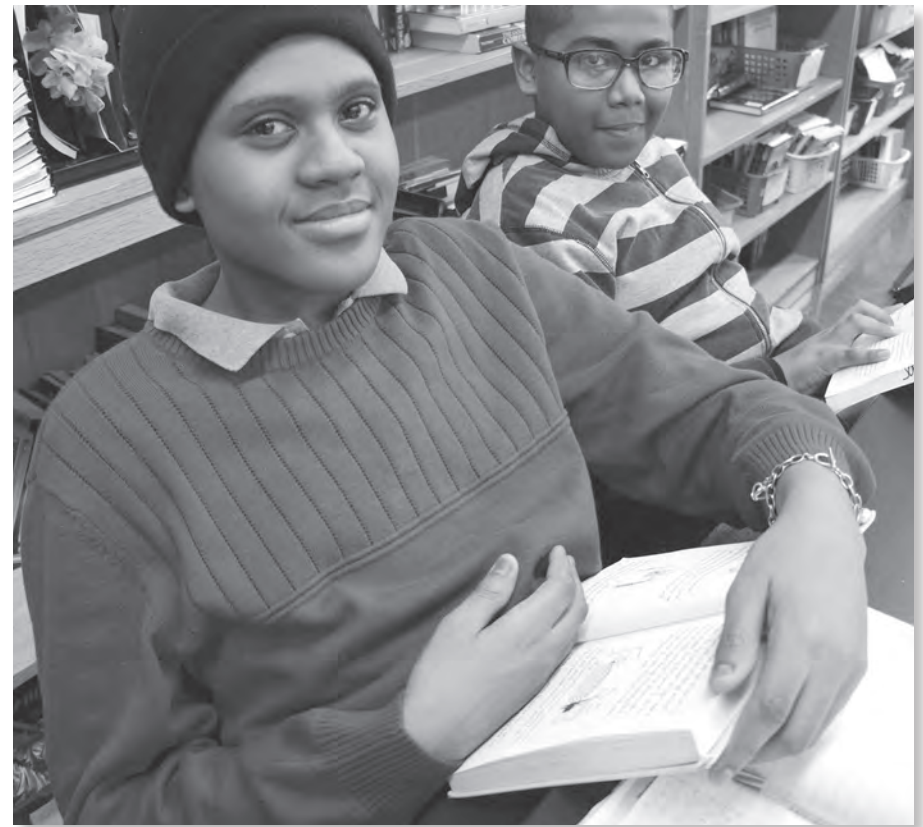
1. Journalists Develop Their Powers of Observation to Capture Events
2. Turning Moments of Drama into Cogent Newscasts
3. Researching and Reporting Experience
4. Making Short Nonfiction Writing Pack a Punch
5. Setting Ambitious Goals and Working toward Publishing

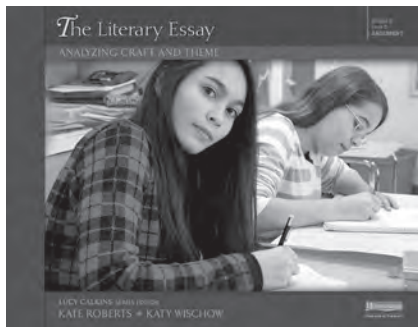
BEND II ♦ Writing to Inform and Illuminate

6. Investigating to Reveal Underlying Issues
7. Using Narrative Craft to Hone Central Ideas and to Stir Empathy
8. Harnessing Narrative and Information Writing Techniques
9. Elaborating to Deepen Readers' Connections
10. Writing Partners Have Each Other's Backs
11. Editing Voice and Verb Tense

BEND III ♦ Investigative Reporting

12. Mentoring Oneself to a Pro to Envision the Arc of Investigative Reporting
13. Expanding Repertoires of Research Tools
14. Structuring Pieces and Leading the Reader with Key Transitions
15. Crafting Endings that Call Readers to Action
16. Publishing Writing for Real Audiences





GRADE 8 ♦ UNIT 2 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

The Literary Essay *Analyzing Craft and Theme*

KATE ROBERTS • KATY WISCHOW

In Bend I, you will teach students that when analyzing texts, literary essayists pay attention to plot, character, and the author's crafting decisions, reflecting on the link between the theme and those elements. As students begin drafting their own literary essays, you will guide them to draw on their previous knowledge about writing in this genre, and you will show them how they can examine mentor texts to plan and set goals for their own writing. You will then teach students ways writers use logic to clarify the relationship between their evidence and their ideas. As students continue drafting and revising, you will teach them how to search for other possible interpretations of the text and write arguments about which interpretation is the best one, explaining why an alternative argument may not be as sound. By the end of this first bend, your students will have learned how to complete a draft of a literary essay with a focus on theme.

In Bend II, students will focus on understanding and writing about author's craft moves and how they affect the meaning of the text. You'll teach students that literary essayists look for craft moves that an author

uses repeatedly and the effects those moves have on the text. Then you'll channel them to look for symbols in the texts they are studying and, as writers do, write long to try to discover the deeper meaning of the symbols they discover. In the rest of this bend, you'll teach students ways writers plan an essay about an author's craft, teaching them ways to frame the essay with introductions and conclusions that provide context and food for thought, and teaching them ways that essayists adopt an engaging yet formal tone.

In Bend III, you'll push students to compare and contrast ideas across texts, writing to discover and writing to explain and support what they discover. Your students have written this kind of essay in earlier grades; now, you'll encourage them to apply all they know and work more independently, using familiar strategies—such as using thought prompts to push themselves to deeper analysis and using transition words to guide their readers. Your literary essayists end this unit by exploring places online to publish parts of their essays and then making their writing online-ready and posting it.

Welcome to the Unit

BEND I ♦ The Thematic Essay

1. Looking for Themes All Around Us . . .
2. Reading Closely to Develop Themes
3. Fine-Tuning Themes by Studying Author's Craft
4. Drafting Essays
5. Finding the Courage to Revise Your Thinking
6. Clarifying Relationships between Evidence and Ideas
7. Counterargument within Literary Essays
8. Editing Using All You Know

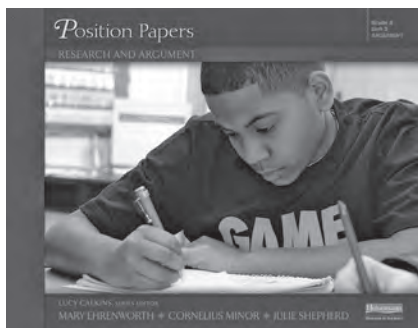
BEND II ♦ The Author's Craft Essay

9. Noticing How an Author Tends to Write
10. The Power of Symbolism
11. Planning the Author's Craft Essay
12. Framing Essays with Relevance and Context: Introductions and Conclusions
13. Adopting an Essayist's Tone
14. A Comma Inquiry

BEND III ♦ The Comparative Essay

15. Writing across Texts
16. Writing Comparative Essays on Demand
17. Publishing on the Internet





GRADE 8 ♦ UNIT 3 ♦ OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS

Position Papers *Research and Argument*

MARY EHRENWORTH • CORNELIUS MINOR • JULIE SHEPHERD

Eighth-graders begin this argumentation study by learning to research and argue various stances within a complex topic—in this case, the pros and cons of kids engaging in games with simulated violence. Students will learn to use debate to strengthen their positions, developing and revising claims, reasons, and evidence. They'll learn ways writers flash-draft efficiently, setting ambitious writing goals so that they are constantly honing their arguments and their skills. Students will move from research of print and digital texts to drafting, and then they will return to research, this time with critical lenses. As they research again, you'll teach them how authors use connotative language to paint a tone, and how they might do the same in their own writing. Students will finish Bend I by publishing their position papers in a collection for students and parents and by giving speeches.

In the second bend of this unit, students will learn ways to understand, navigate, and develop considered positions within a topic with a complicated history and serious consequences. Specifically, students will argue whether or not child soldiers should be given amnesty, a question that is debated by the United Nations, by US military tribunals, and by advocacy organizations around the world. Students learn ways to tackle

a topic of this gravity by immersion in information—researching case studies, statistics, and a variety of print and digital sources. Initially, you will help students use their debate skills and their knowledge of argument writing to compose preliminary position papers. Then you'll teach students that writers take these position papers through multiple drafts, honing their arguments as they extend their knowledge. In this bend, you will teach students ways writers consider multiple perspectives and ways they make their cases stronger by expressing the conditions under which their arguments have merit. As they do this, students will learn to write longer, denser arguments, using more sophisticated transitional moves to guide the reader. You'll coach them to maintain an awareness of purpose and audience. Students will tailor their arguments to their intended audience and then publish these position papers as letters.

At the end of the unit, students reflect on how they can carry their knowledge of argument writing, including the inquiry process, from research to publishing and their skills with debate, across the curriculum. This attention to transference sets students up to be powerful argument writers in other disciplines and in their future endeavors.

Welcome to the Unit

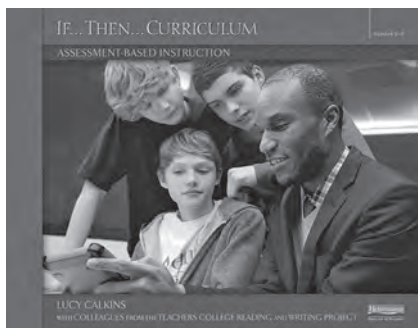
BEND I ♦ Writing a Position Paper: Games Based on Fictional Violence—Diverting or Harmful?

1. Debating Positions to Develop a Complex Argument
2. Flash-Drafting Arguments while Working on Personal Writing Goals
3. Angling Evidence to Support Specific Points
4. Using Connotative Language to Paint a Tone
5. Writing Great Conclusions
6. Getting Ready to Publish: Polishing Presentation and Conventions
7. Unleashing the Inner Dramatist to Give Speeches More Impact
8. A Celebration of Speeches

BEND II ♦ Writing a Position Paper on a Complicated Issue: Should Child Soldiers Be Given Amnesty?

9. Grappling with Issues of Intensity, Developing Initial Understanding
10. Developing Preliminary Positions, Revising Thinking
11. Debating to Draft More Balanced and Principled Arguments
12. Strengthening, Framing, and Pacing Evidence
13. Attending to Alternate Arguments and Points of View
14. Using the Organizational Structure of Your Piece to Help Build Your Argument
15. Tailoring Position Papers as Letters; Attending to Audience and Presentation
16. A Social Activist Celebration





CONTENTS

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 Middle School Writers and Planning Your Year

PART ONE Alternate and Additional Units

Writing Information Books on Topics of Personal Expertise

If your students have not been part of writing workshop classrooms prior to now and they have not had any experience writing informational texts, THEN you may want to teach this unit.

Fiction Writing

If your sixth-grade students display a solid understanding of personal narrative writing and you want them to develop their skills in writing realistic fiction, THEN you may want to teach this unit.

Persuasive Essays

If your students are new to the genre of argument writing, or if they would benefit from additional practice in writing persuasively, THEN you may want to teach this unit.

Memoir: Writing to Reflect on Experience and Suggest Thematic Connections

If you want to teach a unit that will tap into students' motivation because it is especially personal, and that can also show students that structure follows content and that authors decide upon their structure as they figure out what they want to say, THEN a unit on memoir is a good choice.

Historical Fiction: Weaving Together Fact and Fiction

If your students have already experienced a realistic fiction writing unit and display a solid understanding of personal narrative writing, THEN this unit would be a good choice.

Poetry: Immersion and Innovation

If the language with which your students write tends to be social rather than literary, and you'd like to build their sense of playfulness, their love of words, their ability to make reading—writing connections, and their engagement with writing, THEN poetry gets teen writers writing up a storm.

Documentaries: Bringing History to Life

If your students know enough about topics to teach others and you'd like to see their informational writing have more voice, authenticity, and craft, THEN the invitation to produce historical documentaries gives them an opportunity to practice the essential skills of information writing such as organizing information, writing with both ideas and information, and highlighting a perspective.

Literary Essays: A Mini-Unit on Analyzing Complex Texts for Meaning, Craft, and Tone

If you want a quick, minor unit to hone students' skills with text-based writing and to support their engaged reading, THEN writing literary essays will give students an opportunity to explore how theme and craft are related in the stories they read.

Fantasy: Writing within Literary Traditions

If your students are game to build upon their experience writing fiction with a unit that extends that work, THEN you'll want to teach them to write fantasy.

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

NARRATIVE WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

- If the writer is new to the writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .*
- If the student seems to paragraph randomly or not much at all . . .*
- If the story lacks tension . . .*
- If the beginning of the piece is lacking story elements or does not hint at larger issues or tension . . .*
- If the ending of the piece seems incomplete or incongruous with the rest of the piece . . .*
- If the writer is ready to learn about the use of flashbacks and flash-forwards . . .*

Elaboration

- If the writer has elaborated, but in seemingly haphazard ways . . .*
- If the writer has created a story that is sparse, with little elaboration . . .*
- If the writer has written the external story but not the internal story . . .*
- If the writer relies on dialogue and internal thinking to show what a character is thinking and feeling and is ready for new techniques to achieve the same effect . . .*
- If the writer is not making use of literary devices . . .*

Language Conventions

- If the student is struggling with spelling, halting his or her progress . . .*
- If the writer constructs short, simple sentences and is ready to learn to punctuate longer, more complex sentences using median punctuation . . .*

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 the writer is ready to experiment with alternative organizing structures . . .*
- If the writer has chosen a topic that is too broad . . .*
- If the writer does not use transition words and phrases to help readers understand how the text is organized or how information fits together . . .*
- If the introduction to the piece is lacking or weak . . .*
- If the conclusion is lacking or weak . . .*

Elaboration

- If each section is short and needs elaboration . . .*
- If the writer elaborates by adding fact after fact . . .*
- If the writer does not elaborate on information from outside sources . . .*
- If the writer does not credit outside sources in his or her writing . . .*
- If the writer does not incorporate domain-specific vocabulary . . .*

Language Conventions

- If the writer incorporates quotes, facts, and statistics, but does so awkwardly . . .*
- If the writer struggles with spelling, particularly domain-specific vocabulary words . . .*



ARGUMENT WRITING

Structure and Cohesion

If the introduction does not forecast the structure of the essay . . .

If the writer's introduction and/or conclusion feel formulaic . . .

If the writer's supports overlap . . .

If the writer's supports are not parallel or equal in weight . . .

If the writer has developed a thesis that is complex and nuanced, but lacks the skills to organize an essay that supports it . . .

If the writer needs help incorporating counterargument into her essay . . .

If the writer has a thesis and supports, but there is no evidence that he has considered a logical order for his supporting paragraphs . . .

Elaboration

If the writer is struggling to elaborate . . .

If the writer has chosen evidence for each body paragraph, but it does not all support his claim . . .

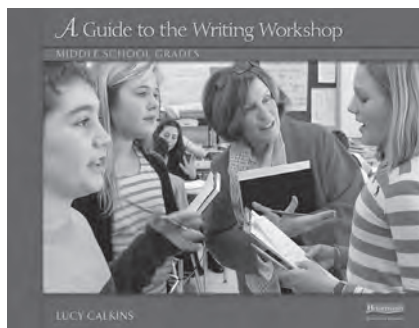
If the writer has included a variety of details and evidence, but it has swamped her piece . . .

If, when writing about reading, the writer is ready to analyze the craft moves an author makes and use those to support his argument . . .

Language Conventions

If the writer uses a casual, informal tone when writing . . .

If the writer struggles to punctuate correctly when quoting, especially when using only part of a quote from a text . . .



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A Guide to the Writing Workshop *Middle School 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

Middle School Writers and the Writing Process

Provisioning a Writing Workshop

Structures and Management Systems

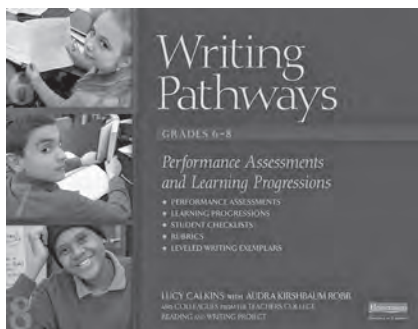
Inside the Minilesson

Differentiation: Conferring with Individuals and Small Groups

Building Your Own Units of Study

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Writing Pathways Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades 6–8

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

An Assessment Toolkit

The First Step: Conducting On-Demand Performance Assessments

The Norming Meeting and Subsequent Scoring: Developing Shared Expectations

Using Early Results to Plan and Adapt the Units of Study

Self-Assessment Checklists: The *What*, the *Why*, and the *How*

Tracking Data: On-the-Run and Formal Record-Keeping Systems

Teaching Informed by the Learning Progressions

Supporting Transference of Learning across the Content Areas

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PART TWO The Assessment Tools

Argument Writing

Learning Progression, Grades 3–9

On-Demand Performance Assessment Prompt

Argument Writing Teaching Rubrics, Grades 6–8

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Leveled Student Writing Samples, Grades 6–8

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Writing Process

Learning Progression, Grades 5–8

Writing About Reading Performance Assessments

Sample On-Demand Prompt for Assessing Writing and Reading: Reading Informational Texts and Writing Argument



INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
DEVELOPMENT (cont.)			
The writer chose her words carefully to explain her information and had effect on the reader.			
The writer worked to compare, contrast, and use information and concepts reader engaged.			
The writer incorporated vocabulary and, when explained terms to read, clues, parentheticals, or similar support.			
The writer supported her using a teaching tone appropriate.			
The writer used resource words in his writing including technical vocabulary.			
The writer used punctuated parentheses, colons, and her include extra information in some of her sentences.			
The writer accurately of using appropriate parts.			

INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
DEVELOPMENT (cont.)			
Craft	The writer chose expert words to teach readers a lot about the subject. He taught information in a way to interest readers. He may have used drawings, captions, or diagrams.	The writer made deliberate word choices to teach his readers. He may have done this by using and repeating key words about his topic. When it felt right to do so, the writer chose transitions, comparisons, and analogies.	The writer made deliberate word choices to have an effect on his readers. He used the vocabulary of experts and explained his terms. The writer worked to include the exact phrase, comparison, or analogy.

INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
STRUCTURE (cont.)			
The writer chose a focused subject.	The writer used subheadings and/or clear introductory transitions to separate sections.	The writer focused her writing on a subtopic or a particular point or two.	The writer's organizational structure introduced and layered key concepts and information.
The writer used subheadings and/or clear introductory transitions to separate sections.	The writer organized her piece into parts and used structures (claims and supports, problem/solution, sequence, etc.) to organize those parts (and perhaps the whole).	The writer organized information and ideas into broader categories and clarified how sections are ordered and connected.	The writer layered information to maintain tension, engage the reader's interest, and/or build complexity.
The writer made deliberate choices about how to order sections and about the sequence of information and ideas within sections.	The writer used introductions, topic sentences, transitions, formatting, and graphics, where appropriate, to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight main points.	The writer used introductions, topic sentences, transitions, formatting, and graphics, where appropriate, to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight main points.	The writer built the sections upon each other logically, allowing the reader to build on the previous sections.

INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
STRUCTURE (cont.)			
Organization	The writer grouped his information into parts. Each part was mostly about one thing that connected to his big topic.	The writer grouped information into sections and used paragraphs and sometimes chapters to separate those sections. Each section had information that was mostly about the same thing. He may have used headings and subheadings.	The writer organized her writing into a sequence of separate sections. She may have used headings and subheadings to highlight the separate sections.
DEVELOPMENT			
Elaboration	The writer wrote facts, definitions, details, and observations about her topic and explained some of them.	The writer taught her readers different things about the subject. She chose those subtopics because they were important and interesting.	The writer explained different aspects of a subject. She included a variety of information such as examples, details, dates, and quotes.

INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9
STRUCTURE			
The writer conveyed ideas and information about a subject in a well-structured text. Sometimes she incorporated arguments, explanations, stories, or procedural passages.	The writer brought together ideas and information about a subject in a text that develops a subtopic and/or an idea. He incorporated a variety of text structures as needed, including argument, explanation, narrative, and procedural passages.	The writer discussed key concepts within a topic and made it clear why these concepts are important. She provided examples with relevant information, using a variety of text structures and formatting, as needed, to make concepts and information compelling and accessible.	The writer discussed complex concepts, presenting facts and information in an engaging manner, teaching the reader significant concepts and information. The writer conveyed the source of the information and analyzed them when relevant.
The writer wrote an introduction in which she interested readers, perhaps with a quote or significant fact. She let readers know the information that she would develop later, and, when appropriate, she used transitions to connect the sections.	The writer interested the reader in the topic by explaining its significance or providing a compelling fact, statistic, or anecdote. He would use transitions to connect the sections.	After hooking the reader, the writer provided context, introduced a focus/main idea, and oriented readers to the overall structure of the text. He would use transitions to connect the sections.	The writer wrote an engaging lead that explained the topic's significance, contextualized it with background information, and mentioned key points of view would be discussed.
of transitional phrases to show up between parts of the text, refers to prior sections and future sections. The writer may position to show the source of her information, and, when appropriate, she used transitions to connect the sections.			
The writer strengths suggested action to take, and/or slight perspective or potential.			

INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
STRUCTURE			
Overall	The writer taught readers information about a subject. He put in ideas, details, quotes, and ideas into each part of his writing.	The writer used different kinds of information to teach about the subject. Sometimes she included little maps, stories, or how-to sections in her writing.	The writer wrote an introduction in which he helped readers get interested in and understand the subject. He let readers know the subtopics that he would later develop, as well as the sequence.
Lead	The writer wrote a beginning in which she got readers ready to learn a lot of information about the subject.	The writer hooked her readers by explaining why the subject mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving a big picture. She let readers know the subtopics that he would later develop, as well as the sequence.	The writer wrote an introduction in which he helped readers get interested in and understand the subject. He let readers know the subtopics that he would later develop, as well as the sequence.
Transitions	The writer used words to show sequence such as before, after, then, next, then, and after. He organized the section in kinds or parts, he used words such as moreover, also, and for example.	The writer used words in each section that helped readers understand how one piece of information connected with others. If he wrote the section in sequence, he used words and phrases such as before, later, next, then, and after. He organized the section in kinds or parts, he used words such as moreover, also, and for example.	When the writer wrote about results, she used words and phrases like consequently, as a result, and because of this. When she compared information, she used words and phrases such as in contrast, by comparison, and especially. In certain parts, she used phrases that go with stories such as a little later and three hours later. In the sections that stated an opinion, she used words such as but the most important reason, for example, and consequently.
Ending	The writer wrote an ending that drew conclusions, asked questions, or suggested ways readers might respond.	The writer wrote an ending in which she reminded readers of her subject and may either have suggested a follow-up action or left readers with a final thought. She added her thoughts, feelings, and questions about the subject at the end.	The writer wrote a conclusion in which he restated the main points, and may have offered a final thought or question for readers to consider.

INFORMATION: LEARNING PROGRESSION, 3-9 (continued)

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
STRUCTURE			
Overall	The writer taught readers information about a subject. He put in ideas, details, quotes, and ideas into each part of his writing.	The writer used different kinds of information to teach about the subject. Sometimes she included little maps, stories, or how-to sections in her writing.	The writer wrote an introduction in which he helped readers get interested in and understand the subject. He let readers know the subtopics that he would later develop, as well as the sequence.
Lead	The writer wrote a beginning in which she got readers ready to learn a lot of information about the subject.	The writer hooked her readers by explaining why the subject mattered, telling a surprising fact, or giving a big picture. She let readers know the subtopics that he would later develop, as well as the sequence.	The writer wrote an introduction in which he helped readers get interested in and understand the subject. He let readers know the subtopics that he would later develop, as well as the sequence.
Transitions	The writer used words to show sequence such as before, after, then, next, then, and after. He organized the section in kinds or parts, he used words such as moreover, also, and for example.	The writer used words in each section that helped readers understand how one piece of information connected with others. If he wrote the section in sequence, he used words and phrases such as before, later, next, then, and after. He organized the section in kinds or parts, he used words such as moreover, also, and for example.	When the writer wrote about results, she used words and phrases like consequently, as a result, and because of this. When she compared information, she used words and phrases such as in contrast, by comparison, and especially. In certain parts, she used phrases that go with stories such as a little later and three hours later. In the sections that stated an opinion, she used words such as but the most important reason, for example, and consequently.
Ending	The writer wrote an ending that drew conclusions, asked questions, or suggested ways readers might respond.	The writer wrote an ending in which she reminded readers of her subject and may either have suggested a follow-up action or left readers with a final thought. She added her thoughts, feelings, and questions about the subject at the end.	The writer wrote a conclusion in which he restated the main points, and may have offered a final thought or question for readers to consider.

INFORMATION: ON-DEMAND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROMPT

ON-DEMAND PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROMPT

Information Writing

Say to students:

"Think of a topic that you've studied or that you know a lot about. Tomorrow, you will have forty-five minutes to write an informational (or all-about) text that teaches others interesting and important information and ideas about that topic. If you want to find and use information from a book or another outside source to help you with this writing, you may bring that with you tomorrow. Please keep in mind that you'll have only forty-five minutes to complete this. You will only have this one period, so you'll need to plan, draft, revise, and edit in one sitting. Write in a way that shows all that you know about information writing."

"In your writing, make sure you:

- Write an introduction.
- Elaborate with a variety of information.
- Organize your writing.
- Use transition words.
- Write a conclusion."

Use the teaching rubrics to assess and score these pieces of work.

INFORMATION: Student Checklist

Name: _____ Date: _____

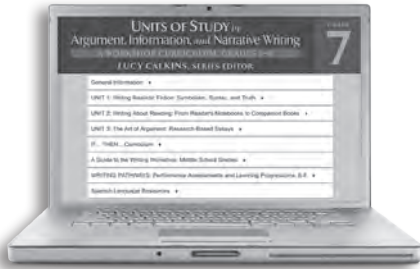
Information Writing Checklist

	Grade 7	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
Overall	Structure I brought together ideas and information about a subject in a text that develops a subtopic and/or an idea. I incorporated a variety of text structures as needed, including argument, explanation, narrative, and procedural passages.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead	I interested the reader in the topic by explaining its significance, or providing a compelling fact, statistic, or anecdote. I made it clear what parts of the topic this text would tackle, and how the ideas and information in the text would unfold.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transitions	I used transitions to link concepts with related information. The transitions helped the reader follow from part to part and make it clear when information is an example of a bigger idea, and how the ideas and information in the text would unfold.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ending	In my conclusion, I reinforced and built on the main point(s) in a way that made the entire piece a cohesive whole. The conclusion may have restated the main point, responded to them, or highlighted their significance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization	I focused my writing on a subtopic or a particular point or two.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I organized my piece into parts and used structures (claims and supports, problem/solution, sequence, etc.) to organize those parts (and perhaps the whole).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I used introductions, topic sentences, transitions, formatting and graphics, where appropriate, to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight main points.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development	I included varied kinds of information such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions. I analyzed or explained the information, showing how the information fit with my key points or subtopics, including graphics where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I consistently incorporated and cited sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I worked to make my topic compelling as well as understandable. I brought out why it mattered and why the audience should care about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Craft	I used words purposefully to affect meaning and tone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I chose precise words and used metaphors, anecdotes, images, or comparisons to explain what I mean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sample 1, page 1

Sample 1, page 2

For additional information visit www.UnitsofStudy.com



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.

UNITS OF STUDY *in*
Argument, Information, *and* Narrative Writing
A WORKSHOP CURRICULUM, GRADES 6-8
LUCY CALKINS, SERIES EDITOR

GRADE
7

General Information ▶

UNIT 1: Writing Realistic Fiction: Symbolism, Syntax, and Truth ▶

UNIT 2: Writing About Reading: From Reader's Notebooks to Companion Books ▶

UNIT 3: The Art of Argument: Research-Based Essays ▶

IF... THEN... Curriculum ▶

A Guide to the Writing Workshop: Middle School Grades ▶

WRITING PATHWAYS: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, 6-8 ▶

Spanish Language Resources ▶



Final Story Plan

Jimmy plays with his other friends for one day instead of playing soccer with his best friend Carter. Carter gets angry at him and throws a tantrum. Jimmy still has no clue why Carter was mad but has yet to find out.

This shows that Carter is very sensitive and doesn't like being alone.

This shows that Jimmy doesn't know what happened to his friend but finds it best to leave it alone.

Jimmy's bully, Adrian starts picking on Jimmy and Carter starts to join in. Carter explains to Jimmy why they are no longer friends and how he is teaming up with Adrian to pick on Jimmy.

FIG. 1.4 Jimmy's final story plan

This shows that Carter is heartless and goes to someone else for revenge on one person.

This shows that Jimmy can't stand up for himself therefore he can't do anything about it.

Jimmy tries to get to Adrian and stick up to him but Carter gets in the way. Carter starts to pick on Jimmy. Adrian sees this and stands up to Carter and they start to argue with each other leaving Jimmy speechless.

This shows that Adrian is tired of being a bully and wants to do the right thing.

This shows that Jimmy still can't stand up for himself.

Carter approaches ~~Adrian~~ Jimmy and apologizes. He wants Jimmy to join him and team up against ~~Adrian~~ Jimmy. Jimmy accepts the apology but refuses the offer. Carter gets mad and goes away. Adrian comes up to Jimmy and apologizes as well and becomes friends with Jimmy even though Carter doesn't want to.

This shows that Jimmy does change and stands up to Carter. He learns that he can't be liked by every one that makes friends with ~~Adrian~~.

This shows that or doesn't change can't be friends Jimmy because he acts.

Narrative Writing Checklist (continued)

Grade 7				Grade 8			
Conventions	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES	Conventions	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES
Spelling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used the internet and other sources to check the spelling of literary, historical, and geographical words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Punctuation and Sentence Structure	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used the internet and other sources to check the spelling of literary, historical, and geographical words.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Narrative Writing Checklist (continued)

Grade 7				Grade 8			
Development	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES	Development	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES
Elaboration	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I developed the action, dialogue, details, and inner thinking to convey an issue, idea, or issue. I showed what is specific about the central character. I developed the setting and the character's relationship to the setting.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I developed the central character's relationship to other characters. I showed character flaws as well as strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name: _____ Date: _____

Narrative Writing Checklist

Grade 7				Grade 8			
Structure	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES	Structure	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES
Overall	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I created a narrative that has realistic characters, tension, and change; and that not only conveys, but also develops an idea, issue, or theme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lead	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote a beginning that not only sets the story in motion, it also grounds it in a place or situation. It included details that will later be important to the story. These details might point to the central issue or conflict, show how story elements connect, or hint at key character traits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transitions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used transitional phrases and clauses to connect what happened to why it happened (if he hadn't... he might not have, because of, although, little did she know that).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ending	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I gave the reader a sense of closure by showing clearly how the character or place has changed or the problem has been resolved. If there wasn't resolution, I gave details to leave the reader thinking about a central idea or theme.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organization	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used a traditional—or slightly modified—story structure (rising action, conflict, falling action) to best bring out the meaning of my story and reach my audience.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Octavo Grado

Yo quiero afectar al lector de ciertas maneras específicas—hacerlo pensar, darle cuenta, o sentir de una manera determinada—por eso elegí el lenguaje para hacerlo. Utilizo comparaciones, analogías, ejemplos vívidos, anécdotas, u otros recursos literarios para hacerlo sentir.

Nombre: _____ Fecha: _____

ARGUMENTACIÓN

Octavo Grado		AÚN NO	COMENZANDO	¡BI!
En general	Estructura	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Comienzo	Después de interesar al lector en el tema, entregué el contexto específico para mi posición y la posición (o posiciones) de otros. Introduje mi posición, y orienté a los lectores en la línea de argumentación general que pensaba desarrollar.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transiciones	Utilicé transiciones para dirigir al lector a través de partes del texto y para ayudarlo a darse cuenta de que manera las partes del texto se relacionan con secciones anteriores. Utilicé frases tales como, "Algunos podrían argumentar que..." "Aunque podría ser verdad que..." "También es el caso que..." "A pesar de..." "Como se dijo anteriormente..." "Visto como un todo..." "Esto es significativo porque..." "La evidencia apunta a..." "Al hacer eso..."	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Final	En la conclusión, describí el significado de mi argumento para los interesados en particular por el tema, u ofrecí ideas o intuiciones, implicaciones, preguntas, y/o desafíos adicionales.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organización	Organicé los argumentos, contra-argumentos, razones y evidencia en secciones y aclaré la manera en que las secciones se conectaban entre sí.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elaboración	Creé una estructura organizacional que pudiera apoyar la comprensión creciente del lector a través de toda mi argumentación, ordenando las secciones para que se pudieran apoyar unas con otras de una manera lógica y persuasiva.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Desarrollo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Desarrollé los aspectos más significativos del argumento para mi audiencia.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Escritores narrativos aspiran a hacerlos como...

Dar el contexto/ información de fondo

Introducir las personas

Mostrar la motivación del personaje

Crear el escenario

Crear el conflicto

Construir un estado de ánimo

Escritores Narrativos usan técnicas como...

Escenas de mundo de ficción

Voces únicas del drama

Pensamientos internos

Diálogo

Acciones reveladoras

Metáforas

Letras suenan más que el carácter (onomatopéya)

Descripciones

Metáforas

Tono

Simbolismo



Session 2

Calling On All Strategies to Write Up a Storm

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers call on a toolkit of strategies for finding ideas for their stories and that they can use those ideas to launch into fast and furious writing. You'll also teach students that narrative writers sometimes generate story ideas by thinking of places and the meaningful episodes that occurred in them.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Each student will need his or her own writer's notebook and a writing tool.
- ✓ Chart titled "How to Write Powerful Personal Narratives" from Session 1 (see Connection)
- ✓ Jack Gantos's neighborhood map to show how published authors use this strategy to find ideas for their stories, available online (see Teaching)
- ✓ Chart titled "Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Topics (see Connection and Teaching)

TODAY YOU WILL TEACH STUDENTS to map places that matter to them as a strategy for finding ideas for personal narratives, and you will teach this as just one of many strategies a writer could draw upon, emphasizing that published writers call on a whole toolkit of generating strategies for help getting themselves started. Your sixth-graders are settling into their identities as adolescents and mature writers, and trust me, it matters to them that these are not just "kid" strategies for generating personal narratives. These are strategies that also work for Newbery Award-winning authors!

As part of establishing their burgeoning identities as writers, you'll want to take a minute to acknowledge the work students did for homework. Writers write, after all, and you'll want to make sure that each and every student understands that homework is not something separate from the workshop but is an integral part of becoming stronger, more prolific writers.

After giving students a moment to share last night's work, you'll begin the new work of the day. To begin the session, you will discuss celebrated author Jack Gantos's map of the neighborhood where he grew up in Florida, the same map that served as his jumping-off point for writing *Heads or Tails: Stories from the Sixth Grade*. Jack speaks often to groups of middle school students and teachers, inspiring the readers who love his books to write their own stories and sharing tips for capturing compelling story ideas and crafting them into powerful personal narratives. When presenting, Jack regularly shares the maps that figure prominently in his own writer's notebooks, acknowledging how much he values this generating strategy. He explains this on his website, with an example of a neighborhood map: <http://www.jackgantos.com.vhost.zerolag.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/06/The-Next-Level-Booklinks-article.pdf>.

After discussing Jack's neighborhood map together and seeing how the act of remembering one moment often brings to mind another and another, your writers will be eager to get started on their own maps of places that really matter to them. This particular strategy is always a big hit with sixth-graders, many of whom already attack the white space in their notebooks with personally significant doodling. The other appeal of this strategy is the

forum it offers sixth-grade writers to document the quirky and humorous details of their lives, the ones that they remember with such clarity and are eager to share within their new writing community.

“Take care to ramp up the level of students’ independent work now, setting high expectations early on.”

Take care to ramp up the level of students’ independent work now, setting high expectations early on. It will be of the utmost importance to emphasize that sketching and labeling a map is just another way to *quickly* list personal narrative story ideas. Nudge your students to be like Jack Gantos and move quickly from the topics they generate when sketching to the beginning of a story. For this reason, you’ll use today’s mid-workshop teaching point to push your students’ volume, to teach them ways they can write more and write faster in one sitting.

In your small-group conferences, when you pull kids together to share their own observations and learning, you’ll

use the time to point out that sophisticated writers have criteria for weighing story ideas. For example, for all the stories that Jack did jot on his map, there must be many more that he deemed not worth adding. You can teach your writers to assess story ideas by asking themselves if these are truly moments of strong emotion.

This is an important journey for the sixth-grade writer. Some students will think they can only write about the time they broke an arm roller-blading or rolled down the school stairs on the way to the gym. In middle school, you are trying to move them toward moments that are psychologically intense, not merely action-driven. Otherwise, students risk thinking they don’t have anything worthwhile to write about if they haven’t experienced a dramatic incident or accident. You do not want your students to miss the opportunity to use writing to figure out how they feel *and what they have come to understand* about the more typical, daily moments of their lives—the friend who didn’t sit with him at lunch, the team he didn’t make, the family interaction that still confuses him.

For more concrete examples of choosing psychologically intense moments over physically daunting ones, you may find it helpful to take another look at sixth-grade student writing samples in *Writing Pathways*. As you reread the stories, notice how each story owes its meaning and tension and brings the reader into the rather ordinary emotional drama of day-to-day life.

Online Resources

The digital resources are cross-referenced inside the books with this graphic. Wherever you see this CD disc icon in the book, the resource will be found in the Online Resources.



Additional Sample Sessions

Please note that additional sample sessions for each grade are available for review here:
http://hein.pub/UOS_6-8



MINILESSON

Calling On All Strategies to Write Up a Storm

CONNECTION

Compliment students on their productivity yesterday, referencing the year's new chart.

"Sixth-graders, I have to confess that our very first writing workshop was pretty thrilling for me. I know the pressure is on, that you are feeling the high expectations. Well, yesterday, I saw you step up in a big way. As I watched you annotate Ai's story with your observations and your ideas about what it took for her to arrive at that finished text, I thought to myself, 'Holy moly. These kids already know how to learn from each other.' Normally I'd spend today teaching you the most crucial things about personal narrative writing—but you guys learned those things, on your own, from Ai and the other sixth-grade writers you studied yesterday." I pointed to yesterday's anchor chart.

How to Write Powerful Personal Narratives

- Focus on one episode, write with detail (don't summarize a stretch of time).
- Help readers picture the episode—a small action and exact dialogue.

"Right now, in a flash second, will you show the person beside you the notebook work you've done so far? You might start by sharing the goal you set for yourself at the end of yesterday's workshop and the writing work you did last night to achieve it."

Acknowledge that students already know strategies for generating narrative writing. Channel them to add more strategies to their repertoire by studying another author—this time a published one.

"As you moved from studying Ai's narrative to writing your own, it was clear to me that many of you already know strategies for coming up with true stories—ones that are worth writing. That is, you know the work writers do *before* they get down to the business of writing strong narratives." I gestured to the anchor chart. "You know how to come up with personal narrative *topics*. Yesterday, some of you, like Ai, thought of a person who matters to you, listed small-moment

◆ COACHING

Time is of the essence in the fast-paced world of middle school. Because of this, you will want to keep your lessons short and focused, giving students as much time as possible to write independently. I urge you, however, to take a few seconds several times a week to bring homework into the world of the classroom. It is all too easy for students to see homework as a time-filler (or time-waster). By acknowledging it in the lesson, you help your sixth-graders see that homework is a relevant and important extension of the work they do each day as writers.

stories connected to that person, then wrote one of those as a whole long story.” I gestured to a new chart on generating personal narrative topics (to be used for just a couple of days) and pointed to that strategy, listed as the first bullet. “So you now have two charts to consult as you work, one for coming up with ideas and one for writing powerfully.”

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Topics

- Think of a person who matters to you, list *Small Moment* stories, choose one, and write the whole story.

“Some of you turned to other strategies to get yourselves started, and once you start sharing those with each other so they become shared strategies, we can put them onto this chart as well. The great thing, though, is that you grabbed a strategy and used it to get yourself writing fast and furious. How many of you—between yesterday and last night—have filled a page and a half or so of your notebook with your own compelling true story?” I demonstrated a discreet thumbs up to clue them as to the signal I wanted.

Some writers signaled they’d done this—fewer than I wished—but I carried on.

“Today I thought you might want to learn from another writer—this time, Newbery Award-winning author Jack Gantos.” I held up a couple of books from Jack’s popular *Joey Pigza* series.

✿ Name the teaching point.

“Today I want to teach you that published writers sometimes think of a *place* that matters to them and make a quick sketch—a map, actually—of that place, jotting all the powerful *Small Moment* story ideas that come from that place.”

TEACHING

Project the image of a neighborhood map, and model studying one author’s process.

“Writers, yesterday you learned that to learn from someone else’s writing, you first just read it, then you think, ‘What did that writer do to pull that off? What’s the recipe for this kind of writing?’ So let’s follow that same plan to learn from Jack Gantos’s map.”

I added, “Let’s just read this map, just enjoying it. Remember as you do, though, that we’ll pause soon to think, ‘What has Gantos done that we could try?’” I displayed his map, and immediately the room buzzed as students talked about parts of it.

Typically you will create and use one or two anchor charts in our units of study—charts you and your students will build on over the course of the unit. In addition, you will sometimes create more temporary charts—charts that you will use for just a day or two to jot ideas in the moment that don’t necessarily help anchor the overall unit. Note that today’s chart is a little different. While it functions as a temporary chart as you and your students gather strategies for generating topics, you will soon (in Session 4) synthesize the ideas you gather on this chart to a single bullet and transfer that to your anchor chart.

After a moment, I asked for the students' attention. "I can tell you are as taken by this as I am. But remember that as writers yourselves, you need to read the work that others have done in a special way. You ask, 'How has he pulled this off? What did he do that I could try as well?'"

Then I said, "So let's look back at this again, and this time, let's notice things Gantos did that any one of us could try. Hmm . . ." I looked at the map. Around the room, hands shot up. I quelled the students' urge to blurt out whatever they were noticing, saying "You'll get a chance soon."

Then, shifting my eyes to the projected image of Jack's map, I said, "So let's figure out what Jack did that you could do as well. Hmm . . . I'm thinking about those boxes right in the middle of the map, aren't you? I think those are the rooms in the house in which he grew up, and this is the canal that ran behind his backyard. So even though there are lots of pictures and captions packed into this drawing, the map is still of one very specific place: the house and yard where he grew up.

"That means that first, this writer had to choose just one place to map, a place where he spent a good amount of time, one that held lots of stories. And, holy cow, there are a lot of stories here! I guess it is true that people have a million stories about the place where they grew up."

Nodding my head as though I was really starting to figure something out, I continued, "There's something else about his map that really stands out to me. It shows a drawing of Jack's dog, BoBo, with a sad, unhappy face. I think that actually this drawing is here as a placeholder for this awful story Jack once told some teachers about a time when one of the mean alligators in the canal actually ate BoBo! Can you imagine that Small Moment story?" Then I said, "So Jack puts little drawings onto the map that each stand for a whole story of 'one time . . .'"

Debrief, reiterating how mapping can be a powerful generating strategy for writing stories.

I exhaled a big breath to show that I was pulling myself out of Jack's story world, and then I said, "Writers, remember, I am studying Jack's map to learn how writers use this generating strategy to make powerful personal narrative writing. It looks like once Jack had a really important place in mind, he remembered Small Moment stories that occurred there and drew quick little pictures representing the stories he could write. Every picture on his map is actually a personal narrative, just waiting to be powerfully written. I wonder if he looks at his map and hears them shouting, 'Pick me! Tell me! Hey Jack, over here—write me next! Writers, let's add Jack's strategy for generating powerful personal narrative topics to that chart.'"



I didn't tell the students this, but the picture of the drooly dog in the corner stands for another story Jack told a group of teachers. He explained that there were many mean dogs in his neighborhood, and one time, this particular dog bit him and he was terrified. He was convinced the dog gave him rabies!

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Topics

- Think of a person who matters to you, list *Small Moment* stories, choose one, and write the whole story.
- Think about a place that matters, use pictures and quick notes to jot about the small moments that occurred there, choose one, and write the whole story.

"Are you ready to try generating another personal narrative by thinking of a place that matters to you?"

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Set students up to give this strategy a try, scaffolding them through just the first steps.

"Let's try it. Right now, think of a place that matters, a place where you have lived a lot of your life." I stopped talking to give the students a chance to think.

"Okay, writers, you have two minutes to tell the person beside you what place you're choosing and what some of the things will be that you sketch onto your map. Go!"

Remind writers to move quickly from generating topics to writing stories.

"Writers, you'll have time today to write. Some of you will not make a map at all—you already have an idea, just from the map you imagined making. Some of you will reuse yesterday's strategy of thinking of a person who matters to you and writing *Small Moment* stories connected to that person. All of these strategies are what Jack Gantos calls 'jumping-off points for writing.'"

LINK

Send students off to quickly sketch their maps, generate ideas, and write.

"So remember, when writers are stuck and need ideas about what to write about, one thing they can do is to look at other writing to see what another author may have done. And they can always think of a place and the meaningful

Notice how, over the course of a unit and even a week, I vary the method of practice during the active engagement. Whereas yesterday I set students up to work independently while I guided them through quiet thinking, today I ask them to turn and talk with a partner. On other days, I will ask students to practice my teaching point in writing.

You will notice that I rarely make the work of the minilesson a directive. Rarely is it "I jump," then "You jump." Rather, I typically direct students to add whatever I've taught to their repertoire of strategies and encourage them to make their own, thoughtful decisions about what strategies they will use. In today's case, what matters to me is that everyone comes up with topics and writes stories, not that everyone creates a map of a place. The latter is merely a strategy for moving toward the end goal, and not everyone need draw upon the same strategy.

events that happened there. So go ahead and sketch, label, or write. Put your pen to the paper—go!” Again, for a few moments, I kept my eyes on my own notebook, concentrating on my writing, while most of the students began writing.

I motioned to writers who were writing up a storm to move back to their tables.

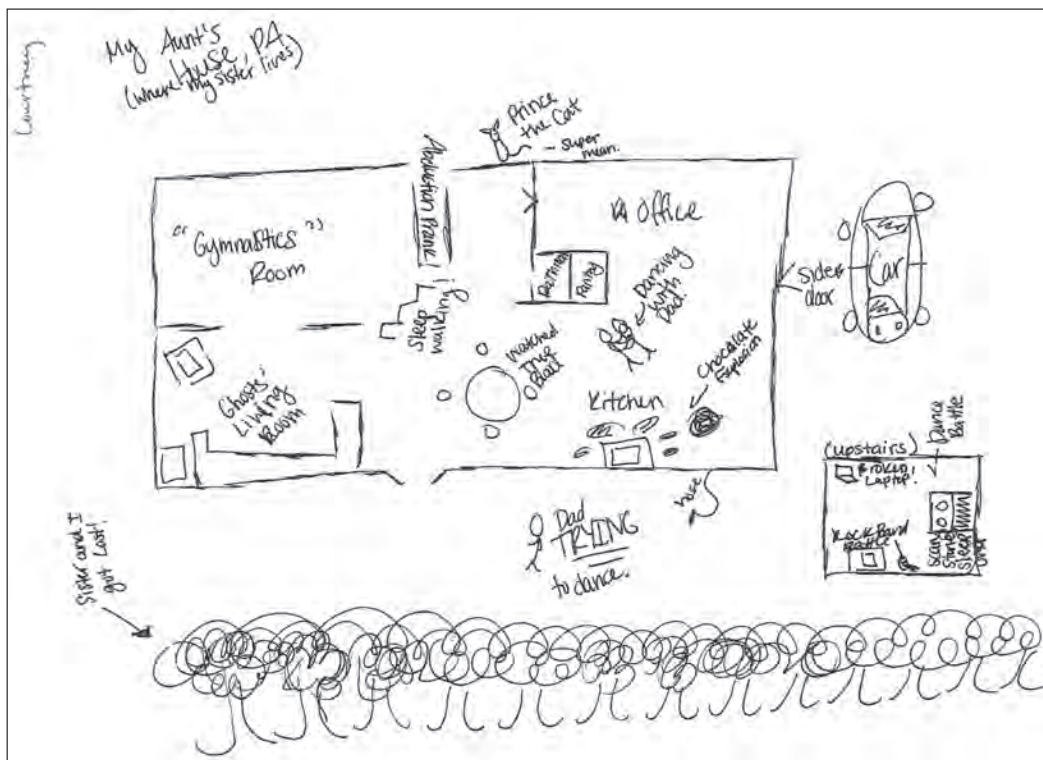


FIG. 2-1 Courtney makes a quick sketch of her aunt's home and jots some of the Small Moment story ideas that come from that place.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Finding Ideas Worth Writing About

WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE of fostering a safe and supportive writing community and emphasized that this kind of community is a prerequisite for the kind of risk taking and honesty that writing requires. As you look over your writers' shoulders, you'll likely find yourself asking questions like "Is wiping out on his bike last summer *really, truly* what occupies Tim's mind space? Is this the memory that speaks volumes about him and his life?" The answer is most likely a resounding "no," but risk taking takes time, reassurance, and some strategies for writing with depth.

In fact, as you circulate around the room today, you are apt to see many students thinking hard about which moments to include on their maps (or lists or webs). What you may not see yet is much discrimination between ideas. Students may not yet realize that for all the stories that Jack Gantos did jot on his map, there must have been many more that he deemed not worth adding. In tomorrow's session, you'll emphasize an important message about the collecting process: collecting ideas for personal narrative is *not* about thinking up any old topic. Instead, it is about generating ideas that say something about ourselves and our lives. This means that we are apt to disregard some memories and choose others. It may be that you decide to teach that concept

to certain students today, ahead of time, to give them more time to work with this important concept.

If you decide to do this, your conferring may go something like the following conference.

I pulled up next to Jelena, who was diligently sketching moments onto a map of her home. "This is where my little brother threw up on the wall," she told me, laughing. "And here's where my mom burned her hand cooking. That was an awful mess." I glanced over Jelena's map, worried that she was playing it a bit safe—grabbing at the first memories that popped into her head. I wondered whether these moments would bring out anything profound about her or yield powerful stories. After complimenting Jelena on her diligence as a writer, I set to work trying to help her develop a more potent topic.

"Jelena," I said, "you know how the books we read usually have a mix of intense feelings? Characters want things. They struggle. They try and try again. Sometimes they fail, but usually in the end they learn some sort of lesson." Jelena nodded and I
(continues)

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Building Volume**

"Writers, I'm sure you remember that I said I would expect each of you to fill a page and a half or so of your notebook every day with a compelling true story." When students began to nod, I continued, "Well, that's not entirely true. I actually expect that you'll soon be filling closer to two pages of your notebook every day!"

"I think that most of you are getting awfully close to that goal. But I have a practical tip for many of you. I noticed that even when you're writing fast and furiously,

getting a stretch of sentences down, you tend to take a break after that stretch. And that break isn't doing you any favors! Today can be the day you get rid of that habit.

"So now, everybody get ready! First, eye the place in your notebook that is a full two pages from where you'll start and mark it with a Post-it®. Now, get there by writing, writing, writing. Resist the urge to stop for a break. Use your strong writing muscles, and forge ahead two pages."

continued on. “Our lives aren’t much different. The best stories are those that involve some sort of want, a struggle, or times when we’ve learned something important. While the moments you’ve sketched are fun, I worry that they aren’t the memories that are most meaningful to you.”

I coached Jelena as she went back to her map, reconsidering memories from her home. This time, we focused on times when she wanted something, times when she struggled, or times when she learned a lesson. Before long, Jelena had uncovered a couple of potential seed ideas: the time she pretended to not see her best friend at the bus

stop and the time she cut her own hair the night before school pictures. “Jelena, what you’ve just done is intense work. Personal narrative writers make choices about the moments they’ll share from their life, and they know that the most intense moments are those that yield the most powerful stories. It means putting yourself on the line, taking a risk and writing about something that is a bit more personal, but the payoff is huge. I hope that you continue to take risks as a writer and to show others in our class how writing and bravery go hand in hand. And remember, when you’re stuck for a potent topic, you can always think back to times when you’ve wanted something, times when you’ve struggled, or times when you’ve learned a lesson.”





SHARE

Celebrating, Sharing, and Keeping Ideas Flowing

Celebrate the fact that students are beginning to take risks and write about powerful moments from their lives.

"Your goal this week is to dig into your own and each other's expertise and to produce powerful personal narratives *every day*. It's only our second day of writing workshop, but you've already written drafts that reveal so much about you and your lives—writing that clearly deserves to be shared.

"Some people call this a 'popcorn share' because when you heat up a pan of popcorn, the kernels begin to pop, one right after the other. And that's what you'll be doing: sharing one right after the other. To get ready, you'll need to choose a short excerpt from your notebook to read aloud. Practice reading the words in your head to show their meaning, just the way I read aloud to you from Ai's narrative yesterday." I looked down at my notebook for a minute, to choose and silently rehearse my tiny excerpt of writing, gesturing for them to do the same.

"I think we're ready! I'll point at each of you to share, and remember, it's a *popcorn* share, so it's going to move quickly." I gestured at Ruby, and she read this excerpt from her writing:

"Well, let's get on with swimming . . ." I nervously said, voice hoarse. I'm not good with waves. Especially, huge waves. The waves slammed the ground so hard it made a huge BOOM-CRASH! The waves were like huge tongues rolling in, out, in, out.

Then I nodded at Garrett and he read a bit from his writing.

When I got downstairs I felt a cold January breeze. I ran to the black Honda right through the snow. I climbed into the car and closed the door. "Dad, I think we're going to win." This is basically my motto, something I say before every game. My dad laughed. Then he stepped on the gas pedal and started to ride through the January ice and snow.

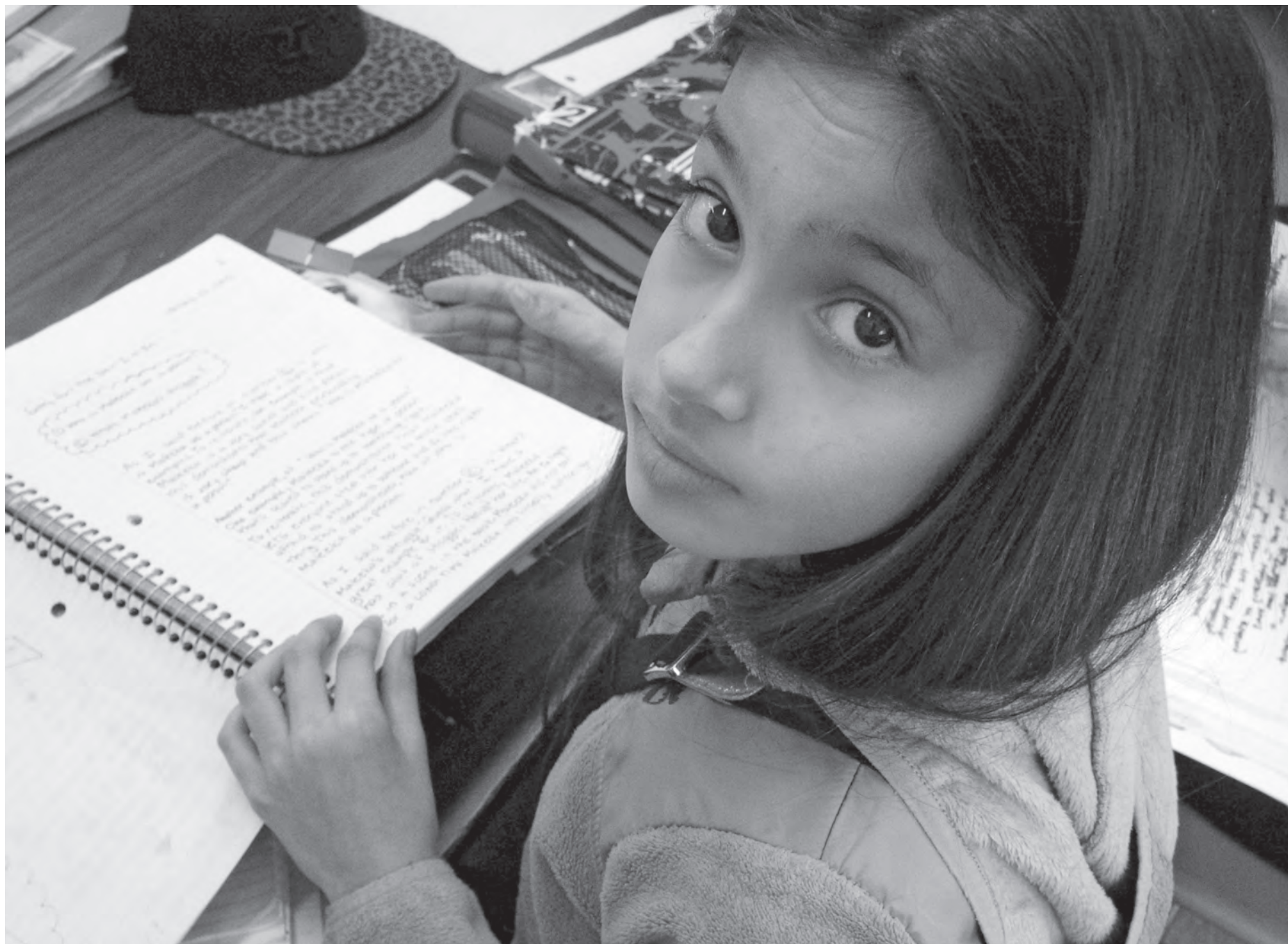
After a few minutes, I stopped gesturing at students and placed my hands in my lap. "Wow. Can you feel the power of your words? Amazing!"

SESSION 2 HOMEWORK

KEEP THE IDEAS FLOWING AND KEEP WRITING

“I bet this is getting you energized to write more. So that’s your job tonight, to keep going. You are the boss of your writing life, and it seems to me like you have a few choices here—go on with one of the personal narratives you started or start a new one. Right now, make a quick plan, and tell your partner what you’re going to do tonight. Be ambitious and see if you can set a goal that will push you even further as a writer. Could you aim to write about two pages?” I looked around the room. “I’m thinking most of you could.” I gave students a minute to set goals and jot them at the top of their notebooks.










Session 3

Thinking Big, Thinking Small

Ideas and Specifics

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that to make their writing the best it can be, writers pause to ask themselves what is working with their writing and to think about how they can make it better. Writers have a vision of exactly what they are trying to do, as well as what makes that type of writing powerful.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Students' reader's notebooks (see Connection)
- ✓ Exemplars of writing about reading entries, the same ones used in Session 1 (see Teaching and Active Engagement) 
- ✓ Chart paper with the heading, "Ways to Write Powerfully about Reading." This will become the anchor chart for Bend I (see Teaching and Active Engagement, and Share). 
- ✓ "Writing to Think about a Message or a Theme" chart (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ "Ladder of Abstraction" chart (see Teaching and Active Engagement) 
- ✓ "Academic Language" chart (see Mid-Workshop Teaching)
- ✓ "Transitions" chart (see Share)

THE CHALLENGE YOU WILL FACE TODAY and this week is to lift the level of your students' writing about reading without rescinding the invitation for them to take ownership over their work. We suggest that the solution is to focus on characteristics of powerful writing about reading, teaching those that are broadly applicable to any sort of work that students may have done.

Of course, it is easier for you to teach a session such as this when you are crystal clear on the specific kind of writing that students are doing. For example, if you know that all of your students are writing feature articles about the texts they are reading, then students could draw on what feature article authors say about their craft, and they could study published feature articles. You could also safely rely on the information writing progression for guidance.

The challenge is that you have not yet channeled students into any one kind of writing. The work your students are doing, really, is that they are writing-to-learn. Some people call this freewriting, or journal writing (not personal journals, but research journals). And the truth is that this sort of writing doesn't usually see the light of day. Sure, people have studied Leonardo DaVinci's notebooks, and Katherine Paterson's, too. But you probably won't find it easy to rattle off the characteristics of good writing-to-learn.

You'll see that we solve this in two ways. During the minilesson, we suggest you teach at a very essential level. This session asks students to be sure that their writing is grounded in concrete specifics and that it grapples with big ideas. This is absolutely foundational not only to good writing but also to good thinking.

In his book, *Writing Tools*, Roy Peter Clark, vice president and senior scholar at the Poynter Institute, one of the most prestigious schools for journalists in the world, encourages writers to shift between writing with detail and writing in abstract generalization. He writes, "Good writers move up and down a ladder of language. At the bottom are bloody knives and rosary beads, wedding rings and baseball cards. At the top are words that reach for a higher meaning, words like *freedom* and *literacy*" (2008, 107). This "ladder of abstraction" was popularized by noted linguist and semanticist S. I. Hayakawa, and the

terms themselves illustrate its meaning. The first noun—*ladder*—is a tool that you can hold in your hands and climb upon. Clark writes, “You can do things with it. Put it against a tree and rescue your cat, Voodoo.” The second noun is *abstraction*. Our point, in citing this, is that one of the qualities of powerful writing-to-learn is a blend of concrete, specific detail and abstraction.

“This session asks students to be sure that their writing is grounded in concrete specifics and that it grapples with big ideas.”

The Common Core State Standards also call for *readers* to similarly practice these two habits of mind. Anchor standards one in reading asks students to read closely, mining the text for its specificity. Anchor standard two in reading points to the top of the ladder, expecting that readers will “Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development. . . .” If students work on writing this way, they will simultaneously strengthen their reading.

To help students write with big ideas, you will want to nudge them out of being grounded in just one specific example. Once

several examples are laid alongside each other, it is a small step for writers to compare one thing with another, and doing this helps the writer to move between concrete details and generalization.

Later in the session, in the mid-workshop teaching, you will add to the list of qualities of good writing about reading by suggesting that what kids are doing is thinking like literary analysts, like literary scholars, and to do this, it is helpful that they don the outfit of literary scholars. You, of course, say that in jest. You don’t actually want your students to stick pens behind their ears and to wear furrowed brows. But you do want them to role-play their way into being literary scholars, and that means that they talk the talk; they take on the lingo. We believe it is very important for students to use academic terminology such as *perspective* and *first-person narrator* and *increasing tension*, because people master any new language by using it in conversation and in writing.

Finally, the session ends in a share, where you remind students of the importance of transitional phrases as connectors between parts of their writing. Charts that should be familiar to them will help prompt them to think, talk, and write to make logical, smooth connections that help readers see how their writing fits together.

Online Resources

The digital resources are cross-referenced inside the books with this graphic. Wherever you see this CD disc icon in the book, the resource will be found in the Online Resources.



Additional Sample Sessions

Please note that additional sample sessions for each grade are available for review here:
http://hein.pub/UOS_6-8



MINILESSON

Thinking Big, Thinking Small

Ideas and Specifics

CONNECTION

Remind students that writers fasten words and thoughts onto the page, then pull back to reread and rethink. This is an essential part of writing becoming a tool for thought.

"You know a lot about the writing process, so you won't be surprised when I tell you that I hope that you do a writerly thing today: I hope you pull out your writing from your backpack or your desk, put it in front of you, and think about your thinking.

"The most powerful thing about writing (and especially about writing that aims to grow thoughts, to grow insights) is this. Usually when one thinks or talks, our words—indeed, our ideas—float away. But when we write, we pin those words, those thoughts, onto the page. We can put them in our pocket, and we can take them out later. We can set them in the center of the table and pull in close to think about those ideas. We can take the best of our thinking and amplify it, and we can take the worst of it and think, 'What's not working?' and start that part again. By thinking about our thinking, we can make it better.

"So right now, look through your reader's notebooks to find your recent thinking and jotting about reading, put your finger on a part you like, and then reread what you wrote, thinking, 'Did I do my best thinking work here?'" After a minute of silence, I added on, "Think about how you *could* revise even that part, if you wanted to do so."

✿ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to remind you that to make *anything* be your best writing or your best thinking, you need to pause to think, 'What's working?' and 'How can I make my best better?'" It helps to have a picture in mind of what you are trying to do. In this instance, it helps to have a picture in mind of what constitutes potent, vitally alive *writing about reading*."

◆ COACHING

Notice that revision is not postponed until the end of a bend or of a unit. It is through revision that writers lift the level of their writing.

It is vital that you talk about revision in very clear, simple words. The work is too important to let it get obscured in a fog of clichés.

Sometimes it is helpful to talk about the revisions one could make as if those revisions are simply possibilities, because then resistance to the hard work is less apt to intercede. That is why you ask, "What could you do, if you were going to revise?"

TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Channel students to study their own best work, as well as the student exemplars, ascertaining characteristics of potent writing about reading, and then sharing these with a partner while you listen in.

"Before we do anything else, will you revisit two things? Revisit your own writing, and then revisit the student exemplars that you studied yesterday. (We're going to circulate those pieces of writing among you as you sit here.) As you look at these pieces, think about what works in both the students' samples and in your own writing. With your partner, try to say aloud the bullet points you'd put on a list of 'Ways to Write Powerfully about Reading.' I pointed to chart paper containing just the title and the empty bullet points.

As the student exemplars circulated, I listened to students' analyses of the characteristics of effective writing about reading. Some looked at writing they'd done about "The Stolen Party," and many looked at an entry they'd made during writing time about an independent reading book.

Create an anchor chart that synthesizes what students have said and what you think, too. Highlight especially that good writing about reading contains specific text-based details and give examples.

Taking a marker in hand, I wrote, "Record important details" beside the first bullet, then started a list to expand further (quotes, significant specifics about the setting, names, objects that seem symbolic). As I wrote I explained, "What I am hearing you say is that your work will be powerful if it contains very precise specific details. That's true not just for fiction, but also for writing about reading."

Ways to Write Powerfully about Reading

- Record important details (quotes, setting, symbolic objects).

"Right now, point to three places in your entry where you've included very concrete specific details right from the text." I looked around as students did this, and said in a voiceover, "If your details aren't as specific as they could be, alter them. If your entry is about 'The Stolen Party,' your detail might include that Rosaura didn't just *tell* her mother to be quiet, she *yelled* at her, saying 'Shut up!' You might quote the text when it says, Rosaura 'didn't approve of the way her mother spoke.'

"These are details that vividly reveal Rosaura's feelings about her mother, as well as the central tension in this story. You are right that to write well about reading, you must think about and record the specific details."

Exemplar writing can be a key driver to support students in lifting the level of their work. In any endeavor, when the goal is to get better, studying work that has been judged successful helps to clarify what should be strived for.

Moving from a vision of exemplary work to clear descriptive language that can serve as a how-to text helps to give the experience of working with mentor texts traction. Examples help—your teaching needs detail just as your students' writing does.

The writer Richard Price once said, "The bigger the ideas, the smaller you write."

Highlight that good writing about reading also contains big ideas, linked to the details.

"But here is the thing. Did any of you say that to write well about reading, you also think about big ideas?" A number of students signaled that yes, they'd found that to be true. "What are some of the big ideas that you or the writer you are studying wrote about? Look on the page and see."

I gave students a minute to do this, and then gestured to some to name what they saw.

Bella said, "Rosaura grows up in this story. Sometimes growing up means learning that the world is meaner than you thought."

"Rosaura is angry at her mother!" Jamal chimed in. "But sometimes parents just want to protect their children."

I nodded. "I love how you came up with ideas by thinking about specific details in the text, but you framed those ideas in ways that are *not* specific to the text. Your ideas could be true—are true—for a lot of characters and people, not just for the characters in this story.

"Remember last year, when you studied 'Raymond's Run,' you learned that it helps to think, 'In what ways does this character learn things that others need to learn?' You talked about universal lessons, universal themes that you were noticing in the text, lessons and themes that didn't just apply to *this* character and *this* text, but that also hold true in the world at large. We're going to continue to do that same kind of work as seventh-graders, talking and writing about our reading. There are some sentence prompts that may help you do this. Some of these may look familiar to you, while some may seem new. Either way, they can be helpful tools when you are thinking and writing about the big ideas in your texts."

Writing to Think about a Message or a Theme

- I learned from (the character, the event) that in life it is important to . . .
- Even if . . . you should . . .
- This story teaches us not only about . . . but also about . . .
- When I first read this story I thought it was just about . . . but now that I think more deeply about it, I realize that it is really about . . .
- Something that's true in this story that's also true in the world is . . .
- (A character) shows/teaches/demonstrates that . . .

When you remind students about a skill they learned in a previous year, be specific about your reminder to help refresh their memories. In this example, we remind students about what they learned about themes in The Literary Essay: From Character to Compare/Contrast unit from sixth grade.

Summarize by pointing out the importance of writing at both ends of the ladder of abstraction, asking students to note where they are most comfortable, encouraging them to learn to shift.

"So powerful writing about reading has two opposites: details, lots of them, and also a big idea or two, usually stated in a way that makes it relevant to people everywhere." I added this to the anchor chart. "Some people say that for writing about reading to be really powerful, it is important for it to represent both ends of what they refer to as 'the ladder of abstraction.' To understand that term a well-known author and educator Roy Peter Clark has said we should think about the two nouns it contains. *Ladder* is an object we can hold, see, and climb. You can do things with it, rest it on the ground, lean it against a tree and rescue your cat with it. The second word, *abstraction*, is something you cannot hold, see, or climb, and there is no concrete example to explain it—it appeals to the intellect. To sum it up, it's the ladder of abstraction—that marvelous juxtaposition of tiny, significant details and big, abstract ideas—that makes writing about reading work."

- Record important details (quotes, setting, symbolic objects).
- Explore big ideas/themes (linked to details).

LINK

Channel students to reflect on whether their writing tends to err toward too concrete or too abstract, and encourage them to include both ends of the spectrum.

"Look at your writing and think for a minute. Do you tend to write more at the top of the ladder—writing about things like grief or loss or peer pressure—or do you tend to write more at the bottom of the ladder—writing about what the characters do and say? Whichever you do the most, you are going to want to shift away from that a bit, so your writing shifts as well—from abstract, general, universal, to concrete, specific, this text, and then back to abstract, general, and so forth. That is what writers do, and that is what you can do in your writing forever. Think about that as you get started today."

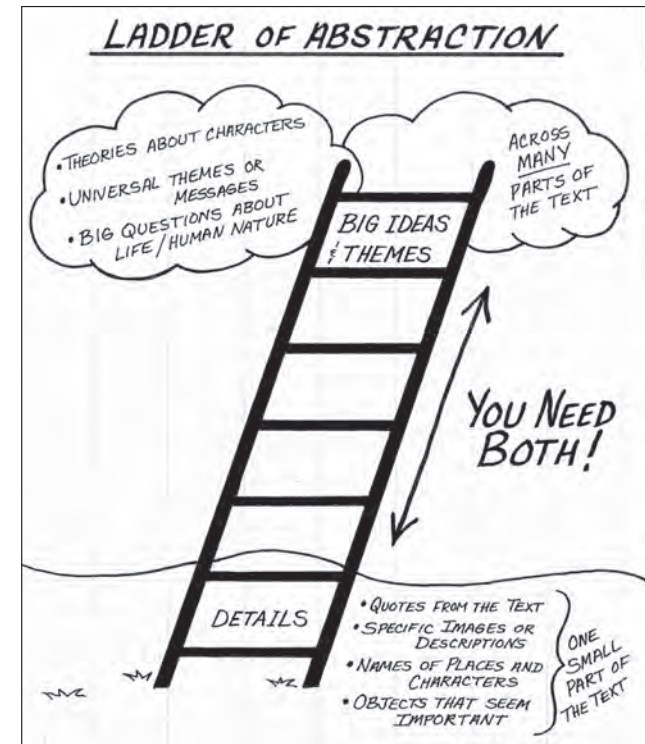


FIG. 3-1 This is one teacher's effort to show the importance of writing at both ends of the ladder of abstraction.

Actually, anyone writing about the ladder of abstraction will suggest that the ratio of writing needs to be something like 9:1, concrete:abstract. The goal is not an equal distribution, but a ratio that ensures that students are moving between the specific and the general, the concrete and the abstract.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Supporting Students' Revisions, Considering the Ladder of Abstraction

TODAY'S LESSON asked students to look at their writing through the lens of the ladder of abstraction. Now is your chance to do the same: to teach into groups of students whose writing is too stuck to literal details to be truly interpretive or into groups of students whose writing is too sweeping and vague, without an attention to the weird and wonderful details that make literature believable.

Look over students' shoulders to notice the telltale signs of writing that is too literal, which is apt to mean too close to the text. Some students may be listing quote after quote, with very little of their own thinking to link these to theories or other interpretations. Some may have diagrams that include very literal plot elements with little of their own connective writing to make more than just summary statements.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING Using Academic Language for More Powerful Writing about Reading

"Writers, can I have your attention? As I peek at the work that many of you are doing, I am struck by a handful of you who are thinking not just about *what* you think as you move between specific details and big ideas, and not just about *how* you want to organize that thinking on the page, but about how you want your thinking to *sound*. A few of you are using the language of a literary expert, which makes whatever you put on the page sound smarter, more professional, more trustworthy—because it is more precisely what you want to say. For example, you talked about the 'central tension' in 'The Stolen Party' and 'the setting.' Similarly, when Sahil was writing about his book, he reached to use precise academic language, so he used terms like *narrator*, instead of just saying, *the talker*; *conclusion*, instead of just *the ending*; *setting* instead of just *the place*. All of you, take a moment to skim what you've written today and look for any academic language that you used—or places where you could insert the most precise literary terms. Then talk briefly with your partner and start a list of other academic language you know."

After about a minute, I called the class back together. "Writers, remember, whenever you write on a particular topic, you want to reveal to the reader that you are an expert, and one way to do that is to use the language associated with the topic. When you are writing or talking about biology, you use the technical, academic vocabulary

of that discipline, like *catalyst* or *mitosis*. When expressing your thinking about history, you speak and write in the language of historians, using terms like *feudalism* or *secession*. The same holds true when you are sharing your thoughts about reading. So from now on, whenever you write about reading, use academic language for literature. Here's a short list of words you should all know and use. I'm sure some of you have additional academic language on the list you just made with your partner, and you should certainly use those words, as well. You might start by quickly revising today's writing about reading before you write more. I'm going to add this idea to our anchor chart as well."

Academic Language

- Instead of *storyteller*, use *narrator*
- Instead of *people*, use *characters*, *protagonist*, or *antagonist*
- Instead of *problem*, use *conflict*
- Instead of *plot*, discuss the *story arc*: *rising action*, *climax*/
turning point, *falling action*
- Instead of *ending*, use *resolution*

During today's independent writing time, I sat down next to Emma to ask her about the Venn diagram she had drawn, as well as the writing that accompanied it. I had noticed that while the Venn diagram held some promise, because it would force some analytic, comparative thinking, the writing itself was very cursory. I pulled my stool up next to her, ready to confer.

"Hi Emma. I noticed your entry, your comparison of 'Jane at home' and 'Jane on strike.' Can you tell me a little bit about what you're doing here? What your thinking is and how you are illustrating and explaining it in your entry?"

Emma looked up from her work. "Well, I'm just noticing that Jane is part of these two different worlds. So I was trying to show how those worlds are really different, but she is really thinking about the factory all the time—in her world and the world of the strike and the factory."

I asked a follow-up question: "How else have you been writing about this book? How does Jane fit into the bigger picture of your thinking about this novel?"

Emma showed me another page, where she had drawn a web, with "Determination" in the center, and spokes leading to each of the three major characters: Jane, Bella, and Yetta. I complimented Emma on her analytic thinking, reframing it just a bit to highlight the author's craft that was behind Jane's characterization.

"This is really getting at some interesting character development in *Uprising*. You're pointing out that the author shows the reader that there are two worlds in this story—the world of the rich and the world of the workers. Your web shows how all the characters connect, and your diagram shows how Jane is a complicated character—she is connected to both worlds. I think you're ready to write longer about this. What do you think?"

Emma nodded, and I continued. "You can use your writing about reading to analyze how all of these characters teach the reader about how complicated this time period was. It often helps to start by naming a big issue. Remember that ladder of abstraction." I pointed to the chart. "If you start at the top, for this book *Uprising*, what would you say is one really big issue in this book?"

Emma thought for a minute, then said, "Well, the strike, of course. But I think more than just that—it's that the workers were not being treated fairly, and so there was a rebellion, but that upset the people who were in power."

Revised Writing
It all started with a whisper. A slow spreading of rebellion, yet burning everything in the shirtwaist factories in its path. And Yetta, one of the three major protagonists in the story and a shirtwaist worker herself, was at the center of it all with her sister, Rachel. Yet she realizes that even Rachel has a breaking point when flames become too large to tame ("I'm going to marry Mr. Cohen" ~Pg 184).
On the other hand, Jane, another major protagonist, was an outsider. All her father's riches from his factory could not buy her a spot in the circle of Triangle girls, since society would not allow it ("Jane didn't, not really. But there was something about these girls spilling out from the Triangle Waist factory, something she couldn't quite name but almost envied" ~Pg 40). Could not allow it, because New York City would be in chaos, the social scale (which she was at the top of, almost as high as Vanderbilt) disrupted, and even maimed if others of high society followed in her suit. Jane was caught between two worlds, but like Yetta and Bella (the last of the three major protagonist) she was determined to light the necessary spark. All she needed was a match.

FIG. 3-2 Emma revises her writing to analyze how the characters in *Uprising* are connected to the Triangle Shirtwaist factory strike.

"Okay, great. So then the next question to ask yourself is 'How do the different parts of this book—in this case, you're thinking about different characters—how do the different parts fit into the big idea?' You can write long to explain that and use specific examples so your writing is also grounded in the details the author chose. Can you try some of that writing now, and I'll come back in a bit to check in?"

Emma nodded again, then immediately started writing under her diagram. By the time I had returned, she had written two paragraphs (see Figure 3–2), analyzing how each of the three major protagonists (She revised her use of the word *character* after the mid-workshop teaching!) connects to the central issue of the book: the strike. This work would serve her well, because it showed her pushing to synthesize across more of the text for her interpretive work, without losing the specificity of how different characters (protagonists!) offer different perspectives. I complimented her on these successes and on the use of quotations to ground her thinking in the text.

Brooklyn Bridge

Something that is true in this story that's also true in the world is that sometimes being a teenager can be hard and it isn't always easy. Parents can treat you like a young adult and it can overwhelm someone. You get more responsibilities. Joseph had to work for his family and he didn't like being treated as an adult. He would ask his parents for money but his parents would say no. Teens can relate because they also have a lot of responsibilities like taking care of younger siblings. At the end Joseph realized that he should be grateful for his little brother. He changed after his family reunited at Coney Island.

FIG. 3–3 Marcus writes to explain a theme in *Brooklyn Bridge*.



SHARE

Using Transitions to Link and Extend Information

Celebrate that writers are lifting the level of their work. Then channel them to work with a partner to notice what they are and are not yet doing, so they can set a goal for homework.

"Writers, by now, most of you are making your writing about reading more powerful than ever! I continue to be awed by your creativity—and by the way you are moving up and down the ladder of abstraction between big ideas and small details. Would you and your partner look together at one of your entries?" I waited till they'd chosen one, putting it between them. "Could you point to two or three places where you explored a big idea *and* two or three places where you recorded important details from your story in connection with that idea? Go!"

As students talked, I took note of a few students who had mostly recorded details without accompanying thoughts and a few who had strayed far from the text. I knew I'd want to follow up with both groups. I noticed a student who had used transitional words and phrases well, so I could highlight that work for the class.

"Writers, would you signal thumbs up if you've realized you can generate more big ideas off the specific details from your story? Okay, now (on the other hand) signal thumbs down if you've realized that you live in the land of ideas but could support those ideas more by collecting and organizing details from your story.

"If you noticed either, jot a note at the top of the next blank page, on the page you'll be working on for homework tonight."

Highlight the importance of using transitional words and phrases to link information. Direct students to scan their own writing for examples and to brainstorm a list of other options with their partners.

"As you talked with your partners, I noticed some of you use transitional words and phrases to connect the parts of your entries, including connecting your big ideas and important details. When you wrote fiction, transitions signaled changes in time and place. When you write information and also opinion texts, transitions link information and ideas. Scan your same page to see whether transitions are linking information and ideas."

While students talked, I jotted a list of transitional words and phrases. "If you need more transitions, make a note to use more transitional words and phrases. I've added this learning to our anchor chart.

- Record important details (quotes, setting, symbolic objects).
- Explore big ideas/themes (linked to details).
- **Use academic language (narrator, protagonist, resolution).**

"Feel free to jot some of these transitional phrases into your notebook if you think they might help you move between big ideas and smaller textual details. These phrases may be useful when you do your homework."

Transitions

To add

in addition

furthermore

also

To suggest examples

for example

for instance

specifically

To suggest a contrast

on the other hand

in contrast

unlike

To show relationships of cause and effect

therefore

consequently

because of

as a result

SESSION 3 HOMEWORK

SETTING A GOAL TO WORK TOWARD

"For tonight, make sure that you have set a goal for your homework. If you don't yet have a goal, review the anchor chart now and choose something to work toward tonight. Maybe you'll use more academic language, or maybe you'll incorporate more details directly from the text into your entries. Whatever your goal or goals, you should continue to read—another twenty-five pages or so—and then you'll write about your reading, aiming to do whatever you wrote at the top of your notebook page."

Session 4

Explaining Thinking



THINK OF THIS SESSION THIS WAY. In a typical unit of study, you start the unit off by teaching students strategies for generating the new kind of writing. For example, in a narrative unit you might teach students that they can map places that have mattered to them and use that map to recall true stories. In that session of the narrative unit, a big part of your teaching comes from the ensuing model of your narrative entry. In a sense, you did parallel teaching during the first two sessions of the current unit, and again, the power of that teaching came as much from the examples that gave students an image of what writing about reading can be like as from the discussion on how to generate those entries.

To continue in a narrative unit, after students generate a handful of entries, the focus of your teaching shifts, and now you teach ways in which students can lift the level of those entries. You might teach focus, detail, storytelling rather than summarizing, but in any case, the point is that students will continue generating entries, and you'll meanwhile aim to lift the level of those entries by teaching qualities of writing specific to the genre that might be under study.

This session and the ones before and after it are part of that tradition. Your goal is to lift the level of students' writing about reading, doing so while they are also continuing to do more of this work. Your goal eventually will be for students to have a rich compost of writing out of which they will also make something for publication. And today you will give students a vision of what that will look like, as a way to encourage them to write about a book they can commit to, and as a rationale for writing to make sense to someone other than themselves.

In just a few days, you will invite your seventh-graders to begin planning a companion book. More specifics on this are in the prelude to that session, and you won't want to bog your writers down with too many details today: the point is to let them know that writing about reading can be informational—it's more than just literary essay—and that they will be working toward a book-length publication that will have chapters, not unlike the research-based informational books that they wrote in sixth grade. This time, the "topic"

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers use freewriting to explain their big ideas so that others can grasp their thinking. You'll also let students know that one way writers write about reading is to create informational companion books.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Samples of student notebook pages showing creative sketches, maps, or charts that leave the reader unclear about what the writer was really thinking (see Connection)
- ✓ Students' reader's notebooks (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ From your own reader's notebook, a page that doesn't really explain your thinking (see Teaching)
- ✓ "Explain Your Thinking" chart (see Teaching)
- ✓ "Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading" anchor chart (see Link and Share)
- ✓ Example(s) of companion books or images of covers and typed up excerpts of table of contents to display (companion books based on popular YA novels, TV shows, or movies). We refer to *The Hunger Games Companion: The Unauthorized Guide to the Series*, by Lois H. Gresh, for educational purposes only (see Mid-Workshop Teaching).
- ✓ Excerpts about using evidence from sixth-grade literary essay charts: "How to Write a Theme-Based Literary Essay" and "Ways to Analyze Evidence" (see Share)
- ✓ "Ways to Cite Evidence from a Text" chart, plus copied slips of this chart with examples to hand out to students (see Share)
- ✓ By the end of this session, students should ideally be about halfway through reading their books so they can finish them by the end of this bend.

of their informational writing will be the books they're reading. The instruction today will move students toward more elaborated explanatory writing, a must for making sense to an audience.

"Today you will move your students from using their notebooks to sketch, chart, and jot toward using them to develop and explain their thinking in paragraphs and pages of writing."

Of course, it will be your decision whether the lesson we have chosen to teach is actually the lesson that your students most need. It is entirely conceivable that when you look over your students' work, you will decide other points entirely are required. But our experience has shown that many students struggle to capture their ideas on the page, and this session aims to help them do this. We're aiming, also, to correct any imbalance, knowing that sometimes the invitation to chart, sketch, diagram, and list can mean that students don't actually produce a lot of writing. This unit is embedded not in the reading classroom but in the writing workshop. You should feel free to require two pages a day of writing about reading,

if it seems that requiring volume is a precondition for getting that volume. Today, then, you will move your students from using their notebooks to sketch, chart, and jot, toward using them to develop and explain their thinking in paragraphs and pages of writing.

As part of this, you'll also teach students that thoughtful readers don't just write about their reading; they also reread that writing, thinking about how their responses to the book can angle them to read on a bit differently, tracking ideas, pursuing questions. Then too, rereading their own writing can enable a student to think between one jotting and another, one chapter or one aspect of the novel and another.

As students work to incorporate more of the text in their thinking (which you will want them to do!), they will inevitably find it awkward to do so. During the share, you'll remind students that they should be carrying forward the work they practiced in sixth grade to gracefully embed evidence within body paragraphs, sharing again some transitional phrases that help. In addition, you'll introduce a protocol for citing the evidence they include. Although using a specific citation style is not required until high school, here we recommend teaching students a simple APA style of in-text citation when using evidence from a book. You will follow up on this in the next unit of study in research-based argument writing, when students will likely cite from numerous sources and media: you'll be glad you introduced it here so that the concept will not be new, and you'll be free to show them additional formatting norms for different text types.



MINILESSON

Explaining Thinking

CONNECTION

Point out that when students talk about their writing, they have insightful ideas—but those ideas often don't get captured on the page. Illustrate by contrasting a student's writing with his talking about a text.

"Writers, last night you worked toward a goal or two from our anchor chart, something that you chose for yourself. I've also been researching your work. I've been looking at your notebook pages and listening to you talk about them in your partnerships and clubs. You know, I've discovered something interesting in all of this research. And that is . . . you often say insightful ideas when you are explaining your notebook pages. But then when I look at the page, I find that thinking often isn't captured in your writing.

"Let me show you what I mean. Here's a notebook page from one reader." (See Figure 4–1.)

"It's kind of cool and mysterious, isn't it? But can you tell that A.J. is on fire with really potent, powerful ideas? What ideas do you see here?" I gave students a minute to think, and then added, "I'll give you a hint. These notes are about *Radiance*. So now, see if you can figure out the thinking work this writer seems to be doing." Again, I left a long moment of silence, and while students thought about this question, I did as well.

"I actually happen to know the thinking that was going on, because I listened into A.J.'s conversation with his partner. A.J. was interested in exploring the Radiant Boy's complicated character. He used arrows around the outside of his diagram to show that he thinks the Radiant Boy is turning good. Brilliant, right? But notice that A.J.'s thinking isn't captured in his writing about reading. There isn't any *writing* that expands or explains his big idea. The moves to develop that thinking are right here in this really creative diagram—but the thinking itself isn't explained or developed.

"A.J. needs to go a step farther and not just collect information that can help him grow ideas. He also needs to write to grow and explain those ideas. And to do that writing, it will help if he takes just a second before he starts writing and ask, 'How will my writing about this go? What kind of writing will it be?' A.J. decided that he should probably write a question that he has, then answer that question, then write another question, and write another answer."

◆ COACHING

You can use the work from any one of your students instead of this work, and do so in a way to recruit your own students' engagement. But if your students' work is not yet close to the caliber that you want, you can borrow the work we've included here or other samples from the CD-ROM. Be sure you get in the habit of duplicating your students' best work and saving it from year to year, because middle-schoolers are happier learning from the work of their peers than from your work!

You'll note that there is some important new instruction embedded in this connection. It could actually be an entirely new session. You'll find that one of the most important ways you can lift the level of your students' writing is to teach for transfer. It is a big deal to teach students to pause before they write almost anything and to think, "What kind of writing am I making? What do I know about how to do that kind of writing well?" It is important that students can answer, "I'm writing-to-learn" or "I'm freewriting," because sometimes a person has absolutely no clue about the shape that writing will take. But certainly there are other times when the writer of entries about books will think, "I'm sort of writing an essay," or "I'm retelling the story, so this will be a story, really," or "I'm doing some all-about writing."

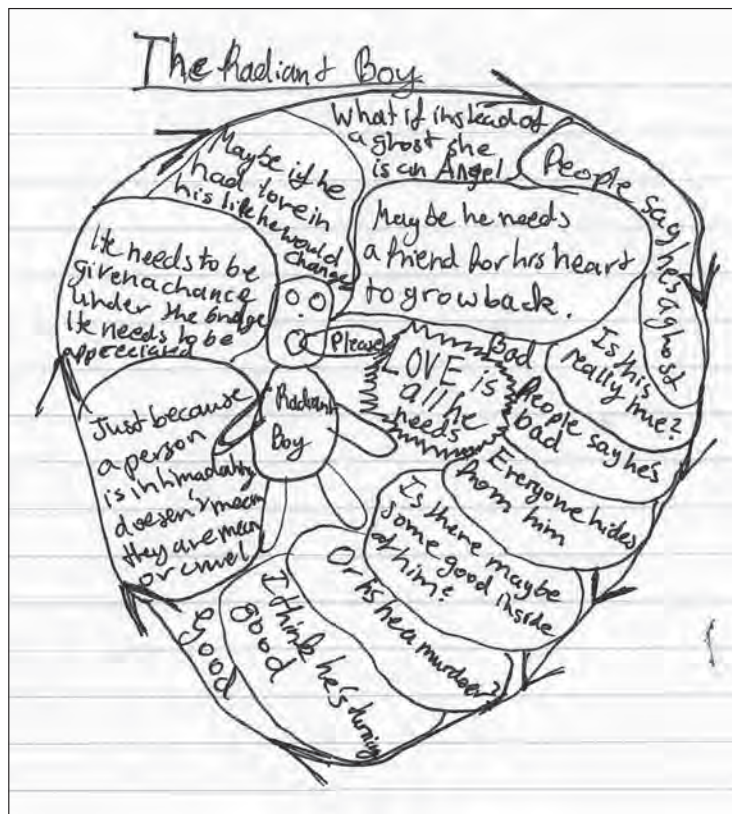


FIG. 4-1 A.J. made a chart to track his thinking about *Radiance*, by Alyson Noël.

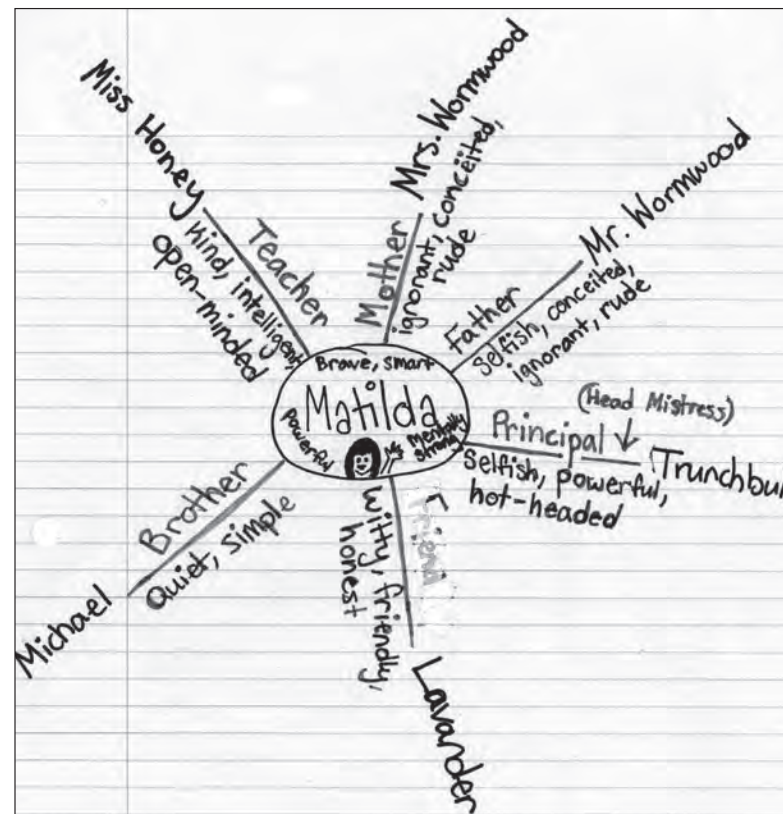



FIG. 4-2 Maggie uses a web to show her thinking about *Matilda*, by Roald Dahl. 

Channel students to consider the discrepancy between a second student's writing and talking about a text.

"Let's look at another example, quickly. Here's Maggie's notebook page about *Matilda*. Quick, tell your partner, what ideas do you think Maggie might be developing here?"

I listened in for a moment and then gathered students' attention. "Many of you seem to think this page is leading to some intriguing ideas about the different characters in Matilda's life. Some of you started talking about how Matilda feels about these different people and why they matter. Here's the thing, though. You can't do that kind of comparison thinking, because looking at this page, you don't really *know* this writer's big thinking yet. Maggie's clearly got a hunch in mind. But what is it? We want to know!

This second example is entirely optional. Become accustomed to noting parts of a mini-lesson that can be deleted if time is short.

"Again, Maggie needs to do some extended writing, and to do that, she first needs to think, 'What is my big idea here?' And then she needs to ask herself, 'How can I use freewriting to explain my idea so that it is clear to my readers?'"

✿ **Name the teaching point.**

"Writers, today I want to teach you that when writing about reading, you should expect that you will come to new ideas. As you write, be sure that your thinking and big ideas are explained and developed. Writers can use freewriting to explain their big ideas so that others can grasp their thinking."

TEACHING

Channel students to find a page where they haven't yet explained their thinking. Meanwhile, do the same to a page from your own notebook.

"Let's try some of this work together. First, can you look across your notebook and find a page or two where you could have explained your thinking more than you did? It could be a page where you were sketching or charting or writing Post-its and you didn't yet have a chance to write long. When you find a page like that, give a nod."

I waited as students flipped through their pages, settling on a chart, a sketch, or a list of ideas, and signaled to me.

Tell students about the thinking you did while creating a sketch or chart, making sure that thinking is not yet on the page.

Before every student was ready, I continued. "I've gotten to a page where I did *much* less writing than usual. In fact mine is mostly just two drawings! Look!" I put my notebook on the document camera, enlarging the page so the class could follow along. "Let's think about ways that I can explain my thinking so that others can follow it. I'll try first, and then I'm hoping each of you will try with your own writing as well."

"So, I think the first step is to remind myself of what I was on about when I made this page. Look at your page for just a second, and ask yourself that question: 'What was I thinking when I made this page?'"

I gave students a half-minute of silence, and then said, "Next, I need to check whether I've already captured some of my thoughts on the page. Listen as I explain and check out whether my big ideas are actually captured onto the page."

"Okay, so I've started reading *War Horse*, a novel written from the perspective of a horse that was ridden into many battles during World War I. Last night when I finished reading the beginning, I thought how peaceful it was for the horse before the war, and then I was thinking about how I learned that horses suffer a lot in battle and they get wild. I started getting the idea that *War Horse* shows not just how horses get hurt, but how there are other effects people don't even think about. Animals get hurt, and innocent people who are just living there get hurt, too. War causes a lot of suffering to innocents. That could be one of my big ideas."

"I got all my thinking onto the page. See, I made these two drawings, and I didn't just stop with that, I jotted some notes, with page numbers, so people would know my thought:

On the farm the horse is peaceful and happy

- he works hard
- he's safe
- people love him

In the battle there are shells and grenades

- he's never safe
- he gets wounded
- everything is different

You'll notice that we often exaggerate when we want to make a point. Clearly these cryptic notes don't capture the thinking!



FIG. 4-3 A teacher made drawings and jotted notes as she read *War Horse*, by Michael Murpurgo. 🐾

I looked up from my pages and said, in feigned confidence, “So from looking at my notebook entries, you can tell I was thinking all that, right?”

I looked out at a sea of shaking heads.

Demonstrate that once you realize you’ve thought or discussed more than you’ve captured on the page, you return to the page and add more thinking.

“When that happens, when I realize I haven’t captured my thinking on the page, I use that strategy of asking, ‘What new ideas am I forming?’ Then I can use writing to follow ideas as they come to me, and also to make sure others can follow the path of my thinking. As I write, it will be almost as if I am saying my new thinking aloud to a writing partner.”

I picked up my notebook, flipped to a fresh page, and started scrawling, saying aloud the thoughts as I recorded them:

The reason I drew the horse is that the horse shows how much suffering war causes.

I paused as if thinking, looking back at my first drawing and putting my finger on it.

At the beginning of the story, he lives an idyllic life on the farm. I surrounded him with flowers to show all good. I was sort of making him be a symbol of goodness, of innocence, really.

When the war comes, there aren’t flowers anymore, just shells and grenades, and he is hurt. Not just physically, but his spirit is hurt. It’s like war changes everything.

“Writers, here’s the thing. Until I pushed myself to really explain my thinking, I just had some vague ideas. Writing forced me not only to capture my thinking, but also to develop new thinking as well.”

Recap the steps you just followed and the discoveries you made.

I closed my notebook. “Writers, so far, you’ve been mostly writing brief notes to save time for reading. It makes sense to sometimes write cryptic notes so that you can keep reading on in a book. But in the end, the important thing about your reading is not the fact that words flood into your eyes and through you. Instead, the important thing about your reading is that you take the words and ideas and stories and experiences that are there on the page, and you make something of them that adds up, that matters to you, that stays with you.

“It is because your response to reading is every bit as important as the reading itself, we moved writing about reading into writing time. And I’m going to ask you to do as much writing in your reading notebook over the next two weeks as you ever did when you were writing fiction stories or writing personal narrative or writing essays about activists. That is, aim to write at least a page and a half or two pages a day, just like you were doing earlier this year.

You need to write fast, so you may just pretend to write. Your notebook will be tipped toward you, out of view anyhow. If it helps, you can record what you are supposedly writing onto the page beforehand and sneak a quick peek at it as you “scrawl” your thoughts.

You’ll notice that although there is a lot of higher-level thinking here, there is also a rambling quality to this. I’m not trying to produce perfect “boxes and bullets” ideas and evidence. I am emphasizing instead the process of unpacking thinking and showing that talking can be a way to rehearse elaboration.

In Making Meaning with Text (2005), Louise Rosenblatt writes: “books do not simply happen to people. People also happen to books. A story or poem or play is merely ink spots on paper until a reader transforms them . . .” (62). Writing can be a key driver of this transformative process.

"Continue jotting, charting, sketching both details and big ideas as you read, but will you also make sure that you are explaining your thinking as well? To do that, remember, you can follow the same steps that I've followed." I pointed toward the chart I had made earlier.

Explain Your Thinking

1. Study one of your responses to reading, conjuring up as much of the thinking as possible.
2. Ask, "Did I make that thinking clear on the page?"
3. If you didn't, then ask yourself, "What new thinking is this work leading me to?" and write as if you are explaining your thinking to someone.
4. Expect your thinking to develop as you write.

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Nudge writers to get started on this, first by one partner explaining his thinking behind a response to reading. Encourage the listening partner to channel her classmate into writing.

"Why don't you get started right now? Look again at that page, asking that question, 'What new thinking did this lead to?'"

I gave the students a minute to do this. "Partner 1, explain your thinking to Partner 2. Push yourself to say a whole paragraph of thought. Go!"

I pulled alongside Griffin, who looked over the timeline he had been making of critical moments in *Divergent*. After a little thought, he started explaining, "The thing is, a lot of stuff happens really quickly in *Divergent*. Tris leaves her family, she chooses Dauntless as her faction, she is the first to make the jump in their first test, and I think that actually, each of these things is important because . . . well, because they're all scary events. No, maybe it's more that they're scary and Tris does them anyway. So you find out that she's actually really tough, much tougher than people think."

Listening, I waited to see if Griffin's partner would encourage him to write his ideas onto the page. When he didn't, I whispered a nudge to him, then moved on, prompting other partners to say, "You should write that!" I listened in a few more moments and then interrupted their explanations.

As you circulate, take note of which students say their ideas with more fluency than you suspect they will write them. By middle school, there are often quite a few students who have learned to talk well about books, but they don't show the same fluency when they put their ideas in writing. They need a lot of practice, and they may also need some tools for using their talk to elevate their writing. You can tackle that work in small groups.

LINK

Segue students into quickly writing down their thinking as a coherent explanation.

"Writers, you have all these insightful ideas! There is so much more thinking in the air of this room than has been made visible so far! Look, I wrote a point summarizing what you've been doing and added it to our anchor chart."

Ways to Write Powerfully about Reading

- *Record important details (quotes, setting, symbolic objects).*
- *Explore big ideas/themes (linked to details).*
- *Use academic language (narrator, protagonist, resolution).*
- **Explain your thinking (write long to clarify).**

"Quick, before we leave the meeting area, find a place where you can write your explanation. Write on a nearby page, or if you need a giant Post-it, I've got some. Go from writing short to writing long. Explain your thinking. Get started!"





CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Using Small-Group Instruction and Tools to Elevate Idea-Based Writing

IN YESTERDAY'S SHARE, you took note of two groups of students—the ones who tend to record details without using them as a jumping off place for their own thinking and the ones who live in the land of ideas without grounding them in text details. Today you will probably want to continue to work with both of these two groups of

students. With each, you might highlight how ideas and details work like a braid, woven together on the page. Some students might benefit from a visual, in which case, you could direct them to highlight or underline their ideas in one color and their details in another so as to notice whether one or the other dominates the page.

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING Introducing Companion Books

"Writers, as you may know, I'm obsessed with *The Hunger Games*. Recently, I reread *Catching Fire* just so it would be fresh in my mind when the new movie came out. Then last week, a friend of mine who knows how I feel about *The Hunger Games* asked me what I thought about the companion book to the series. I looked at her and asked, 'What are you talking about?' She looked at me like I had two heads and said, 'You don't know about this? There's an unauthorized companion book—and it's awesome!'

"So of course, I went home and looked it up on Amazon, and sure enough, there it was." I held up my copy of *The Hunger Games Companion: The Unauthorized Guide to the Series*, by Lois H. Gresh.

I flipped open the book. "Look at the table of contents. The chapters look incredible!"

I revealed a partial list of these chapters.

The Hunger Games Trilogy: Surviving the End of the World

Weapons: How Tributes Survive

Medicines and Poisons: Simple and Complex

Survival Instincts and Strategies: Does Katniss Know What She's Doing?

"It's amazing! And you know what? This is kind of like what you've all been doing lately! The writing you are doing could become a companion book to the book (or to the series) that you're reading.

"There are companion books to many popular series—books and TV shows!"

I showed a few more covers as examples.

A Friday Night Lights Companion, edited by Leah Wilson

The World of Downton Abbey, by Jessica Fellowes

Filled with Glee: The Unauthorized Glee Companion, edited by Leah Wilson

I showed these books, because I had heard my students talking about these shows, but there are so many companion books out there, I could have chosen others to match my students' interests.

"For this unit, you will soon be writing your own companion books, and in a few days, to prepare for that, you'll start planning your books, the way you always plan before drafting. But today, I wanted to let you know that you will be publishing your writing about reading. You will have an audience! This gives you all the more reason to explain your thinking. As you keep writing, picture your audience: someone who has also read or will read the book you're writing about—but who hasn't had your thoughts and insights yet."

For those who struggle to generate ideas, you might teach the types of details that often lead to worthwhile thinking. For example, readers often linger at points of tension and change in a story, taking careful note in such moments of characters' actions, feelings, inner thinking, the choices they make, and how they interact with others. From there, readers often use prompts like the following to generate ideas about the significance of such details and moments:

- *This makes me think . . . because . . .*
- *Maybe . . . Or maybe . . .*
- *I used to think . . . but now I'm realizing . . .*

Students who generate ideas but fail to stay connected with the text itself, might benefit from revising an entry: You can coach them to cite or summarize parts of the text that act as evidence for each line of thinking. Perhaps you'll give them sentence starters like:

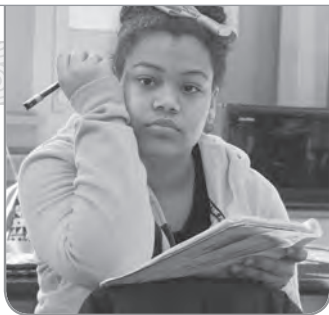
- *For example, in the beginning, the reader sees . . .*
- *When the character says, "____," this shows that . . .*
- *On page . . . the author writes . . . This demonstrates (reveals, illustrates) . . .*

In addition to pulling groups of students who need additional support with the ladder of abstraction, so too might you pull a small group of students who would benefit from follow-up with academic language. You might photocopy ahead of time the list of academic language you charted with the class earlier in the unit, so you can leave each student with an individual copy. You could coach them to reread past entries, chart in hand, looking for places where they could simply swap out one word for another. Send them back to their seats with the expectation that they will incorporate language from the chart as they compose new entries.

Then, too, as you listen and watch your kids at work, it's somewhat inevitable that you will find some students who continue to talk with much more fluency than they write. It won't always be your lower-level readers who wax eloquently when talking and then are very abbreviated on the page. Sometimes you'll have an avid reader who reads fast, talks about books wisely, and yet hates to stop and write, finding the enterprise of putting thoughts into print frustrating. You might find yourself tempted to let your avid readers read up a storm, without pausing to write. Don't think you are doing these students any favors if you free them from the expectation that they'll write about their reading. Throughout life, they will be asked to use writing as a tool for organizing and expressing their ideas, and the truth is that if one generates a lot of thoughts, it is harder to corral those thoughts and write them down. So readers whose thinking is rapid and multifaceted do need experience trying to pin down thoughts that aren't easily funneled into words on the page.

You might decide it would help a student who thinks quickly and writes laboriously if you become that student's scribe for a bit. Ask the student to talk aloud, telling you his thoughts about a text, and then write like the wind, capturing everything onto the page. Then pass that page to the student. "These are your thoughts. This is what you just dictated to me."

There are also digital tools—including iPhones, iPads, and any smart device—that can help this kind of writer. Ask a student to explain her thinking, and meanwhile record the audio. Then let her play back the recorded conversation bit by bit, transcribing it into a notebook. Alternatively, you might try Dragon Dictation, or one of the many free transcribing apps that are available. These apps transcribe what writers say, then give them a chance to go back and edit their writing. For some students, this might become the way they write their papers in high school and college—and they can start figuring this out now with you.



SHARE

Finding, Analyzing, and Citing Evidence to Support Ideas

Remind students to tap into what they already know: how to include evidence to support ideas and how to analyze evidence and come up with their own ideas. Then show them a simple way to include a citation in their writing.

"Writers, do you remember all the deep work you did in the literary essay unit last year? You learned how to notice details, and you wrote to explore 'Why this detail?' You also searched for the most compelling evidence to support your claims, and then you wove that strong evidence into your essays. Here is part of the anchor chart from the literary essay unit. Looks familiar, right?"

- Search for the most compelling evidence that can support the claim, then add it to the essay like this:
 - Quote some parts of the text
 - Story-tell other parts
 - Summarize yet other parts

"You already have this knowledge stored in your brains and in your writing muscles, so go ahead and activate it. This knowledge is useful for so many kinds of writing—including what you are doing right now. So you have to do these basic things: find strong evidence, then think about the evidence, and include the evidence and your own thoughts in your writing. If you get stuck on how to analyze evidence, take a look at this chart from the literary essay unit."

"Now I want to give you one more tip that may be new to some of you. When you provide evidence in your writing, it's a good idea to let your readers know where the evidence came from. Here's a simple way to cite evidence from a book." I pointed to what I'd written earlier on chart paper.

Ways to Analyze Evidence

This shows... because...

It is important to notice...

— means —, therefore —

This is significant because...

Even though... (the character)...

Ways to Cite Evidence from a Text

After a detail

Early in the first book in *The Hunger Games* series, we learn that most citizens don't own weapons, but if they did, they would probably poach for their food. (Collins, 2008, p. 5)

After a quotation

Katniss, the narrator, says that "Even though trespassing in the woods is illegal and poaching carries the severest of penalties, more people would risk it if they had weapons." (Collins 2008, 5)

"Notice that the author's name, followed by a comma, followed by the year the book was published are included in parentheses right after the quote or after the detail from the book. People call that APA style because it comes from the American Psychological Association. I have copies of these examples for you to tape into your notebooks and refer to for homework tonight, and whenever you cite from a text.

"I'm also going to weave citing evidence into our anchor chart," I said, inserting words on the chart.

Ways to Write Powerfully about Reading

- Record **and cite**—important details (quotes, setting, symbolic objects).
- Explore big ideas/themes (linked to details).
- Use academic language (narrator, protagonist, resolution).
- Explain your thinking (write long to clarify).

SESSION 4 HOMEWORK

WRITING ABOUT READING, WITH A SPECIAL FOCUS ON EVIDENCE

"For tonight's homework, write at least another two pages in your reader's notebook. Remember to use all you know about evidence—how to find compelling evidence that supports your ideas, then dig into that evidence and analyze what it means and see possible connections. Then be sure to weave the evidence, as well as your own thoughts, into your writing. Finally, try citing your evidence in the simple way you just learned."



Session 9

Grappling with Issues of Intensity and Developing Initial Understanding

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that when writers grapple with intense issues, they don't just dive into argument; instead, they read, write, and discuss to begin understanding a complex, difficult topic.

GETTING READY

- ✓ Sample letter to parents and families that describes the real-news aspect of this unit. 📎
- ✓ Link to video clip of Ishmael Beah's interview on "The Hour," on CBC. You will play the first three and a half minutes during the lesson (refer to Bend II text set on CD-ROM) (see Teaching and Active Engagement). 📎
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5K4yhPSQEzo>
 YouTube search terms: Ishmael Beah, child soldier
- ✓ Students' writer's notebooks and pens (see Link and Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✓ A few initial texts to read today (refer to Bend II text set on CD-ROM) (see Link) 📎
- ✓ "Questions to Help Think about Complex, Difficult Topics" list, one copy per student (see Conferring and Small-Group Work)
- ✓ "Argument Writers Aim Toward Goals Such As . . ." and "Argument Writers Use Techniques Such As . . ." visual checklists (see Conferring and Small-Group Work) 📎
- ✓ A list of recommended texts for students (from text set) (see Share and Homework) 📎

J. K. ROWLING AND SUZANNE COLLINS have both spoken about how their writing affirms teens' capacity to speak up and to bear witness to violence, suffering, and evil. Teens yearn to read about frightening struggles, and they seek heroes in the books they read—which is clear from the millions of teens who have read *The Hunger Games* and the *Harry Potter* books. Teens also want to know about real experiences of other teens and children, even when those experiences stir them to horror and empathy. When Ishmael Beah's memoir, *Long Way Gone*, was released, it shot to the best-seller lists—for young adults. Teens everywhere wanted to read the words of this boy who had escaped from the darkest place a child could find himself—a place where he had lost everything and where out of that loss and fear he had been trained to kill. In the first year of the book's release, you could read it on a train or a bus or a plane, and someone would invariably lean over, and ask, "Where are you in the book?" and then, "Isn't it amazing, how this boy freed himself?"

Ishmael did free himself, but he didn't do it alone. He made his way to New York City, he attended high school, and he was able to write his story and speak up against the recruitment of children as soldiers, because people believed in him, which means people believed in an immense capacity for human change. Yet not all child soldiers are given amnesty. Some are considered threats to the national security of certain nations, including our own. Some are considered so hardened, or the acts they continue to commit are deemed so horrifying, that these youth face prosecution, rather than rehabilitation.

In this bend, your students will learn how to write a position paper about child soldiers, but first they will have to understand this complicated issue. Your students may not know very much about this up front. You'll want to allow them the gradual realizations and sudden epiphanies that make inquiry work so compelling. They'll need time to process what they read and watch. It's not that the violence in these texts is more graphic than what they might encounter in fiction or the gaming they've just written about. But this violence is *real*, not a fantasy.

Today, therefore, you'll give students a chance to freewrite and to talk in response to their exposure to a text—an interview with Ishmael Beah. This kind of writing lets kids express their thoughts and emotions without yet worrying about how they are fulfilling an academic genre. We know that there are some who want to relegate *all* personal response writing to the scrap heap. As educators who brushed inches of ash from the World Trade Center off classroom desks in lower Manhattan and wrote with kids for months after the buildings fell, who

“When kids encounter violence, they deserve a chance to use writing to respond to it. Soon, you’ll help students raise their own voices to do something about this topic. Today, you steer them to open their hearts.”

sat in strange hallways with kids who had been relocated after natural disasters, who witnessed kids pour their hearts onto the page after shootings, we say “no” to this stance. When kids encounter violence, they deserve a chance to use writing to respond to it. Acting in school as if it’s “all about standards, so get on with it,” feels morally bereft. Soon, you’ll help students raise their own voices to do something about this topic. Today, you steer them to open their hearts.

At the end of the session, you’ll send kids off to continue talking about this issue outside of class, and some students will be moved to read more. To do this work, you’ll need a few short texts on hand. We recommend some digital texts that

convey a lot of information quickly, so that students’ learning is not mitigated by their reading level. The list of recommended texts for a starter set is on the CD-ROM. You’ll see we suggest starting today with a brief excerpt from an interview with Ishmael Beah.

Two pieces of advice. One: be open with students and parents about the real-news aspect of this unit of study. By eighth grade, most parents expect that their kids will be reading and watching the news, as well as reading mature works of literature that introduce tragic elements, such as *To Kill a Mockingbird* or *Romeo and Juliet*. On the CD-ROM we’ve included a letter that one teacher sent home to parents and families. You might invite parents into a book club around *Long Way Gone*, as an opener to this unit of study, and at the book club, watch the interview that launches this session. The second piece of advice is this: look ahead at the upcoming teaching so that you don’t try to pack it all into today! Your kids will get a chance to rethink their positions and revise their arguments across this bend. You don’t want to slow down every part of today’s work to fix up everything they could be doing better.

By the end of this bend, students will have researched, rethought, and refined their positions, not just on whether child soldiers should be given amnesty, but under what conditions. They will be ready to shape their arguments into letters that they will send to key decision makers at organizations such as Amnesty International, UNICEF, the military, and the like. You’ll want to share this intent with students early on, so that they know the end goal toward which they are aiming. Above all, you’ll want to convey that they have a responsibility to seek their own truths by understanding the whole picture of the topic, which means exploring all angles of this complex issue, posing and answering questions, talking back to their own initial thoughts and to those of their peers, and coming up with compelling evidence that supports their final convictions.

Online Resources

The digital resources are cross-referenced inside the books with this graphic. Wherever you see this CD disc icon in the book, the resource will be found in the Online Resources.



Additional Sample Sessions

Please note that additional sample sessions for each grade are available for review here:
http://hein.pub/UOS_6-8





MINILESSON

Grappling with Issues of Intensity and Developing Preliminary Positions

CONNECTION

Congratulate students on the work they have done, salute them, and then muse about the meaning of that gesture as a segue to the focus of this new bend.

"Writers, gather close. You should be proud of your work so far. In your reflections some of you wrote about how you are trying new craft in your writing—and it's visible. You're also doing something else that will make you not just more convincing, but also more ethical—you're attending to more than one point of view, or trying to. So, I salute you." I raised my hand and gave them a very crisp, army-like salute. Two or three students saluted back.

I sat back a little, pausing as if to think. I spoke slowly. "Writers, that salute is a very interesting gesture. It's a way of showing pride and authority. You know that its roots are based in the military, right?" Many students nodded.

"Yes, and it's interesting to see how military images and images of war are used in society, isn't it? Most of us salute each other playfully and may not think about the history of that gesture or about situations happening right now around the world where that gesture is used in a non-playful way. It's making me think much more about our work from Bend I. Just like we don't always think about all the meaning that is carried in a playful, military-like salute, we don't always think about all the meanings that are carried in a game where people shoot each other, or in a TV commercial for a new battle toy. And yet, there can be a thin line between things that seem light and fun—a salute, a role-play game, a Nerf® gun—and real situations that are not at all light and fun."

Announce that today the class will be moving to consider more complex, emotion-evoking arguments in the world, and that while this is not easy work, it is a moral imperative.

"I think that you are ready to move on from arguments that, though very important, are sort of safe. You don't need to get emotionally caught up in them. We're going to move from a safe argument about role-play games and video games to an argument that is deeper. We'll explore a topic that is harder to explore because its real-life consequences are huge.

Even though these kinds of arguments are difficult, and it would be easier to just not think about them, if we want to live in a just world, we have to think about hard things. We must be willing to have the difficult arguments."

◆ COACHING

Give students feedback by using language such as "You should be proud" rather than "I'm proud of you," so that students get that they are doing this work for themselves, not for you. Peter Johnston reminds us to be specific with students when naming behaviors and skills that will help them be more effective and powerful, so that they are likely to call on these skills when we are not steering them.

You might substitute a different metaphor for the salute—something that is emblematic of the tension between violence that is play and violence that is real. A gesture, a passage of text, an anecdote, a video—any of those can serve as a metaphor in your classroom. One teacher, for instance, used her hand as a mock "gun" and made a gesture as if shooting at something—then deconstructed that gesture in light of looking at the taken-for-granted quality of everyday actions.

❁ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that argument is not just an academic exercise. It's a moral imperative. As human beings, you have a responsibility to understand complex issues and to argue in ways that promote justice. One way to start doing this is to read, write, and talk to understand issues that are current, complicated, and difficult."

TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Explain the debate concerning child soldiers taking place in national and international organizations.

"So today you are going to start studying a real argument that relates to kids and violence. The argument concerns child soldiers—kids, usually around your age, who are recruited to fight in armies. This argument involves real children getting hurt and killed, and killing others, too. This situation is familiar to some of you, and almost incomprehensible to others—but we all need to think about it. This argument concerns us, each of us, because we live in this world and we need to shape the world; otherwise, it gets shaped for us.

"The United Nations, Amnesty International, and the U.S. military are actually debating the issue of child soldiers right now. This is the argument they are considering: Should child soldiers be given amnesty? The heart of this argument is a question that requires you to think: Should child soldiers be considered victims or perpetrators? In a week or so, you'll be presenting your ideas about that topic to Amnesty International or another organization in the hopes of influencing them.

"I'm going to play a video clip of a former child soldier named Ishmael Beah. Some of you may have read his book, *Long Way Gone*. You might want to take notes for each side of the argument or capture your thinking in another way. Or you may just need to watch Ishmael's clip and take it in. I want to warn you again—it's not easy to hear the things he will talk about. But it's important that we do."

Play a three-minute clip of Ishmael Beah. Afterward, give students a minute to think and to process their reactions.

When the clip ended, I kept it frozen on a shot of Ishmael Beah, looking eye to eye with viewers. Then I looked at the students. Many looked back at me with shocked expressions. I let the silence deepen. Then I said quietly, "It's not easy to think about it. But this argument will have real consequences for people like Ishmael. It's not a show you can turn off and forget about. So, I'm going to give you a moment to gather your reactions. Before you build any kind of logical argument, take all this in and think. If you're feeling outraged that this could ever happen, be outraged.

"Take a minute to think on paper a bit and then, when you want, talk to a partner." As students bent their heads and began writing, I moved among them, looking over their shoulders and giving indications that I acknowledged their thoughts—a "Hmm . . ." a slow nod, and "I didn't think of that."

Here, you do several things: you set the tone for the work and content matter that students will tackle in this bend; you convey that all of us—adults and eighth-graders alike—have a civic responsibility to educate ourselves about worldwide matters of consequence and to form stances and take action; and you give students a choice for how to learn from the video clip you are about to show.

Maxine Greene, the famous philosopher of education, suggests that a goal of education should be to produce children who are capable of being outraged. She says that one of the greatest dangers is the "numbness of oppression"—that after you see images of something horrible, such as a child injured by war, four or five times, you become desensitized to it. Greene argues that to promote social justice, children need what social psychologist Morton Deutsch calls the "sense of injustice." As Greene describes it, "You know, the ability to say damn it, that's not fair, or that you can't treat people like that. . . And if you could say it's unjust, or you can say something is inhumane, or something is an infringement on somebody else's freedom, then you can say, what? This is a terrible deficiency, what can I do to repair it?" (Imagination, Oppression and Culture/Creating Authentic Openings, Greene, 2007, 7).

Invite students to discuss with a partner their feelings about what they have just seen.

"Writers, you're having strong reactions to what you've just seen. Right now, talk with a partner about what you're thinking." The buzzing in the meeting area was quieter than usual.

"I don't even know. That was horrible," Kah Soon told Emily. "His whole family was killed."

"Mother, father, and two brothers," Tate said.

"Why?" Sakura asked. "Why were they all killed?"

"I don't know," Tate said. "But he was only twelve, and all those little kids had to go to fight and they made them take drugs. It's not right."

"I was twelve last year," Griffin said, somberly.

Ask a few students to share out what they have been saying.

"Writers, can you come back to the whole group? Let's talk about this. What were you thinking as you listened to and watched this clip of Ishmael?"

"Jared and I were saying that Ishmael didn't really talk that much about killing people," Gio said. "But he probably did."

"We were wondering who they were. Like were they other soldiers or like, innocent people?" Jared asked.

The kids all looked at me and I looked back seriously at them. "I think if you study more about this, you will probably find the answers to some of those questions, and you'll probably also have other questions."

LINK**Send students off to continue to study the issue and to sort and process their own feelings in light of the evidence.**

"I'm going to give you time today to continue trying to wrap your minds around this issue. I have texts for you to read. As you think about child soldiers, and specifically about whether they are victims or perpetrators, your thinking will probably shift and change." I distributed copies of a few texts to the students.

"Later today, we'll come back to the question I raised at the start of the lesson about how organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International, and the U.S. military should deal with child soldiers, but for now you'll need time to learn about this issue. Become informed about the experiences of child soldiers and the perspectives different people have on them. Use your notebook as a place to think. I expect that you will want to make notes on both sides of the issue, as many of you have been doing, and you may want to freewrite a bit. The texts are at your table. Get started."

Because one of the goals of this unit is that students see argument as truly purposeful and important, we aim here to support students in doing the kind of critical mind work that real people do in response to arguments and issues in the world. Boxes and bullets—position and evidence—will come soon (very soon, in fact, as you'll see in the share), but it's a rare person who does not first allow himself the emotional and intellectual processing time needed when dealing with a difficult, complex issue.

Expect students to write from varied positions; their experience with war and violence will be diverse. Some may know more than you. Others may have been protected from knowledge of current events. Keep an eye on each of your students, and use what you know about them to check and assure their well-being.

Tomorrow you'll make more extensive text packets available. We suggest that you put out only a few texts today, including making available the complete interview that students just watched. If you strategically release just a few texts at the start, you can ensure that students will have a chance to talk from some common ground, and you also keep the research part of this project from seeming overwhelming. At the end of the session today, you'll distribute a recommended reading list, and you'll soon find that some of your students begin to read avidly and broadly. Encourage these students to bring in texts as well.



CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

Using Writer's Notebooks as a Thinking Tool

YOU FACE SEVERAL INEVITABLE CHALLENGES TODAY. On the one hand, you will surely need to help your students process the intense content to which you've just exposed them. Some students won't be entirely in the dark about child soldiers; they will have read articles on this topic or learned about it from the news or from conversations with parents and friends. You may teach in a school with students who have personal experience with war. For others, however, this may be a new reality, and not an easy one to digest. Even those kids who are more in the know will need time to reflect, because there is a difference between a third-person report on a difficult topic and a firsthand account of it. Anticipate strong reactions, therefore, and be prepared to listen and to help students make sense of horror, fear, and sadness. You also want to help them, already, get past stereotypes and misconceptions. You'll need to watch for when they make sweeping judgments from learning about one experience or when they overstate. Let them know that these are common tendencies when we are first learning about a topic, especially when we feel a sense of moral outrage.

Of course, the second challenge is to get students not just to react emotionally, but also to record their thinking, so that they can mine this soon for writing that will support a structured, researched argument. You can allow both the time and space for students to be sad, angry, horrified, reflective, and meanwhile get them thinking as debaters by suggesting they use their notebooks as a thinking tool. Perhaps first, they'll simply write to get whatever emotions they're feeling off their chests. You might suggest they take a few minutes to write, fast and furiously, almost as they would in a journal. Then, perhaps they can draw a line under that entry and move toward writing that is of a more persuasive, critical kind. You might give them a list of questions to guide this thinking:

Questions to Help Think about Complex, Difficult Topics

- What are the intended effects of the action/circumstance?
- What are the actual effects (short and long term)?
- Who is hurt by the action/circumstance and who benefits?

- Who is responsible for the actions? Who is the perpetrator? Who is the victim?
- What role do all of us play in assuming moral responsibility?
- Do fear/coercion play a part in responsibility?
- What does it mean to be responsible for something?

MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

Rethinking Responses from an Argumentation Stance

"Writers, eyes up here. A lot of you are writing with indignation. You are writing, 'And another thing . . . What's more . . . I mean, can you believe . . .'"

"It is not surprising that this topic stirs passionate responses. But here's the thing: you're coming to this topic of child soldiers *within a unit on argumentation*, so your thinking should be shaped not only by the topic, but also by what you know about debate and argumentation.

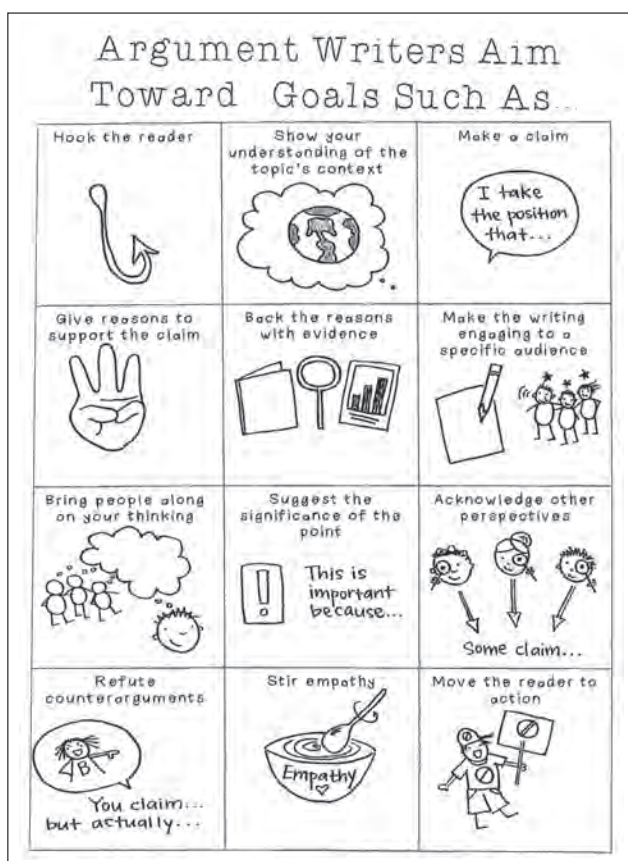
"Right now, talk to your partner. What do you remember about debate and argumentation, and how can your knowledge of argumentation influence how you talk and write and think about this issue?"

Students talked with each other, and soon afterward, I said, "Many of you are saying that in argumentation, you make claims—not just random claims, but ones that include reasons and evidence as support. I heard some of you say that it is helpful to consider more than one side and to know what others argue so you can respond thoughtfully to those ideas. That's more than just talking back. You also want to be fair to those ideas. As you write and talk, then, begin to use your knowledge of argument to do the real work of arguing to learn."

Chances are that one challenge you won't face is apathy. Your students are bound to have strong reactions to the video and the topic of child soldiers. By giving students a list of questions like the ones on the previous page, you provide a framework into which they can put their thoughts, and you model for them the kind of thinking that will go into the writing they do during this unit. You could, of course, add questions that are specific to this topic, but you'll also want to include ones that might as easily apply to other similar topics, so that students can apply this type of thinking not just to child soldiers, but also to any other topic of similar consequence.

Another way to move students from an emotional response to an analytical one is to give them a tool for considering how the texts shape their content and stir up the

reader. Often, when new content is hard to look at because of its graphic violence, if we take a moment to study author's craft, we can then think about craft and content together, which is somehow more manageable. You'll see this when students write memoirs about true events. Studying and talking about craft often lets them also study and talk about mature content. In the conferring and small-group work of Session 4, you introduced the visual checklists for analyzing techniques and goals of information writers. Now, perhaps in table conferences, you might introduce (or reacquaint) students with the techniques and goals of argument writers. Encourage students to consider if the text they are reading or watching is more informational or argument, and to add in observations of how the author teaches and convinces. They'll be more analytical, and often this helps them deal with mature content as well.





SHARE

Writers Consider More Than One Side of an Issue

Give students a sense of the real-world implications of the issue at hand, and invite them to jot down preliminary positions.

"Writers, I want to remind you that the issue of child soldiers is actually a case being debated at the UN and at Amnesty International, and also by U.S. military tribunals. And the actual question about child soldiers that is being considered is this: Should child soldiers should be given amnesty (which means legal forgiveness)? One way to begin to delve into this question is to consider whether, overall, they should be considered victims or perpetrators. I know you have not had that much time to delve into this topic—tomorrow you'll have more time—but even though you have only scratched the surface of this issue, you probably have some thoughts about the points that could be made for different sides of that argument: victims or perpetrators?"

"Right now, jot down the beginnings of a case for each side. This will probably look like a box and some bullets to support the position that child soldiers should be considered *victims*, and also a box and some bullets to support the position that child soldiers should be considered *perpetrators*."

Students jotted for a few minutes, and then, long before they finished, I interrupted. "Okay, talk to someone near you about the tentative case that might be made for each of the positions. And if you have any immediate questions, jot those as well so you don't forget."

Students talked, and as the end of class neared, I said, "Writers, good work." I started to give them a little salute, and then stopped, and looked around at the kids. "You know, I think I'm not going to salute you. Instead, I'm going to invite you to do more thinking, talking, reading, writing about this issue."

"Some of you said that you wanted to watch the rest of that interview or read something else. Here's a preliminary reading list to take with you for your homework." I distributed the reading list.

At the beginning of this work, polarized positions can be an entry point. Asking students to divide on the position of child soldiers as perpetrators or victims will get them thinking, sorting evidence, and analyzing. The end goal, though, is not that students stay in this binary realm of thought, but that they begin to realize that there are conditions and circumstances that would point toward amnesty and others that wouldn't. If your students already show signs of recognizing multiple perspectives, encourage them to consider various points of view and ways to make their own position more nuanced.

SESSION 9 HOMEWORK

TALK, READ, AND WRITE TO DEVELOP NEW THINKING

"So tonight I'm going to ask you to talk more about this issue with people around you. Talk about it with your peers; talk about it with your older cousins, with your parents. Choose wisely. Don't discuss this topic with someone much younger than you who would not be appropriate. But do choose a trusted adult or peer. And here is your assignment. Talk in ways that get you to think new things. Talk in ways that get you to reconsider your own thinking.

"After you talk and/or read, do some writing in your notebook about your new thinking. Write at least one page, and be prepared to share your thinking both about this issue and about the work you might do next. Tomorrow we'll spend some more time grappling with this issue."

<p>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</p> <p>CONTENT:</p> <p>1. Who fights?</p> <p>2. Why do people fight wars?/why do people continue fighting wars?</p> <p>3. How does war affect people? what factors are involved in determining who is affected and how?</p> <p>4. How has and is war justified as a tactic for settling disputes, overcoming oppression, and attaining power?</p> <p>SKILL:</p> <p>1. How can I use my research to support my verbal and written communication?</p> <p>2. How can I use primary and secondary sources to help me consider multiple perspectives in understanding the experiences and implications of war.</p>
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FIG. 9-1 Emily lists her immediate questions and the skills she might apply as she moves forward.

Professional Development Options from TCRWP

The Units of Study books are a curriculum—and more. Lucy Calkins has embedded professional development into the curriculum, teaching teachers the “why” and “how” of effective reading and writing instruction. The professional development embedded in this series can be further enhanced through the following opportunities.

IN YOUR SCHOOL OR DISTRICT

Units of Study “Quick Start” Day

Through a one-day intensive session, teachers can get started unpacking the series’ components, grasping the big picture of effective workshop teaching, and gaining an understanding of how to integrate assessment into the curriculum.

Contact Judith Chin, Coordinator of Strategic Development
Judith.Chin@readingandwritingproject.com
Phone: (212) 678-3327

Multi-Day Institute (40–300 educators)

Invite a Reading and Writing Project Staff Developer to work in your school or district, helping a cohort of educators teach reading and/or writing well. Host a “Homegrown Institute” for writing or reading instruction, usually during the summer months for four or five days. Tailored to your district’s needs, the instruction and materials are specialized for K–2, 3–5, or 6–8 sections.

Contact Kathy Neville, Executive Administrator
kathy@readingandwritingproject.com
Phone: (917) 484-1482

Extended On-Site Professional Development

For deeper, more intensive professional development, schools and districts can work with TCRWP to plan on-site professional development that includes a sequence of 10–25 school-based staff development days, spaced throughout the year.

Contact Laurie Pessah, Senior Deputy Director
Laurie@readingandwritingproject.com
Phone: (212) 678-8226

ONLINE FROM TCRWP

Facebook Discussion Groups

Join the Units of Study community on Facebook to learn from educators across the country, including Lucy Calkins and TCRWP Staff Developers, and to share your own experience.

Search Units of Study in Writing TCRWP and Units of Study in Reading TCRWP.

Classroom Videos

These live-from-the classroom videos model the minilessons, conferences, and shares you will engage in as you teach the Units of Study.

View these videos at:
readingandwritingproject.org/resources/units-of-study-implementation

Resources

The Project posts important and useful resources throughout the year, including examples of student work.

Visit readingandwritingproject.org/resources

Office Hours

In these live webinar sessions, Lucy and her TCRWP colleagues respond to questions from educators on a wide range of topics.

Sign up to receive invitations at:
samplers.heinemann.com/lucycalkins-updates

Twitter Chats

On Wednesdays from 7:30–8:30 PM EST join TCRWP for live chat sessions on topics supporting literacy instruction.

Follow them at @TCRWP or search #TCRWP [Twitter.com/tcrwp](https://twitter.com/tcrwp)

AT TEACHERS COLLEGE

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TCRWP offers institutes across the year led by teacher-educators from the project and world-renowned experts.

For registration and application information go to:
readingandwritingproject.org/services/institutes

ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Units of Study “Quick Start” Days

TCRWP and Heinemann offer several one-day workshops for teachers and administrators.

For dates, locations, and registration information go to:
readingandwritingproject.org/services/one-day-events/conferences and Heinemann.com/PD/workshops



ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Lucy Calkins is the Founding Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP). In that role, Lucy's greatest accomplishment has been to develop a learning community of teacher educators whose brilliance and dedication shines 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.

Lucy 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 in Phonics, Grades K–2; and Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades K–8 series; 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 TCRWP. 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 in reading and writing series.



Colleen Cruz, Director of Innovation at the TCRWP, is a writer of children's literature and of professional texts for teachers, including *Independent Writing: A Quick Guide to Reaching Struggling Writers, K–5*; and *The Unstoppable Writing Teacher*.



Mary Ehrenworth, EdD, Deputy Director of the TCRWP, works with schools and districts around the globe, and 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 many articles and books she has authored or co-authored.



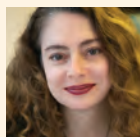
For many years, **Stacey Fell** was an English teacher as well as a literacy coach at MS 131 in lower Manhattan. After completing her EdD in Curriculum and Teaching at Columbia University's Teachers College, Stacey joined the TCRWP as a Staff Developer. Currently, Stacey teaches 8th grade Humanities at Tompkins Square Middle School in New York City's East Village.



Alexandra Marron was a Staff Developer, Researcher, and Writer-in-Residence at the TCRWP. Her responsibilities included leading a yearlong study group for master teachers, presenting at conferences, and teaching at summer institutes. She is coauthor of numerous books in the Units of Study in reading and writing series.



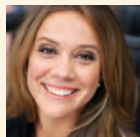
Cornelius Minor is a frequent keynote speaker for and Lead Staff Developer at the TCRWP. In that capacity, he works with teachers, school leaders, and leaders of community-based organizations to support deep and wide literacy reform in cities (and sometimes villages) across the globe.



Audra Kirshbaum Robb, Associate Director for Middle Schools at the TCRWP, develops and pilots performance assessment tools aligned to state standards; provides staff development to schools in New York City and across the country; and leads workshops on incorporating poetry into ELA and content-area curriculum.



Kate Roberts is a national literacy consultant, author, and popular keynote speaker. She taught reading and writing in Brooklyn, NY and worked as a literacy coach before joining the TCRWP, where she worked as a Lead Staff Developer for 11 years.



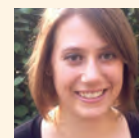
Maggie Beattie Roberts is coauthor with Kate Roberts of *DIY Literacy*. As a former Staff Developer with the TCRWP, Maggie led research and development to help teachers use digital literacy and technology as an alternate way to help young people grasp fundamental concepts.



Julie Shepherd spent five years teaching 8th grade Social Studies and Humanities at IS 289 in lower Manhattan. While there, she developed text sets that have been used by many other educators in NYC. Her classroom was frequently used as a Project lab site.



In her position as a Staff Developer at the TCRWP, **Emily Strang-Campbell** supports schools across New York City, New Jersey, and the nation. Before joining the Project, Emily's classroom at The Clinton School for Writers and Artists was frequently used as a Project lab site for NYC teachers and visiting educators from across the country.



Annie Taranto is a Lead Staff Developer at the TCRWP, 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.



For more than 20 years, **Kathleen Tolan** was a Senior Deputy Director of the TCRWP. She had special responsibility for the Project's work with reading instruction, organizing instruction for staff developers and the Project's four summer institutes. She was also instrumental in the creation of the content literacy institutes and coaching institutes.



As a Lead Staff Developer at the TCRWP, **Katy Wischow** supports elementary and middle schools in New York City and across the nation and the world. She has been an adjunct instructor at Columbia University's Teachers College, teaching graduate courses in literacy education.