

GRADES

3-5

Units of Study in Writing

by Lucy Calkins and Units of Study Colleagues



Units, Tools, and Methods for Teaching
Writing in Today's Classroom

Welcome to Units of Study in Writing

Forty years ago, Lucy Calkins and a colleague, Don Graves, conducted a focused study on young children as writers as part of the National Institute of Education. Inspired by that work, Calkins developed innovative curricula and methods that transformed the way children learned to write, adapting the collegiate and professional-level “writing workshop” model so that it works for younger students. This proven, research-based approach has given ownership to students and fostered powerful communities of learning for decades. Adjusted and improved over the years based on classroom feedback and new research, the Units of Study in Writing champions the importance of explicit direct instruction, of teaching through demonstration with scaffolds and feedback, and above all, of creating communities of care within which young people—and those of us who teach them—can find our voices.

Today’s Units of Study in Writing represents the newest and best knowledge of state-of-the-art methods for teaching writing. The units provide:

- ◆ A curriculum in narrative, informational, argument and literary essay writing that cumulates and builds across years.
- ◆ A digital experience with AI-assisted, customizable writing feedback for Grades 3–5 to support teachers in doing their best work and saving time every day.
- ◆ Inclusive and affirmative units where all children, educators, and communities will find themselves portrayed across the curriculum.

Research Based

Units of Study in Writing draws on the latest research on oral language development, writing instruction, grammar, vocabulary, knowledge generation, feedback, executive function and growth mindset, as well as on aspects of the science of reading research.

The K–2 units include explicit support for phonemic awareness and are more explicit about the ways that writing can support phonics (Gonzalez-Frey, S. M., & Ehri, L. C., 2020; Duke, N. K., & Mesmer, H. A. E., 2016) and orthographic mapping (Ehri, L. C., 2014). Across K–5, when students write nonfiction, especially those units dealing with research, Units of Study in Writing helps students bring more knowledge to their work with a topic (Cervetti, G.N., Hiebert, E.H., 2015) and emphasizes the importance of learning and using key vocabulary, including webs of words (Hiebert, E.H., 2019). The units include:

- ◆ Direct support for phonemic awareness and opportunities for encoding practice, with a spotlight on transfer and orthographic mapping, in K–2.
- ◆ Support for grammar, spelling, and vocabulary development.
- ◆ Explicit instruction in all five strands of Joan Sedita’s (2019) Writing Rope.

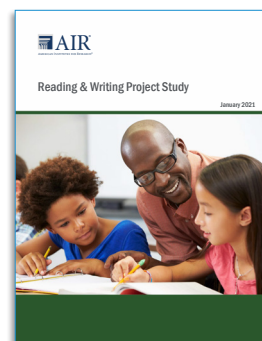
“Students take a lot of pride in their writing and have become much more confident in their abilities as writers. In fact, they now see themselves as authors, not just students of writing.”

— 3rd Grade Pilot Teacher

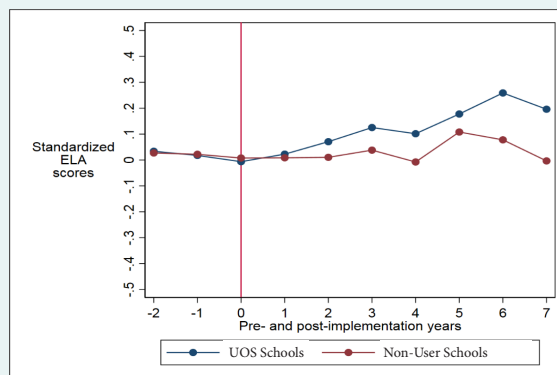
Evidence Based

The Units of Study approach to literacy instruction has been proven effective in classrooms across the country and around the world and has been validated by third-party research.

- ◆ The American Institutes for Research (AIR) collected nine years of high-stakes assessment data from 229 schools and found statistically significant increases in ELA scores among UOS user-schools beginning in the second year of implementation.
- ◆ For all implementation years, UOS user-schools’ scores were found to be higher than the scores of non-user comparison schools—and the impact of Units of Study on student achievement was shown to grow larger over time.
- ◆ Further, the AIR researchers found that these gains in student achievement pertained not only to the general population, but also to subgroups of multilingual language learners (MLLs) and students with disabilities.



heinemann.com/research/#dr



Conclusion: “Overall, results indicate implementation is associated with improvements in ELA achievement starting in the second year of implementation, and in schools that opt to continue with the approach long term, the magnitude of the effects grows larger over time.”

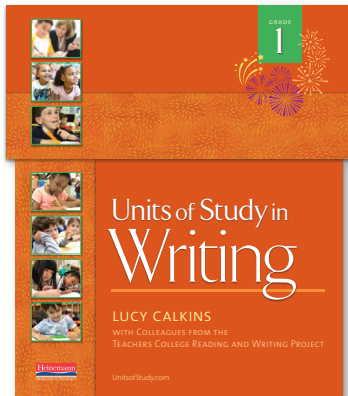
Teacher Friendly

The structure of the writing workshops is kept deliberately simple and predictable so that teachers can focus their energy and attention on helping individual writers.

- ◆ Lively brief minilessons filled with engaging demonstration writing and snippets from mentor texts.
- ◆ Suggestions for how to revise instruction and expectation to give all students access to the most essential content.
- ◆ Colorful charts and bookmarks, goalposts, and assessments, all designed to help students work with increasing independence.
- ◆ If/then charts that anticipate the real-world challenges teachers will face and give practical tips for addressing them.

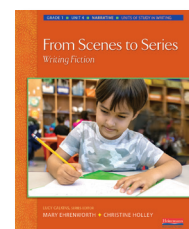
What does the Writing Series contain for Grades K-2?

The Units of Study in Writing series is designed to support students' abilities to be strategic, metacognitive writers. Within and across grades, units fit tongue-and-groove alongside each other. Together, they help students consolidate and use what they have learned to meet and exceed standards expectation for each grade.



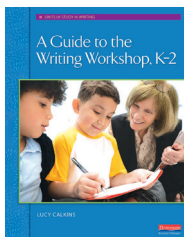
Units of Study in Writing

Each of the four Units of Study in Writing for each grade level offers a sequenced set of daily sessions that invite students along a path of writing development in one of three genres: narrative, information or explanatory, and opinion or argument writing.



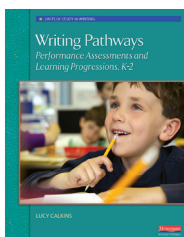
Supporting All Writers: High-Leverage Small Groups and Conferences, K-2

This book supplements the units, providing teachers with easy access to ready-to-teach small groups and conferences around major writing goals. It includes work-time teaching that especially supports children either below or above benchmark, ensuring that all children progress along trajectories of growth.



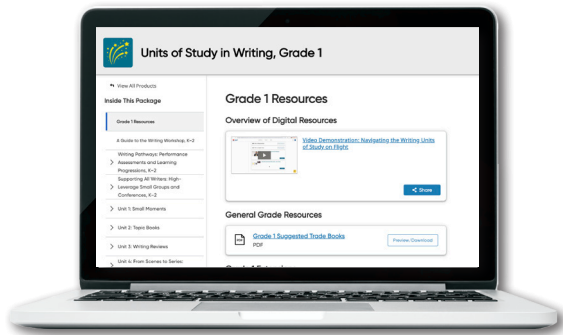
A Guide to the Writing Workshop, K-2

This guide provides an overview of the essentials of a writing workshop, helps teachers with all-important methods, introduces practical management tips, and guides teachers to lead powerful writing workshops.



Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K-2

This book contains the assessment system for the K-2 writing units. In it, teachers will find a chapter overviewing writing development, plus assessments, checklists, exemplar texts, and annotated benchmark pieces of writing, at each level for all three genres.

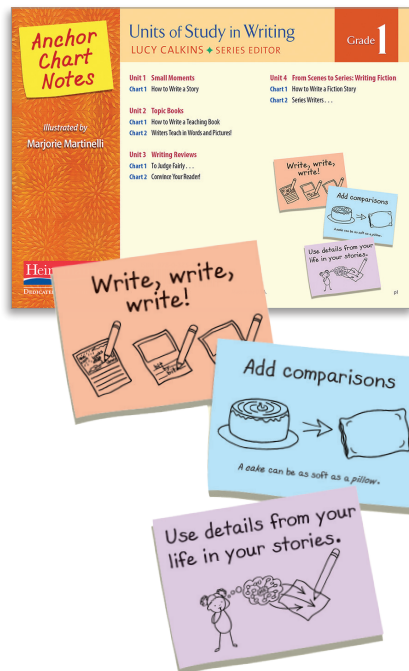


Online Resources

Online Resources provide digital access to all the printed books in the core units of study set (Units, Guide, etc.), along with a rich array of resources to support each unit. These resources include downloadable versions of charts, handouts, book lists, exemplar texts, supports for Spanish-speaking students, and more, all arranged session by session to streamline each day's preparation.

Premium Digital Content—Annual Subscriptions for K–2

The minilesson videos in the Premium Digital Subscriptions for grades K–2 are designed to serve as valuable exemplars for effective, concise, and engaging minilessons, exemplars that can help teachers lift the level of their teaching. Each minilesson is modeled by a staff developer and can serve as powerful professional learning for individual teachers and for teams as they plan instruction. Teachers may also use the videos in settings where remote teaching is needed.



Anchor Chart Sticky Notes

The Anchor Chart Sticky Notes feature each day's teaching point to help teachers create and evolve anchor charts across the units.

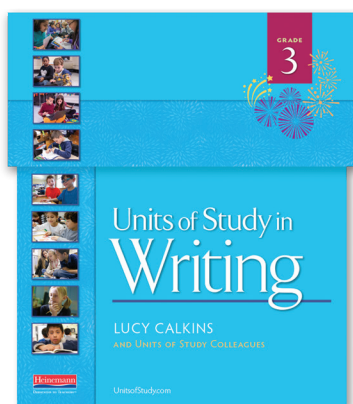
Units of Study Trade Book Pack

Each Units of Study Trade Book Pack includes grade-level appropriate books that teachers use as demonstration texts to model the skills and strategies they want students to try. Spanish language Trade Book Packs are also available.

NEW!

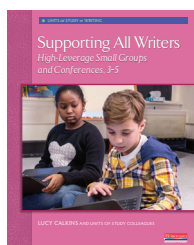
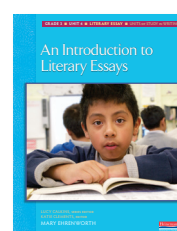
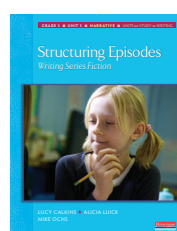
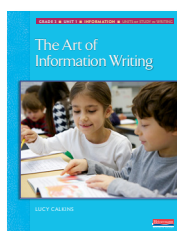
What does the Writing Series contain for Grades 3–5?

The brand-new Grades 3–5 Units of Study in Writing complement the K–2 units for a full K–5 trajectory of state-of-the-art instruction in writing. The units have been thoroughly revised in ways that make them easier to use, more research-based, and updated for today’s classroom. For the first time, they include a sequential standards-based curriculum in grammar, opportunities to tap the power of digital technologies, far more discipline-based writing, and a compendium of tools to support responsive small-group instruction.



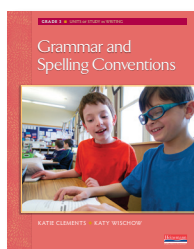
Units of Study in Writing

Each of the four units offers a sequenced set of daily sessions that invite students along a path of writing development in narrative, information, argument, or literary essay writing.



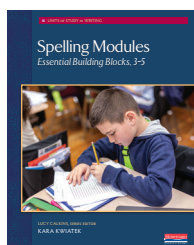
Supporting All Writers: High-Leverage Small Groups and Conferences, 3–5

This book supplements the units, providing teachers with easy access to ready-to-teach small groups and conferences around major writing goals. It includes work times that especially support children who are either below or above benchmarks, ensuring that all children progress along a trajectory of development.



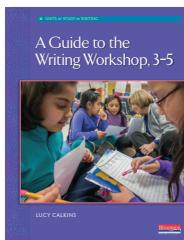
Grammar and Spelling Conventions

This resource contains grade-specific grammar lessons that are designed to integrate closely with the Units of Study in Writing. The grammar instruction is sequenced so that students can apply the lessons they learn to their ongoing writing. This resource also includes spelling minilessons that can be woven into the teaching of each writing unit as needed.



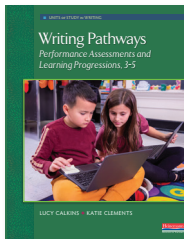
Spelling Modules: Essential Building Blocks, 3–5

This resource contains carefully sequenced modules for students who need more targeted support in phonics and spelling. It draws on the latest research on the science of reading, supporting students in the foundational skills needed to be strong writers.



A Guide to the Writing Workshop, Grades 3–5

This guide serves as an overview of the essentials of a writing workshop, describes the four core writing genres included in the series, helps with all-important methods, introduces practical management tips, and guides teachers in leading the writing workshop.



Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, Grades 3–5

This contains the assessment system for the Units of Study in Writing, 3–5. In it, teachers will find a chapter that provides an overview of writing assessment, plus progressions, checklists, exemplar texts, and annotated pieces of writing, at each level for all four genres.

Online Resources

The NEW Units of Study in Grades 3–5 are on our Heinemann Flight platform. They provide a deeper digital experience for teachers and—for the first time—a digital experience where students can submit writing. Teachers can use AI-suggested comments, informed by Units of Study instruction, to provide each student with customized feedback. The feature also helps teachers more easily see patterns in students' writing and identify areas of support.

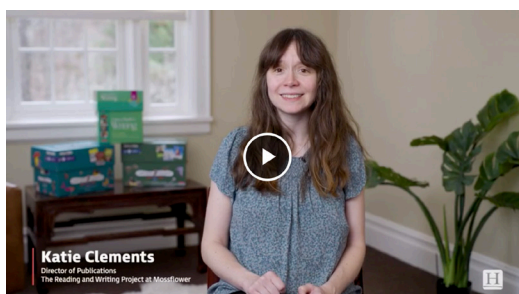
The Digital Teacher License also provides digital access to all the printed books in the core units of study set (Units, Guide, etc.), along with a rich array of resources to support each unit. These resources include downloadable versions of charts, handouts, book lists, exemplar texts, supports for Spanish-speaking students, and more, all arranged session by session to streamline each day's preparation.

Anchor Chart Sticky Notes

The Anchor Chart Sticky Notes feature each day's teaching point to help teachers create and evolve anchor charts across the units.

Units of Study Trade Book Pack

Each Units of Study Trade Book Pack includes grade-level appropriate books that teachers use as demonstration texts to model the skills and strategies they want students to try. Spanish language Trade Book Packs are also available.



Hear about the brand new Grammar and Spelling Resources

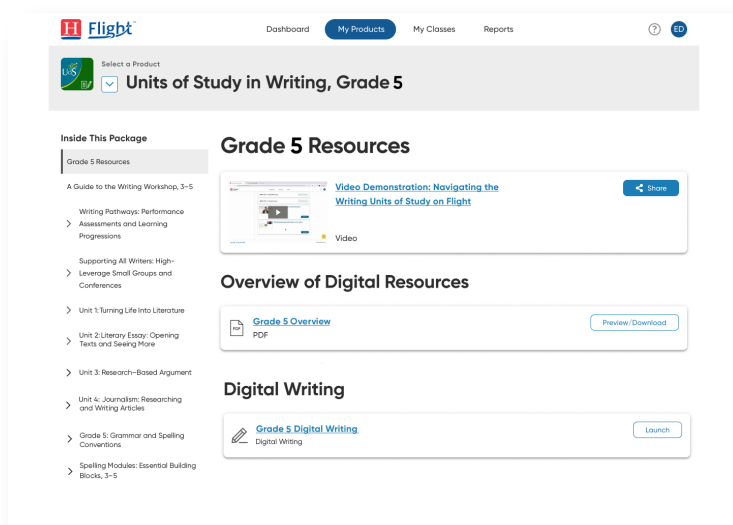
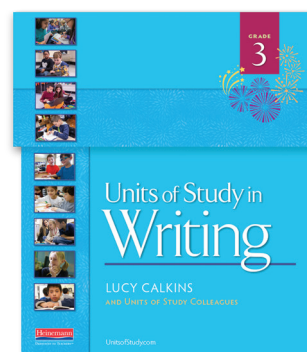
NEW!

Digital Writing Experience for Grades 3–5

Included in every Digital Teacher License for Grades 3–5 is access to a brand-new digital writing experience in the Heinemann Flight platform. Generative AI-suggested feedback uniquely tuned to the instruction and style of Units of Study makes this the most powerful version of our Writing units ever.

The digital writing experience:

- ◆ Gives teachers the ability to respond quickly and easily to students with high-quality, AI-suggested feedback at key moments of each unit
- ◆ Allows students to submit writing work and act on teacher feedback as they write and revise

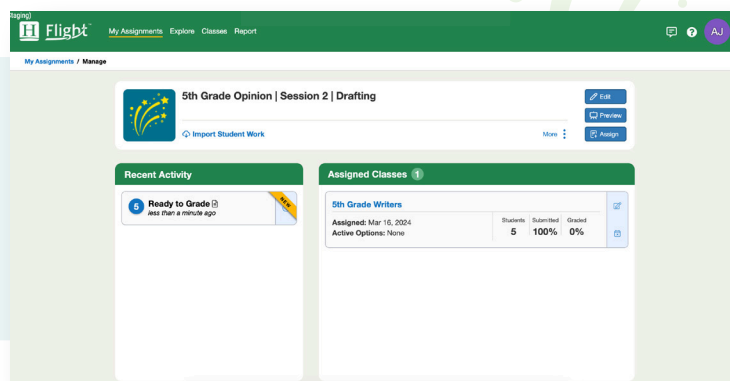


Teacher Experience

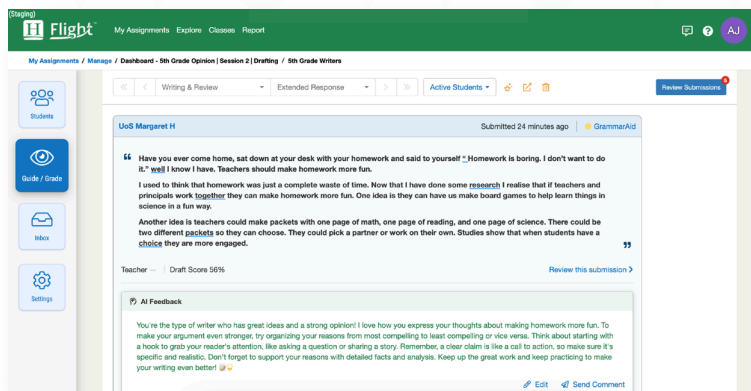
Teachers access digital writing functionality and share AI-suggested feedback with students.

Teacher Experience

Teachers can review work written within the platform or import previous student work.

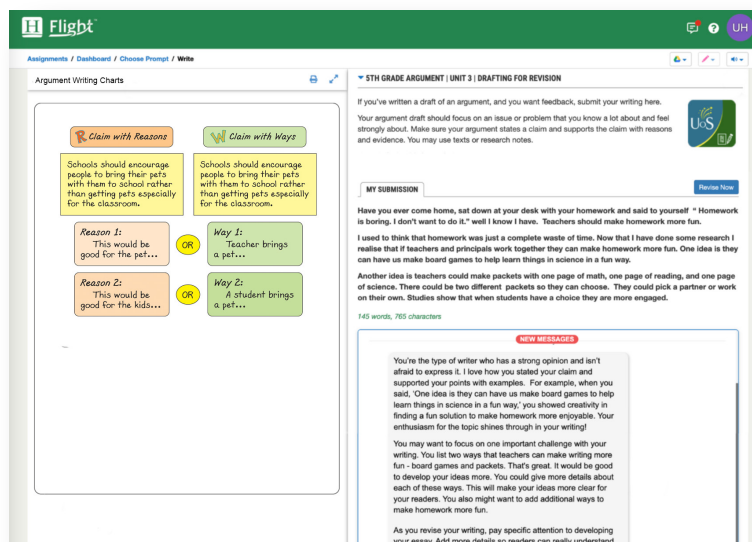


Digital images not final.



Teacher Experience

Teachers can review student submissions all on one screen.



Student Experience

- Resources are presented side-by-side to make the experience seamless for students.
- Students can use text-to-speech, change menu items to Spanish, chat directly with their teacher, and more!
- Students can easily access new comments from their teacher on their work to help drive their revision.

Digital images not final.

Contact your Heinemann Sales Representative for a tour of the digital writing experience!

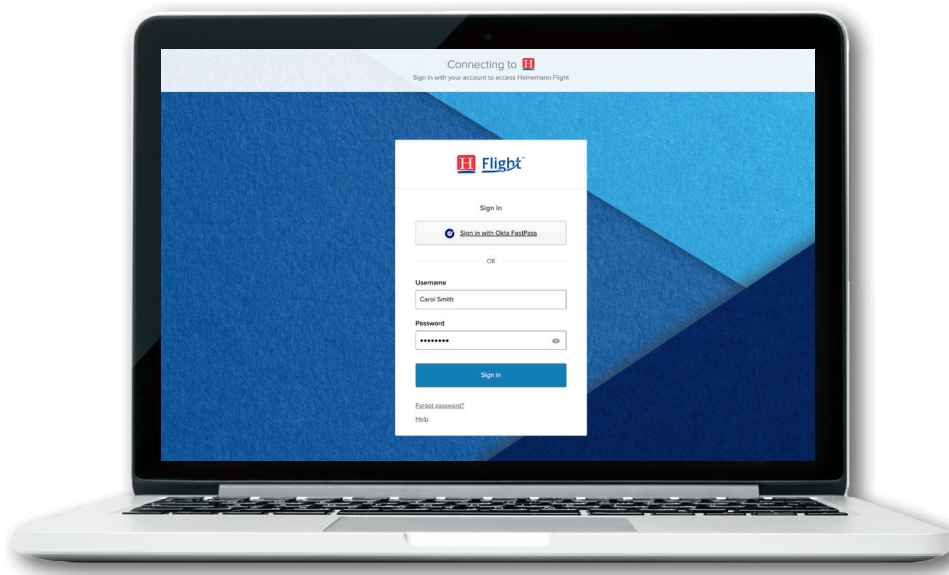
Heinemann Flight

A Digital Platform to Support Blended Teaching and Learning

The Online Resources for the Units of Study in Writing, Grades 3–5 are hosted on Heinemann Flight. Heinemann Flight's all-in-one, anywhere, anytime access, via the Digital Teacher License, enhances instruction, assessment, and professional learning

The Digital Teacher License on Heinemann Flight includes:

- ◆ All digital resources to teach the units, book by book and session by session
- ◆ Teacher ability to review student writing and provide AI-assisted feedback
- ◆ Student Licenses for the digital student experience, including digital writing functionality
- ◆ Assessment tools
- ◆ Demonstration texts
- ◆ Small-group and conferring tools
- ◆ Instructional videos
- ◆ Spanish-language video introductions and scripts (every session)
- ◆ Spanish translations of teaching points anchor charts, and student checklists
- ◆ Access to ongoing software improvements and program capability





November

EVERY DAY
if you LISTEN

			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29			

FIG. 1-3

Partners Give Feedback

Spelling

hurred
↓
hurried

Clarity



Edits

Aa
! ? , .

Word Choice

She ran down the hall.

What's New: Units of Study in Writing, Grades 3–5

What's New	What This Means
<p>The instruction is even more cohesive, with deliberate links to prior instruction. Students are reminded to draw on all they know, and teachers can draw on instruction from prior years.</p>	<p>In the Units of Study, one day's teaching builds upon the preceding day in ways that help learners practice and extend skills. Content introduced in one unit is revisited both within that grade and across grades.</p>
<p>This new version of the Units of Study in Writing is easier to teach, and the entire resource is more teacher friendly.</p>	<p>This version of Units of Study in Writing will be easier to teach. The minilessons are much shorter, and livelier, and the layout and design of the unit makes them appealing. The assessments are more student-friendly, and the adherence to standards is more evident. You are given help adjusting the curriculum, so it is applicable to your community of learners as they develop their skills and writing craft.</p>
<div><div></div><div><p><i>Grammar and Spelling Conventions</i></p></div></div>	<p>These lessons are designed to require few materials and almost no preparation, and to be lively, interactive, and fun. They frequently challenge students to find, adapt, or analyze mentor sentences from their reading or their writing. The teaching makes grammar and spelling be all about exploration, playful language, and making meaning.</p>
<div><div></div><div><p><i>Supporting All Writers, 3–5</i></p></div></div>	<p>This book provides teachers with the most high-leverage small groups, conferences, and tools from across the K–5 series, sequencing them into progressions that can help you provide targeted instruction. This resource will be especially useful for meeting the range of needs in your classroom and for intervention. If a child is working at the very earliest levels of writing development, that writer needs instruction which is attuned to the child's level, showing the youngster the most powerful steps forward.</p>
<div><div></div><div><p><i>Spelling Modules: Essential Building Blocks, 3–5.</i></p></div></div>	<p>This contains sequenced, systematic spelling lessons that will help students who need foundational support with spelling to transfer their phonics knowledge into their spelling. This means they will be working on reading words, writing words, and using phonics principles at the same time.</p>

What's New	What This Means
<p>More Support for your responsive teaching.</p>	<p>The most important part of a workshop is the time when students write, and you keep them working with engagement while leading assessment-based small groups and 1:1 conferences. Over 200 work times are designed so that you can open a unit and, without much prep, lead conferences and small groups that respond to the challenges students are apt to be facing that day. If some of your youngsters are working well below benchmark levels, <i>Supporting All Writers</i> can help you provide exactly-right instruction that moves them dramatically forward.</p>
<p>A new digital platform to support blended teaching and learning.</p>	<p>The online resources that come with the Digital Teacher License provide you with downloadable versions of charts, handouts, book lists, exemplar texts, and more, all arranged session by session to streamline each day's preparation for you. As new research comes out, we regularly release updated information into these online resources.</p>
<p>A new digital experience for writing.</p>	<p>Teachers can use AI-assisted technology to help provide students with support and feedback. Teachers can also get AI-assisted guidance in understanding how to cluster and support the varied needs of their students. Students have the option to submit work digitally and get feedback that refers to all they've been taught, drawing on the charts and models with which they are familiar.</p>
<p>Instruction that is more motivating than ever.</p>	<p>The mentor texts are irresistible. They include videos and podcasts, and work done by other youngsters who are fighting to make the world a better place. More care is given to draw youngsters into the big work of a unit, inspiring them to write with deep investment. The curriculum taps into the power of collaboration, inviting kids to work on big writing projects within clubs and groups. The celebrations are bolder, more fun, and there is more drumroll for a celebration. Additionally, we have developed research clubs to help students of varying reading levels learn and write about topics together. We've created engaging opportunities for writers to use video and other multimedia techniques to share their opinions digitally.</p>

What's New	What This Means
Every unit includes more support for conventional spelling and effective punctuation and grammar.	Students will be supported in applying developing spelling and grammar skill to their ongoing learning as they progress through the units.
More focus on writing about reading.	There is now a unit on literary essay within every year, and the units include source-based writing about reading.
New teaching to support tricky concepts.	Because this edition of the units grows out of work alongside teachers in hundreds of classrooms, the new edition addresses tricky challenges. Teachers will receive fresh help teaching kids to address point of view, to write with literary devices, to handle flashback and foreshadowing, to incorporate quotations in essays, to include counter-argument, to use statistics, and to write digitally.
Curriculum that is more inclusive and culturally responsive.	The teaching builds students' identities, helping them value and tap into their lived knowledge. The units help all children to see themselves in the examples and teaching. Mentor texts draw on this beautifully diverse world of ours, with a welcoming tone that invites all children in.
Additional support is included for Multilingual Learners.	We include a video preview in Spanish for each session and have translated teaching points and charts into Spanish. There are also blue coaching notes in the margins of each unit book specifically designed to help support your MLLs. Ensuring Access callouts in the unit books provide a wealth of additional support. Additionally, most of the mentor texts are by authors from underrepresented groups.



What Does a Workshop Classroom Look Like?

The Units of Study approach to instruction recognizes that “one size fits all” does not match the realities of the classrooms and schools in which they work.

When you walk into a workshop classroom at any given moment, you’ll see instruction that is designed to:

- ◆ help teachers address each child’s individual learning;
- ◆ explicitly and systematically teach foundational skills and strategies students will use not only the day they are taught, but whenever they need them;
- ◆ help students work with engagement so that teachers are able to coach individuals and lead small groups;
- ◆ support small-group work and conferring, with multiple opportunities for personalizing instruction;
- ◆ tap into the power of a learning community as a way to bring all learners along; and
- ◆ build choice and assessment-based learning into the very design of the curriculum.



The Predictable 5-Part Workshop Framework

The routines and structures of reading and writing workshops are kept simple and predictable so that the teacher can focus on the complex work of teaching in a responsive manner to accelerate achievement for all learners.

Each workshop session is a day, and each day's workshop is ideally 50 to 60 minutes.

1. Each session begins with a minilesson. Students sit with a long-term partner while in the minilesson.
2. The minilesson ends with students being sent off to do their own independent work.
3. As students work, the teacher confers with them and leads small groups.
4. Partway through independent work time, the teacher typically delivers a mid-workshop teaching point.
5. The workshop ends with a share.

The workshop framework offers the perfect combination of whole-class, small-group, and one-on-one instruction, along with ample opportunities for independent practice.

Overview of a Day's Reading or Writing Workshop

WORKSHOP COMPONENT	TIME FRAME	LOGISTICS	TEACHER	STUDENTS
MINILESSON	Less than 10 min.	The teacher gathers students in the meeting area next to their partners	Whole-group instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connection • Name the teaching point • Teaching • Active Engagement (guided practice) • Link to the work students will do 	Listening, then actively engaged in applying new learning
INDEPENDENT READING AND WRITING CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK	35–45 min.	Students find comfortable spots to read or write	One-on-one and small-group teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulate • Observe • Question • Listen • Coach • Demonstrate • Reinforce the minilesson • Encourage 	Practicing strategies learned throughout the unit, working independently or with partners
MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING	3–5 min. (during independent reading and writing time)	Students' eyes are on the teacher	Extends the minilesson or reminds students of ongoing habits	Pausing to reflect, then refocusing to resume reading or writing
SHARE	3–5 min.	The teacher gathers students in the meeting area or calls for their attention while they remain at their reading or writing spots	Sets students up to share and celebrate the work they did that day	Sharing their learning with partners or the whole group

A Framework to Connect Learning from Unit to Unit and Grade to Grade / Reinforce and Extend Prior Learning

The Learning Progressions that undergird the Units of Study in Writing are cohesively organized to help teachers see ways to teach toward big goals. They offer a clear map of what writing development looks like, grade by grade and level by level.

Minilesson

BEND 1

Elaborating on Reasons by Providing Evidence

CONNECTION
Explain that to spark change, supporting your claim with reasons alone is not enough. Convey the importance of providing evidence.

"There are so many important changes you want to make, here in our school." I gestured toward our class. "What Could Make Our School a Better Place?" chart and read aloud a few examples. "New lunch options in the cafeteria, other activities at gym, more books with characters you can relate to. These are all such important topics."

"To spark change, you'll need to be as convincing as possible. Would it be enough to say, 'We should do other activities at gym because we always play the same things. Kids would be so excited for gym if there were more choices. Okay, thanks, bye.'? Definitely not convincing! To really win an argument, you have to say more than just a few reasons. And you need to provide evidence to support your claim so readers know why you think the way that you do."

♦ **Name the teaching point.**

"Today I want to teach you that argument writers do everything they can to convince their audience. They not only add lots of reasons, but they also say more about each of those reasons by providing evidence. Evidence can be examples, facts, quotes, or even personal mini-stories that support reasons, and ultimately, the claim."

I added the a new sticky note to the "How to Write a Convincing Speech" anchor chart.

TEACHING
Elicit students' help to elaborate on a reason by providing evidence. Suggest that they choose evidence that will help support their claim.

"You already know that when you teach someone information about a topic, it's important to include specific details and examples. The same thing is true when you're trying to convince someone of something. So let's try to make our argument for more choices at gym more convincing. Here are two reasons." I revealed a chart where I had written a claim and two reasons.

We should do other activities at gym.

- We should do other activities at gym because we always play the same things.
- Kids would be so excited for gym if there were more choices.

"To make this argument more convincing, it will help to give evidence, or examples, to explain each reason. So what kinds of activities do you do over and over? It'll help to list the activities that are especially boring to make this reason extra compelling. Make a list of examples with your partner. I'll listen and add them here." I listened in as kids talked, quickly jotting a few examples on the chart. After a minute, I called the group back together.

We should do other activities at gym because we always play the same things. For example, we always have to do jumping jacks and kickball. Also a lot of gym is just running back and forth.

ANCHOR CHART
Say more about each reason. Give evidence!

Units of Study in Writing: Grade 3: Unit 2, Bend 1, Session 6

These pages share just a few examples of the ways skills and strategies are introduced, practiced, reinforced, and deepened within each unit, across each grade, and from grade to grade.

Skills Are Introduced...

In Grade 3, students are introduced to the importance of evidence and will bolster their argument writing by elaborating on their reasons with evidence.

BEND 1

Session 6

"Wow! Those gym activities do not sound exciting at all. I know you have fun at gym, but you really found a way to make it sound boring. Argument writers don't just give any old evidence. Instead, they choose the strongest details that will especially support their claim. That's what you've done here."

ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT
Set up partners to write-in-the-air, supplying evidence to support the next reason.

"Now, partners, do that same work to say more about the next reason. 'Kids would be so excited for gym if there were more choices.' What kinds of choices should be offered instead? Write it 'in the air,' saying the exact words you'd write in your speech. Remember to use linking words like *for example* or *also* to say more. Ready? Go!"

"Writers, you're giving these reasons so much more power by giving examples that will help convince others. Here's some of what I heard." I read aloud, emphasizing the linking words to support structure.

Kids would be so excited for gym if there were more choices. For example, some kids can't do jumping jacks. Kids might be happier if they could choose between doing yoga positions or jumping jacks during the warm-up. Also, some kids prefer dancing or martial arts instead of sports.

"Do you see how these reasons and evidence work together to make an argument extra convincing?"

LINK
Channel students to reread their own speeches to consider the evidence they can add to support their reasons.

"Writers, take out the speech you drafted in the last session and find one of your reasons. Then reread and think of a piece of evidence or two you could add to say more about that reason. Touch the page and say the words you'll add to say more. You might use linking words to add on." I gestured toward the "Some Linking Words and Phrases Argument Writers Use" chart. "Do that now." I moved around the meeting area, coaching students to elaborate.

Then I voiced over, "Once you say more about one reason, say more about your next reason. Give an example! Write it 'in the air.'"

"Wow, you have lots of ideas for ways to say more about your reasons and to make your arguments even more convincing. Luckily, our writing center is stocked with the revision tools you'll need to revise your speeches. I bet you'll grab sticky notes or revision flags and some tape to add on to those pieces of evidence. I can't wait to see what you do! When I call on your table, head to the writing center to find the tools you need. Then get started on those revisions!"

Some Linking Words and Phrases Argument Writers Use

When you want to add a reason	When you want to add a reason that supports your claim	When you want to add on
• One reason ...	• For example ...	• In addition ...
• Also ...	• Another reason ...	• Some other ...
• And ...	• According to ...	• I could ...
• And last ...	• In a hurry ...	• I could ...

Units of Study in Writing: Grade 3: Unit 2, Bend 1, Session 6

Minilesson

Using Analytic Thinking to Link Evidence to the Claim

CONNECTION

Tell a personal story about a time you gave evidence, but did not show how that evidence connected to your reason as a way to illustrate the importance of analysis.

"Writers, when I was your age, I wrote a speech that I delivered to my parents arguing that our family should get a kitten. One of my reasons was that kittens don't require all that much work to take care of them. And I gave what I thought was a really convincing example—do you want to hear it? I said, 'Kittens don't require that much work. You feed them a few times a day and clean out their litter box about once every day.' Fourth-graders, I paused there, expecting my parents to be totally convinced! Instead, my mom looked at me and said, '... And?'"

"I was bewildered! What did she mean, 'And?' Get this, writers—this is what she said to me next: 'What I mean is... so what? How do feeding and cleaning a litter box every day show that kittens are not that much work?'"

"It was then that I realized something important, writers. Essayists may have evidence that seems super-obvious to them, but won't always seem obvious or even very convincing to their audience. In fact, essayists always need to ask themselves, 'So what?' after each piece of evidence they include. When I asked myself, 'So what?' I realized I needed to explain why that bit was important or relevant. I went on to say that compared to a puppy—who needs multiple walks and training on top of feeding and cleaning—taking care of a kitten is a piece of cake!"

"Writers, for your evidence to have an impact on your reader, to convince them, it's important to explain why each piece of evidence is important to the claim in your essay."

◆ Name the teaching point.

"So, today I am going to teach you that essayists need to explain why they have included each piece of evidence and show how that bit of evidence links back to their claim."

TEACHING

Invite students to reread a body paragraph of your essay, checking for evidence that needs to be linked to the claim. Introduce phrases for doing this.

"Let's reread one of my body paragraphs—perhaps the one supporting the idea that a Welcome Club could help new kids make friends—and check to see whether I have linked each piece of evidence back to my reason, and to my claim. We need to be sure I've clearly explained how each bit of evidence proves my point." I pulled out my drafting booklet and turned to the page that held my second body paragraph.

"Read along with me and look for places where I need to do this. Give a sideways thumb if you see a place where the evidence is just plopped there, disconnected with the claim. Then, in a minute you'll get a chance to try this with your essay." I displayed and read the beginning of the second body paragraph of my essay.

More importantly, our school should make a Welcome Club because it would help new kids make friends when I moved, everyone already had a group of friends. At lunch I would sit at the table just listening. One time, a kid told a joke, and I laughed. Then, everyone stopped

The concept of "linking together" pieces of an essay (or of another genre of writing) is one that students will encounter again and again. It's worth developing hand gestures (perhaps two linked hands) to represent this concept, using that gesture whenever you return to this concept from now on.

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GRADE 4 ◆ BOXES AND BULLETS

Deepened...

In Grade 4, students practice analytic thinking and learn how to make their argument writing even more convincing by explaining the importance of each piece of evidence and how it links back to their claim.

Minilesson

Acknowledging Different Points of View and Responding to Counterclaims

CONNECTION

Help students understand why it is important to respectfully acknowledge the points of view of others, while also talking back to them.

"Writers, will you think about a time when you got involved in an argument with someone whose views on a topic were really different from yours? Maybe you disagreed about politics, a book, a movie, a sports team. Here's my question: Did the conversation feel okay even though you disagreed?"

"Sometimes you can have these conversations, these disagreements, and everyone feels okay. But other times, these conversations really don't work. This often happens when one person acts as if the other is totally wrong to have a different opinion. When two people refuse to even hear each other's sides of the issue, both people can end up furious at each other. But the important thing for you to know is that conversations between people with different opinions can go well, and that is most apt to happen if people respectfully discuss the ideas and issues.

"I'm telling you this because it turns out that it's very hard to convince readers of an idea—or even to get them to consider your idea—unless you respect the fact that they might think differently from you. And you can acknowledge their different opinions with respect while still holding onto your own opinion. It can even help to consider how even your own thinking might shift a bit as you listen respectfully to another opinion."

◆ Name the teaching point.

"Today, I want to remind you that some readers will probably have different points of view on your topic. To write an effective argument, writers need to acknowledge the views of others and respond to their arguments with respect, even while you disagree with their views."

TEACHING

Role-play to show what not to do, then show how you could instead have respectfully considered—and refuted—a counterclaim.

"Can you imagine that some people disagree with my idea that teachers should bring their own dogs to school because they think school should be work, not fun, and they think the dogs will distract kids from focusing on their work?"

"I'm getting ready to say to those people, 'You are wrong. You want school to be all work? You are coldhearted and you don't know anything about how to support learning...'"

I slapped my hand over my mouth, rebuking myself. "Wait, that's not being respectful. Let me try again and this time, to be more respectful, I'm going to use this chart," and I tapped the chart, "To Consider and Respectfully Talk Back to Conflicting Ideas."

"Let me go back to the initial argument. I'll repeat it and then add on, using the prompts in one of these boxes." I wrote-in-the-air:

To Consider and Respectfully Talk Back to Conflicting Ideas:

"Some might say... I understand this because... but I still argue that..."

"Some people might disagree saying... That concern makes sense but I think..."

"You might argue... I can see why you... but I still respond to that by saying..."

This could be a good time to reference a shared experience—a time when a disagreement either did or didn't go well in your class. Just make sure to move quickly into the teaching point of the session. You don't want kids to get sidetracked by an old argument.

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GRADE 5 ◆ RESEARCH-BASED ARGUMENT

Units of Study in Writing: Grade 4: Unit 2, Bend III, Session 5

Extended and Applied in New Ways...

In Grade 5, students learn that part of writing an effective argument is acknowledging the views of others and responding to counterclaims.

Units of Study in Writing: Grade 2, Unit 3, Bend II, Session 7

A Framework to Support Teachers and Build Their Capacity

The Units of Study offer a framework for powerful reading and writing workshops—and much more. Opportunities for on-the-job professional learning are embedded throughout the units, teaching teachers the “why” and “how” of effective instruction. Through regular coaching tips and detailed descriptions of teaching moves, essential aspects of instruction are underscored and explained at every turn. The professional development provided within the Units of Study can be further enhanced in many ways by offerings from The Reading & Writing Project at Mossflower (RWP-M), including the following:

Office Hours with Lucy Calkins

Teachers and administrators can receive help and advice directly from Lucy Calkins during these live, online conversations. During each session, Lucy and Staff Developers respond to questions from participants about the reading and writing workshop and offer practical advice on how teachers can raise the level of their practice and how administrators can support effective implementation of Units of Study.

Units of Study Conference Days

These one-day conferences offer detailed support in the foundations of reading, writing, or phonics workshops, including ways to unpack units of study, teach minilessons, lead small-group work, and plan assessment-based instruction. <https://mossflower.com/units-of-study-day/>

RWP-M Institutes

Institutes provide an immersive experience in the teaching of reading, writing, and phonics. Participants study methods and plan curricula, revitalize their thinking, and most importantly, learn ways to help students to lead rich and literate lives. These are hosted virtually and in person across the world. <https://mossflower.com/events/>

Homegrown Institutes (4–5 Days)

Homegrown Institutes are 4–5 consecutive days of on-site professional development tailored to the priorities and goals of a school or district. <https://mossflower.com/homegrown-institute/>

On-Site Teacher Professional Development

On-site professional development (PD) is the most popular way for schools and districts to partner with RWP-M for yearlong professional development to support literacy instruction. Typically, this option includes at least five days of school-specific professional development for each grade band: K–2, 3–5, 6–8, and/or 9–12. Across these days, Staff Developers work shoulder-to-shoulder with teachers, studying their students’ reading and writing, responding to teachers’ goals and questions, and demonstrating best practices in literacy instruction. Staff Developers also collaborate with school leaders to understand the school’s priorities and goals and align PD to those goals.

<https://mossflower.com/annual-professional-development/>

THE Reading & Writing Project AT MOSSFLOWER

About The Reading & Writing Project at Mossflower:

The Reading & Writing Project at Mossflower was created out of the pioneering work that Dr. Lucy Calkins began over forty years ago. Inspired by her research, she developed innovative curricula and methods that transformed the way children learned to write, adapting the collegiate and professional-level “writing workshop” model for younger students. Today, RWP-M remains deeply rooted in this experience, where Dr. Calkins and her team of experienced educators author the Units of Study in Reading, Writing, and Phonics for grades K–8, and several series of engaging decodable texts. More than authors of curriculum, at its core, the Project is a community of practice, a think tank, and a professional development organization dedicated to working with schools and educators to empower students to become what we have always known them to be: proficient and enthusiastic writers, readers, and thinkers.





See more Units of Study in Writing at
UnitsofStudy.com

