



***Making Memoir Meaningful...
Implementing Memoir Writing in Grades K-2***

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Bain Elementary School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
writing in grades K-2

Keywords: memoir, writing, writing workshop, writing process

Teaching Standards: See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

Synopsis: This unit will use writing techniques and activities to teach students how to write properly and go through the writing process. Students will learn about memoir through writing exercises, read aloud and making personal connections to create strong, meaningful, writing pieces. We will focus on best practices in writing, research based strategies, conferring and providing feedback to students throughout the writing process. We will begin with an introduction to writing by creating and using daybooks on a regular basis. Students will work on different activities structured around making connections and discovering strong topics to write about. Students will also learn more about themselves and their lives in the process. As a final activity, they will be able to create a published piece of memoir writing to share with others. This unit is multifaceted and can easily be adapted for older grades.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 20 students in my first grade classroom as well as sharing this unit with teachers on my grade level and the kindergarten and second grade team for usage in their classrooms.

I give permission for the Institute to publish my curriculum unit and synopsis in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.

Making Memoir Meaningful... Implementing Memoir Writing in Grades K-2

Nikki Guevara

Introduction

As a student in my educational journey through elementary, middle and high school, I remember loving to write. I wrote in diaries, journals, notebooks, etc. I remember using writing as a tool to express how I felt at that time. Writing was the “screen time” of my day. It was a way to have conversation with friends, classmates and siblings. I don’t remember having a “voice” or writing a certain way...I just wrote. It was therapeutic and allowed me to express my thoughts, feelings, events, questions and much more at an early age.

As a first grade teacher, the concept of writing is fairly common to these students. Although they are not expert writers, they have experience with using the writing tools and completing a product. In this unit, we will discuss the concept of memoir writing and use various picture books as literature connections to memoir that are written in a first-person narrative style. This unit will include various activities to incorporate writing and literacy in a cross-curricular unit for first graders. This unit could also be adapted for older grades.

While attending the seminar, "Exploring Memoir" led by Brian Kissel from The University of North Carolina in Charlotte, I began to realize how I could use this topic and style of writing in my first grade classroom. We will focus on the meaning of memoir, the style of writing and create a finished product of a written and published memoir along with other activities based on the exposure to different types of memoir picture books. These activities will be used to promote writing abilities while incorporating literacy skills in reading and writing.

Throughout this seminar, we have learned how to teach memoir in the classroom. We have focused on important objects, events, places and people to create interesting and meaningful memoir pieces. We have completed daybooks and journaling as a way to write every day and express our thoughts, feelings, memoirs and ideas. We have also experimented with digital storytelling, through the use of iMovie, as a way to incorporate technology in writing. I will use these activities and exercises along with our writing objectives to teach first graders about writing memoir to enrich and challenge students.

In first grade, students focus on writing narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequences events, including some detail regarding what happened. They are expected to use temporal words to signal event order and provide a sense of closure. We will use this objective while incorporating memoir pieces and focusing on the writing

process. I will use literacy activities of reading and writing to create a unit promoting the topic of teaching memoir in the classroom. We will focus on the following topics:

- * Write narratives to develop real experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details and well-structures events.
- *Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English including capitalization, punctuation and spelling when writing.
- *Using technology to produce and publish writing.
- * Read grade level text with purpose and understanding.

I plan to make this curriculum unit available for other teachers at my school and beyond in order to promote memoir writing and children's literature that is told in first person point of view. Students will have the ability to create writing pieces while focusing on objectives to create a well-rounded, conscious writer while having opportunities to express themselves and share important events from their lives.

My goal is to use the information presented and taught from the seminar to teach and scaffold information for students as they participate in various writing and literacy activities. Since first graders are learning to read and write, this unit will be useful as students are learning how to create writing pieces and respond to literature. The end result would include students understanding what memoir is and looks like in writing and in picture books. After information is presented to students in the form of teacher-led material, students would use that information with the help of guided instruction, opportunities to create on their own memoir piece and incorporating technology in writing. This curriculum unit will assist me in the classroom by developing strong writers and readers in first grade.

Demographics

Bain Elementary School is an elementary school serving close to 1,000 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. The school is located in Mint Hill, North Carolina in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School District. This school system is the second largest in North Carolina and the nineteenth largest in the nation.

I am currently a first grade teacher at our school. This is my thirteenth year in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg school district. I am one of seven first grade teachers and teach using the North Carolina Common Core standards. I incorporate various literacy-based teaching methods including: Balanced Literacy, Words Their Way, Making Meaning/Vocabulary program, Guided Reading, differentiated teaching methods, flexible grouping, 21st century skills, technology and current research-based strategies to teach and promote reading skills to reach all students. I have taught first, second and third grade over the past thirteen years. I have experienced the vertical planning aspect by

teaching in a variety of grades. I have seen the developmental process of students *learning to read* in grades K-1 and also *reading to learn* in grades 2-3.

Teachers at my school use flexible grouping to differentiate student instruction based on individual needs. Balanced literacy programs that include: word work, independent reading, supported reading with the teacher and daily writing to help reinforce academic concepts learned in the classroom. Our school motto is *to challenge and prepare students for future success*.

Technology is constantly used to enhance learning opportunities on a daily basis. Teachers in grades K-5 have access to the following technology: document camera, mounted overhead projector, 11 iPads per classroom (10 for students and 1 for personal teacher usage), as well as a cordless mouse. Teachers also have subscriptions to online magazines such as *Scholastic News* and teaching resources such as *Discovery Education* and *RazKids* to help further promote reading and technology. These are just a few of the techniques and teaching strategies used on a daily and weekly basis.

Rationale/Objectives

This multi-faceted curriculum unit is intended for first graders to help increase literacy skills specifically in listening and reading appropriate memoir text, writing narratives, including appropriate conventions and using technology to publish a piece of memoir writing.

Students will be exposed to various activities in order to fully understand memoir and the connection being made with their lives as well as people and events that are a part of their lives. The meaning of memoir will be taught as students attempt to create their own memoir writing pieces after proper modeling through read alouds and teacher scaffolding.

They will have a plethora of writing opportunities to encourage and fine tune their writing abilities. This writing unit is intended for first graders to help master writing skills. Students will focus on these four writing objectives as they learn to become more effective readers and writers.

- *Write narratives in which students recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal words to signal event order and provide some sense of closure.
- *Write narratives to develop real experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details and well-structured event sequences.
- *Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to task, purpose and audience

Specific areas of focus for the unit will be based on first grade writing standards: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing and Conventions of Standard English.

Background Information on Memoir

According to Katherine Bomer in her book, *Writing a Life: Teaching Memoir to Sharpen Insight, Shape Meaning and Triumph Over Tests*, memoir is a mere slice of ordinary life. It is a certain time period, a special relationship, a theme or angle on life written about the author of the pieces. It is a “slice-of-life” story. Memoir interprets experience (1). For young writers, memoir acts as a record of something that has happened. Memoir is capturing and revealing memories in reading and writing.

By directly teaching memoir and various writing strategies, along with modeled reading skills and thinking aloud with the read aloud, students can increase his or her reading and writing abilities in and out of the classroom setting. Deborah Dean discusses in her article, “Teaching Genre Concepts”, how it is important for students to understand that writing is not all the same (2). Writing accomplishes different tasks. She also explains that when teaching genre, students should be allowed to investigate the topic. Students can investigate by being exposed and studying memoir picture books.

In this unit, students will investigate the memoir genre, explore its context and examine and analyze text. Students will do this by being immersed in memoir books in order to learn more about this particular genre and see examples of different styles of writing. Students will have discussions on memoir using graphic organizers. They will use graphic organizers to organize ideas when writing memoir by using topics or items to evoke memories. Students will also draft and publish a memoir piece to share with the class.

Some examples of memoir books for students include:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Big Red Lollipop by Rukhsana Khan

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

El Deafo by Cece Bell

In My Momma’s Kitchen by Jerdine Nolen

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges

Thunder Cake by Patricia Polacco

When I Was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox

The genre of memoir is a useful tool in teaching students how to communicate with an audience using specific experiences as a way to express themselves, something that has happened to them or even an idea. Memoir is important to teach because it focuses on the relationship between the writer and a certain person, place or object. Writing memoirs is a beneficial way for a student's writing to come to life. When reading memoir picture books, be sure to include a variety of read alouds including multi-cultural authors to relate to your versatile writers.

When teaching memoir writing, it is equally important to expose students to literature with strong memoir content. This literature can be used as a building block between visual examples in text and students mirroring that style of writing in their own pieces. Use literature as a way for students to learn the story and also to notice specific writing styles. You can also compose your own memoir piece as an example to share with students.

Best Practices in Writing

Writing is a wonderful avenue for students to share their feelings, recall events, express thoughts, ask questions, communicate and even teach. At an early age, students need to be taught the power of writing. As a teacher, you can facilitate this journey in the following ways: teaching why writers write, setting goals, generating ideas, adding more details, publishing and sharing. Brian Kissel's article, *Bringing Lives into Literacy*, explains how teachers are effective teachers of writing when they are immersed in the writing process themselves. Teachers should be writers in and out of the classroom in order to portray a positive sense of writing to students (3). Teachers should also focus on building a writing community in the classroom.

Ralph Fletcher states in his article, "The Writing Cycle", how writing is very complex. It is not a program, but more of a process. The writing cycle is a fluid process for students, weaving in and out of certain areas: prewriting, rough draft, revising, editing and publication. Each process can vary. Students do not have to specifically follow a start to finish program. They are allowed to weave in and out of the writing cycle as it fits best for the individual student. The main stages in Ralph Fletcher's writing cycle are: prewriting, rough draft, revise, edit and publish (4). These will be specifically addressed in the next section. However, here are a few topics for how to successfully create a foundation for writing expectations in the K-2 classroom.

Teach Why Writers Write

The use of an anchor chart is a great visual tool for teaching why writers write (see Activity 1). It is critical for students to build a foundation of why writing is important. Students write to share their ideas and things that are important to them. Writing is also a tool that can help communicate and teach others.

Set Goals

Setting goals for writers is an equally important tool in creating successful writers. Some appropriate goals for students in grades K-2 include: using spaces, capitalization, punctuation, spelling sight words correctly and adding more details in writing pieces. By using a mini-lesson format, these goals can be taught and implemented in the classroom.

Generate Ideas

Generating ideas can often be difficult for young writers. A heart map (see Activity 3) is a great idea for helping students think of topics to write about.

Focus on the Details

The use of transitional words is useful for adding more details. Since details make for a more interesting story, the more details the better. Teaching students how to use temporal words such as: First, Next, Then and Last is a helpful way to add more details to memoir writing pieces.

Publish and Share

Publishing is a beneficial way for students to realize their writing is important. Students writing pieces can be published into final drafts, or even class books to share writing with their peers. Katie Wood Ray explains in her article, *Exploring Inquiry as Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop*, that writing is a tool for learning and as a means to communicate that learning (5).

Creating a Writing Community

Establishing a Positive Atmosphere for Writing

Teachers should create an environment that is respected, positive and encourages community. Literacy should be valued and celebrated in order to establish a positive classroom culture. An inviting classroom that engages students' senses and emotions can also help students feel more comfortable.

Modeling Good Writing

The teacher is an excellent example of a writer in the classroom. Teachers need to model the act of writing for students. This is a great way to promote the writing community in the classroom.

Setting Routines and Expectations

Teachers should set clear routines and expectations for writing in order to establish the writing community and encourage students to feel comfortable with writing and expressing their ideas.

Writing Materials

Students need materials to facilitate writing. Such include: a pencil box filled with pencils, crayons, markers, etc. Students would also benefit from a writing journal and a writing folder for keeping materials and published pieces organized. Personal word walls are an added touch to encourage students to spell words correctly.

Using a Variety of Reading Materials to Model Writing

Reading a variety of books and exposing students to a variety of genres is critical for the development of young writers. It is important to expose students to different types of writing as well in order to expand their creativity for their own writing pieces.

How to Teach Writing

According to the International Literacy Association, writing is best taught authentically and in a manner that encourages creativity. Writing is best taught in the following steps: Prewriting, Drafting, Revising/Editing, Rewriting and Publishing (6).

Prewriting

This is a vital part of the writing process. Prewriting is a form of brainstorming and can be any of the following: making lists of words, conferring with the teacher or another student, looking through pieces of literature for ideas or creating graphic organizers. In the younger grades, brainstorming whole-class is beneficial as a way to share ideas. A few free, online graphic organizers include: Essay Map, Notetake and Popplet.com.

Rough Draft

In this stage, students should not be worried about grammar or spelling. They should focus on getting their ideas on their paper. Encourage them to write without hesitation or resistance. This stage is helpful for building their writing fluency as well. No editing tools at this time. As a teacher, you can move from the “sloppy copy” phrase and refer to it as their “best first draft”. In the drafting step, students are encouraged to write independently. Teachers can confer with students independently or in small groups offering encouragement and suggestions for their writing as they prepare to revise.

Revise

In the revision stage, students do not have to revise everything. They are encouraged to revise by: changing the beginning, the ending, deleting parts, changing the tone, etc. Revision is not just correcting spelling and writing conventions. Revision is also not editing. This process is an effort to enhance their writing. As a teacher, you must be patient with young writers at this point. Teachers can also suggest specific areas to revise if students need assistance. Teacher needs to model and teach students how to write so their ideas are clear and to reread their sentences so they make sense.

Edit

The editing stage is where students will pay more attention to their pieces as they go from private to public writing. Editing is geared for the audience reading their work and not for individual students. Conventions and spelling are important, but keep in mind the writing cycle is an opportunity to create writers that write rich and interesting work.

Publish

This stage will look very different depending on what age students you are working with and why your students are writing. There are two types of publishing: informal and formal. For grades K-1, focus on the informal publishing where spelling and grammar do not always have to be perfect. For second grade and up, focus more on formal publishing where attention to detail and conventions are important. For specific publishing pieces, encourage students to think about their audience as they decide what publication they would like to use. Publishing options include: letters, plays, scripts, notes, how-to, etc. Publishing with young writers can be challenging but keep the end in mind and work slowly. Publishing, as stated by the ILA, is a direct connection between a student's lives and literacy development (7). After publishing takes place, a rubric or checklist can be used by teachers to give feedback (See Activity 5). Students can even be taught how to Peer Edit. Teachers can continue to give feedback using other mini lessons, small group lessons and individual conferences in class.

Teaching Strategies

Read Alouds and Daybooks

Some strategies I plan to use include *read alouds* and journaling through the use of *daybooks*. Read alouds will be used throughout the unit in order to model proper reading and writing skills with a focus on memoir. I plan to use books and information appropriate to first grade students in order to promote conversation and collaboration among peers regarding memoir. Read alouds are a great way to share information and create small teaching moments about our topic. Journaling in the form of a composition

notebook, known as a daybook, will be used on a daily basis to integrate writing and recalling and retelling memories of students. Students will have opportunities to write, ask questions, illustrate, etc. in individual daybooks about people, places and events in their lives. The journals will be a place of reflection for future use with writing topics and memory moments.

Turn and Talk

We will often work in partners and small groups for collaboration of ideas. Turn and Talk is a great way to orally discuss thoughts and ideas in a non-threatening way and to learn to work collaboratively with others for the prewriting as well as revision stage. Students will also learn to provide constructive feedback as well as properly peer edit.

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling tools are a great way to incorporate technology with publishing. The site www.storylineonline.com is a great resource for students to introduce them to digital storytelling. There are several websites and Apps available for students to create their own published writing pieces. Free digital storytelling websites include: ACMI Generator, Bubblr, Capzles, Comic Master, MapSkip, Storybird and ZooBurst. Free Apps for Digital Storytelling include: Adobe Slate, Puppet Pals, Sock Puppets, Toontastic, WeVideo and 30hands Starter. You can also create a published piece in the form of a class book through the website, www.studenttreasures.com.

Throughout the unit, students will participate in writing different memoir pieces while *collaborating* with each other and incorporating *personal creativity* with the writing process. This unit will be a beneficial way to promote *cooperative learning* and *engaging students* in writing as well as *integrating across the curriculum* for an ultimate goal of *increasing reading abilities, promoting reading and writing development* and *setting a foundation* for future success in reading as they become more comprehensive and expressive writers.

Classroom Activities

The classroom activities will be centered around incorporating writing in the classroom. They will be used to promote a sense of community in the classroom as well as a comfortable and safe environment to share writing pieces and publications.

Activity #1 Why Writers Write

Objective: In this activity, students will be taught why writers write. Teacher will create a graphic organizer of why writers write and then transfer that to an anchor chart for the classroom. Students will learn about why writing is important.

Background Information: Graphic organizers help promote organization and can provide students with a framework for identifying topics, information and ideas efficiently. Anchor charts are a great resource to keep in the classroom to reference.

Introduction: Teacher will explain that writers write for a variety of reasons: to express thoughts, to share experiences, to tell about something they love, to ask questions, to teach, to tell about important events and also they write about things they love.

Activity: The first activity will be a teacher discussion about why students write. Teacher can take ideas from students but focus on the topics above for why writers write. An anchor chart will be created for classroom use (See Figure 1).

Closure: Students will reference the anchor chart during writing workshop.

Extension: A smaller version of the class anchor chart can be printed for individual visuals in their writing journals.

Activity #2 Daybooks

Objective: In this activity, students will be introduced to Donald Murray's idea of a daybook for daily use in writing for writer's workshop.

Background Information: Donald Murray created the idea of a daybook for students and their writing. Murray explained how writers use daybooks to make lists, capture ideas, compose drafts and to play with writing. Daybooks are a tool to help students understand how to coordinate and organize their writing. Daybooks create a place for students to write without reservation.

Introduction: Students will be introduced to the topic of daybooks. They will be instructed to bring in photos or images that are special to them in order to decorate their notebook that will be used all year long. It will be a place for daily writing.

Activity: Students will decorate and organize a notebook (composition or spiral) and refer to them as daybooks because they will be writing in them daily. Decorations include pictures, visuals, artwork, stickers, etc. The cover decorations will help students create ideas for memoir writing when writing about their lives (See Figure 2).

Closure: Students will share their decorated daybooks with their peers.

Extension: Students can use daybooks across subject areas for writing and reflection.

Activity #3 Heart Maps

Objective: In this activity, students will create a Heart Map that will help them identify what is important to them as a reference for writing topics.

Background Information: Students will identify people, places and things that are important to them. This will help when students need inspiration for writing during writing workshop.

Introduction: Students will be introduced to a Heart Map and given instructions on how to complete it. Heart Maps are a wonderful visual for organizing topics and ideas to write about. They can be color coded if desired. Students can write words, images or sentences in their Heart Maps (See Figure 3).

Activity: Students will complete a blank Heart Map with people, places and things that are special to them or important in their lives. Students will fill up their Heart Map with important topics in their lives they can write about.

Closure: Students will share their Heart Maps with peers. They will have opportunities to compare and contrast their ideas with their fellow classmates.

Extension: Students will cut and paste the Heart Maps in their writing journals.

Activity #4 Writing about Our Lives

Objective: In this activity, students will begin memoir writing. They will use photos or items from home and write about them to practice writing in this type of genre.

Background Information: Students will be taught the characteristics of memoir writing. It is a memory, written in first person, based on the truth, reveals feelings of the writer, has meaning and is focused on one event.

Introduction: Students will be introduced to memoir writing through the use of read alouds prior to the writing activity. Some possible read alouds include:

Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No-Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst

Big Red Lollipop by Rukhsana Khan

Brown Girl Dreaming by Jacqueline Woodson

El Deafo by Cece Bell

In My Momma's Kitchen by Jerdine Nolen

Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Through My Eyes by Ruby Bridges

Thunder Cake by Patricia Polacco

When I Was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant

Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox

Activity: Teacher will begin by choosing appropriate read alouds to introduce the memoir genre. With teacher direction and modeling, students will notice the characteristics of memoir writing as they prepare to write memoir themselves. Students will use an object or picture of their choice to write their first memoir. Students will focus on what memory is evoked from the object. Students will write in their daybooks in this particular genre, memoir, while focusing on the characteristics of memoir as mentioned previously.

Closure: Student will go through the writing cycle with this piece and decide how they would like to publish them (See Figure 4). This mini lesson can be repeated using different objects.

Extension: Students will share their pieces with their peers and feedback will be given through the use of a rubric (See Figure 5).

Activity #5- Creating a Timeline of Your Life

Objective: In this activity, students will complete a timeline of their lives using pictures.

Background Information: Timelines are a great visual for information. A timeline of a person's life is an instrumental tool in the memoir genre. Chronological order is important in this type of visual publication as well.

Introduction: Students will bring in pictures, put them in order and create a timeline of their life. They will reflect on memories and important events in their lives as they create this individual project.

Activity: Students will organize, put in order and compose a timeline of their life. Students will use dates, descriptions and provide notes on certain events and memories in their life. They will think about when events happened, where they happened and why that specific event is important to them. Students will cut and paste photos and images from their lives on a timeline with descriptions (See Figure 6).

Closure: Students will share their timelines with their peers.

Extension: Timelines will be used for memoir writing prompts. Certain pictures or images will help spark a writing topic.

Activity #6- Creating a Digital Story

Objective: In this activity, students will use one of their memoir pieces to create a digital story.

Background Information: Digital storytelling can be done in a variety of ways. There are several Apps and online websites that are kid friendly and easy to use. Digital storytelling is a wonderful way to showcase writers and their hard work.

Introduction: Students will use a previously drafted and edited piece to take to publication in the form of a digital story. As a teacher, you can decide which avenue to use for creating a digital story.

Apps include:
Animation Desk
Art Maker
Boom Writer
Comic Master
I Tell a Story
My Story

Story Creator
Story Bird

Websites include:
TumbleCloud
Voice Thread
WriteComics
Xtranormal
Zoo Burst

Activity: Students will use a selected memoir piece to create a digital story using an app or website. Students will take place in the process of publication by using this 21st century technique of incorporating technology through digital storytelling.

Closure: Students will share their digital stories with their class or you can invite parents to attend as well.

Extension: More Apps and website resources can be found at:
www.techlearning.com/default.aspx?tabid=100&entryid=5656

Activity #7- Memoir Memories (Creating a Class Book)

Objective: In this activity, students will use one of their memoir stories to create a class book as a culminating activity with learning about this type of genre.

Background Information: Publication is a powerful way for students to feel like real authors. It is a fantastic way to showcase the writing cycle with a final product. Class books also encourage community, collaboration and fluency by reading and rereading what students have written as they are placed in your reading center or on display for students to access.

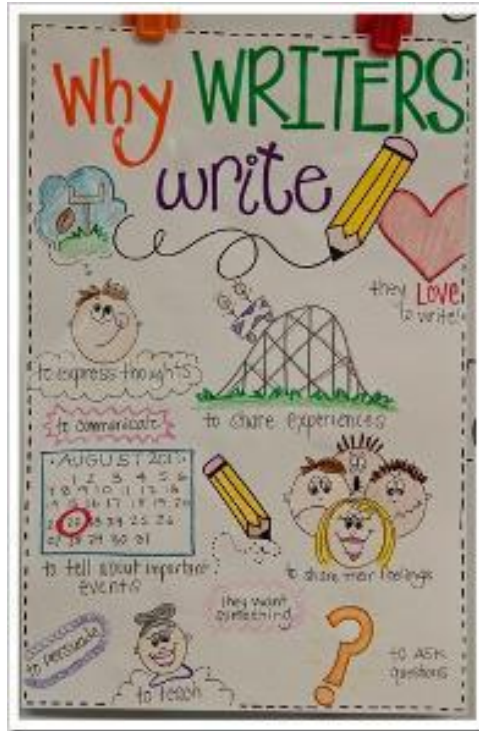
Introduction: Students will be introduced to the topic of publication. Students will use a previously drafted and edited piece to take to publication in the form of a class book. As a teacher, you can decide which avenue to take for this activity. The website, studenttreasures.com is a great resource for creating a well-made, professional style class book (See Figure 7).

Activity: Teacher will facilitate the process of compiling student work and submitting it through the website studenttreasures.com for compilation into a class book.

Closure: Students will collaboratively read a copy of the class memoir book and share their memoir stories as a celebration of memoir writing.

Extension: Students can each receive their own copy of the book if desired through the website. The books are hardback, professional and a great keepsake for students, teachers and families.

Figure 1-Anchor Chart



Sample Anchor Chart from: http://thefirstgradeprade.blogspot.com/2011/08/writers-workshop-anchor-charts.html?_sm_au_=iVVPK6KK8Jk7J4jP

Figure 2-Daybook

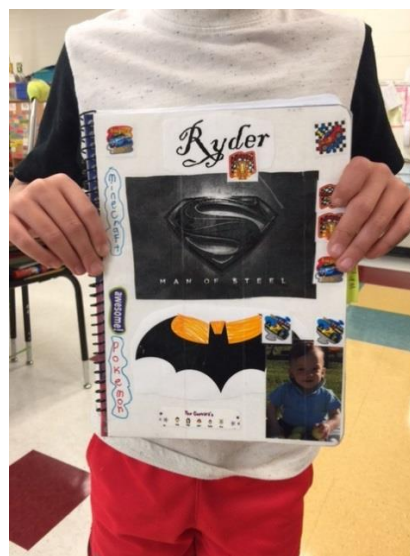


Figure 3-Heart Map

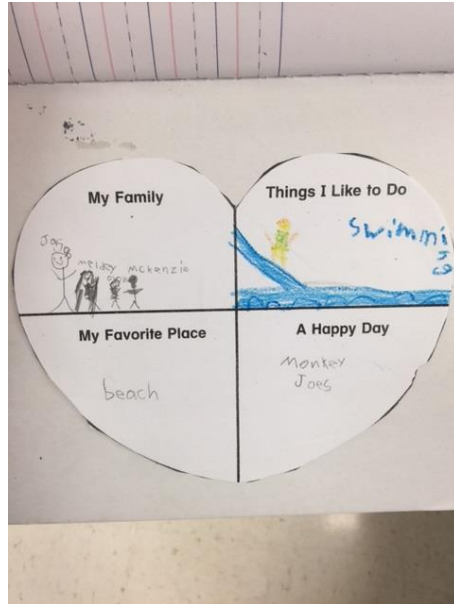


Figure 4-Writing Cycle

The Writing Process is NOT linear. It doesn't move straight from Prewriting to Publishing.

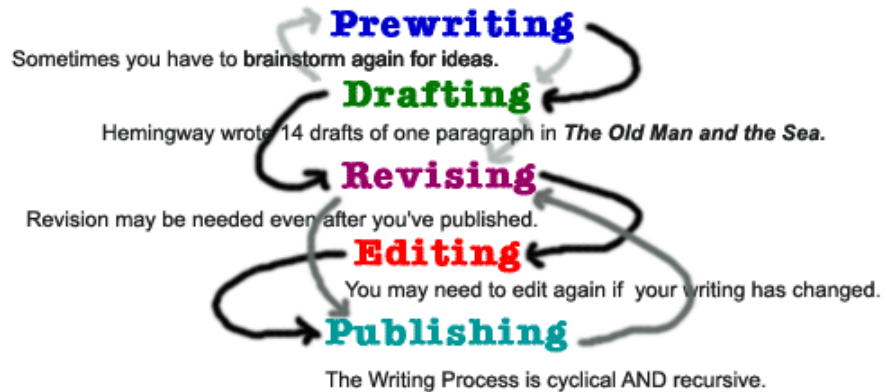




Image from: <https://www.tes.com/lessons/z9ZEq4cBUoQw0w/the-writing-process>

Figure 5-Sample Writing Rubric


_____ 's


writing rubric

	needs improvement	fair	good	excellent
convention Student uses accurate punctuation and capitalization. Student writes most sight words correctly and uses best guess spelling.	1	2	3	4
sentence fluency Student has a variety of sentence lengths. Few choppy or run-on sentences. Sentences are complete and make sense.	1	2	3	4
organization Student has a beginning, middle, and end. Student uses transitional words. Student has an opening and closing.	1	2	3	4
style and voice Student uses interesting words. Shows own personality in appropriate ways.	1	2	3	4
content/ideas Student stays on topic, and is thorough with interesting details. Uses "showing" or "descriptive" detail effectively.	1	2	3	4
writing process Student applied the writing process to create a finished product. Student attempted some editing, and/or use resources such as a dictionary.	1 <small>needed a lot of guidance</small>	2 <small>needed some guidance</small>	3 <small>very little guidance</small>	4 <small>independent writer</small>

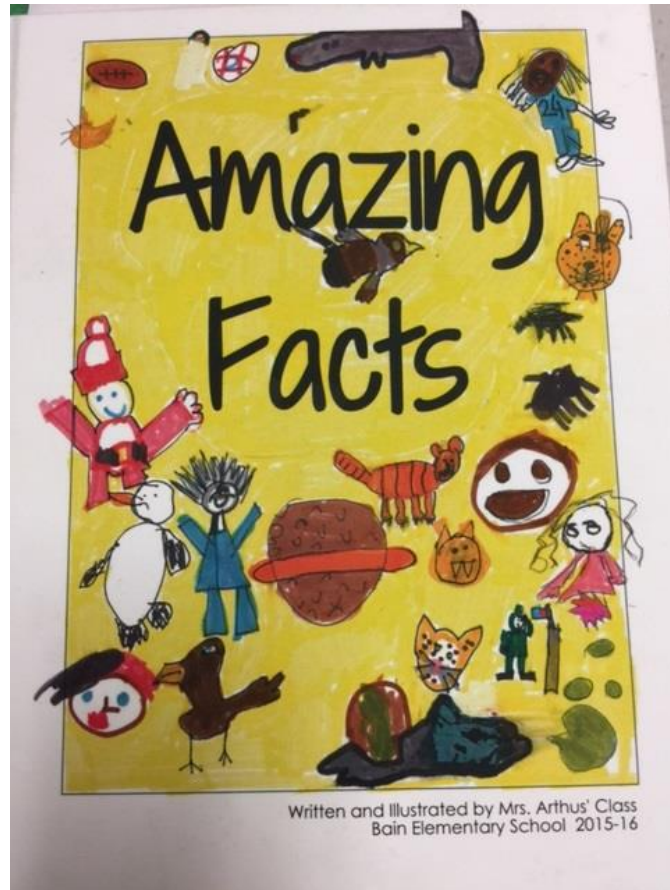
I ♥ WRITING
Total: _____

Free download available at: http://snippetsbysarah.blogspot.com/2012/04/writing-rubric-for-end-of-year.html?_sm_au_=iVVPK6KK8Jk7J4jP

Figure 6-Timeline



Figure 7-Class Book



Appendix 1

Implementing District Standards

My unit would implement various Common Core Reading Standards for Writing in a significant way. The literacy based unit would incorporate writing standards as well as the North Carolina Essential Standards for reading and writing to produce an overall educational and informative unit to writing in young students. Students would have the opportunity to increase their writing skills in order to develop and apply strategies and skills to read and write. Students would also develop and apply strategies to comprehend text that is read, heard and viewed in various forms of literature. Students will be exposed to the Essential Standard to prepare them for upcoming writing topics in their school years.

The North Carolina Standard Course of Study objectives that will be taught in the unit deal with writing:

Writing: CCSS.ELA-Literacy W.1.5-With guidance and support from adults, focus on a topic, respond to questions and suggestions from peers, and add details to strengthen writing as needed and CCSS.ELA-Literacy W.1.2-Write texts in which they name a topic, supply some facts about the topic, and provide some sense of closure.

Specific areas of focus for the unit will be based on first grade writing standards: Text Types and Purposes, Production and Distribution of Writing and Conventions of Standard English.

Notes

1 Katherine Bomer, *Writing a Life: Teaching Memoir to Sharpen Insight, Shape Meaning and Triumph over Tests* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005).

2 Deborah Dean, *Genre Theory: Teaching, Writing, and Being* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2008).

3 Brian Kissel, "Bringing Lives Into Literacy: Teachers Learn about Choice, Audience, and Response through Multigenre Writing," *Reading Matters* 14 (April 2014)

4 Ralph J. Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi, *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001).

5 Katie Wood Ray, "Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop," *Language Arts* 83, no. 3 (January 2006).

6 <http://www.readwritethink.org/professional-development/strategy-guides/implementing-writing-process-30386.html>

7 <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/teaching-elementary-school-students-be-effective-writers>

Resources

List of Materials for Classroom Use

Anchor chart paper and markers

This is used to explain why writer write.

Art supplies (paper, crayons, pencils, markets, etc.)

These are used for activities listed.

Internet access

This is used for digital storytelling.

Read aloud memoir books

These are used throughout the activities listed.

Heart Maps

These are used to help organize writing ideas.

Writing journals

These are used throughout as reflection tools.

Reading List for Students

Bell, Cece, and David Lasky. *El Deafo*. New York, NY: Amulet Books, 2014.

This is a memoir about a girl who is deaf and is leaving her old hearing impaired school and entering a new school where everyone is not deaf.

Bridges, Ruby. *Through My Eyes*. New York: Scholastic Press, 1999.

This is a memoir collection by Ruby Bridges on what it was like dealing with segregation.

Fox, Mem, and Julie Vivas. *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. Norwood, S. Aust.: Omnibus Books, 1990.

This is a memoir about young boy who lives next door to a nursing home.

Khan, Rukhsana, and Sophie Blackall. *Big Red Lollipop*. New York: Viking, 2010.

This is a memoir about Rubina who has a rough time dealing with her little sister at a birthday party.

Nolen, Jerdine, and Colin Bootman. *In My Momma's Kitchen*. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1999.

This is a story about an African American family and their bond and love as a family.

Polacco, Patricia. *Thunder Cake*. Boston: National Braille Press, 2013.

This is a memoir about young girl that is afraid of storms at her grandmother's house.

Rylant, Cynthia, Diane Goode, Ann Durell, and Riki Levinson. *When I Was Young in the Mountains*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1982.

This is a memoir told from the perspective of a young girl about what life was like growing up in a rural mountain area.

Rylant, Cynthia, and Stephen Gammell. *The Relatives Came*. New York: Bradbury Press, 1985.

This is a memoir about family coming to visit and how it changes things.

Viorst, Judith, and Ray Cruz. *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. New York: Atheneum, 1972.

This is a memoir about a boy named Alexander who has a terrible day.

Woodson, Jacqueline. *Brown Girl Dreaming*. New York: Nancy Paulsen Books, an Imprint of Penguin Group (USA), 2014.

This is a memoir collection of poems about what it was like growing up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s.

Yolen, Jane, and John Schoenherr. *Owl Moon*. New York: Philomel Books, 1987.
This is a memoir about a son and his father who go owl hunting.

Annotated Bibliography for Teachers

Bomer, Katherine. *Writing a Life: Teaching Memoir to Sharpen Insight, Shape Meaning and Triumph over Tests*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2005.

This is a great resource for how to teach memoir writing.

Dean, Deborah. *Genre Theory: Teaching, Writing, and Being*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2008.

This is a journal focusing on the topic of teaching genre in the classroom.

Fletcher, Ralph J., and JoAnn Portalupi. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2001.

This resource depicts the writing cycle as evolving and fluid in the classroom.

Kissel, Brian. "Bringing Lives Into Literacy: Teachers Learn about Choice, Audience, and Response through Multigenre Writing." *Reading Matters* 14 (April 2014): 41-45.

This is a wonderful resource for why multigenre writing is useful in the classroom.

Ray, Katie Wood, and Lester L. Laminack. *The Writing Workshop: Working through the Hard Parts (and They're All Hard Parts)*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2001.

This book is helpful for learning about implementing writers workshop.

Ray, Katie Wood, and Lisa B. Cleaveland. *About the Authors: Writing Workshop with Our Youngest Writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2004.

This is a useful tool for implementing writing in young classrooms.

Ray, Katie Wood. "Exploring Inquiry as a Teaching Stance in the Writing Workshop." *Language Arts* 83, no. 3 (January 2006): 238-47.

This resource is helpful in learning more about writing workshop and inquiry.