

A Day at the Valley

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Hidden Valley Elementary

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
Kindergarten, first grade, second grade,
third grade, fourth grade, fifth grade

Keywords: Photography, day in the life, personal narratives, writing, cameras, picture, school, country, Europe, Asia, Africa, Spain, Mexico, India, United States of America, rubric, photograph

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

Synopsis: For this unit, students will be learning how to make a personal narrative that depicts a day in the life of a second grader at Hidden Valley Elementary. For one month, each child will get a chance to take a picture 20 minutes after each hour while they are in school. The students will then get a chance to write a short synopsis of what is happening during the time that the picture was taken. The end result will be students receiving a “4,” based upon the attached rubric (in Materials section of Appendix).

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 50 students in second grade language arts.

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Introduction

Rationale

Time is such a precious thing and can be lost in an instant. With cameras all around us, any moment in time can be captured with a picture and forever tell about that specific moment. It is with this unit that students will be able to tell “their story” of a day in the life of a second grader at Hidden Valley Elementary their moment in history.

Background

I teach at Hidden Valley Elementary, which is in the Northeast Learning Community in the Charlotte Mecklenburg School district. As of October 2017, Hidden Valley currently has 911 students in grades preK-5th. 389 students are African American, 2 are American Indian, 9 are Asian, 473 are Hispanic, 9 are Caucasian, and 19 are other races. 100% of the students receive free and reduced lunch.

Content Background

At Hidden Valley Elementary, we use the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop model. Students go through the process of writing a piece: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing.

The idea of the books the students will be making is to have the reader depict what is happening at that moment in time, based on the picture alone. “Narrative” is a term more commonly known as “story.” Narratives written for college or personal narratives tell a story, usually to some point, to illustrate a truth or insight.

To infants, the world is said to be a great glowing confusion, a bewilderment with no beginning or end. In old age the world can become infuriatingly inexact, and it can refuse to snap back into focus. As the eyes weaken and slowly give way, the world and the people in it grow dim and recede and finally die along with the eyes in an opaque gloom. In that respect, each day rehearses the progress of the eyes from birth to death.

We all know that when we die, our memories go with us. However, imagine being able to share a day in your life, forever! That is what your students will be able to do when they write their narratives.

I have always been fascinated by taking pictures and looking at pictures people have taken. To me, it is an escape from the current reality and a time to reminisce about a period that may have been “better,”; even if it was not, but for that moment that I am looking at it, I become happy.

Two years ago, I lost my older cousin suddenly; I had grown up with him and he was a huge influence in my life. For those first few days and weeks after his death, the memories of him were very vivid - his voice, face, gestures, etc. However, as time passed, so did the clear images and “videos” of Scott in my mind. When this happened, I relied heavily on home videos and photographs of him. Not only did they remind me of Scott, they also reminded me of the happier times and the way I always measure time now, before Scott died.

Lessons

Students will make their own narratives, using photographs that they have taken.

Below are suggested mentor texts to support lessons that you can read with your children. They can be read at the beginning of each lesson, showing the students what some examples of good things to photograph are.

[A Day in the Life of a Zookeeper](#) by Kimberleigh Briggs and [A Day in the Life of Sea Turtles](#) by Cari Meister are two great books that can be read aloud to show students what animals go through in a day.

Before reading the mentor text, show your students images of children in different countries going to school, just as your students do. See Appendix 1 for some website ideas of pictures to use. Before they look at the text, have students think about these questions, which they will answer after viewing the images.

- I notice _____
- I see _____
- I wonder _____
- This takes place in _____. I know this because I see _____.
- I see someone _____.
- I think that person feels _____ because _____.
- I think that person might be saying, “_____”.
- This makes me feel _____.

Have students look at the following picture:



(India)¹

Have students look at the above photo. Probe students by asking questions, provided in the paper, you can have them focus on one image or as many as you feel they can handle. After you have looked at the picture, students can share their answers to the questions posed.

Photographs

Below are some examples of photographs that you can use for the students:



(First Day of School in Qatar)²



(Tokyo, Japan)³

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https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLCLYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=576QJLt8FrHbVM:

3

https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKewi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLCLYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=FNdJVkwhFVfM-:



(Children getting to school in the Philippines)



(Buenos Aires, Argentina)



Pilgrims School - Winchester, UK



Stonyhurst College - Lancashire, UK



Sacred Heart Catholic Secondary School - London, UK



Valley View School, Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya

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[https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLCLYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=xOJ2crkl0sKYdM:](https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLCLYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=xOJ2crkl0sKYdM;)

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https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLCLYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=oLwAcc3r_46TqM



Visavi Deaf and Dumb School, Rajkot, Gujarat, India



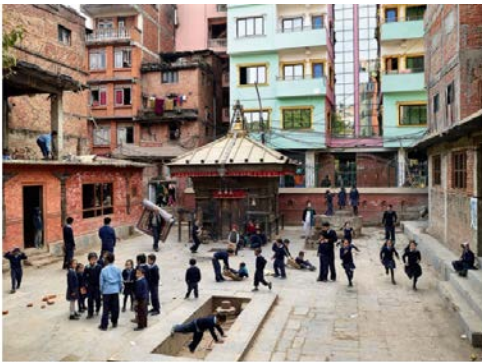
Tileret-Menachem Chabad School, Beitur Illit, West Bank



Hertz High School, Tel Aviv, Israel



Maamounia Elementary Rhinal Area, Gaza City, Gaza



Bhakta Vidyashram, Kathmandu, Nepal



Seishin Jushi Gakuen School, Tokyo



学校 7 Jostai 山形県 日本



School #2003, Moscow



Nativity School, Los Angeles



St. Mary of the Assumption Elementary School, Brookline, Massachusetts



Affiliated Primary School of South China Normal University, Guangzhou, China



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Manacapuru, Brazil. These are children of the Satere Mawe Indian tribe school. They are posing with their teacher.⁷

⁶ <https://www.creativeboom.com/inspiration/playground-photographer-documents-school-playgrounds-across-the-world/>

⁷

https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLCLYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=5STUQ0DdVnsmwM

Lesson Plans

Day 1

Display the image of the students in India. Ask students to think about what they notice in this photograph. Do not give them any prompting; this will allow you to see what your students know about reading a photograph closely.

Have students turn and talk about what they notice and listen to partner discussions.

Have students come together again and ask for answers about what they see. Some possible examples of what you might hear are:

I see students sitting. All students are in blue and white uniforms. They are waiting for lunch. They are in a different country.

Once you are finished with this discussion, explain to your students that they will be making their own books to represent their school day.

Day 2

Display the image of the students on the first day of school in Qatar. This time, make an anchor chart of the guiding questions, in the previous pages, that students can use to discuss what is happening in the photograph.

Days 3-30 (or however long you will be doing the unit for)

Each day, open with a new photograph. You can use the ones that are included in this unit or you can search online for new photographs. Students will become experts at discussing their photographs and gain new perspectives on what they should be photographing.

Another idea, instead of or in addition to the photographs, is you can allow your students to view about what life is like as a second grader. The link for a great video is: https://youtu.be/Dfh_vTUsvnE. This video has pictures that are narrated by students and has different perspectives from which your own students can take photographs.

At Hidden Valley, students in grades 2-5 have one to one technology, making it possible for them to work on their computers to publish their books.

I would suggest setting up a Google Classroom account. From here, you can create an assignment for each student that has personal pictures in it. The students can learn how to format their books (you can use Microsoft Word or Powerpoint; I used Powerpoint with my students) and work on them at their own pace. You could also print the pictures and have students write about the events happening in the pictures on the paper the pictures were printed on (or lined paper).

Below is a table that you can use to show your students' times for their day of taking pictures and the times they are to do it. You can have the student color in the times so they know they have completed the assignment that day.

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
7:20										
8:20										
9:20										
10:20										
11:20										
12:20										
1:20										
2:20										

	Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15	Day 16	Day 17	Day 18	Day 19	Day 20
7:20										
8:20										
9:20										
10:20										
11:20										
12:20										
1:20										
2:20										

	Day 21	Day 22	Day 23	Day 24	Day 25
7:20					
8:20					
9:20					
10:20					
11:20					
12:20					
1:20					
2:20					

When students have completed their day, they can then begin the writing process. As stated previously in this paper, there are five steps to the writing process. Each of your students should go through these before they finish their personal narrative books.

Publishing the Books

When your students are finished with their books, a great idea would be to publish them! There are many different outlets to do this. Some are:

Scribblitt (www.scribblitt.com)

This publishing website advertises a hardcover book for \$24.99. Teachers can also enter a child's story to be featured on the website.

Shutterfly (www.shutterfly.com/photo-books)

This website allows a person to print photos into a book. With this website, students would have to type directly on the webpage.

Blurb (www.blurb.com)

This website actually allows you to sell a book. However, it is a little pricey. For 20 pages, it is \$40.99 and \$.35 for each additional page (for a 10x8 inch book).

If you do not have the funds to do this, students can simply make a Power Point. You could put a picture per slide and have your students type in their narrative. This could also give students a way to present them to families if you had a writing celebration that allowed families to come in and see their work.

Writing Process

When students begin writing about their photographs, have them consider the following steps to analyzing a photograph:

Step One: Students will look closely at the picture for a long time. They should look for the size of people, colors they see, locations of objects, etc.

Step Two: Have students write down what they see, but do not have them write down what they meant by taking the pictures.

Step Three: Are there any questions that someone reading this book may have about this photograph?

Step Four: If their questions could not be answered, your student should think about whether or not they should use that photograph.

Step Five: Have students think about what their photograph is trying to say and who they want the intended audience to be. If they are photographing the class pet, for instance, what are they trying to say? Does the pet encourage students to read more?

Photography Process

Encourage students to use different perspectives when photographing their day. What do they want the reader to see from their day? Allow your students to pause and reflect on their picture when they have completed it. You may also want your students to make notes about their specific pictures and why they photographed what they did and in the perspective that they did, which will make it easier when the students have to write about their photographs.

As your students are taking pictures, have them think about what they want people to see about their life at that moment. Each picture they take should reflect that question.

Below is a rubric I made that enables you can to assess your students on their photography portion.

	2	1
Subject	The subject that is in the photograph is related to the text.	The subject that is in the photograph is not related to the text.
Assignment	The photographs show what happens during the day.	The photographs do not show what happens during the day.

Sharing Process

Students love to share their writing and will be very proud of their finished books. Some ideas that you can use to help facilitate their excitement are:

1. A celebration that invites other teachers and students into your classroom.
2. A “museum display” of writing in which students display their writing on desks and tables; students will get a chance to walk around and view pieces of writing.
3. You can have your students go outside and read their books to visitors.
4. Students can have a coffee house or writing “slam.” You can serve hot chocolate and cookies, creating a cozy atmosphere.
5. You can videotape each of your children reading their books. When these are all put together, you can have a “movie day” in which students eat popcorn and watch the readings.
6. You can have students pretend they are reading around a campfire. Students can bring in flashlights, blankets, etc. and read to a partner (from their class or another class).

Materials

Personal Narrative Rubric

2nd Grade Writing: Personal Narrative Rubric

1	2	3	4
I used capitals randomly.	Most of my sentences begin with capitals.	I used capitals at the beginning of all my sentences, my title and some proper nouns.	I used capitals at the beginning of all my sentences, proper nouns and title.
I didn't use punctuation or used it randomly.	I used correct punctuation at the end of my sentences most of the time.	I used appropriate punctuation at the end of all my sentences and tried some other punctuation.	I used appropriate punctuation throughout my sentences including commas, apostrophes and quotation marks.
I have many words spelled incorrectly including grade appropriate and high frequency words.	Some of my words are spelled correctly but I have many mistakes.	Most of my words are spelled correctly. I have some tricky words spelled correctly.	All of my words are spelled correctly including grade appropriate and high frequency words.
Some sentences are complete thoughts and most have nouns and verbs that do not match.	My sentences are complete thoughts and contain a noun and a verb that might not match.	All of my sentences are complete thoughts are most have matching nouns and verbs.	All of my sentences are complete thoughts and contain matching nouns and verbs.
I didn't write enough about my topic to give my reader a clear picture.	I wrote a few sentences about my topic but didn't use enough details and descriptive words to make things clear.	I wrote a lot about my topic to show my reader what I know and used some descriptive words and details.	I wrote enough about my topic to show my reader what I know and used many descriptive words and details.
1	2	3	4
I did not focus on one topic. I talk about many topics in my writing.	I focused on one topic most of the time and most of my sentences match my topic.	I focused on one topic the entire time and most sentences match my topic.	I focused on one topic the entire time and all sentences match my topic.
The structure of my story is random. I do not have a beginning, middle and end or words that signal event order.	I have a developing beginning middle and end but some of my sentences are out of place. I have some words that signal event order.	I have a beginning, middle and end with opening and closing sentences and/or words that signal event order.	I have a strong beginning, middle and end with strong opening and closing sentences and words that signal event order.
I have no dialogue in my personal narrative.	I tried to use dialogue to show conversation in my piece.	I used dialogue to show conversation once or twice in my piece.	I used dialogue and quotation marks correctly to show conversation throughout my narrative.

My writing is not in my point of view and/or does not include I, me, mine, we, us.	I from my point of view and someone else's My writing sometimes uses I, me, mine, we, us.	I wrote from my point of view and used some words like I, me, mine, we and us.	I wrote from my point of view and used words like I, me, mine, we and us.
I was missing many story elements and details.	I included some of the story elements and used some details.	I included most of the story elements and used many details.	I wrote about who, what, when, where, why and how and used many details.
I did not tell how I felt or thought. during this time.	I told how I felt or how I thought but didn't use any supporting details.	I wrote how I felt and/or thought during this time and used some details.	I included a detailed personal reaction about how I felt and what I thought during this time.

- Digital camera
- Disposable cameras
- Paper
- Selfie stick (for different perspectives for pictures)

Appendix I

Teaching Standards

W.2.3

Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

W.2.6

With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

W.2.8

Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

2.W.3: Write narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

2.W.8: Recall information from experiences or gather information from provided sources to answer a question.

2.L.1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

c: use reflexive pronouns

d: form and use the past tense of frequently occurring irregular verbs

e: use adjective and adverbs and choose between them depending on what is to be modified

2.L.2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

2.L.5: Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

a: Identify real-life connections between words and their use (e.g., describe foods that are *spicy* or *juicy*).

Bibliography

Bendykowski, Katie, *Teachers Pay Teachers*, October 2017.

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/FreeDownload/Common-Core-2nd-Grade-Personal-Narrative-Rubric-765158>

Teachers Pay Teachers allows teachers to download content that other teachers have created and shared. Most of the content is for sale, but some of the content is free. This particular rubric is free. The rubric allows the teacher to grade each book that their students write. In this unit, this rubric is used to assess students on their writing portion of the book.

Briggs, Kimberleigh, *A Day in the Life of a Zookeeper* (Highlights, 2017).

<https://www.getepic.com/app/read/20544>

Get Epic provides free books to educators, parents, and students. This particular book allows the reader to see what life is like for a zookeeper.

Meister, Cari, *A Day in the Life of Sea Turtles* (Highlights, 2017).

<https://www.getepic.com/app/read/11440>

Get Epic provides free books to educators, parents, and students. This particular book allows the reader to see what life is like for a sea turtle.

Santa Barbara City College. *Structure of a Personal Narrative Essay*

<https://www.sbcc.edu/clrc/files/wl/downloads/StructureofaPersonalNarrativeEssay.pdf>

September 21, 2017

This website teaches the reader about how to structure a personal narrative. I used this to find the definition of a personal narrative.

A Picture Is Worth . . . : Close Reading of Photos and Illustrations.

<https://www.pearsonhighered.com/assets/samplechapter/0/1/3/2/013290747X.pdf>

This website has a sample chapter of a book that teaches you how to read a photograph closely. I used this source to look up the questions to ask when doing so.

http://www.augusta.k12.wi.us/cms_files/resources/Writers%20Workshop.pdf This is a district website (August, WI). The homepage website gives a visitor insight into their curricula, which is where the Lucy Calkins Writing Workshop source was found. I used this website to find the personal narrative unit.

Washington Post, *How Classrooms Look Around the World in 15 amazing photographs*. 2017.

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2015/11/13/how-classrooms-look-around-the-world-in-15-amazing-photographs/?utm_term=.9ed960fb2d05

This website lets you look at photographs about different schools around the country. I used this when looking for different photographs to include in my unit.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/analyzing-images> Visited October 24, 2017.

This website allows readers to analyze a photograph in history, using a six step process.

Correll, Robert. *Teaching Kids How to Take Better Photos*. 2017.

<http://www.peachpit.com/articles/article.aspx?p=2416795>.

This website gives readers tips on how to help children photograph the world around them. When I began teaching this unit, I used this website to give my students ideas on how to take their pictures.

Ellkins, James. *The Object Stares Back: On the Nature of Seeing*. 1997.

This book is about the “meaning” of photographs, what they can show someone about something and the effect they can have on a message you may be trying to send. I used this book when I looked how to teach my students photography.

<https://www.creativeboom.com/inspiration/playground-photographer-documents-school-playgrounds-across-the-world/>

These are all photographs of children enjoying the playground in different countries. In my classroom I would use these photographs and discuss what perspective/point of view is being shown.

https://www.google.com/search?q=school+across+the+world&safe=strict&rlz=1C1GGRV_enUS751US751&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwi6_K6nq7fWAhXF5oMKHdNLC_LYQ_AUIDSgE&biw=1366&bih=662#imgrc=oLwAcc3r_46TqM:

This photograph shows children at a school in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I would use this picture to show students an example of how they can photograph their school day.