



Teaching Students to Discover Their Writing Process through Memoirs

By: Janella Booker, 2018 CTI Fellow,
E.E. Waddell Language Academy

This curriculum unit is recommended for:
(Literacy and Writing/ Kindergarten-3rd Graders.

Keywords: memoir, small moments, heart map, Writers Workshop, events, true story, read aloud, conferring, formal conferences, informal conferences, individual conferences, small group conferences, editing, publish, brainstorming, revise, skills conference, publication conference, portfolio conference, genre conference, process conference, goals, conference, timeline.

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

Synopsis: This curriculum unit will teach students how to focus on a small moment in their life and write memoirs expressing their feelings and experiences about events and memories in their life. Most importantly, they will experience and learn that there is not just one of way of utilizing the writing process as they compose their memoirs. Students will use a variety of graphic organizers, writing journal, day book, photos, favorite objects from home to help them put their feelings in writing. Students will be exposed to a variety of picture books, memoirs written by prominent authors, fiction and nonfiction memoirs. Students will learn how to lead during writer's workshop by identifying their individual needs and where they are in the writing process. They will be able to decide whether they need an informal or formal conference. Informal conferences are typically 1 to 2 minutes where the student can check in with the teacher about where they are in the process. Formal conferences are typically 4 to 5 minutes where the student can focus on goal setting, planning, revision, and reflections. Students will also be taught about other conferences that can be utilized during writer's workshop and depending on where they are in the writing process.

I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 16 students in Literacy and Writing.

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Synopsis Continued

They will be introduced and learn when they need to utilize the following conferences, goals conferences, process conferences, genre conferences, skills conferences, publication conferences, and portfolio conferences. Students will also learn and practice the writing process but understand and know that there is not one way to utilize the writing process. Throughout the unit, students will be provided the tools, practice, and opportunities to continuously write a variety of memoirs. They will publish at least two of their written pieces. Students will be given an opportunity to select any of their published memoirs and display them on the bulletin board. At the end of the unit students will have a memoir celebration. Each student will select 2 of their published memoirs and the class will create a multi-page book displaying their memoirs. Students will also include their own illustrations to go along with their memoirs.

Rationale

“There is something delicious about writing the first words of a story. You never quite know where they’ll take you.” Beatrix Potter

I believe everyone has a story to tell, regardless if it is a sad or happy story. Young writers have a lot of memories and experiences floating around in their minds but sometimes they have a hard time putting their memories in writing. Most young writers enjoy and are able to share their stories orally but sometimes have challenges in putting their stories in writing. Some young writers are afraid to write because they would often state “I don’t know what to write” or they have had some negative experiences when they had to write in class. This curriculum unit will provide students with the support, guidance, and structured activities to fully engage them in hopes of students finding that writing is easy, fun, and a way to express themselves. My goal is for all students to engage in the differentiated writing activities that will improve their ability and willingness to enjoy writing. This curriculum unit will allow students to have their writing assignments broken up into manageable parts. In doing so, this allows students to focus on one task at a time and through the conferences during Writer’s Workshop it will allow students to experience feedback in developing their ideas to put in writing. Students will discover their own writing process through the use of memoirs. Memoirs are stories that allow our young writers to focus on a small moment and not the whole story. Memoirs are a way for them to share their experiences, memories, and emotions from their point of view because they are the authors. They will be able to generate more precious memories and experiences after listening to a variety of memoirs written by prominent authors. They will be able to make connections in their life as compared to the memoirs they have read. Discussing, creating heart maps, and maintaining a writing notebook helps students to process their experiences, events, and situations to be able to compose their memoirs. Some students become overwhelmed with the idea of having to write because they feel that the task is too much for them to handle or they immediately feel that they are going to fail. At the end of this curriculum unit students will publish at 2 of their memoirs and create a multi-page book to share with their peers, teachers, parents, and administrators. The book will be placed on display in the school’s media center.

Background

E.E. Waddell Language Academy is a magnet Language Immersion Academy for grades Kindergarten through 8th grade. E.E. Waddell Language Academy is a county wide magnet school with a unique and one of kind program. Our students enter the school in Kindergarten and are immersed in French, Chinese, Japanese, or German. Once the students enter 6th grade they can select a second language than the language they learned in elementary school. A majority of our students remain at Waddell Language Academy until they enter high school. Some of our students are able to speak fluently in 2 to 3 languages by the time they enter high school. Our school is very diverse. During the 2017-2018 school year there were 325 African Americans, 6 Americans Indian, 71 Asians, 286 Hispanics, 65 Multi-Racial, 625 Whites, and 2 Pacific Islanders. There were 935 students at the elementary levels and 445 students at the middle school level during the school year of 2017-2018. This year (2018-2019), we have a population of 1357 with 929 students at the elementary level and 446 in middle school. The student body is very diverse as well: 43% Caucasian, 22% African American, 22% Hispanic, 6% Asian, less than 1% each American Indian and Pacific Islander, and 6% Multiracial.

Unit Goals

- Students will discover the writing process through memoirs (brainstorm ideas, drafting, revising/editing, and publishing).
- Students will be asked to write a variety of memoirs, enhancing their ability to add relevant details, dialogue (voice), and the parts of a narrative (setting, characters, events, and resolution).
- Students will confer with the teacher during writer's workshop but students will determine what type of conference they need to have with the teacher. They will lead the conference instead of the teacher.
- Students will publish at 2 of their memoirs and create a multi-page book. The book will include memoirs from every student in the class. Students will also include their own illustrations to go along with their memoirs.
- Students will write a memoir in a form of a letter where they will select a family member, neighbor, or friend to write to about their most memorable small moment.

Content Background

This curriculum unit is designed to support students in grades Kindergarten through Third grade in the areas of literacy and writing while focusing on memoirs. These lessons will not only focus on memoirs but teaching students how to lead during writing workshop and to utilize the writing process independently. These lessons are aligned with the Kindergarten, first, second, and third grade North Carolina Standards. These lessons can be adjusted to meet the needs of students in grades fourth and fifth grade. There will be a variety of differentiated graphic organizers, rubrics, and anchor charts available to support the students as they write their memoirs. There are going to be many personal narratives shared to help support students with making connections and sharing their experiences, emotions, feelings about different events in their lives especially the events that are not very joyful/positive events. I feel confident that having students learn how to write memoirs will help teachers to get to know their students beyond the classroom. When teachers are able to know about their students' lives they are able to address their needs better.

Most importantly, the students will develop a deeper level of caring and compassion for their classmates and teachers.

Content Research

Benefits of Teaching Memoirs at the Elementary Level

As stated in Camille Pires's article, *Memoir: Magical Moments in Young Children's Lives*, "Young children in their primary years begin their educational journey full of wonder and enthusiasm. This exuberance quickly dulls over the next two decades as many children go through the process of learning. Once confident and courageous about their ability, children as young as 2nd grade begin to feel defeated and stop taking chances. Because of this, their writing skills do not grow at the same pace as their verbal ability, creative thinking, and imagination." Memoirs are a good way to focus on writing and writing to support and help young writers to be creative and use descriptive writing about their own life story.

In elementary school students are exposed to a variety of writing genres, including fiction, poetry, expository writing, personal narratives, but memoirs offers an opportunity to let children explore what they know best, their own experiences about their own lives. Young writers are able to recount those special memories, experiences, events in a thoughtful and reflective way which can improve their writing skills in general as they learn other writing genres. Memoirs can improve young writers writing fluency, sentence structure, punctuation, grammar, descriptive language, dialogue, and creativity. "Students automatically write right where they are and we, as teachers, can push forward from their own natural starting point" (Camille Pires). Memoir is ideal for young writers because they have a lot of memories and life experiences to draw on but the challenge for them are to focus on a small moment instead versus the whole story and determining what's important to them.

Articles That Supports the Writing Process

Let's Take another Look at the Fist: The Writing Process as Discovery by Bob Tierney

This article focuses on different scenarios and mini stories to help teachers understand that students must discover their own writing process. This article gets you to thinking about your teaching methods and style, especially when it comes to differentiation instruction in your classroom. Students are not going to discover the writing process the same. It is important to provide many opportunities and activities to support students with discovering the writing process. Students are provided an opportunity to collaborate with their peers on their writing topics. The goal is for students to generate different questions based on what they have written and be able speak about their writings without having to reference their writings.

The Writing Cycle by R. Fletcher and S. Portalupi

This article focuses on how teachers can support students with discovering their writing process. The goal is for students to find a process that works for them. The process will definitely differ from student to student. Students are going to use different methods as they learn how to complete the steps in the writing process. Allow students the freedom to explore different methods so that they develop their own style. When students have to prewrite before writing their drafts, some students may jot down their ideas by making a list, confer with another student to gather ideas, reading books similar to their writing topics to gather ideas, or some students

may think about their ideas in their head but never formally write them on paper. In this situation all of the students are prewriting. Teachers should not make the prewriting stage a burden for students but show them how it is a way to help them as they write their draft. It is best practice to allow students to decide how they would like to complete the prewriting stage. It is good to have students to be exposed to different graphic organizers. Teachers can use the story map, outline, cluster web, list, etc. Allow the students decide which graphic organizers they are comfortable using independently.

Teachers model for students how to draft their writings using the instructional tool/method when they completed the prewriting stage. Modeling how writing the draft is not a stressful event but this is the time to get all of the ideas into sentences. Reinforce that students should not worry about grammar, spelling, and punctuation because they will be given an opportunity to fix all of their mistakes when they revise/edit their writing. In this article the authors writes that we shouldn't force students to revise but provides alternatives to consider when revising. They are as follows, changing the beginning, change the ending, add a sections, delete a part, reorganize the order, change the genre, and change the point of view, break a large piece into chunks, and the tone. Teachers should allow students to make the decision as to what they need to edit. It is important that students know the difference between revision and editing. It is always a good idea to allow your students to write for at least three to four weeks without pointing out their spelling and grammar errors. Once you introduce and practice proofreading then this will be the perfect opportunity to focus on spelling and grammar. When working with young writers you want to think two types of publishing, formal and informal. Formal publishing involves standardized spelling, grammar, and punctuation. Informal publishing is when the teacher puts students work up on the board exactly as they wrote it, inventive spelling, and their own drawings.

From Workbook to Working Book by Lil Brannon

This articles provides an overview as to why daybooks are beneficial for students. Daybooks is a place where students can store all of their writings until they have published they writings. Students can use sticky notes to divide their daybooks into chapters. If students have difficult using sticky notes as dividers they can create a table of contents in the front of the journal. This helps the students to organize their writings. The daybooks are safe place for students to capture all of their thinking. Students are able to reference their daybooks for ideas when completing writing activities in class. They are able to develop as confident writers.

Bringing Lives into Literacy: Teachers Learn about choice, audience, and response through Multigenre writing by Brian Kissel, Katie Stover, Crystal Glover

This article focuses on teachers are immersed in the area of writing. Teachers will learn the benefits and purpose of Multigenre Writing. This is article was written to focus on college students that are preparing to become teachers. This article provides future teachers with new and creative ideas to implement writing in their classrooms differently than what they experienced. Reading this article will make a person think about their writing lesson, structure of their class during writing, and giving students choices during writing instruction.

Why Teach Memoir? Reasons that will change your teaching and your life by Katherine Bomer

This article focus on the benefits of students writing memoirs. Students are given the opportunity to write about their lives. They are able to be honest and reflect on the different events that has taken place in their lives. Memoirs are an easy way to get students excited about writing because they are writing solely about their lives and experiences. This is a way to get students to break the silence and fear they may have when it comes to writing.

Revision Toolbox, Chapter 4, Structure by Georgia Heard

Chapter 4, focuses on teaching students different genres and identifying some defining qualities of each genre. This chapter focuses on teaching students how to structure their writings by using a variety of strategies. It also focuses on how to develop a good lead by asking a question to get others thinking and wanting to read your writing even more.

Instructional Implementation

Classroom Lessons/Activities

Lesson: Brainstorming

It is beneficial that teachers introduce, expose, and teach students different instructional tools they can use to brainstorm their ideas. Students can use a story web graphic organizer, timeline, memory maps, timeline of life events, and making a list. Examples of the different resources are listed below.

Lesson Focus: Developing an Idea




Resource Materials: 39 Users for a Friend by Harriet Ziefert, 40 Uses for a Grandpa by Harriet Ziefert, Courage by Bernard Waber, writing notebooks, blank copies of a heart map, story web graphic organizer, or memory map.

Guided Practice: Teacher should provide guidance and support to the young writers by providing a lot of scaffolding and modeling. The teacher can read one of the books or generate possible topics ideas (small moments) for writing. Once you decide which tool you are going to use then identify a memory, and write it on the heart map, story web, or memory map. The teacher will select the resource that is going to work best for the group of students you are working with. I would suggest allowing students to utilize all of the resources but at different times throughout the school year.

The teacher will talk in great dealt about the writing topic and using the small moments graphic organizer listed below. The teacher can use different sentences other than the ones inside of the graphic organizer. This will allow students the opportunities to see the difference between a big topic, smaller topic, and a small moment.

Small Moment Anchor Chart:

Writing Topic: Birthday Card

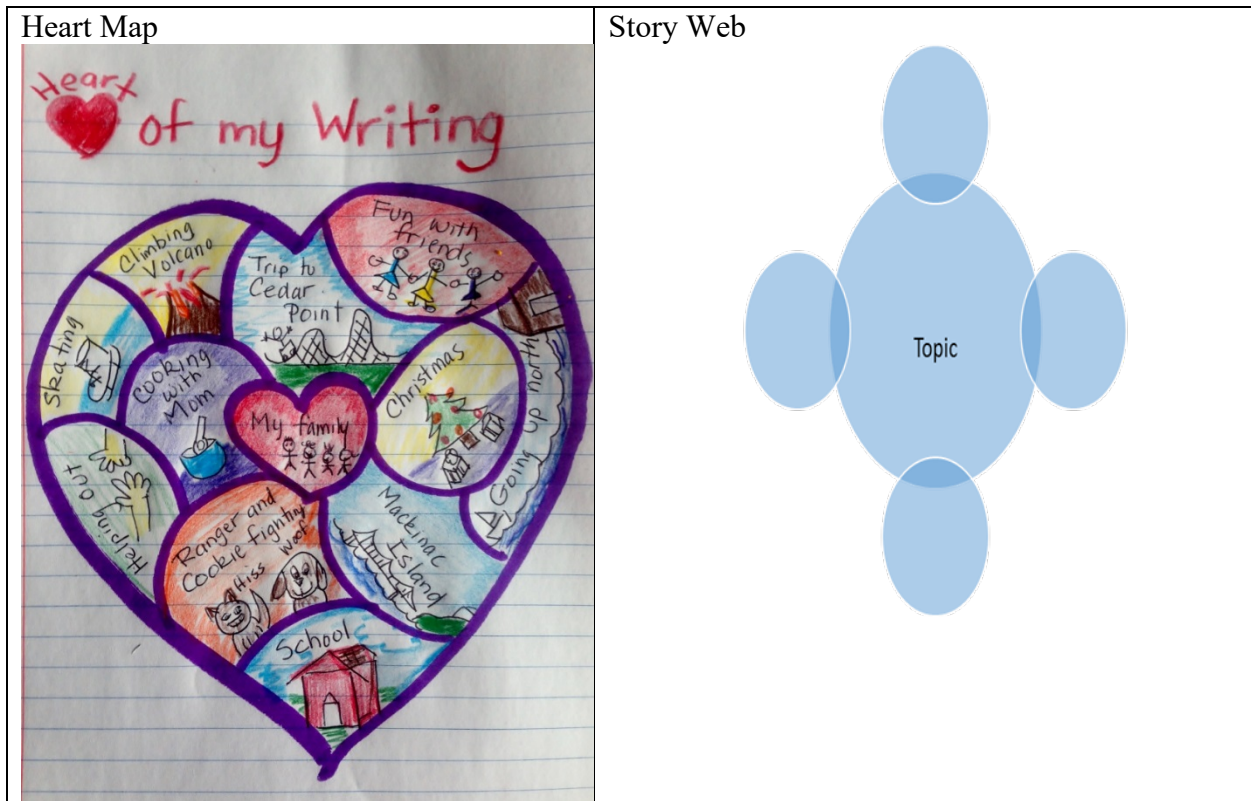
<p>Big Topic</p> 	<p>My mother took me on a trip to Disney World and brought me a lot of presents.</p>
<p>Smaller Topic</p> 	<p>My mother and I rode on 2 rides at Disney World.</p>
<p>Small Topic</p> 	<p>My mother gave me a beautiful birthday card.</p>

The teacher will start generating ideas on one of the resources listed below and jotting down all of the ideas.

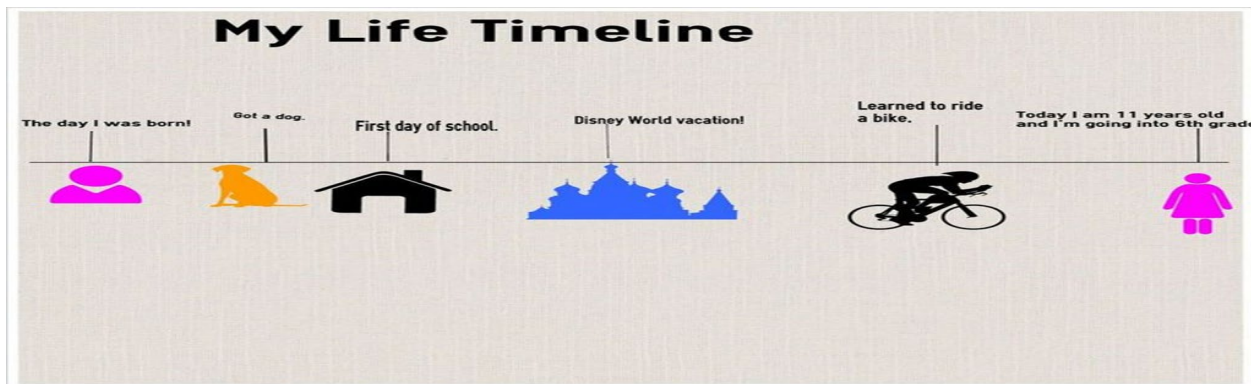
Independent Practice: Students will be given a heart map and document at least 3 to 5 small moments. It is okay to leave many spaces blank because throughout the school year the students will be given an opportunity to add new memories or old memories that would like to write about. Students will use the story web, list, or timeline and start jotting down their ideas. Students can turn and talk to their elbow partner to share their ideas.

Artifacts Gallery: This can be an activity that can be used to document memories and to help with brainstorming. Students can bring photos, artifacts, or personal items (favorite teddy bear, birthday card, bracelet, etc.) and use an index card to write explanations on the back.

Examples/Models:



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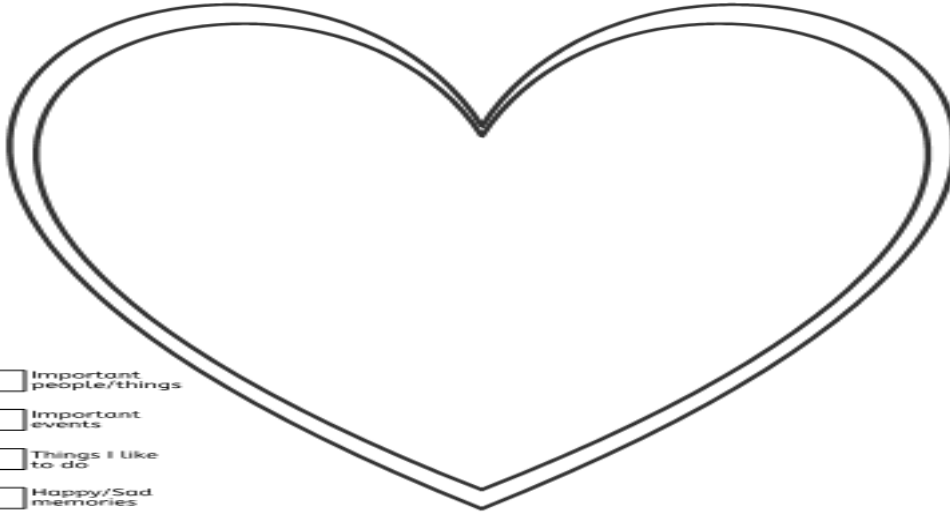
<https://www.thoughtco.com/timeline-activity-for-kids-4145478>

It is beneficial to have the students to insert the dates on the timeline that the events happened.

Templet of Blank Heart Map

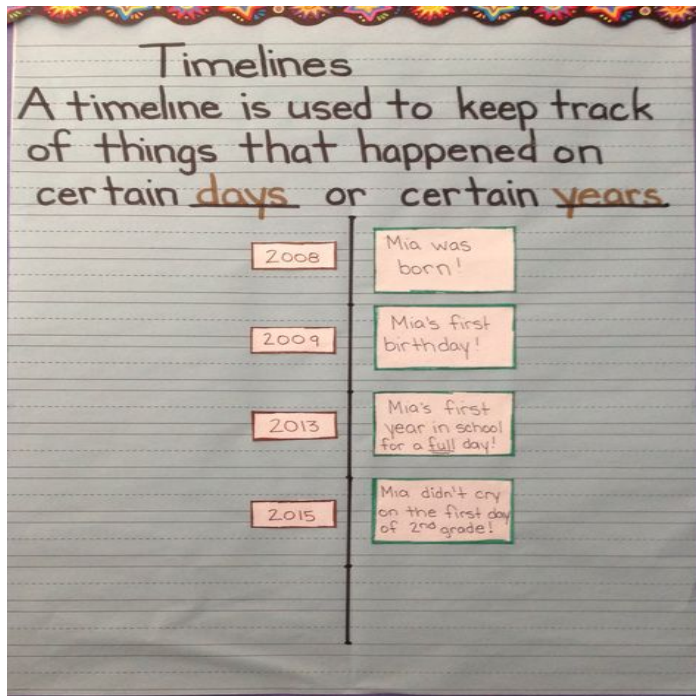
My Heart Map

Directions: Think about the special things in your life. Then jot down words and short phrases about the most important people, places and memories that fill your heart and world.



- Important people/things
- Important events
- Things I like to do
- Happy/Sad memories

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<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/516225176023052434/>

List of Ideas:

Lesson – Brainstorming - Pulling a Topic from a “Grab-Bag” Piece of Writing:

Resource Material: “Me” by Mark, chart paper, marker, writing journal, box, preprinted sentences/writing topics

Lesson Focus: This activity helps young writers to choose writing topics to home and end up with a loose collection of important facts that tell about themselves and their families. This can also help young writers think about their precious memories.

Guided Practice: Teacher read the book “Me” or you can select another book that focus on children making choices. Teacher will have a box with some preprinted sentences listed on them. Model pulling the sentences from the bag and generate ideas you know about the topic/sentence. Teacher write the ideas on the chart paper and ask for students to share their ideas to be added to the chart.

Lesson: Drafting

Resource Materials: Large chart paper, tape, scissors, extra paper, narrative graphic organizer (an organizer that supports the beginning, middle, and end), and writing notebook.

Guided Practice: During a mini-lesson, sit in front your students with large chart. On the chart draw three large boxes side by side labeled beginning, middle, and end. Teacher will put the sheet used to brainstorm his/her ideas on the Document Camera so that students can see that you must use the ideas to write your draft. Teacher can read their draft or read a picture book like *Fireflies!* By Julie Brinckloe. Have students to identify which part was the beginning, which part was the middle, and which part was the end. This activity may be challenging to some students so the teacher must provide a lot of scaffolding. Teacher will model writing the information on the graphic organizer listed below so that students can repeat the same process. Write these questions on a piece of chart paper so that students can reference them as they are writing their drafts. Does my story have a beginning, a middle, and an end? Remind students that should not worry about spelling, grammar, and sentence structure because they will have an opportunity to fix all of their mistakes when they edit/revise their paper. Teacher should model for students what to do if they forget to add a beginning or end to their story by modeling how they can write it on a separate sheet of paper and staple/tape it onto the bottom.

Additional Activity to Use to Teach Drafting:

Resource Material: Three page stapled books.

Give the students a three page stapled book. Have the students to label the first sheet what happened first? The second sheet what happened next? The last sheet what happened last? The teacher will remind students that books have pages and each page gives you a way to think of your story in terms of the beginning, the middle, and the end. Teacher will put up 3 large sheets of chart paper.


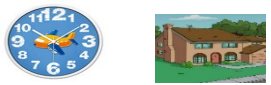
Examples of the Three Page Stapled Books:

What happened first?	What happened next?	What happened last?
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This activity is beneficial for students that have such a hard time with understanding and comprehension to much writing on one page. Sometimes, after students have completed their graphic organizers it could be a lot of information for them to handle/manage at one time. This will sometimes causes a student to shut down and feel failure before they actually start writing.

Example of Graphic Organizer to Draft Their Memoir:

Topic: _____

Characters 		Setting 	
Beginning First,	Middle Next,	End Last,	
Conclusion,			

Lesson: Drafting “Developing the Middle”

Resource Materials: Emily’s story (teacher can select a story of their choice), chart paper for visuals.

This lesson uses a metaphor and a visual to help students understand the importance of a well-developed middle by sketching their sentences out and adding relevant details. Put inference on the middle should be the biggest part of the memoir. Read the story “Emily’s story”. Point out and write the many details that supports the middle. Draw the 2 graphic organizers on a piece of chart paper to show the comparisons of what a developed and an undeveloped middle looks like. Write the details in the 2 charts to provide the visual for the students.

Examples of a Developed and Undeveloped Middle:

Developed Middle:

Beginning:

Middle:

End

Undeveloped Middle:

Beginning:

Middle:

End:

Lesson: Drafting – Using Details (General versus Specific)

Resource Materials: large chart, your own writing

This lesson is designed to teach students how to use specific words to make their writing exciting and paint a picture for them and others that are reading their memoirs.

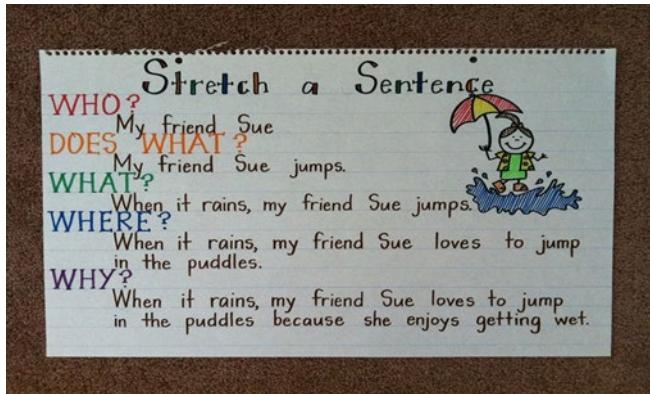
Guided Practice: The teacher will create a chart with two columns headed general and specific. Under the general heading list all of the general words you often see in your students writings, review the list, and ask the students to close their eyes and ask them what picture they see. The teacher will make a list of specific words and repeat the same process. The students are going to be able to see a more vivid picture and willing to share with their classmates. Point out to students that when you use general words it causes the reader to question what is happening in the story but using more specific words hooks the reader.

Independent Practice: Students will read over their drafts and highlight all of the general words and replace them with a specific word. Ask the students to see if they can add some details to their story so that they can picture exactly what's going on. This is an excellent opportunity to have student stretch out sentences by adding relevant details.

Examples of General versus Specific Words:

General Words	Specific Words
Nice	Star Wars Action Figures
Fun	Spider Man Sleeping Bag
Things	Pink Apple I-Phone
Good	
Bad	

Example of Stretching a Sentence by Adding Relevant Details.



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Lesson: Editing/Revising – “Using Cut and Paste”

Resource Materials: Multiple pairs of scissors, rolls of tape, extra writing paper, “A Change in the Weather”.

Lesson Focus: This lesson is designed to teach students how to add new material into the text they are working on without having to rewrite the entire paper.

Guided Practice: The teacher will read “A Change in the Weather” to the class or the teacher can select a text where the author has not to include essential information. The teacher will write these questions on the board, does my writing make sense? Have I left anything relevant details out? Did I use more specific words vs. general words? How can I stretch my sentences out to create a clear picture and hook the reader? The teacher will read parts of the story starting with the beginning and finding sentences and sections that need relevant details added. The teacher will model how to cut the paper up in sections and taping the piece of writing on a blank piece of paper. The teacher will model by adding the relevant details that were left out of the draft. This strategy is called “story surgery”. This is a way to show students that you don’t have to rewrite the draft a second time. After, this process the teacher will ask the students the same questions that were mentioned earlier in this section.

Independent Practice: Students will reread their drafts, identify the areas they need to add more details, cut the sections out, and tape them down on blank paper. Students will add details to these sections.

Lesson: Editing/Revising - “Unpacking a Heavy Sentence”

Lesson Focus: This lesson will help students identify those sentences that are heavily loaded with hidden meaning. The students will be able to identify those sentences, unpack them, and flesh them out to show a more vivid picture.

Resource Materials: Large chart, The Hello Goodbye Window by Norton Juster, alternative texts – Kevin Henke’s books – Lilly’s Purple Plastic Purse; Julius, the Baby of the World; Chester’s Way; Chrysanthemum; A Seed is Sleepy and An Egg is quiet by Dianna Hutts Aston (these books show examples of unpacked heavy sentences).

Guided Practice: The teacher will read inserts from the book The Hello, Goodbye Window by Norton Juster. The teacher will create a T-Chart and the left side write “the heavy sentence and the right side write “unpacked sentences.” I have listed a few heavy sentences from this book and they are as follows, “It looks like a regular window, but it’s not”, and “Poppy can play only one song on his harmonica.”

Independent Practice: Students will reread their draft and with guidance and support from the teacher they will start identifying those heavy sentences and start unpacking them by using the graphic organizer below. Students can highlight the sentences or put a star next to the sentences that feel are heavy and that they may have more to say.

Example of the Heavy Sentence and Unpacked Sentences Graphic Organizer:

Heavy sentences	Unpacked Sentences
He can play the harmonica a lot of different ways.	He can play it standing up, laying down, and riding on a bike. He prefers to play it fast but will play it slow, too. He likes to challenge himself by playing the harmonica and chewing gum at the same time.

Lesson: Publishing – “Using Paragraphs to Organize Your Writing”

Resource Material: “Sleepover Party”

Lesson Focus: Students will learn about paragraphs and how paragraphs help organize their information.

Guided Practice: The teacher will initially write a draft in one large block of print. Teacher will chunk sentences and break up the text into paragraphs to show students how paragraphs help the reader move from one idea to another. Teacher will use the “Sleepover Party”, read it aloud, and point out each time the shifts from one idea to another. In this reading selection you will find four potential paragraphs for each of the following main ideas: getting ready for the sleepover, making a mess in the bathroom, trouble falling asleep, and the morning after. Circle each chunk of text to show where the paragraph breaks would be made. Then show students the same story, written in paragraphs. Point out the writer indented from the margins at the start of each paragraph to model how they moved from one idea to another.

Independent Practice: Students will take their revised draft, organize their information into paragraphs, and rewrite or type their final paper.

Instructional Implementation Continued

Writer's Workshop

Students will experience and create memoirs during writer's workshop. Writer's workshop takes place during English Instruction. During writer's workshop, there are a variety of different differentiated activities taken place according to the student's individual instructional writing needs. During writer's workshop the teachers normally follow the same format but this unit is designed to show teachers that there is not just one way to conduct writer's workshop. Teachers normally do all of the heavy lifting and leading during writers workshop but with the strategies provided in the book "When Writers Drive The Work Workshop", by Dr. Brian Kessel students will learn, practice, and experience many strategies to successfully lead during Writer's Workshop.

Establishing Expectations for Writer's Workshop: It is important for teachers to establish and model the expectations they would like for the students to follow during Writer's Workshop. There is not one way to conduct writer's workshop but it is important for students to know what is expected of them so that they can remain on task and know what to do when they finish with their individual assignments. This is a way to teach students to enhance their ability to be more responsible and manage their learning on their own without the teacher having to tell them what they need to do. It is beneficial for the teacher to set up different stations in the classroom designated for materials and supplies for students to easy access at all times. The teacher should write students book levels on the writing folder so that students can independently select a "just write" book on their level once they are finished with their assignments. It is beneficial for the teacher to have a variety of writing graphic organizers available for the students to select and complete after they read their "just write" book. The teacher can place and label the different writing graphic organizers in a pocket chart for easy access. This is an excellent way to get students to read and respond to what they read in writing. Teachers can design a roster and place it on the board so that students will know what days and times they are conferring with the teacher. This will help with classroom management during Writer's Workshop and prevent students from continuously asking what day they are conferencing with the teacher. The teacher can create a graphic organizer that students must complete at the end of Writer's Workshop so that students can check off what they need to do the next day during Writer's Workshop.

Writer's Workshop Expectations:

- Look at the "Teacher Conference Roster", to check to see if you are conferring with the teacher on that specific day.
- Students will review their "Next Steps" graphic organizer to determine what writing activities they must complete.
- Stay in your assigned area unless you are conferencing with the teacher, selecting a just write book, or working with a peer.
- Work quietly and use your inside voice when working with a peer.

-When all assignments are finish, select and read a just write book, and complete the writing graphic organizer.

Students Leading during Writer's Workshop: At the beginning of the school year, it is important and imperative that teachers teach students the difference between the conferences they can have with the teachers when they need to confer with the teacher. Once the students reach this stage during "Writer's Workshop" then they have ideas and some may have their drafts ready when they confer with the teacher it all depends where they are in the writing process. When teachers confer with students, they should consider whether the student's need a formal versus informal conferences, short versus a long conferences, or a small-group conferences versus individual conferences.

Goals Conferences: The writer's set the goals, monitor goals, and decide whether they have met their goals.

Process Conferences: The writer's thinking about what they are going to write, start their draft, and time to help writers revise their writings.

Genre Conferences: This is the time to support writer's understanding of about particular structures of a genre and text features associated with that genre.

Skills Conferences: This conference helps writer's edit their work. This is an opportunity to focus on word usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation) before the writer attempt to share their writing with others.

Publication Conferences: This conference is when writers determine publication formats.

Portfolio Conferences: This conference is when writers select artifacts, reflect on the artifacts, and explain orally or in writing what they've learned as writers.

Mini – Lessons (Whole Group): The teacher will review and analyze students writing and work samples, and select what mini-lessons that needs to be implemented to provide students with the skills that they are demonstrating a weakness. It would beneficial for the teacher to use the books that are going to be used throughout the year as a read aloud to support the skill that is being taught. Students benefits from listening to stories being read multiple times. By doing this students will be provided with the scaffolding that they need to put their ideas in writing and publish their writings. It is also beneficial for the teacher to model the writing process using one of their events off their heart map. Examples of mini-lessons to teach the writing process: How to Generate Ideas, how to add relevant details to writings (sketching sentences out), paragraph writing, grammar lesson, editing/revising.

Objective: Students will learn what a memoir is and how to write a memoir.

Materials: Dreams from my Father, by Barack Obama, writing notebooks, pencil, graphic organizer.

Activity: Teacher will ask the students, "What do you think memoir writing is?" Students will brainstorm their ideas. Students will write their ideas in their writing notebooks.

Read two passages, one from Barack Obama book and then one from Goldilocks and the Three Bears.

Students will have to identify which is an example of memoir writing and why. Then the teacher will then state that memoir writing is a memory of an event in their life. Encourage the students to write in first person. Students will be asked to write about a recent event in their life and focus on the emotions, feelings, experience to discover the meaning of these moments.

Generating Ideas: Brainstorming, read aloud, and digging deeper: Students will be given an opportunity to create a list of experiences, events, memories in their writer's notebooks. Not only will students be encouraged to write down events in their writing notebooks they will also explain why each event was meaningful to them. The students will draw a heart map in their notebooks. They will divide the heart map into different sections that could possibly include their favorite birthday party, school events, playing with friends on the playground, favorite pet, family events, hobbies, friends, memorable vacations or family events. The heart map is a good way to identify important people, events, things, and memories in our life. They can title their heart map "The Heart of My Writing" or they can select a title of their own. Students can use the heart map as a guide to go to when they need an idea to write about. They can also leave some blank spots and fill in the spots as the school year goes on. There are other maps that students can sketch out to create ideas to write about and they are as follows, map of their neighborhood, map of their day, map of their family, or map of country they are from. Students can collect family stories that are memorable for them and the family. They can gather artifacts from their life. These objects can consist of photos, a birthday card, letter, stuffed animal or doll, first baseball glove, favorite hat/blanket, etc. Refer to sample heart maps in Appendix 3. Students can also record their special moment in a story web. In doing this, students are able to remember these reflective notations showing purpose, feelings, emotions felt at this time, and what people, special places, or things are connected with this memory. Teachers can read aloud a variety of nonfiction and fiction books to support students with making connections to the text and their personal experiences, memories, and events.

Mini Lessons Continued

Read aloud is a way for the teacher to model how the reader should read with prosody, accurately, and at an appropriate rate to comprehend the text and to be able to generate questions as the teacher is reading. This will help the students with using descriptive words and appropriate language in their writings.

Sequencing and Pacing: The teacher will model by brainstorming a list of transitional words with students and keep them on anchor chart/chart paper in the classroom. It is important to teach students as they are writing to identify/determine what parts they can fast forward through and when they need to slow. For example, ask students "What are the small moments that make the story meaningful? This is a good time to have students make a timeline of events that they want to write about. Refer to Appendix 4. The timeline will serve as their outline. Then, students should circle the two or three small moments (adjust the number of small moments that the students circle according to their individual writing needs/abilities) where they want to slow down and add more descriptive elements.

Students Crafting Their Stories: At this stage students will select their small moments and start drafting their memoirs. This section supports students with helping them make their story come alive. This is an opportunity for students to share as many details about their small moment. This is an opportunity to conduct a mini lesson on adding details and sketching out their sentences. The student's sentences should include adjectives and adverbs to their sentences but what makes their sentences powerful are the verbs that they use to make their writing more interesting and allows the reader to visualize their writing. This is an opportunity for students to create their characters that played a role in their small moment.

Teaching Strategies

Read Aloud and Interactive Read Aloud: During this time students are able to listen to books on the computer and listen to the teacher read aloud books that focus on memoirs. Sometimes, some students have difficulty with reading grade level text but allowing them to listen to a story read aloud via computer using the "Read and Goggle" App will provide students with the opportunity to be exposed to higher level text. The Read and Goggle App is available to all students that attend Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools.

Academic Conversation: During Writer's Workshop, guided groups, and whole group (mini-lessons) students will be given an opportunity to collaborate with their peers to share how they utilizing the skills taught in class to write their memoirs and use the writing process to draft, revise/edit, and publish their memoirs. They will be given sentence starters they could utilize as they are collaborating with their peers. Academic Conversation is excellent way to get students actively engaged and learning from their peers.

Interactive Writing Notebooks: During Writer's Workshop and guided groups students will take notes and jot down questions after listening to the teacher read a book aloud or a book they read independently. Students will draft, revise, edit, and publish their memoirs in their writing notebooks. At least once or twice a week the teacher will have students leave their notebooks on their desk and students will take a gallery walk around the classroom to gain ideas from other students. This will allow students to be able to make connections and draw on their own personal memories and experiences. As stated by Ralph Fletcher, "Keeping a notebook can help kids pay closer attention to their world, incubate 'seed ideas,' and collect important artifacts, memories, snippets of talk, for future writing projects." Students can also collect artifacts like photographs and articles.

Story Map: A story map is a graphic organizer to support students learns the elements of a story or book. A story map will show allow students to map out their stories from the beginning, middle, and ending of their stories.

Independent Writing: Students are provided with 40 minutes to write during Writer's Workshop to complete their writings and utilize the skills that are taught during the mini-lessons. Students are able to refer back to their writing journals and select topics off of the "small moment graphic organizer" or their writing list that was created at the beginning of the year. Students are encouraged to add additional events, memories, and experiences to their writing list in their writing notebook.

Activities

“I Remember” Activity

Objective: Students will write about a favorite childhood memory. Students will be able to break a writing topic into smaller chunks of ideas. This activity gives students the feeling for the writing process. By students tackling a topic in this step-by-step manner, students will become more confident and gain the skills in the brainstorming and drafting stages of writing. In doing this, students will discover, fluent writing flows from the power of knowing they have something to write about. This activity is appropriate for any age group.

Materials: writing notebooks, pencil, and graphic organizer.

Lesson: Think of five things that have happened to you. Write down each of the five things, beginning with the phrase, “I remember,” When you’ve done, share your ideas with the teacher.

Now, write down one name associated with each of the five things you selected.

Write down the most important of the five senses (taste, touch, hearing, sight, smell) that goes each of your “I remembers.”

Choose the “I remember” you would most like to write about. Share the memory with your teacher/peer.

Ask students to start writing for 10 to 15 minutes, getting your memory on paper. Encouraged and reinforce to students to not worry about punctuation and spelling at this time.

Now, read your writing/story and think of ways to possibly add details and make the writing better (drafting stage of the writing process).

Six Word Memoir, A Quick Write

Objective: The students will describe something about themselves in exactly six words. This activity allows young writers to feel safe with sharing a small piece of who they are. This is a good way for their peers and teacher to learn more about them as an individual. This activity is an easy way to introduce memoirs to young writers.

Materials: pencil, writer’s notebook, teacher created samples, character traits handout –teacher created or print a list off the website, and graphic organizer.

Lesson: Have students generate a list about what is important to them, things that are happening right now or in the past few weeks in their lives. It could be helpful to focus on character traits.

Read some of the teacher’s six word memoirs. You can goggle some examples of six word memoirs.

Examples of Six Word Memoirs:

- Chocolate candy calls my name daily.
- Life is a journey. Believe it.
- Always live every day to the fullest.

Ask students to look at their lists and write at least three or four 6 word memoirs about themselves. (Give students about 10 minutes).

Students will share the memoirs with a partner or sit in a circle and allow students to share with their small group of 5 students. Students can select one of the memoirs that best fits/represents what is currently going on in their life.

(Whole Group) - Students can do a whip around read in the whole group. Each person shared their 6 word memoir one after the other without comments from anyone in the group.

End of Unit Celebration

Each student will select 2 of their published memoirs and the class will create a multi-page book displaying their memoirs. Students will also include their own illustrations to go along with their memoirs. The teacher will invite the principal, Assistant Principal, and parents to the event. The students will also designed a slide show to display as the guest wait to hear the students read their memoirs. The students will read at least one of their memoirs and share the published memoir book with the guests.

Resources and Materials:

- Small Moment Anchor Chart (examples of small moments)
- Sample Memoir Rubric
- Writing Workshop Conference Planning Sheet
- Timeline
- Story Web
- Heart Maps

Memoirs for Students:


- The pain and the Great One, by Judy Blume
- A Girl from Yamhill, by Beverly Cleary
- Thank You, Mr. Falker, by Patricia Polacco
- Grandfather's Journey, by Allen Say
- When I was Nine, by James Stevenson
- A Chair for my Mother, by Vera Williams
- Real Friends, by Shannon Hale
- Honor Girl: A Graphic Memoir, by Maggie Thrash
- This One Summer, by Mariki Tamiki
- Ashley Bryan: Words to My Life's Song, by Ashley Bryan and Bill McGuinness
- Brown Girl Dreaming, by Jacqueline Woodson
- A Piece of Cake: A Memoir, by Cupcake Brown
- Everything You Ever Wanted: A Memoir, by Jullian Lauren

Sample Memoir Rubric

Criteria	4 Points	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point
Memorable Small Moment	Memoir focuses on one single moment and is able to explain what happened in great detail.	Memoir is focused on one single moment and is able to share at least 1 or 2 details.	Memoir focuses on two moments in the author's life.	Author needed support with identifying a memorable moment in their life.
Elaboration	The author wrote many details using descriptive words indicating who was there, where the story took place, what they did, and how the characters felt throughout the paper.	The author wrote some details about happened in the story. The author added the setting and the characters.	The author had some details in the story but did not add or elaborate on the characters, setting, and explain what happened.	The author had a few details but did not explain what happened in the story.
Planning	The author independently planned their writing by drawing or using a graphic organizer, made a list, etc. The author was able to generate at least 5 or more ideas.	The author used a graphic organizer, made a list, etc. and was able to generate at 4 ideas.	The author needed some assistance with planning using a graphic organizer to plan their writing. The author needed some support with generating ideas.	The author needed one-on-one support to plan their writing.
Developed beginning, middle, and ending	The author wrote a beginning identifying the characters and the setting. The author wrote the story in order using transitional words or phrases. The author used paragraphs and skipped lines to separate what happened in the beginning, middle, and end. The author consistently added relevant details throughout the paper.	The author's paper consists of a beginning, middle, and end. The author used some transitional words. The author identified some characters and the setting. The author elaborated and used some relevant details throughout the paper.	The author put effort to identify the characters and setting. The author did not use paragraphs to separate what happened in the beginning, middle, and end. The author added a few relevant details.	The author did not include any characters and setting. The author's paper was not well developed. The paper did not have a beginning, middle, and end.
Published work	The author's paper is free from errors. The paper could be used as a model for other students.	The author's paper is neatly written and published in an appropriate format.	The author's paper is somewhat legible but is not appropriate to be displayed or sharing with others.	The author's paper is not published for others to read. The author requires support with publishing their writing.

Student's Name _____

Writer's Workshop

Type of Conference – put a  mark beside the conference name you need to have with the teacher.	Date of Conference	Write a brief statement describing what you need to discuss during the conference.
Goals Conference		
Process Conference		
Genre Conference		
Skills Conference		
Publication Conference		
Portfolio Conference		

Description of the Conferences:

Goals Conferences: The writer's set the goals, monitor goals, and decide whether they have met their goals.

Process Conferences: The writer's thinking about what they are going to write, start their draft, and time to help writers revise their writings.

Genre Conferences: This is the time to support writer's understanding of about particular structures of a genre and text features associated with that genre.

Skills Conferences: This conference helps writer's edit their work. This is an opportunity to focus on word usage, grammar, spelling, punctuation) before the writer attempt to share their writing with others.

Publication Conferences: This conference is when writers determine publication formats.

Portfolio Conferences: This conference is when writers select artifacts, reflect on the artifacts, and explain orally or in writing what they've learned as writers.

Appendix 1: Teaching Standards and Goals

The goal is to have students to focus on a small moment from their lives. The teacher will use a variety of resources ranging from nonfiction and fiction leveled books, personal narratives (memoirs), heart maps, create timelines with students to provide the students with the guidance and support to craft their memoirs using the writing process to eventually publish at least 2 of their writings.

W.K.5 Participate in shared investigator of grade appropriate topics and writing projects.

W.1.3 Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events, include some details regarding what happened, use temporal transition words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure.

This standard addresses and support the students with learning that there are many forms of communication and writing is one of them. Students will write their memoirs in sequential order and use their transitional signal word chart in their journals to self-assess their writing is written in sequential order. Students will also add details to tell two events in order, using words demonstrating an order with details and an ending.

W.1.4 & W.2.4 With guidance and support from adults, use a variety of digital tools and resources to produce and publish writing, including in collaboration with peers.

This standard will help students publish their work using a digital tool, such as goggle, class blog, and a power point.

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 transition words to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure.

This standard address that writers understand that narratives share their experience, focus on a small moment, and use time as their core structure. Writers will understand that their narratives will include story elements and can describe a short sequence of events by using the writing process.

W.3.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

This standard addresses that the writers can share an experience, real or imagined, and use time as their core structure. Writers will write with purpose and think about the details to convey their purposes, using sensory vivid details and other literary elements to evoke reactions from and create effects on the reader.

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