

Teacher Notes

This six week unit was designed to meet all of the Common Core narrative writing standards. By the end of this unit, all students should take at least one piece of writing through the entire writing process and formally publish that piece of writing. Students will also write to three different writing prompts within this unit. I've added a variety of writing craft and organization lessons within this unit. There are many other important writing craft lessons that will be introduced in my fictional narrative writing unit. You certainly do not have to follow these lessons in the exact order that they are written. You may want to spend multiple days on one lesson or rearrange some of the mini lessons. No one knows your students' instructional needs better than you! However, the early lessons were designed to help build students' writing stamina by having extended mini lessons and shorter independent writing time.

The mini lessons were designed to be an approximately 10-15 minute lesson that intentionally teaches a particular writing craft or skill. I've included a script of what I might say to my students when I was teaching the mini lesson, as well as additional teaching notes. I often use a picture book as a mentor text within the mini lesson.

You can follow each mini lesson with additional guided practice, but that is completely optional. I personally like to give my students that additional assistance before having them try those strategies independently. The guided practice can also be complete in guided writing groups for students who need the extra practice. In a few of the lessons, I have included multiple forms of the guided practice, so you can choose the form that best fits the needs of your students.

Independent writing time should take up the majority of time in the writing workshop. I allow my students to move around in the writing process as needed, rather than trying to require them to follow the writing process in a linear manner. After students have three completed first drafts, I have students select one of the narratives to take through the entire writing process to be published and shared at an author's tea.

Almost all research on writing workshop strongly recommends that students should select their own topics and be allowed to work at their own pace. I completely agree with that philosophy, and the majority of the time I do have my students choose their own topics and work through the writing process at their own pace. However, most states do require students to take a formal writing assessment where students will have to complete a timed writing to a given prompt. I feel that in addition to my ongoing writing instruction, I also need to help prepare my students for our state writing assessment. This is why I occasionally have my students write to genre specific writing prompts.

These writing prompts are not only good practice for formal writing assessments, but they are also great tools for identifying areas that need improvement in students which can help you form writing groups. These formal assessments can also give you ideas for additional mini lessons that your students need.

There is also a grammar tie-in for each lesson. I like to focus on one grammar skill each week, and spend a few minutes each day focusing on that skill. I prefer to set aside a few minutes before and after our traditional writing workshop time to focus on these grammar skills. Beginning on week two, these grammar skills are partially taught through mentor sentences that can be displayed for students to identify what is right or wrong about the sentence. These are not “fix all” sentences with a variety of errors. Instead, each sentence will reflect the grammar concept of the week. A collection of mentor sentences are included on pages 67-91 and are labeled to correlate with each lesson. Have students analyze these sentences and discuss what is right or wrong with the sentences and why. Be sure to use the formal language of the standards and relay that you expect to see these rules applied in student writing.

At the end of the unit, I've included a rubric to formally assess student writing. I do not give a grade using the rubric until the end of the unit, because I want to be sure I have taught each element the student will be graded on before I formally assess. However, it is very important to informally assess student writing throughout the unit.

The last day of the unit is an author's celebration. This celebration will be a chance for students to showcase their work to others. Students will create invitations to send home to their parents or other family members, other teachers or administrators. This will be your students' opportunity to show off all of their hard work. I've included this celebration on the last day (day 30) of the unit, but the timing of this celebration will depend on your classroom needs.

Suggested Mentor Texts

Personal Narratives

- Mama Had a Dancing Heart by Libba Gray
- Fireflies! by Julie Brinkloe
- The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant
- Salt Hands by Jane Aragon
- My Rotten Red-Headed Older Brother by Patricia Polacco
- Grandpa's Face by Eloise Greenfield
- Shortcut by Donald Crews
- In November by Cynthia Rylant
- Bee Tree by Patricia Polacco
- The Memory String by Eve Bunting
- Owl Moon by Jane Yolen
- Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge by Mem Fox
- Strong to the Hoop by Leslie Jean-Bart
- Oma's Quilt by Paulette Bourgeois
- Saturdays and Teacakes by Lester Laminack
- Meanwhile by Jules Feiffer
- Come on, Rain by Karen Hesse
- When I was Young in the Mountains by Cynthia Rylant
- Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day by Judith Viorst
- Punctuation Takes a Vacation by Robin Pulver
- A Chair for My Mother by Vera B. Williams

Unit at a Glance

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Week 1	What Can I Write About?	What is a Personal Narrative	Using a Graphic Organizer	Writing About a Small Moment in Time	Adding an Emotional Hook
Week 2	6 Writing With a Strong Lead	7 Writing With a Strong Lead	8 Writing With a Strong Lead	9 Writing With a Strong Lead	10 Show Don't Tell
Week 3	11 Paint a Word Picture	12 Adding a Satisfying Ending	13 Adding a Satisfying Ending	14 Adding a Satisfying Ending	15 Adding a Satisfying Ending
Week 4	16 Adding Transition Words	17 Avoid the "It Monster"	18 Strong Verbs	19 Specific Nouns	20 How to Include Dialogue
Week 5	21 Stretch Your Sentences	22 Performing Surgery	23 Revision Checklist	24 Revision Checklist Part 2	25 Editing Checklists
Week 6	26 Rewriting Your Narrative	27 Illustrating Your Narrative	28 Choosing Your Title	29 Parts of a Published Book	30 Author's Celebration

Day 1: What Can I Write About

Standard:
Text Types and Purposes 3

Materials:

- Your Own Heart Map
- Heart Map Template
- Mama Had a Dancing Heart by Libba Gray

Mini Lesson: *In this writing unit we will be learning how to write personal narratives. When we write a personal narrative, we write about our own lives, memories, and feelings. A personal narrative tells a true story about you!*

Many times young authors have trouble deciding what to write about, so today we're going to create a heart map to show all of the things

DETAILED LESSON PLANS

Read Mama Had a Dancing Heart as a mentor text to show students an example of a personal narrative.

Independent Writing: Have students create their own heart map. They can either use the blank template or the template with the sections already added to it.

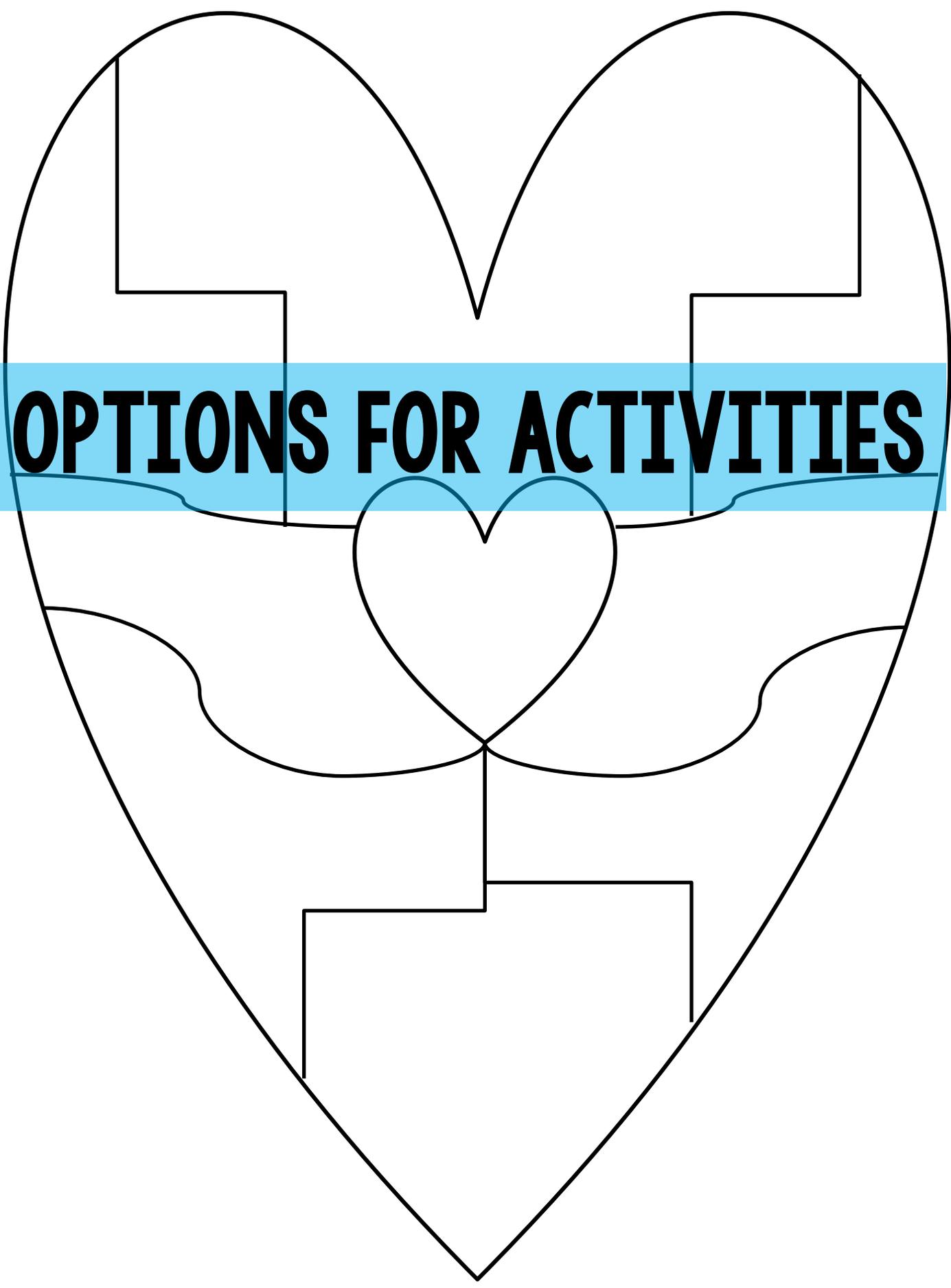
After students complete their heart map they should begin independently writing in their writing notebook. They can select any topic, but their writing should be about themselves. Remind students that they will be able to write made up stories later in the year.

Sharing: Since students have not had the opportunity to spend much time writing, allow two or three students to share their heart map. Give students time to ask questions to the presenter.

Optional Handout/Printable:



Grammar Tie-in: Spelling
This week, focus a small amount of time each day on what students should do if they can't spell a word. Remind students that they should not let a word interrupt their thinking and flow of writing.



OPTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

Day 3: Using a Graphic Organizer

Materials:

- The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant
- Several copies of the graphic organizers

Standard:
Text Types and Purposes 3
Production and Distribution of Writing 4

Mini Lesson: *Sometimes when we write, we need a road map to help guide our writing. A graphic organizer helps us make a plan for our writing and keeps us organized as we write. There are many different types of graphic organizers, and today we'll be learning how to use one that I think you'll find very useful.*

I've included three of my favorite personal narrative graphic organizers that you can use. First, you only introduce the graphic organizer to me, because anything more would be overhelping to students.

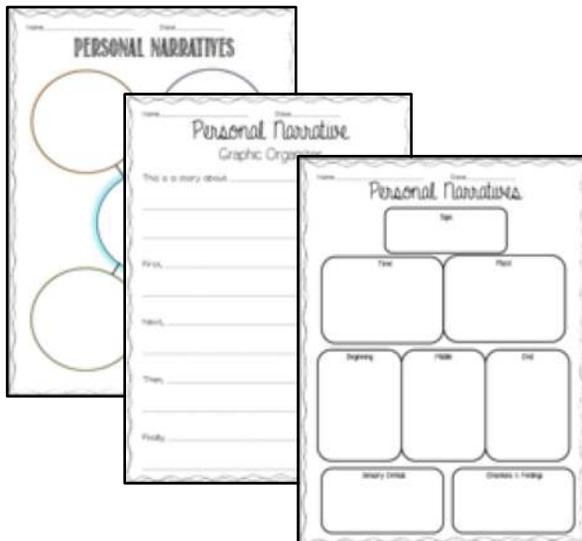
GRAMMAR TIE IN FOR EACH LESSON

Read The Relatives Came as a mentor text for personal narratives, and recreate the graphic organizer as if you were the author planning the story.

Independent Writing: Encourage students to begin a piece of writing and to plan the narrative using the graphic organizer. I like to keep a copy of the graphic organizer in my students' writing notebooks. If students have trouble deciding what to write about, you can suggest that they write about a time when they visited with their relatives.

Sharing: Select one or two students who completed the graphic organizer and allow them to share using the document camera.

Optional Handout/Printables:



Grammar Tie-in: Spelling

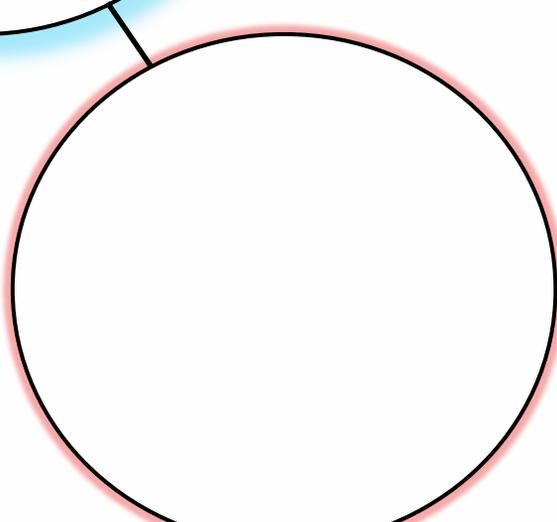
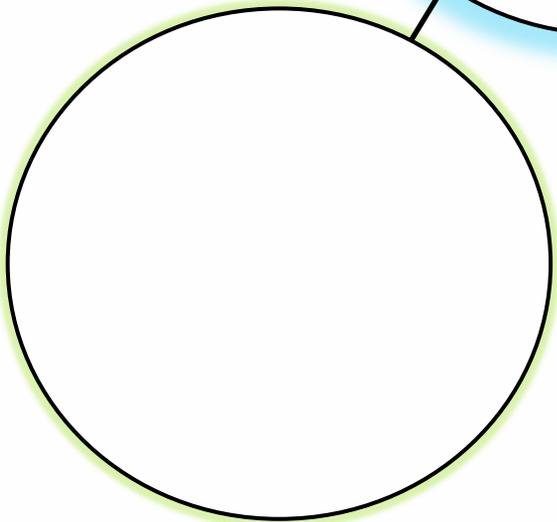
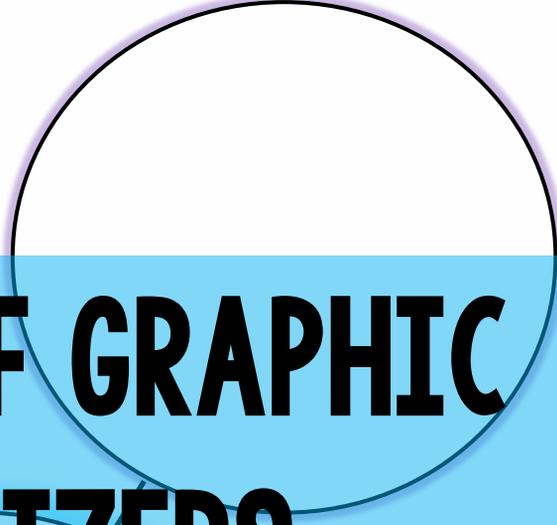
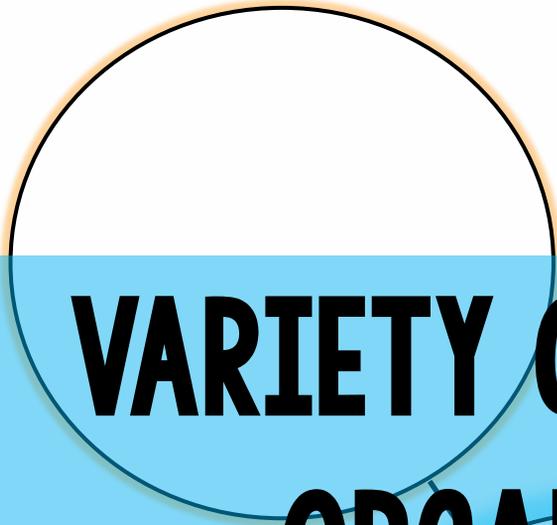
Show students that when they write, they can circle words they don't know how to spell, so that they can come back to those words at a later time.

Name _____

Date _____

PERSONAL NARRATIVES

VARIETY OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS



Name _____

Date _____

Personal Narrative

Graphic Organizer

This is a story about _____

VARIETY OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

First, _____

Next, _____

Then, _____

Finally, _____

Name _____

Date _____

Personal Narratives

Topic

Time

Place

VARIETY OF GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Beginning

Middle

End

Sensory Details

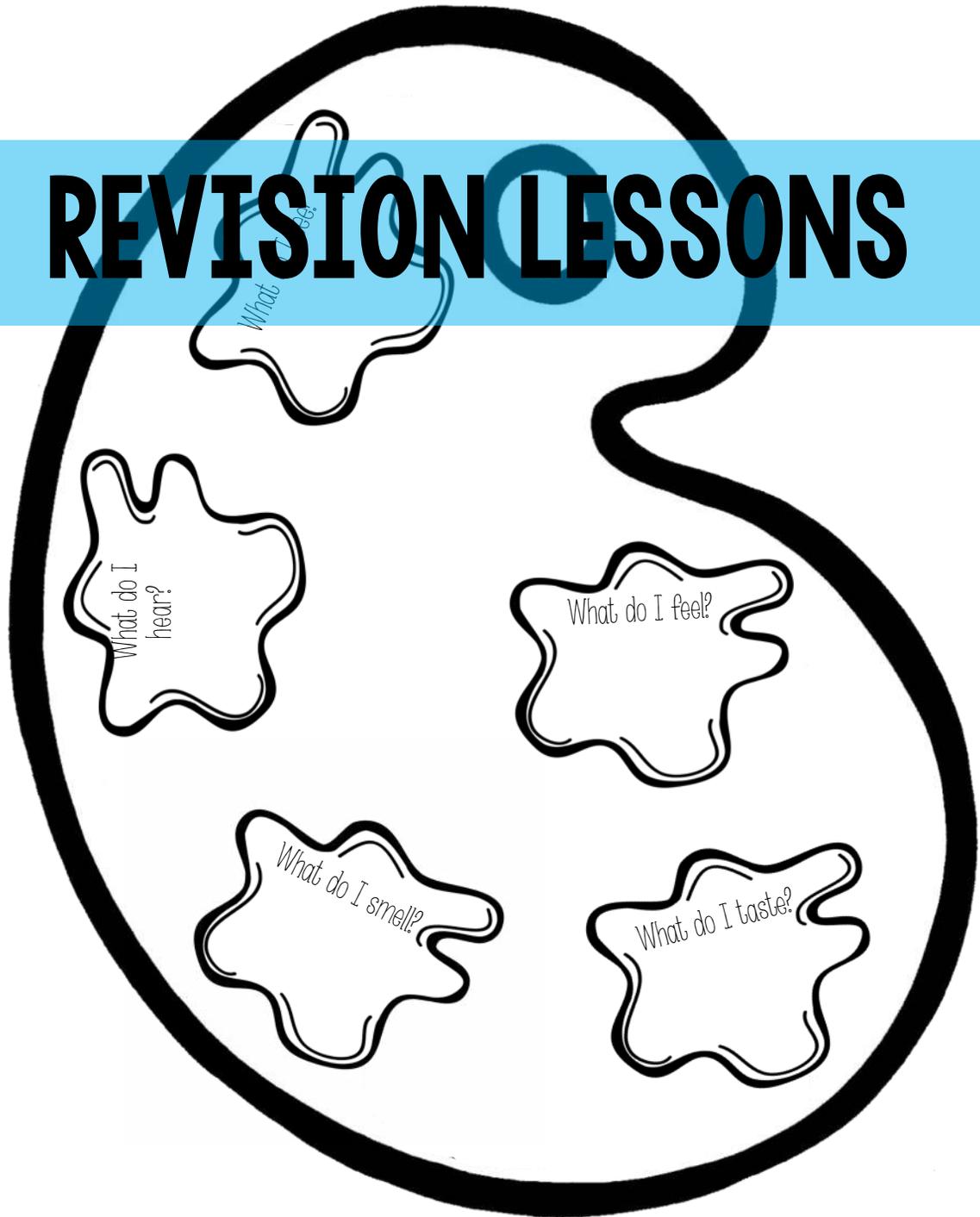
Emotions & Feelings

Name _____

Date _____

Paint a WORD picture
using sensory details

REVISION LESSONS



What do I see?

What do I hear?

What do I feel?

What do I smell?

What do I taste?

Mentor Sentence 1

The foliage swayed in
the breeze.

MENTOR SENTENCES

Suggested Mentor Texts

Informational Writing

Titles Suggested in Mini Lessons

- A Drop of Water by Walker Wick
- Animal Dads by Sneed B. Collard
- Chameleons are Cool by Martin Jenkins
- Caribou Journey by Debbie S. Miller
- Dakota Dugout by Ann Turner
- Desert Animal Adaptations by Julie Ann Murphy
- Honeybees by Deborah Heiligman
- In the Deep-Sea Floor by Sneed Collard
- Marshes and Swamps by Gail Gibbons
- Owls by Gail Gibbons
- Sharks by Gary Lopez
- Take a Backyard Walk by Jane Kirkland
- Take a Beach Walk by Jane Kirkland
- The Great Fire by Jim Murphy
- The Great Kapok Tree by Lynne Cherry
- The Man Who Walked Between the Towers by Mordicai Gerstein

Unit at a Glance

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Week 1	What is informational writing?	Writing an Expert List	Selecting a Topic	Writing Subtopics	First Steps of Research
Week 2	6 Writing Notes	7 Types of Text Structures	8 Introducing Graphic Organizers	9 Graphic Organizers Part 2	10 Writing a Lead
Week 3	11 Writing a Topic Sentence	12 Structure of a Paragraph	13 Practicing Paragraphs	14 Supporting Details	15 Writing Descriptions
Week 4	16 Facts—What to include?	17 Writing Conclusions	18 Strong Verbs	19 Developing Voice	20 Transition Words
Week 5	21 Sentence Variety	22 Quotes and Dialogue	23 Revision Checklist	24 Editing Checklist	25 Creating a Title & Cover Page
Week 6	26 Detailed Drawings	27 Writing Captions	28 Diagrams, Graphs, & Charts	29 Creating a Glossary	30 Author's Tea

Day 1: What is Informational Writing

Materials:

- Writing T-Chart
- Owls by Gail Gibbons
- Owl Moon by Jane Yolen

Standard:
Text Types and Purposes 2
Production and Distribution of Writing 4

Mini Lesson: Since many of my students do not have experience with informational writing, I typically keep my independent writing time minimal during the first two writing lessons within this unit. The mini lessons are considerably longer than those in a traditional mini lessons.

In our previous writing unit, we learned how to write personal narratives. Let's read Owl Moon and discuss some of the common elements we see in

narratives. Read Owl Moon and create a large anchor chart that replicates the left column of the T-chart and complete the right column together. In that column, have students list common elements of a narrative.

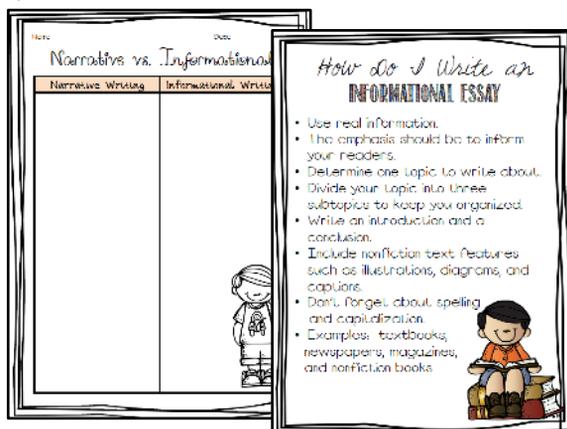
DETAILED LESSON PLANS

As I'm sure many of you already know, there are many different types of writing. During our next writing unit, we will learn how to write informational or expository papers. Spend a few minutes informally assessing students prior knowledge for informational writing. Read Owls and after reading, complete the right column of the T-chart together. In that column, have students list elements of informational text.

Independent Writing: Have students explore the room to find as many different examples of informational writing as they can. Students should record these examples in their writing notebooks. Students will not officially begin writing their informational papers for a few days.

Sharing: Since students have not had the opportunity to spend much time writing, allow two or three students to share their list of examples of informational writing.

Optional Handout/Printable:



Grammar Tie-in: Irregular Plural Nouns

- Mentor Sentence 1

As a whole group, create an anchor chart to explain the rules on how to spell plural nouns. Today, only focus on how to spell plural nouns that end in s, ch, sh, and x.

Name _____

Date _____

Narrative vs. Informational

Narrative Writing

Informational Writing

OPTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES



Y. 1/12

How do I Write an

INFORMATIONAL ESSAY

- Use real information.
- The emphasis should be to inform

your readers.

STUDENT HANDOUTS

- Determine what to write about.
- Divide your topic into three subtopics to keep you organized.
- Write an introduction and a conclusion.
- Include nonfiction text features such as illustrations, diagrams, and captions.
- Don't forget about spelling and capitalization.
- Examples: textbooks, newspapers, magazines, and nonfiction books



Day 2: Creating an Expert List

Materials:

- I'm an Expert graphic organizer
- Swamps and Marshes by Gail Gibbons

Standard:

Text Types and Purposes 2
Production and Distribution of Writing 4

Mini Lesson: *One of the first steps in writing an informational paper is deciding what to write about. Before you begin writing, you have to choose a topic! It's important to put a lot of thought into the topic you choose, because you'll need to be an expert on that topic. I believe that we could all consider ourselves experts on swamps, since we just finished learning about them. Let's read Swamps and Marshes together, so we can hear an example of expert writing.*

I chose the book Swamps and Marshes, because I've been in the 5th grade year with habitats and know that all of my students will have a fair amount of prior knowledge on swamps. You'll definitely want to choose a book with a topic your students will be familiar with.

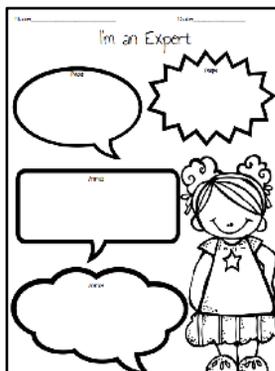
Since all of us are different, we're all experts on different topics, so today I want everyone to create an Expert List during independent writing today.

GRAMMAR TIE IN FOR EACH LESSON

Independent Writing: Have students complete one of the Expert List graphic organizers. I've included four different versions: a boy and girl version with no labels, and a boy and girl version with labels to help guide students as they brainstorm. Encourage students to place a lot of thought into their lists and to think about things they've learned from home and at school.

Sharing: Allow several students to share expert lists. I try to get really excited about ideas that will lend themselves to great informational writing essays.

Optional Handout/Printable:



Grammar Tie-in: Irregular Plural Nouns

- Mentor Sentence 2

Discuss that some nouns completely change when made into a plural noun. Give students a few examples of these types of nouns. Add the rule to the anchor chart.

Narrow or Broaden Your Topic

Change the following broad or narrow topics to a narrow topic you could easily write about.

Broad Topic: Outer Space

Just Right Topic

Broad Topic: Animals

Just Right Topic

EXTENSIVE SCAFFOLDING

Broad Topic: The Ocean

Just Right Topic

Narrow Topic: The Childhood of George Washington

Just Right Topic

Narrow Topic: The Temperature of the Sun

Just Right Topic

2 Ways to Begin Informational Writing

Type of Beginning	Mentor Text	My Example
Question	<p><u>Honeybees</u> by Deborah Heiligman</p> <p>When you see a bee on a warm summer day, do you think, "OW! That bee is going to sting me?"</p>	
Fact	<p><u>The Man Who Walked Between the Towers</u> by Mordicai Gerstein</p>	
Description	<p><u>Sharks</u> by Gary Lopez</p> <p>The ocean water is clear and blue in the bright sunshine. Under the surface, schools of colorful fish swim through the water.</p>	

REVISION LESSONS

Mentor Sentence 1

The ~~use~~ driver placed
three boxes by my front
door.

MENTOR SENTENCES