

## 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade Narrative Writing Unit

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Narrative Writing

#### Week 1

##### Day 1: Personal Narrative

Review with students that a narrative essay is telling a story and introduce personal narrative as a story about your life.

Show an example essay on the overhead and discuss why it is a personal narrative. Cover the section that says which section are beginning, middle, and end. Explain to students that narrative writing has a beginning, middle and end. See if students can identify the beginning, middle and end of the story.

Introduce Student Writing Checklist and explain how it is used. Go through the rubric as a class and highlight the parts of the rubric that have been covered through learning the Simple Six. All conventions should be highlighted, but will be reviewed in Language and referenced throughout the writing unit. (Copy and hole punch a checklist and put it in the student's red writing folder as a reference throughout the narrative unit)

Tell students that they will be writing a personal narrative about something fun they did over summer break. Give them the graphic organizer and have them write ideas for the beginning, middle and end of their story. Check student's organizer and then allow them to write this story in their writing notebook.

##### Day 2: Generate Ideas/Personal Narrative

Demonstrate the idea of generating ideas by blowing bubbles. Take a bottle of bubbles and blow the bubbles around the classroom. Explain with one blow several bubbles come out. Explain how with one topic many ideas can form.

On the overhead, show students how to brainstorm. Put the word school on the overhead and show how you make a list of things to write about school. Struggle with the list and think aloud about how you come up with words for the list.

Ask students what they noticed about how you brainstormed. Was it easy to come up with ideas? What things helped develop ideas? Discuss with students how writers come up with ideas of what to write. Tell them when we brainstorm we come up with as many ideas as we can about a topic or an idea. Remind students that this is the first step of writing because it helps us focus our ideas and become better writers.

Set a timer for 2 minutes. Have students brainstorm a list of important people in their life. On the overhead, brainstorm your own list of important people, picking one.

Tell students to circle one person from the list that they would like to write about.

Set the timer for four minutes. Tell students to write the name of the person they circled at the top of the page. In the four minutes they should list all the reasons that person is important to them under the persons name. Again you should be doing this on the overhead.

Give students time to look at their list and have them circle one of the reasons from the list. Tell students they will be using this list on Day 3 for more writing.

### Day 3: Generate Ideas/Personal Narrative

Have students take out their brainstorming lists from Day 2. Tell them that they are going to think about all the times that the person they chose displayed the reason they selected. (Example: My mom is caring when she helps me with my homework.)

Set the timer for 4 minutes and have students make a list of all the examples they can think of that go along with that reason. Remind them that their examples have to coincide with that reason only.

Have student pick their favorite example from the list and write a story about this time. (Example: My mom was caring when she helped me with my Social Studies project.) Remind students of the format for narrative writing. If students are struggling, they can use a graphic organizer for support.

## Week 2

### Day 1: Generate Ideas/Seed Story

Show students a picture of a watermelon slice and tell students that the watermelon is the big picture and the watermelon seeds are the stories that go along with it.

Give each student a watermelon seed with a topic on it. Display the four watermelon slices with the different topics listed. Have students come up and place their seed on the watermelon slice that they feel their seed would best fit.

Explain to students that the seeds are what we want to focus on as writers. Tell students they are going to brainstorm ideas again today about an important place.

Next, set a timer for 2 minutes. Have students brainstorm a list of important places. On the overhead, brainstorm your own list of important places, picking one.

Tell students to circle one place from the list that they would like to write about.

Set the timer for four minutes. Tell students to write the name of the place they circled at the top of the page. In the four minutes they should list all the reasons that place is important to them. You should do this on the overhead also. (Example: An important place is my grandma's house because this is where I get to spend the most time with her, we make cookies and she lets me sleep on the pull out couch.)

Give students time to look at their list and have them circle one of the reasons from the list. They should then write about this reason in a story. Tell them that the watermelon is the place and the things you like to do there or the reasons this place is important are the seeds. They should pick one seed to write about.

- Some students will not finish their story about the important person. Students can work on their writing pieces whenever there is free time.

### Day 2: Show Not Tell/Visualization

Tell students that their writing should create a picture in the reader's mind. In order to do this they have to write a good description of the different things they are talking about in their writing. Showing what is happening versus telling what is happening.

Read aloud *A Tree is Nice*. Have students close their eyes as they listen to the story to get a picture in their minds. They should not look at the pictures that the author has provided. After the story is read, have students draw a picture of what they saw in their mind while listening to the story. Compare the picture with students in class. See how pictures compare.

Reread the story and show students the pictures. Let them see how well their drawings compare to the story.

### Day 3: Show Not Tell/Visualization

Show the story *Tuesday* to the class. The students should look at the pictures in the story. Explain how this story does not have words, but you can visualize a story based on looking at the pictures.

Put students in groups and give each group a copy of the picture from the story. Have students write a story about what is happening in the picture. Tell students they must only write about what they see in the picture. Put the story together in order with the pictures. Read the story to the class. Explain how the story makes sense even though they were written by different groups because of the strong pictures in the story.

Explain how someone should be able to take their writing and do the opposite, draw a detailed picture of what they are reading. You are showing the reader with strong words and detailed descriptions with your story.

Have students return to their writing and try to add descriptions and make changes.

### Week 3

#### Day 1: Generate Ideas

Show students a popcorn seed. Tell students that the popcorn seed is their idea. Drop the seed into the popcorn machine and let it pop. Ask students if they would only like to have this one piece of popcorn. Then take a cup of kernels and tell students that these are a variety of different ideas that they could brainstorm. Pop the kernels and explain how their ideas will turn into stories just like the kernels turned into popcorn. Would they rather choose from one piece of popcorn or an entire bowl of popcorn? Explain how they would like to choose from multiple ideas to write about then just one.

Have students take out their writing notebooks. Tell them they are going to generate more ideas for writing. Set the timer for 4 minutes. Tell students that they are going to brainstorm about their first time with an animal. Tell them to write short sentences about their first time with an animal. Example: seeing an animal at the zoo, getting a new puppy, or meeting a friend's pet.

Repeat the above process with these prompts: The first time you had something hard to do and the first time you did something you like to do now.

Tell students to pick one of the topics that they brainstormed and write about that topic. They should tell the story of the first time with an animal or whichever topic they choose. Students should write for about 15 minutes.

#### Day 2: Good Beginnings

Hand out list of good beginnings for student's writing folders or have the list already in the folder and ask students to open to the list.

Introduce questions and exclamations as a way to begin a story. Explain to students that their beginning should go along with the main idea of their writing.

Put the words *The Day I Went to the Beach* on the board. Show students how to write a question and an exclamation if this was your topic. Give each student a sentence strip. Tell them that you are going to give them a new topic and they will have to write a good beginning for this topic. Write *My First Day of School* on the board. Give students time to write a good beginning using either a question or an exclamation on this topic. Have students come up and share their beginnings. Discuss why they are good/bad beginnings. Keep these for Week 4, Day 3 activity.

On the overhead show an example of a paragraph with a weak beginning. Discuss why it is a weak beginning. Together think of a better beginning for the paragraph on the overhead using either a question or an exclamation.

#### Day 3: Good Beginnings

Read the story *Gerald McBoing McBoing* to class. Explain how Gerald only speaks in sounds or in onomatopoeia. Tell students that this is another way that you can begin a story.

Good back to the paragraph from Day 2 and see if you can change the beginning using the sound instead of a question or an exclamation.

Put students in groups and give them each an overhead copy of a story beginning. Give the students time to underline the beginning and identify how the story begins. Let each group come to the front of the room and share their overhead and tell what beginning the author used. Tell students that they will see examples of these beginnings in stories they read. Encourage students to point out these beginnings when you are reading stories in class.

Tell students to go back into their previous writing and change one of their beginnings to a question, exclamation or onomatopoeia/sound. After giving time to make changes, have students share their changes with partners/groups.

## Week 4

### Day 1: Drafting – Beginning, Middle and End

Begin lesson by playing with a yo-yo in front of the classroom. While doing this, ask the students what they notice about the movement of the yo-yo. Explain to the students that the action of the yo-yo functions very much like the action of a well-written paper. An introduction lets a reader know what a paper will be about, just like the beginning stance of holding a yo-yo shows others that you will soon begin using a yo-yo. Next, show the different lengths that a yo-yo can be extended by unreeling a string that the yo-yo recoils on. This is like the body of the paper, which can be extended to different lengths. Finally, explain that the yo-yo comes back to its starting place when it has been used successfully. Say that a successfully written conclusion does the same thing by coming back to the original starting position.

Place the paragraph from Week 1, Day 1 on the overhead. Reread the story to the students and tell them to listen to where they think the beginning, middle and end come in. Together identify the parts of the story and separate it by drawing a line on the story. Relate this to the yo-yo. (You will already identify them briefly in Week 1. This is a time to go a little more in depth with the parts of a narrative.)

Have students take out a previous story that they wrote. Put the students in partners and have them take turns reading each other's story. See if they can identify the beginning, middle and end. Have them use three different colored highlighters to draw a line between the beginning, middle and end of the story. If there are not three parts, have students fix their paper to follow this format.

### Day 2: Transitions

Explain to students that transitions are words that link the parts of your paper together. Tell students that they can link paragraphs together or sentences within a paragraph together. Give each student a strip of construction paper. Have students think of a transition word and write it on their strip of paper. Call students up to share their transition word and glue the strip together to form a chain. As you glue remind students that transition words link paragraphs and sentences together.

Pass out list of transition words for students to add to their folder.

Have students take out their writing from Day 2 that was highlighted and add transition words to their paragraphs. Tell them that they can use any transition words that were brainstormed or any from the list.

- If time permits, students can return to previous writing to finish.

### Day 3: Good Endings

Tell students that good writers begin and end their paper in strong ways. Pass out the Good Endings paper for students to add to their folder. Introduce the good endings of a feeling and a question.

Show students the example of a bad ending from a story. Together fix the ending to include either a feeling or a question. Reread the paragraph and show how it sounds better with a strong ending.

Take out sentence strips from Week 3, Day 2. Remind students of the good beginnings that they wrote. Pass back their beginnings. Have the students flip their sentence strip over and write a good ending on the back top go along with the topic. Remind students that if they used a question or exclamation in the beginning, they should not use the same one in the ending. Have students share and discuss why they are a good/bad ending.

Have students go back to the same story from Day 2 and fix the ending for their story. If time permits have students share the endings that they wrote.

## Week 5

### Day 1: Editing

Hand out proofreader's marks. Teach the children what the different marks stand for. Display a copy of the sample paragraph on the overhead. Perform a think aloud where you edit the paragraph using the proofreader's marks.

Tell students they will be put into pairs and asked to edit a paragraph using the proofreader's marks. Give the students time to edit the paragraph with their partner. Then go over the paragraph together on the overhead.

Have students pick their favorite story that they would like to *publish*. Have them read their story and edit it using the proofreader's marks. Each child should meet with the teacher to ensure corrections have been made before moving on to the final paper.

Final copy will be homework, but students can begin in class if there is time.

### Day 2: Writing Celebration

Take the day to celebrate the writing of your students by allowing them to share their final draft piece that they wrote for homework.

### Day 3: Introduce Realistic Fiction/Generate Ideas

Read aloud and discuss what genre the students think the story is. Review what a realistic fiction story is and what the parts of a realistic story would be. Talk about how you divide the story into a beginning, middle and end.

Since this is realistic fiction, not a true story, remember that we have to **teach our writers to omit I**. Our writers need a lesson on writing with the pronouns he and she. Try to have students include only one problem and one solution.

Refer to the previous lesson using the popcorn and how students want a variety of topics to write about.

Write the topics: vacation, family, and friends on chart paper. Tell them to take out their writing notebook to brainstorm ideas for realistic fiction stories. Have students write the word vacation at the top of their page. Set the timer for 2 minutes and have them list all the different things that they could write about pertaining to vacation. Repeat this process for family and friends. Then have students come up and add a topic they brainstormed to the list for each topic.

Have students pick one of these topics and begin to write a realistic fiction story.

## Week 6

### Day 1: Text Structure

Explain to students that a good story has many elements including characters, setting, problem and solution. Reference back to reading and the graphic organizers used during that time.

Put a copy of the story map on the overhead. Pick one of the topics from Day 3 and do a think aloud where you fill out the story map about a realistic fiction story you would like to write.

Give students a story map to fill out on their own using one of the topics they brainstormed. After they have filled out the organizer, check it and then allow students to begin writing their story.

### Day 2: Character Development

Display large outline of body. Talk about the difference between internal and external characteristics and why it is important to develop a character in the story. Give each student a card with a characteristic on it. Have students come up and place the card inside the body if it is an internal characteristic or outside the body if it is an external characteristic.

Display paragraph of simple character description. Together, use the characteristics to make the description of the character better.

Then have students go back to their story from Day 1 and develop their character with internal and external traits.

### Day 3: Show Don't Tell

Remind students that their writing should create a picture in the reader's mind. In order to do this they have to write a good description of the different things they are talking about in their writing. Showing what is happening versus telling what is happening.

Give each child a card with a different emotion on it. Have them take turns coming up and acting out the emotion on the card. See if students can guess which emotion the child is acting out. Explain how they are showing their feelings instead of telling them.

Have students go back into their writing and highlight any time they told a feeling i.e. Amy was scared. Rylee was happy. See if they can describe how the character is feeling instead of telling their emotion.

Pass out chart. Have students think of different scenarios to put in the boxes. Tell students they can use this to come up with different problems/solutions for their story. Give time to fill out the chart and then give students time to write a story about one of the items on the chart.

## Week 7

### Day 1: Generate Ideas

Show the picture of Spongebob. Ask students to generate story titles that could correlate with the picture. Write these titles under the picture. Explain how now we have a good list of titles that we can write about based on a character.

Give students the sheet with 4 different characters on them. Set the timer for 8 minutes and allow students to brainstorm different titles to go along with the characters that they see. After time is up have them share in groups the titles that they wrote.

Have students pick one title and write a story based off of that title and character. Remind students that they should still be working with a beginning, middle and end in their story.

### Day 2: Character Development/Dialogue

Explain to students the story of where punctuation came from. Explain that “lips” symbol was used in scripts for Greek plays. They used the lips only when a character was talking. Put page of dialogue on the overhead. Pretend to be both characters as you read. As you read the conversation, make air quotes. Explain how we write dialogue correctly.

Show second overhead and have students choral read the text. Students should apply air quotes as the text indicates based on when someone is talking.

Pass out candy heart sheet. Show example on the front page. Explain to students how the candy heart conversation sayings in the box were used to make dialogue. Tell students they will be writing their own dialogue using the candy heart sayings provided on the back. They should use at least 6 of the provided sayings in their dialogue. If time permits, share papers with partners/class.

### Day 3: Movement Through Time

Show students the train on the track. Have the train move on the track. Explain how the train moves smoothly down the track. Then take a section of the train out. Have the train go down the track. The train will not be able to move past the gap. Explain to students that good writers do not leave big gaps in their writing. If they do, the story will not be able to flow, just like the train could not move down the track.

Show example of a paragraph with gaps on the overhead. Read the paragraph and show how there are gaps in the time of the story. Complete a think aloud where you fix the text and make sure it flows and there are not any time gaps.

Have students go back to one of their realistic fiction writing pieces and fix any time gaps they may have.

## Week 8

### Day 1: Voice

Explain how people's perspectives and life experiences are what lead to voice in writing. Explain to students that writing is more interesting and fun to read is when it has what is called voice: personality, color, and emotion. Ask students to tell you what they think it means for writing to have voice.

Make a list of the characteristics of writing that indicate strong voice. "You know writing has voice if

- It shows the writer's personality
- It sounds different from everyone else's
- It contains feelings and emotions
- The words come to life
- It comes from the heart

Tell the class that you will be reading aloud a story that you believe has "lots of voice." Explain that there are many emotions that are captured in the story, which you want the students to listen for as you read the book.

Pass out card with the names of different emotions that are captured in the story. As you read, ask students to hold up their assigned emotion as you read if they hear it expressed in the story.

Read *The Memory String* aloud; pausing at times to talk about why students have held up different emotions and what part of the story captured the emotion.

Follow up the read-aloud with a discussion about why this story had such strong voice and how the author achieved this. Make sure that your students understand that adding emotion is one way to add more voice to a story.

Tell students that they have been assigned an emotion that they will need to portray through writing. Look at your own card and model for your students how to complete the activity. Follow the steps below:

Peek at your card without showing it to your class. (You may want to choose your word ahead of time so that you can pre-plan your writing.) Write a short paragraph in which you reveal your assigned emotion. Tell students that the word on their card CANNOT be used in the paragraph. Students must reveal the emotion solely through the thoughts, words, or actions of the characters or narrator in their short stories.

Write your paragraph in front of the class. For example, if you have the word NERVOUS, you might write:

*My hands were so sweaty I could barely hold the microphone in my hand. Butterflies were bouncing off the walls of my stomach, and my knees were shaking. As the announcer called my name, I watched the curtain slowly rise to reveal the hundreds of people in the audience. I was blinded by the brightness of a spotlight shining down on me. "You can do this," I whispered to*

*myself.*

After reading your paragraph to your class, have students guess the emotion that you were trying to reveal through your writing.

Send students back to their desks with their Voice Card. In their Writer's Notebook, have them write their own paragraph to reveal the emotion they have been assigned.

Once all students are finished, have students read their paragraphs aloud to the class and ask their classmates to guess the emotion.

Now that students understand how to improve their writing by adding more voice to their stories or essays, they will revisit an entry in their Writer's Notebook (or any piece of writing that they have already published) to find places where they can add more voice, emotion, or point of view.

Using sticky notes, students will find places where they can add more emotion to a scene, add more exciting dialogue, or add a character's actions to reveal a certain attitude or mood.

## Day 2: Developing Setting

Display posters of school, baseball field and zoo. Take the characters and randomly place them on the different posters. Ask students if the places these characters are placed make sense. Example: Put a giraffe in the school, a peanut seller at school, etc Tell students that it is important to fit your characters and setting together. Call up students to fix the characters and place them in the correct setting.

Next give each child a descriptive card for the setting. Call students up and have them place the card where they think it would best describe the setting. Tell students that an important part of writing is not just telling where the setting is, but connecting it to the characters and describing it in detail.

Have students pick one of the settings and characters from the board and write a story about it.

## Day 3: Word Choice

Show a picture of a hot dog. Ask students, "If I said do you want this long, brown stick for lunch? Would you want to buy it?" They will probably say no. However, if I said, "Do you want this delicious, juicy, flavorful hot dog that will make your mouth water?" people would say yes.

Tell students that they are going to help you think of words to describe an ice cream cone that would make people want to buy or have one right now. Show the picture of an ice cream cone and have student's help you think of words to help describe the cone.

Explain how word choice is very important in writing because it makes your writing more interesting and makes the person reading your story want to keep reading.

Next, assign a pair of students a day from the school's lunch calendar. Students should revise their given day using more vivid descriptions using nouns, verbs and adjective. Have students share their sentences when finished.

Have students go back to their writing from Day 2 and fix parts to make them more descriptive.

## Week 9

### Day 1: Word Choice (Cont.)

Show example of text and explain how word choice is important. Have students come to the overhead and underline good word usage.

Next tell students that you are going to read them a description of a place. You want them to see if they can guess the place based on your description. The first one they should not be able to guess. Then read them another description and have them guess. Both should be displayed on the overhead.

Tell students they will now do the same thing that you did only with animals. Give each student a piece of notebook paper. Tell them they are going to be using words to describe an animal, but they cannot say what the kind of animal they are describing. Tell them that they want to describe it using as many good words as they can. Have students share their descriptions and see if students can guess which animal the student is describing. Discuss how word choice was very important to getting a clear picture of what you are writing.

### Day 2: Editing

Review proofreader's marks.

Have students pick their favorite story that they would like to *publish*. Have them read their story and edit it using the proofreader's marks. Each child should meet with the teacher to ensure corrections have been made before moving on to the final paper.

Final copy will be homework, but students can begin in class if there is time.

### Day 3: Writing Celebration

Celebrate by allowing students to share their final draft and celebrate the end of narrative writing.

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Narrative Writing

### Week 1

#### Day 1: Personal Narrative Introduction

- Review with students that a narrative is a story and personal narrative is a story about their life.
- Display sample essay "The Day I Took the Spotlight" for students to review.
- Read essay aloud to class. Have students brainstorm positive aspects of the essay and what makes it a personal narrative. Point out how the essay is broken apart into beginning, middle, and end.

- Introduce the narrative student writing checklist. Discuss with students which concepts from the checklist have already been covered in previous lessons (simple six). They should highlight these topics as a reminder when they are writing. All conventions should be highlighted but will be reviewed in language.
- Give students the prompt “Something fun you did over summer vacation.” (approx. 20 minutes)

### Day 2: Generating Ideas

- Demonstrate the concept of generating ideas by blowing bubbles in your room. Explain how with just one blow many bubbles are formed, similar to how with one topic many ideas can be formed.
- Review with students that personal narrative is a story about their life. Discuss the difficulty that writers have when they can’t come up with ideas for their writing. Last time, they were given the prompt, now they will work on generating ideas on their own. Discuss the importance of brainstorming ideas before writing.
- Have students brainstorm a list of people that are important to them. (Set a timer for 2 minutes) On the overhead, brainstorm your own list of important people to model for the students.
- Then have students circle two important people they would like to write about. List these two people in a T-chart.
- Then have students list reasons why these people are important to them (4 minutes)
- Students will then choose one person they would like to write about and circle ONE reason why this person is important.
- Then write a story about one time when this quality was displayed. (Ex. If I brainstormed reasons my mom was important to me and I circled funny; I would write a story about one time my mom was funny.)

### Day 3: Seed story

- Discuss with students watermelon vs. seed story. A watermelon is a large fruit that has many tiny seeds. Many topics that students write are too broad (watermelon) and they can pull smaller stories (seeds).
- On a T chart mark label Watermelon and Seed. The teacher gives the watermelon and the students brainstorm different seed stories.

<b>Watermelon</b>	<b>vs.</b>	<b>Seed</b>
Disney Vacation		Going on Space Mountain
My night on the haunted hayride		When the ghost popped out of the shed
Sleepover with Jessica		Roasting marshmallows

- Students then go back into their story about their important person and reread to see if they are writing a seed or watermelon story. If they are writing a watermelon, rewrite. If they are writing a seed story, they should continue writing. If students finish their first story, they should go back to their list of ideas and write another story.

## Week 2

### Day 1: Generating Ideas

- Bring in two bowls of candy. One bowl should have one piece of candy in it. The other bowl should have a variety of choices. Ask the students which bowl they would want to pick from. Hopefully, all the students would choose the bowl with a large variety. Relate this to generating ideas and how it is important to have a variety of ideas to choose from. The more ideas the students brainstorm, the more possibilities they have to write stories.
- Have students brainstorm places that are important to them. (2 min.)
- Then students circle two from their list. Using these two places, students make a T chart. Set the timer for 5 minutes and have students generate ideas why each of these places is important. (Ex. Manhattan is important to me because I got my first job here, we bought our first home here, and I met my best friend.)
- Most students should be finished with at least one story about an important person. Even if students are in the middle of a story, they can always go back and finish later. They should begin writing a new story about their important place.

### Day 2: Introduce beginning, middle, end

- Introduce the idea of beginning, middle, and end by displaying sample personal narrative "Indy's Life Story."
- Have students fill out the beginning, middle, end graphic organizer while you are reading.
- Students should continue writing their story about an important place.

### Day 3: Show Not Tell

- Read the story Courage by Bernard Waber
- Introduce the idea of visualizing. Explain how it is important for the reader to be able to picture in their mind what the student is writing.
- Point out the descriptive parts in the story (post its). Reread these parts to students, while they close their eyes. Ask them to picture these parts while you read.
- Have students go back to their writing notebooks and find 3 places where they can use the skill show not tell to improve their quality of writing.
- Students should continue writing their story about an important place.

## Week 3

### Day 1: Generating Ideas

- Tell students that we will be brainstorming more topics for them to write.
- Have students list a question at the top of their notebook. Ex. "When was the first time you played a sport?"
- Have them brainstorm all the times they did something hard. Set a timer for 4 minutes.

- Then have students list another question at the top of their page. “ First/last time with an animal.” Have them brainstorm all their firsts (or lasts) with any animal. It can be a pet, the first time they saw a friend’s pet, the first time they saw an animal at the zoo, the last time they saw their pet ect. Set a timer for 4 minutes.
- Continue with one more question. “A time you realized something important about yourself.” Set a timer for 4 minutes.

\*Students are just jotting down brief sentences about all of these times.

- Have students look back at all of their ideas and circle ONE they would like to write about.  
Ex: The first time I learned how to roller blade.
- Students should begin to write their story.

### Day 2: Good Beginnings

- Show the students a baby pop up toy and demonstrate the different actions that you can do to make each door open. Each time you are taking different actions to get the toy to pop out. Relate this to the different ways you can get your essay to “pop” with an attention getter.
- Hand out list of good beginnings for student writing folders.
- Introduce the idea of “starting by describing the setting.” Teacher think aloud: Give a few verbal examples of describing familiar settings for the students. Ex. Describe the classroom in great detail, describe the gym, ect. This is to help students hear what describing the setting sounds like.
- Display example of weak beginning “My Zoo Adventure” and have students share their thoughts about what makes it weak. Now that the students have heard what it sounds like to describe a setting, fix the weak example into a strong intro by describing the setting together.
- Students should go back to an old piece of writing from personal narrative. They should make their introduction stronger by “describing the setting.” Share their changes.

### Day 3: Good Beginnings

- Review with students different ways to start their narratives with strong beginnings. Write these on separate pieces of construction paper or on the overhead. (question, exclamation, describing the setting, sounds)
- To show students that authors use these different strong beginnings, have each student take out the novel/book they are currently reading or even their reading basal. If it is a chapter book, they can look at the beginning of each chapter. On an index card, copy down the strong beginning the author used.
- Once all the students are done, have them share the strong beginning they found and come to the board and place their index card under the corresponding category.
- Teach students another way to begin their essay is starting with a surprise.
- Give a few examples on the overhead of surprise opening sentences.
  - Wow! I was doing my back flip and I landed it!
  - I can’t believe it, the Sox won the world series!
- Allow students time to make their beginning stronger. Then students can continue writing.

## Week 4

### Day 1: Drafting beginning, middle, end

- Display a toy train to the students. Point out the three different parts, the engine, cargo, and caboose. Relate this to the beginning, middle, and end of a narrative. The engine is the beginning; it carries all the important parts of that train that makes it run. Just as your beginning carries all the parts of your story that will help it develop. The cargo on the train carries all the goods, just as the middle paragraph carries the detail of the story. The caboose wraps up the train, just as the ending wraps up the story.
- Put sample personal narrative essay from week 1, day 1 “The Day I Took the Spotlight” back on the overhead and focus on the beginning, middle, and end. Explain the structure and draw lines to separate paragraphs.
- Have students turn to a previous story and switch with a partner. The partner’s job is to try and identify the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Have the partner draw a highlighted line to indicate the three parts. If there are not three clear parts, the student should work on fixing their own paper to follow this format.
- Continue writing personal narrative story.

### Day 2: Transitions

- Show students mega sized Legos. Demonstrate how Legos connect or link together. Relate this to transition words and how these link different sentences and paragraphs together.
- Hand out a list of transition words to students. Give each students a mega sized Lego and have them choose one transition to write on the Lego (use a label so we can reuse the Legos. As a class, stack the Legos so all the transition words are visible.
- Have students turn to the current personal narrative piece they are working on and highlight any transition words. If they don’t have transitions, they should add them.
- Continue writing personal narrative story.

### Day 3: Good endings

- Remind students that just like good beginnings, it is important to have a good ending. It is the last thing the reader will take away from the story and it should be strong.
- Hand out list of good endings. Review with students the endings they learned last year.
- Introduce the ending “something I learned.”
- Display the sample of a weak ending “My Zoo Adventure”. As a class, discuss ways to improve the ending to make it stronger.
- Students should go back to the writing piece they are currently working on and add strong ending.
- Students should continue writing.

## Week 5

### Day 1: Editing

- Hand out proofreaders marks. Go over each mark and when to use it.
- Display on overhead a copy of the sample paragraph with mistakes. As a think a loud, use the proofreading marks to fix mistakes.

- Partner students and hand out the second sample paragraph with mistakes. Together, the partners should use their proofreading marks to correct the mistakes in the paragraph. Once everyone is finished, go over the mistakes together.
- Students need to choose one story to bring to final draft. It can be any personal narrative that they have written.
- They should edit their own paper using the proofreading marks. The teacher should check this paper and the corrections before the student brings this paper to final draft.
- The final draft is homework. If there is time, the students can begin in class.

#### Day 2: Writing celebration

- Take the day to celebrate the students writing by allowing students to read aloud their final draft story.

#### Day 3: Introduce realistic fiction genre/ generating ideas

- Read aloud When Lightning Comes in a Jar by Patricia Polacco. Discuss with students the elements of a realistic fiction story.
- Explain that they will be writing their own realistic fiction stories.
- Give students the following topics to brainstorm: Holiday, Sports, S.S. concept of choice, and School. Have them list each in their spiral with room to write underneath. Set the timer for 6 minutes and allow them to brainstorm ideas for stories that relate to the topics listed.
- Then, write the same topics on separate pieces of butcher block paper. Allow students to come up and write their ideas for stories under each topic. Encourage students to add these ideas to their spirals. Remind them it is better to have options to choose from (refer back the candy bowl trigger and how they would rather have more options to choose from).
- Students can then pick one story idea and start writing their realistic fiction story.

### Week 6

#### Day1: Text Structure- story map

- Explain to students that a good story has many elements including characters, setting, problem and solution. Reference back to reading and the graphic organizers they have filled out for story structure.
- With a transparency of the story map, complete a “think aloud” so the students can see how to take their idea and turn that into a story.
- Then have students fill out a story map of their own, using lots of detail and description.
- After the story map is filled out, they should continue to write their realistic fiction story, including all elements from their story map.

#### Day 2: Character Development

- Discuss with students the importance of characters in stories. Explain that there are two types of traits, internal and external. On butcher paper draw a T chart and list different traits for each. Discuss with students why it is important to include both internal and external traits in their stories.

- Place students in groups and have them trace one person onto butcher block paper. Have them choose a character from a previous story in reading or they can use themselves to list internal and external traits on the traced person.
- Have students open up to the realistic fiction story they are writing and have them add internal and external traits to their characters.
- Continue writing realistic fiction stories.

### Day 3: Show Not Tell

- Ask the class to guess how you feel (act nervous). Once they've drawn that conclusion, ask what were the "clue details" that helped? Jot them all on the board and label them as "showing" details. Write nervous and label it as a "telling" detail.
- Using the students "showing" details from the board, orally write out a couple of sentences describing what you acted out.
- Have students work in small groups and hand out expression cards. They must write a few sentences "showing" that feeling, without telling it. Then have the students read their descriptions and have the class guess how the character is feeling based on "showing" details.
- Have the students go back into their writing and highlight anytime they "told" a feeling. Ex. Billy was scared, Kevin was happy. They must change those to "showing" sentences.
- Students should continue writing.

## Week 7

### Day 1: Generating Ideas

- Play different sounds bites to spark students' minds for topics to write about. Play one clip at a time. While students are listening, they should close their eyes and visualize what would be happening in a scene if this music was playing. Then have the students open their eyes and jot down any ideas for a story they thought of while they were visualizing. Repeat with all sound bites. Remind the students that they are still writing realistic fiction stories.
- Then have students pick one of their new ideas and start writing.

### Day 2: Character Development- Dialogue

- Show students different comic strips. Explain that the speech bubbles are showing what the characters are saying. Relate this to writing stories and how it is important include dialogue.
- Place the comic strip translation on the overhead. Highlight the use of quotation marks and punctuation.
- Give students comic strips with blank word bubbles. They should add words to the speech bubbles based on the pictures and what they think is happening. Allow students to share with the class or a partner.
- Have students go back into their writing and add dialogue. They should highlight the areas that they added it. Allow students to share the dialogue they added to their papers.
- Students should continue writing their realistic fiction stories.

### Day 3: Movement through time

- Set up dominoes with a distinct gap (you want the first half of the dominoes to fall and the second half to stay standing). Knock over the first domino and ask the students why they all didn't tip over. Explain that there was a gap in the dominoes and that they all didn't flow together because of it. Relate this to writing and how sometimes there are gaps in time and this prevents the paper from flowing.
- Display sample story on overhead "Jaxon on the Run" and discuss with students the gaps in time. Discuss ways to fix this problem and edit the paper.
- Have students reread the paper they are currently reading to make sure they don't have any gaps in time. If they do, they should fix them.
- Students should continue writing their realistic fiction stories.

## Week 8

### Day 1: Voice

- Explain to students that it is important to understand that every topic has different perspectives or points of view. People look at the same situation and react differently from it. For example, some people might see a clown and it makes them happy, while others see a clown and it scares them. Ask the students reasons why people would react these two ways when seeing a clown. (Maybe the person that was happy always had clowns and their birthday party, while the person that is scared of clowns saw a scary movie with clowns.)
- Explain that when we are writing, we should express our feelings about the topic through our word choice and tone. This is using voice. Showing how we feel makes our writing more meaningful.
- Show sample picture on overhead of cow. Discuss with the class the different characters in this picture- cow, fly, eagle. If you were writing a story about the day, it would be very different if the story was written from the fly's perspective vs. the cow's perspective.
- Demonstrate a "think aloud" together and write a quick paragraph from the cow's perspective. Write about him being in the field, having a fly on his head, ect. Then have students partner and write a short paragraph from the fly or eagle's perspective.
- Have students continue working on their stories.

### Day 2: Developing Setting

- You will have 4 different bags with items inside that would be used in a particular setting. Start with one bag and pull out the items one at a time. Ask the students if all of these items were found in a story, what would the setting be? Repeat with the other bags.
- Explain to students that it is important to describe the setting. Readers shouldn't have to guess the setting, it should be included in their story. Do a few think alouds describing the settings from the bag project.
- Students should go back into their essay and develop their setting.
- Then students should continue to write their stories.

### Day 3: Word Choice

- Show students different restaurant menus. Point out the variety of word choice that is used to describe the food. Discuss with students the reason restaurant owners use such descriptive words is to entice the customer and get them to eat more.
- Tell the students that today we will be creating a classroom menu. The goal is to make dishes that are extremely appetizing to guests by using extremely descriptive words. Split the class up into groups and give each group a part of the menu: appetizers, salad, main course, dessert. The group should create 2-3 mouthwatering dishes. You might want to decide on a theme and restaurant name.
- This activity may take most of the time, so students probably won't be able to continue writing their realistic fiction stories.

### Week 9

#### Day 1: Word choice

- Remind students of the lesson last week about the importance of using strong words.
- Display sample essay "My Special Place" on overhead. With students help, underline strong, vivid words. Discuss how this effects the feeling of the paper.
- Have students pick one story that they want to bring to final draft. They should add more vivid words to this piece of writing.
- Allow for time for students to share the words they changed.

#### Day 2: Peer Editing

- Using the paper the students chose yesterday, proofread using the proofreading marks worksheet.
- The teacher should approve the student's essay before they bring it to final draft.
- Students can work on the final draft. Maybe type in the computer lab for something different?

#### Day 3: Writing Celebration

- Celebrate the students writing and ending of narrative by allowing them to share their final drafts.

### 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Narrative Writing

#### \*Introduce Narrative & Generate Ideas- Week 1

#### Day 1:

##### \*Personal Narrative

- Review with students that a narrative essay is telling a story and introduce personal narrative as a story about the student's life.
- Show example essays for students to review and discuss together what elements make this a personal narrative. Discuss how the writer organized the story into a beginning, middle, and end.
- Introduce "Student Writing Checklist," discuss with students which concepts from the checklist have already been covered in previous lessons. Students should highlight each

of these concepts. All conventions should be highlighted at this time, and will be referenced throughout the year in Language and Writing.

- Give students the prompt to write about something fun or interesting that they did over summer vacation (about 20 min).

Day 2:

\*Generate Ideas

- Demonstrate the concept of generating ideas by blowing bubbles in your room. Explain how from just one blow many bubbles form. Similar to how from one topic many other ideas can form.
- Review with students that personal narrative is a story about their lives.
- Discuss with students the difficulty that writers have when they can't come up with ideas for their writing. Last time they were given the prompt and now they will work on generating ideas on their own.
- Set a timer for two minutes and have students brainstorm a list of important people in their lives. As students brainstorm you are doing the same thing on a transparency to show as an example.
- Next, have students circle three people from the list and set the timer for five minutes. Have them create a new list with each of the three people and all the reasons of why that person is important.
- Students will now choose one person that they would like to write about and circle one reason why this person is important. Then write a story about a time when this quality was displayed (Example: I chose my mom and circled that she was caring, so now I would write about a certain time that my mom was caring).

Day 3:

\*Seed Story

- Explain the importance of choosing one seed story instead of writing about the entire watermelon.
- Show example essay about Disneyland that talks about the entire trip as a whole. Note how the author loses the details that make a story interesting when they try to focus on too much.
- Draw a watermelon on the overhead and title it "My Trip to Disneyland." Then have the students give you individual seed stories that you could write about.
- Have students go back to their story from Day 2 and see if they are focusing on only the one seed story. Make any changes and continue writing or begin writing a new story.

### **\*Generate Ideas, Show not Tell- Week 2**

Day 1:

\*Generate Ideas

- Display a row of dominoes and explain to the students that these dominoes represent different ideas. That it's important to come up with many ideas and have several to choose from. Then knock one domino down and watch the others fall. Explain how often we may be frustrated and not know what to write but once we come up with one idea several more can follow. Have one domino by itself and knock it over ask the students which one they found more interesting.

- Explain that we are going to be generating more story ideas for students to choose from.
- Set the timer for two minutes, and have students brainstorm a list of places that are important to them (Do the same activity on the overhead and show students when the
- Circle three places and set the timer for five minutes. Create a new list for each place with all the reasons this place is important. (Example: I chose my family's lake house as one of my three places and I might write under this topic that I spend time with my family, go water skiing, and it's where I met my best friend).
- Have students begin a new story using one of the examples from this brainstorming. At this point, most students should be finished with at least one of their important people stories. They may have started a new story on Day 3, and can always go back to that story at another time.

Day 2:

\*Show-Not-Tell

- Describe the skill of visualization by reading aloud, Storm in the night (few pages only).  
\*Mention how the author organized the story into a beginning, middle, and end.
- Hand out pages from the story and have students highlight places where the author showed what was happening instead of telling.
- Have students go back to their writing notebooks and find three places that they can use the skill of Show-Not-Tell to improve their writing.
- If time allows they can continue writing or begin a new piece.

Day 3:

\*Show-Not-Tell

- Review the concept of show-not-tell
- Make a t-chart on the overhead. On one side write Tell and on the other side write Show. On the tell side write "I rode a rollercoaster," discuss how the author just simply told you what was happening instead of using description to show you. Write a "Show" version together.
- Next, give the students the sentence; "I took a walk in the park." Have students create a "Show" version on their own and share a few with the class.
- Students can now continue writing in their notebooks.

### **\*Generate Ideas, Good Beginnings Week 3**

Day 1:

\*Generate ideas

- Set the timer for four minutes. Have students write a feeling at the top of their paper (Example: Happy), then they can brainstorm different times when they felt that way. Repeat this process twice with different feelings.
- Have students begin a new story using one of the ideas that they came up with today. They may be in the middle of another story and can always revisit that at another time.

Day 2:

\*Good Beginnings

- Hand out list of good beginnings for students' writing folders.
- Read over the "Good Beginnings" list and emphasize the example of starting with a

description. Do a think aloud using the good beginning of description to model for the students (Example: boat ride, baseball game, concert).

- Show example of weak beginning and have students share their thoughts on what makes it weak. Ask students why they think it is important to have a strong beginning.
- Have students change the weak beginning in partners using description. Share some examples. (5min to work in partners only)
- Students will now continue writing and go back to a previous piece of writing (personal narrative) and change the beginning.
- Continue writing

Day 3:

\*Good Beginnings

- Show the shape sorter (toy) to the class and lay all the blocks out to represent the different ways we can start a narrative. Explain how all the blocks (beginnings) can fit into the toy, but we want to try and choose the one that will go the best with our story. Display trying to fit a shape into the wrong place to demonstrate how choosing right beginning is important to the essay.
- Review the changes from Day 2 on the personal narrative beginning.
- Introduce the “Good Beginning” of dialogue.
- Put students in groups of four and give each group a piece of chart paper and a bunch of books. They will divide the paper in four with a marker and can label each section with any of the good beginnings that we have covered. Their job is to find as many examples of good beginnings and put them in the appropriate section. They will write the name of the book, the chapter, and the actual beginning sentence. Remind students that they will only have ten minutes to do this so they need to stay on task. After, share a few examples and post the chart paper for reference.
- Students will now go into their current piece of writing and change their beginning to make it stronger by using one of the examples on the “Good Beginnings” sheet. They will then continue writing.

#### **\*Drafting B-M-E, Transitions, Good Endings Week 4**

Day 1:

\*Drafting B-M-E

- Show students silly putty and explain how the two outside shells are like the beginning and ending of a story. The silly putty itself is the middle of the story. Demonstrate how the silly putty stretches just like we want to stretch the description and details in our story. It's important to also note that the two shells are similar just like the beginning and endings should be.
- Place the personal narrative example on the overhead from week 1 and have students identify the B,M,E. Discuss how you can find these three parts, what are the clues?
- Have students turn to a previous story and then trade with a partner. The partner will then highlight the beginning in blue, the middle in yellow, and the end in pink. If the partner does not see a distinct beginning, middle, and end the author should go back fix this during writing time.
- Continue writing.

Day 2:

\*Transitions

- Show the barrel of monkeys and explain how the purpose of transitions is to link different sentences and paragraphs.
- Hand out transition list and monkey outlines. Have students write a transition on each monkey to be displayed in the classroom.
- Have students turn to their current writing piece and highlight any transitions, if they do not have many transitions they need to add some before continuing to write.

Day 3:

\*Good Endings

- Hand and discuss the list of good endings. Review the previous three endings that students should be familiar with from previous grades, and then introduce the ending-end with something you want your readers to remember.
- Show a weak ending on the overhead and as a class improve the ending with one of the choices they have reviewed.
- Have students then go back into their current writing piece and add a strong ending. Remind students that they should not use the same ending as their beginning.
- Continue Writing

### **\*Editing, Writing Celebration, Generate ideas- Realistic Fiction Week 5**

Day 1:

\*Editing

- Hand out a copy of proofreaders marks and review with students.
- Display on the overhead a copy of the sample narrative and do a think aloud editing the paragraph with the proofreader's marks
- Hand out a new paragraph and have students edit with a partner. Review what they found together.
- Students will now go back into their writing notebook and choose one personal narrative to take to a final copy. Each student will edit their own paper and show the teacher before moving on to the final copy.
- \*Final copy will be homework but students can begin in class if they have time.

Day 2:

\*Writing Celebration

- Celebrate the writing of your students by taking time to have them read aloud their final drafts in small groups or as a whole class.

Day 3:

\*Generate Ideas – Realistic Fiction

- Connect personal narrative to realistic fiction by reading aloud, Dear Mr. Falkner and discuss how the writer used ideas from her own life to create a fictional story.
- Write the topics; friendship, school, and sports on different pieces of chart paper.
- Students will then write each topic in their writing notebooks with plenty of space left below to write ideas.
- Set the timer for 6 minutes and have students brainstorm different realistic fiction

story ideas based on the three given topics (Reference the dominoes to remind students that they need to have many options to choose from)

-Have students begin writing their first realistic fiction story from the topics generated.

### **\*Text Structure, Character Development, Show-not-Tell Week 6**

Day 1:

#### **\*Text Structure**

-Explain to students that a good narrative has many elements including; characters, setting, conflict, plot events, and resolution. Reference the use of story structure from reading and hand out the story map graphic organizer.

-Do a think aloud with an overhead of the story map. Choose a topic from the realistic fiction ideas that you did with your class last week. Then fill out the map demonstrating out loud everything you would want the students to be thinking when they fill out their own maps.

-Students can choose a topic and fill out the story map and then begin writing.

Day 2:

#### **\*Character Development**

-Discuss the importance of using and developing the characters in every story. Point out the difference between internal and external character traits.

-Divide a piece of chart paper in two sections and label them internal and external. Have students brainstorm different traits to fill each section.

-Hand out the outline of a person and tell students to choose the main character from their current piece of writing. They will place all internal character traits on the inside of the outline and all external traits on the outside.

-Students will now go back into their writing to further develop the main character.

Day 3:

#### **\*Show-not-Tell**

-Review with students the importance of show-not-tell.

-Prior to the lesson have a piece of chart paper labeled show-not-tell

-Have a student come up to the front of the room and show them an index card with an the name of an emotion on it (ex: nervous). The student will need to act out the emotion without any words and the rest of the class will have to guess what the emotion is.

-Then move to the chart paper and divide it in two sections. Label one side show and one side tell. On the tell side write the emotion (nervous) and on the show side have the class give different ways that the person showed how they were "nervous."

-Repeat this with a few different emotions.

-Have students go back into a piece of writing and highlight any time they told about a feeling versus showing the feeling (angry, scared, sad, embarrassed). Their goal is to change the telling to showing.

-Continue writing

### **\*Generate Ideas, Character Development- Dialogue, Movement through time Week 7**

Day 1:

### \*Generate Ideas

- Choose several different books that have interesting covers. Choose one to show students and discuss different titles that could go with that book. Write these on the overhead.
- Continue showing students several different books and have them generate story ideas based on the inspiration that they get from the displayed books.
- Use the book Skippjon Jones and the mentor text "That Crazy Cat" to illustrate how students can use the inspiration of a book cover or story they've read to create their own fictional stories.

### Day 2:

#### Character Development- Dialogue

- Discuss how dialogue can make a story more interesting. Remind students of the proper way to punctuate dialogue by displaying the mentor text, "That Crazy Cat." Hand out a copy of this text to each student.
- Give students different magazine pictures and post it notes. Have them think of what they believe the characters in the picture may be saying and write them on the post its. Have students turn for one minute and share what they wrote with a peer. A few students can share with the class.
- Students will now go back and continue writing in their notebooks. Their task is to have at least three places where dialogue is used in their stories.

### Day 3: Movement through time

- Display a wooden block tower and explain to students that the tower represents their writing. Often in writing we lose track of time and leave significant gaps which causes the writer to be confused. Remove one block from the center of the tower and watch the rest fall. Explain to students that when they leave gaps in their writing the rest of the story falls short.
- Show the example story on the overhead and read together. Have students point out where the story has gaps and give suggestions on how to improve the piece.
- Have students reread the current paper to ensure that they do not have any gaps in their story and continue writing.

## **\*Voice, Develop Setting, Word Choice Week 8**

### Day 1:

#### \*Voice

- Discuss with students how voice is their own personality coming out in their writing. How the author feels about a topic should be clear after reading their writing. Everyone has different points of view and may see the same situation or topic in a completely different way. Voice is so important because its what makes an author's writing original and special.
- Display the picture of a family eating dinner and hand out "Juggling Voices- Dinner Time!" Talk about how each character in the picture shares the same setting but feels very differently. Connect this to how characters in a story should also have different points of view
- Display the picture of the dog being washed and have each student choose one

character and write about their point of view.

-Have students continue writing with a focus on developing their own voice in the story.

Day 2:

\*Develop Setting

-Discuss with students the importance of developing and describing their settings in each story.

-Place different setting pictures on the board. Give examples of plot events and characters to students and have them explain which setting would match the best with these story elements. For instance, the character of a cowboy would match best with the desert picture. Explain to students it's important to describe the setting but it's also important to make sure that the setting connects to other parts of the story.

-Students can now choose one of the displayed settings to begin a new story. The focus should be on developing the setting and connecting it to the other story parts.

Day 3:

Word Choice

-Remind students about the importance of using strong and challenging words in their writing to make it more meaningful and interesting.

-Announce that the class will be participating in a Fall-Walk Single-Sentence Contest. Each student will try to describe the season with only one sentence. Point out that this is a place where every word counts because they only have one sentence to create. The winner will be chosen from someone outside of the class and a prize will be given to the student with the most descriptive sentence.

-Walk outdoors with the students and give them 15 minutes to walk around school and jot down different words that they could eventually end up putting into their sentence. For example they may write...crunching leaves, cool breeze, dying plants, red, yellow, etc.

- When students come back into the classroom have them work on the sentences. Explain to the class that every good author does several drafts before the final copy. Having just one sentence does not change that. Each student should have several sentences so that they can edit and make changes to create the very best one.

-Collect sentences at the end of the day.

### **\*Word Choice, Editing, Writing Celebration Week 9**

Day 1:

\*Word Choice

-Display mentor text of "My Home, the Rain Forest." Give each student a copy and highlight each strong or challenging word together in the first paragraph together. Then have students finish highlighting on their own.

-Students will now choose their final writing piece to draft. They will find places where they can improve word choice and begin making changes.

Day 2:

Peer Edit

- Using the paper that the students chose yesterday and the proofreader's marks from week 5, have students edit their papers.
- Next students will trade papers with someone else and repeat the editing process.
- Final copy will be homework but students can begin drafting if time allows in class.

Day 3:

Writing Celebration

- Celebrate the students writing by allowing them to share their final drafts and celebrate the end of the narrative unit.