

Curricular Plan for Writing Workshop

Grade 5

Unit 2: The Interpretive Essay

Exploring and Defending Big Ideas about Life and Texts

Students should understand and be able to:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write interpretive essays and arguments• Provide logically ordered reasons supported by facts and details• Use evidence from their own life and from literature to support big ideas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write on demand, structured, thesis driven, flash-draft essays• Use literature as a way to access big ideas• Develop ideas about themselves in the same way they develop ideas about characters |
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Mentor Texts

- Make reference to texts used in reader's workshop and read aloud
- The Tiger Rising by Kate DiCamillo

Possible Teaching Points

Part One: Essayists Grow Compelling Ideas in Writer's Notebooks

(W.5.1a, W.5.1b, W.5.1c, W.5.1d, W.5.7, W.5.10, L.5.1b, L.5.1c, L.5.1d, L.5.2a, L.5.2b, L.5.2e, L.5.6)

- Writers know that thoughts surface as they keep their pen moving across the page. In writing workshop, we are going to be growing ideas and theories about ourselves or even about a person we care a lot about like a grandparent or sister. We are going to develop really big, insightful, wise ideas about ourselves by writing essays!
- Writers grow ideas about themselves or about people they know and care about, just as we grow ideas about characters in reading workshop.
 - Pay attention to key 'scenes' in your life just as we do in our novels when we think, *What does this scene say about who this character really is?*
 - Think back to a moment in your life, write it down and ask, *What does this show about me? What kind of person acts this way?*
 - Jot down an idea and write about it.
- Writers sometimes get stuck after coming to an idea. If this happens:
 - Ask questions of yourself to test out an idea and then write the answers in your notebook.
 - Why do I act this way?
 - When have I not seemed like this?
 - How did I get to be this way?
 - Read over old writing and find an entry you care about. Then, write another entry in which you reflect on and think about the first

one.

- Use free writing to generate ideas. Use phrases such as, *The thought I have about this is...*
- Essayists can look to their writing about reading and try the same strategies to come up with an essay.
 - Push yourself to think about your life and people around you in complicated ways—as you would a character in a story.
 - Tailor familiar strategies so that you come up with material that will lead to a new kind of writing.
 - Read over all entries and think: *What idea about my life or another person or character has generated the most and the best writing? Try to write more to explore that idea.*

Part Two: Writing to Develop More Thinking around a Chosen Terrain, Develop a Thesis and Structure, and Gather Evidence.
(W.5.1a, W.5.1b, W.5.1c, W.5.1d, W.5.7, W.5.10, L.5.1b, L.5.1c, L.5.1d, L.5.2a, L.5.2b, L.5.2e, L.5.6)

- Writers/essayists write long to bring about new thinking by:
 - Pushing past the first thought about ourselves
 - Saying more and more about that idea
 - Using sentence starters when we're stuck
 - What I'm thinking about this is....
 - This makes me realize...
 - I used to think...but now I realize...
 - My thoughts about _____ are complicated...
- Writers/essayists also write to think through an idea in a different way by connecting it to fiction.
 - Write about a character that feels the same way you do or has similar character flaws.
 - Choose the most interesting, fresh idea you have to help craft a thesis statement.
 - Ask, *What do I really want to say about myself and the kind of person that I am?*
 - Remember that people are not always what they seem. Choose a seed idea about yourself or another person that goes beyond the surface and shows something true and harder to see.
- Essayists write just a sentence or two that state the idea they want to develop. This becomes our thesis statement.
- Essay writers, unlike narrative writers, do not make a timeline that progresses straight into drafting. Instead we:
 - Pause at this point to plan the main sections of our essay.
 - Plan the sections of our essay by deciding how we will elaborate on our main idea.
 - Organize our thinking with boxes-and-bullets. Box out the main idea and then list reasons why this idea is true.

I'm the kind of person who _____.

- Reason
- Reason
- Reason

- Different kinds of thesis statements will need different structures to support them.
 - I used to think...but now I realize...
 - I used to think...
 - But now I realize...
 - My thoughts about _____ are complicated.
 - On the one hand, I think...
 - On the other hand, I think...
- Essayists collect stories as evidence to go inside each body paragraph.
 - Just like we've been finding "text evidence" for our ideas about characters, now we can find "life evidence"—moments in our lives that truly show what our thesis statement says.
 - We can collect stories from our own lives as well as stories from the lives of others that illustrate the main idea.
 - We can turn to the lives of our characters and retell scenes where characters acted in a similar way or learned a similar lesson.
- Writers sometimes collect examples that we do not stretch out and tell as stories but that we list instead.
- Essayists revisit their thesis statement and plan as they gather evidence. We can:
 - Change the focus of our thesis slightly.
 - Cut one part from our plan if we cannot find evidence that supports our idea.

Part Three: Drafting and Revising Interpretive Essays about Our Own Lives

(W.5.1a, W.5.1b, W.5.1c, W.5.1d, W.5.4, W.5.5, W.5.7, W.5.10, L.5.1b, L.5.1c, L.5.1d, L.5.2a, L.5.2b, L.5.2e, L.5.6)

- After writers plan and collect for their essays, they put everything together.
 - Revise essays just like you revise any other kind of writing.
 - Move from a bunch of entries in some folders to a rough draft of an essay.
 - Put material together by using a couple techniques.
 - Arrange in an order you choose for a reason.
 - Use key words from your thesis in your topic sentence to help organize into paragraphs
- Essay writers often use the beginning of an essay as a place to convey to readers that the ideas in the essay are important.
- Writers review what they already know about endings to choose the best one for their piece.
 - Some endings circle back to thoughts or images from the introduction as a way to give closure.
 - The important thing is to leave the reader with your most important thoughts.
- Essayists use all they know about narrative writing to make the anecdotes in their body paragraphs come alive.
- Essayist retell a scene from literature making sure to pop out the part that really goes with the essay's main idea while cutting out the other parts of the scene.
 - Start retelling right before the part you have in mind to set up the context. Be sure not to tell everything!

Part Four: A Quick Draft of a Character-Based Interpretive Essay and a Possible Introduction of Essays That Draw from Multiple Texts

(W.5.1a, W.5.1b, W.5.1c, W.5.1d, W.5.4, W.5.5, W.5.7, W.5.10, L.5.1b, L.5.1c, L.5.1d, L.5.2a, L.5.2b, L.5.2e, L.5.6)

- Writers write about their reading
 - Think more deeply about a character by writing an essay about them.
 - Look back at all your on-the-run Post-it notes and pick an idea about a character to try on for essay writing.
- Essayists can use the same thesis and support structures to plan for an essay that interprets a character.
- Essayists use mini-scenes from their books to support their ideas.
- Essayists work to show the reader not only what parts of the book go with their thesis but also *how* those parts bring out this idea so well.
 - Use all you know from reading workshop/narrative writing to help you talk about it.
 - Use literary language such as the setting and how details of the setting can help us know how the character feels.
 - Use objects/places that seem to be symbols of a bigger issue for your character
 - Include dialogue and tell how that gives you insight into a character's relationships.
- Essayists take big ideas or lessons from literature and write about how those ideas come through in different ways in more than one text.

Part Five: Essayists Edit, Prepare for Publication, and Celebrate Their Work

(W.5.1a, W.5.1b, W.5.1c, W.5.1d, W.5.4, W.5.5, W.5.6, W.5.7, W.5.10, L.5.1b, L.5.1c, L.5.1d, L.5.2a, L.5.2b, L.5.2e, L.5.6)

- Essayists think about the tense that they are using as they craft their anecdotes, and they work to stay consistent in that throughout the stories.
 - If we start a mini-story in the past tense, we want to stay in past tense.
- Essayists make sure to use proper punctuation when citing the title of a book or a short story in our writing.
 - We can check our work by using an editing checklist to make sure that we are using the right conventions
- Writer's love to get feedback from other writers.
 - During a gallery walk leave a Post-it note with a specific compliment next to another writer's work.

Helpful Tips

- This unit draws on Character and Interpretation units of study in reading. Therefore you will need to make several references to reading workshop mini lessons and texts.
- The students will be working toward an interpretive essay that they will draft and revise across almost two weeks.
- Review what your students know about characters and their actions by connecting back to the character unit in reading workshop.
- Have your chart from your read-aloud work at hand to show how any one of the ideas you've had in whole-class conversation about a character might become a thesis statement. Plan to include the different structures.
- Make and display a chart on collecting anecdotal stories and making lists to support an idea.
- Show students that thoughts surface as you keep your pen moving across the page.
- Assess students at the beginning of the unit to see where students are and how ready they are for the upcoming unit. You may have to make changes to meet their needs. Whether it is upon conferring or during small group work.
- If students' on-demand essays do not state a claim, provide reasons that the claim is true, and support with evidence that is organized

into paragraphs, then you may want to teach a simpler version of this unit.

- Have students read over notes they have made about characters from reading workshop. This might give them examples of how they may have acted.
- Keep students on-demand original draft and make copies for them to revise. That will provide you baseline data and allow you to see their growth as a writer through the unit as well as the year.
- Use a strategy chart from the character unit about supporting readers in growing theories about characters. This will help them grow theories about themselves.
- During conferences you may:
 - Help students make goals and plans for their next drafts
 - Provide “thought prompts” when students have a difficult time elaborating about their ideas. Examples: *In other words...The surprising thing about that is...This makes me think... To add on...*
 - Have students bring Post-it notes from reading workshop that they could use as a springboard for ideas about themselves.
 - Help students recognize the difference between writing about ideas and not just facts.
 - Coach students to recognize that as writers collect jots and entries around a topic that they should all support one main opinion.
 - Assist with revisions and conventions
- Questions to consider asking:
 - What do you really want to say about the kind of person you are?
 - Does this really show the thesis?
 - Is this connected or does it feel forced?

Common Core State Standards

W.5.1a Introduce a topic or text clearly, state an opinion, and create an organizational structure in which ideas are logically grouped to support the writer’s purpose.

W.5.1b Provide logically ordered reasons that are supported by facts and details.

W.5.1c Link opinion and reasons, purposes and audiences

W.5.1d Provide a concluding statement or section related to the opinion presented.

W.5.4 Produce a clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience.

W.5.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting or trying a new approach.

W.5.6 With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.

W.5.7 Conduct short research projects that use several sources to build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.

W.5.10 Write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

L.5.1c Use verb tense to convey various times, sequences, states, and conditions.

- L.5.1d** Recognize and correct inappropriate time shifts.
- L.5.2a** Use punctuation to separate items in a series.
- L.5.2e** Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.
- L.5.6** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases, including those that signal contrast, addition, and other logical relationships