

**Curricular Plan for Writing Workshop
Grade 5
Unit 7: Literary Essay and Test Preparation**

Students should understand and be able to:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to a text with a reasoned and well-crafted piece of writing • Master the essay form | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write an argument essay that supports a point of view with text-based evidence • Write for standardized tests |
|--|--|

Mentor Texts

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novels • Rich, provocative short texts • Collections of texts by the same author • Books with similar themes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short passages • <u>Those Shoes</u> by Maribeth Boelts. • <u>The Other Side</u> by Jaqueline Woodson |
|---|--|

Possible Teaching Points

Part One: Interactive Writing-A Quick “in-the-air” Class Essay to Launch the Unit
(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.5.6)

Day 1-Interactive Writing Activity

- ❖ This unit begins with an interactive writing activity in which the teacher and the class co-create a quick literary essay by saying it to each other at the carpet. They then transfer this ‘in-the-air’ essay to paper with each student writing a version of that literary essay. Select a fiction text the class knows well to use as a mentor text. A good choice might be The Other Side by Jaqueline Woodson or Those Shoes by Maribeth Boelts.
 - Writers remember that any kind of writing can be *said* as well as written.
 - Listen to me say a kind of writing and see if you can figure out what kind of writing it is. (Read an example of essay.)
 - Starting today, you will be *saying* essays a lot.
 - Writers, today instead of doing a mini-lesson, let’s work together on the rug to **say an essay about...** (teacher picks the text).
 - To write an essay about a text, you first need to quickly look back over the text.
 - As we look back over the book, you will think, as you would whenever you are going to write an essay about a text, “What idea do I have about this book that I could write about in an essay?”

- ❖ Skim the text quickly and ask students to jot down ideas they have about the book. At this point you will need to assess in order to direct your instruction. If most of your students' work is character based, then you will start by showing readers how to write a literary essay that revolves around a writer's claim about the protagonist. If most of your students retell then you will want to remind students of sources for ideas to help them dig deeper. Jot the students' ideas on chart paper and think about choosing one for the essay the group will write. Plan to write a low-level, straightforward essay that is within reach of most of the students and can be backed up with evidence from throughout the entire story (not just at the end).
 - Writers, now that we have chosen an idea, let's work together to *say* the start of the essay about that idea.
 - Turn and talk to your partner and *say* the start of the essay.
 - Fancy up your beginning by including the title and author, as well as the claim you will be defending.
 - Writers state a claim but then they need to think of reasons and examples to back up their idea. We do this by:
 - Rereading the book with a partner to find parts of the text that show that idea.
 - Drawing on all parts of the story, including things that occur early and things that occur late in the story.
 - Writers, now it's time to write the first body paragraph 'in the air' to each other.
 - Start with the transitional phrase, '*Early in the story...*'
 - Continue, '*One example is the time when...*'
 - Writers, it's now time for a second reason, a second body paragraph.
 - '*Later in the story, there are more examples of...*'
 - Go back to the claim and restate it.
 - Add your next reason and your next example of evidence that supports your claim.
 - "Does this hit you over the head as an example? Does it clearly show what you are trying to say? Does it show an obvious connection? Or do we need to look back for an example that *obviously* supports your idea?"
- ❖ Coach students towards using more appropriate evidence without *giving* it to them. Let them discuss appropriate evidence and whether they think they should find more. You will focus on elaborating more later on in the unit. Determine whether you feel it is necessary at this point to address a final, concluding paragraph. Some students will do this naturally during their own writing. You may also choose to teach this important piece of an essay later in the unit.
 - Writers, it is time for you to go off and write on your own. You have two options:
 - Write the essay the class has been working on together.
 - Take another idea about the text and, following the same structure, write a similar essay about a different idea.

- ❖ When students go off on their own to write for about 25 minutes, tell them to *write, write, write* fast and furiously. You may want to show them prompts for the essay on a chart:
 - State the claim like it's the start of an essay.
 - Rehearse for the essay, locating places in the text that support the claim (boxes and bullets).
 - Take the first part of the text. Say, in a new paragraph, '*Early in the text, there are examples of...One example is the time when...*'
 - Be sure to cite detailed actions and words.
 - Unpack this example by writing, "This shows..." and refer back to the claim.
 - Then cite a second example, again using the transitional phrases as in the first paragraph, and again unpack this

Part Two: Revising Essays Quickly and Developing Compare-contrast Essays across Texts
(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.5.6)

Day 2 and Day 3-Quick Revisions of First Drafts and Comparing/Contrasting Essays

- ❖ Use the essays that students wrote on Day 1 to analyze their work and plan for instruction needed to take them to the next step. Make sure to save essays they write for their portfolio. At this point, students could rewrite their first essay if need be or begin another essay. When students are ready to write another essay, whether on Day 2 or Day 3, they will do it with less support
 - The first thing essayists check on is the structure of their essay. They make sure their writing is organized.
 - Do you have paragraphs?
 - Did you use transitional words?
 - Did you restate your claim at the start of each body of your paragraphs?
 - Did you indent each paragraph?
 - Writers take a moment to think over the writing that we're going to be doing. When we do this we often remind ourselves of how this kind of writing goes. (Here you can briefly review all that was covered on Day 1.)
- ❖ You can assume that writers will write quick essays every other day and will revise all their essays on the days between. They will be writing with much less scaffolding than they did before allowing you to evaluate their writing to decide on their next step, making sure it is attainable.

Day 4-on

- Writers remember that after writing an essay, we shift from being writers to being readers.
 - Read over our draft.
 - Remember to check for structure.
 - Revise the essay if it needs it.

- Writers sometimes write an essay that focuses on a big idea or life-lesson that they notice in more than one text, and possibly in their own lives as well. Just like we noticed in readers workshop that the same lesson can be taught in multiple stories. We can add more examples of a theme by:
 - Writing a two-paragraph essay.
 - Writing a 3rd paragraph that connects the theme to our own experience.
- Essayists don't just describe the big idea but they also analyze how the author gets his message across. We can do this by:
 - Noticing how different authors approach the theme.
 - Comparing key scenes, repeated images, and patterns across texts.
- Essayists 'unpack' and elaborate on examples that they cite.
 - Stay focused on the part of the story that will best support your idea—don't retell the whole story!
- Essayists use correct conventions when writing and revising.
 - Underlining the titles of novels
 - Using quotation marks when citing stories
 - Using proper names, exact quotes, and precise actions from the text and punctuating them correctly
 - Underline key words or phrases from the text to use in your essay
- Writers use different tools to help them paraphrase.
 - Create a word bank with synonyms.
 - Plan your piece using boxes and bullets and lists.
- Writers think carefully about when they should paraphrase and when they should quote directly.
- Writers use a variety of ways to write their introductory paragraphs. These include:
 - Writing a general statement about literature (ex. People can learn life-lessons not only from school but also from books.)
 - Using some sentence helpers such as,
 - "I used to think...but now I believe..."
 - "Some people think...but I believe..."
 - "When I first read...I thought...but now I reread it and realize..."
 - Using a short summary of the text within the opening paragraph
- Writers revise their essays by writing closings. We can do this by:
 - Linking the story's message to our own life—a Hallmark moment!
 - Linking the story's message to a social issue.
- Writers cite more than one part of the text. We can do this by
 - Using transitional phrases within a paragraph
 - Using transitional phrases between paragraphs

- Writing *also* or *in addition to* and then include a second example

Part Three: Writing for Standardized Tests Requiring Writing about Reading
(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.5.6)

- ❖ Students need to be able to write swiftly, fluently, and on demand about subjects with which they may not be familiar. They need to be able to do this using text support from texts that may be inaccessible to support an idea constructed in response to a prompt. It is expected that students write with a clear structure, a sense of voice and style, and with the use of helpful transitions. During this part of the unit, students will be writing about short passages rather than whole books. In order for students to do well, they need to be able to write a boxes-and-bullets essay, an argument essay drawing on two texts, and a comparing/contrasting essay concerning two texts. They also need to simply answer questions in order, responding to the parts of a prompt in the order they are asked. You will want to teach each one of these structures at a time in an isolated writing assignment. However, you may want to use the same texts over and over with the different prompts/purposes so that students are able to fully concentrate on the writing and not the reading/rereading. These passages should also be easy for most students in the class to read.
 - Writers rely on all that they've learned about structure when writing to a prompt/essay question.
 - Remember to glue paragraphs together with transition words.
 - Cite examples that you find in the text.
 - Unpack your examples.
 - Make conclusions.
 - Writers revise as they go along. We don't need to wait until the end of a drafting cycle to fix something we already know we can/should do. With all our practice so far, our next first-drafts should already have paragraphs, transition words, and citing from the text already in place!
 - Writers that are drawing on two texts instead of one have strategies in place to get this done quickly.
 - Read both passages in about 7-10 minutes.
 - Underline evidence as you read each passage.
 - Balance your references to include examples from both passages.
 - Use strategies for finding the main ideas and topic sentences.
 - Real writers often need to train themselves to work to deadlines and finish a piece of writing by a certain time. We can do this by:
 - Self-monitoring for time and pacing.
 - Aim to finish within a set time.
 - Make it a habit to glance at the clock every once in awhile.
 - Starting with a mental outline (boxes and bullets).
 - Write legibly and pay attention to spelling/grammar rules the first time.

- ❖ When teaching students the compare-contrast essay, pick two categories from children’s everyday lives and prompt them to compare and contrast them. It may be helpful to use a T chart.
 - Writers carefully organize their writing to compare and contrast information and ideas.
 - Paragraph 1: Introduce a thesis statement.
 - Paragraph 2: Elaborate on the similarities.
 - Paragraph 3: Talk about the differences.
 - Paragraph 4: Restate the thesis in a conclusion, noting whether the similarities outweigh the differences or vice versa.
 - When writers compare and contrast two categories from within texts, it is helpful to use a T chart. When doing this,
 - Remember to consult both texts.
 - Sort items on the T chart from most significant to least significant.
 - Circle the items on both sides of the T chart that are the same.

- ❖ Introduce the argument essay with a bit of in-the-air writing about something close to home (ex. Why recess should be longer). Use this whole class time to introduce how writers address and refute counterclaims by poking holes in it to show why it is not a strong argument. You will be teaching your class to forward and defend a claim, consider and refute opposite claims, and then reinforce their original claim.
 - Writers do three main things when they write an argument essay.
 - Choose a side to argue for.
 - Come up with reasons to support your side.
 - Consider the opposite side’s argument and explain why it isn’t good.
 - Writers learn how to read a prompt and decide on the most appropriate essay structure. We do this by looking for clues in the prompt.
 - A prompt beginning with a question that uses the word ‘Which’ is likely an argument question.
 - Words like *similar, different, common, same, differences*, etc. indicate a compare-contrast essay.
 - Sometimes writers are not sure exactly how to structure a response. A good safety net is to simply take each question that is asked and write one paragraph that directly and fully answers that part.
 - Read the test prompt and identify the number of questions being asked.
 - Don’t ignore any question but answer them all in the order they were asked.
 - Go back in the text and put a star in the margin or underline/circle parts of the passage you are going to use as evidence for each question.
 - Writers add a conclusion to their essays.
 - One line insight you learned from answering the prompt.
 - A *very short* personal response.

Part Four: Celebrating Progress at the End of a Month of Essays
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.5.6

- Writers celebrate! One way to do this is to publish folders full of essay drafts.
 - Organize your essays according to the kind.
 - Include a table of contents.
- Partners can write appreciative notes to one another after studying each other's work and noticing specific things they do well.
- Prepare a small presentation of the essays written during the unit.

Helpful Tips

- Before jumping in to the unit, read through the entire unit to make instructional decisions about moving quickly through the unit or bypassing some parts.
- Begin this unit by finding out what students can do when working with this genre. Give them an on-demand essay prompt that asks them to take about fifty minutes and write a quick literary essay about a familiar read aloud text. You will ask them to show evidence that supports the idea, drawing on details from the text.
- Literary essay practice is a direct connection between reading and writing.
- Teaching literary essays will help students grasp right from the start what a well structured, fairly complete essay looks and sounds like.
- From Day 1 students will draft whole literary essays but over time work to improve various parts of those literary essays
- It is suggested to give students repeated practice writing flash-essays so they internalize the form and voice of the literary essay.
- It is best to teach this unit directly following the interpretation text unit in reading workshop since they have worked on developing accountable theories about texts.
- Expect students to keep writing or revising another essay every day so they become accustomed to writing fluently and with increasing structure, coherency, and precision.
- You may want to save a few weeks at the end of the unit to be able to walk students through a variety of scenarios and plenty of practice.
- It will be important to move charts from earlier essay units to front and center in your meeting area or where they are noticed!
- The conversations students have with others about books during reading will allow them to form, revise, and expand their ideas before selecting ones to further develop through writing.
- Once you get through the lessons in days, you will cycle back again.
- When teaching the writing for a standardized test, choose two pairs of texts that your students can mine repeatedly. Use these to address the argument essay, compare-contrast essay, etc. You may also want to have one passage be literary and one informational –a good way to revisit some non-fiction strategies they may need to use.

- Teach time management:
 - Channel students to self-monitor for time and pacing.
 - First ten minutes: introduce your claim
 - By the end of 20 minutes, 2-3 cited reasons should be provided.
 - By the end of 25 minutes, wrap up with a conclusion.
- Provide children with the language of comparing and contrasting.
 - Both, alike, similarly, in the same way, on the other hand, contrary to this, however, instead of, in contrast, opposite to this, etc.
- Teaching students to look for clues as to what type of essay they should write is helpful. However, often times, prompts are unclear or will ask for two different kinds of responses in the same essay. You may want to tell the students this, practice it, or even have students rewrite prompts so that the writer is asked to write with more than one structure.

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 using words, phrases, and clauses.

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 the 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 for a range of discipline-specific tasks.

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.