

Click! Snapshots of Our Lives

Beth Wagner

Introduction

“In nationwide surveys, teachers report that they have not been adequately prepared to teach writing.”¹

“2-out-of-3 teachers in Grades 4-6 represent being ill-prepared to teach writing.”²

For years, I have struggled to find a one-size-fits-all curriculum for writing. I have felt confident in the units that I have piecemealed for opinion writing for there is no shortage of prompts. In 2019, topics for opinion pieces are as simple as turning on the news. I also find research and informational writing to be easy and accessible with the help of technology. Elementary students are eager to learn and share new information. So, what’s forgotten? The art of narrative writing.

According to the New York Times narrative writing envelopes us. “If you flip or scroll through sections of the paper, you’ll see personal writing is everywhere, and often ranks among the most popular.”³

Why is such a popular genre so difficult to produce? Well, when students are asked to write about themselves, their mind flashes through all 9 years or all 3,285 days of their life. Where to begin? Well, most third graders start their stories as a baby and progress naturally from there. Long-winded, off-topic, wandering narratives emerge. Unlike defending their opinion, narratives are hard to keep focus. While research has facts to present, the narrative leaves much to the writer, and younger students need more modeling and guidance to craft a cohesive piece that not only makes sense, but that engages the reader.

In my unit, I hope to help students find focus in the forgotten genre- narratives. Carefully chosen mentor texts will expose the beauty found in the craft of narrative writing. Opportunities for modeling and practice are outlined in this unit, which guides students from “What is narrative writing?” to writing their own focused narratives.

Demographics

My school, Pleasantville Elementary School, is located in New Castle, Delaware within the Colonial School District. In this small school of less than 500 students,

there is a high population of Low Economic Status Families (LES) and English Language Learners (ELL). Whereas 13.5% of Americans are living in poverty as recorded by the US Census Bureau, 48% of families are identified as living below the poverty line. This staggering statistic has a devastating effect on students, as many have trauma impacting them in school. In addition, 23% of families and their students have identified a language other than English as their first spoken language. This results in a lack of school-to-home communication.

13% of the school population and 25% of my current classroom population are labeled Special Education. Therefore, they are typically working on personalized goals that are well-below the grade level standards on which they are tested.

Despite some challenges, Pleasantville Elementary School is fortunate to have a Reading Coach, four Reading Interventionists, two Reading Tutors, a Mathematics Coach, and two Math Interventionists. These additional supports assist teachers to reach students identified on benchmark assessments as performing below grade level.

On the most recent Smarter Balanced Assessments, 47% of Third Grade students at Pleasantville were proficient in ELA, while 35% were proficient in Mathematics. The state of Delaware has set a goal that by 2020 all scores will increase, across the board by 18%. Such goals are not without reason. The National Commission on Writing says that “Writing today is not a frill for the few, but an essential skill for the many.”⁴ Most jobs today require some sort of writing, and students need it whether their path heads towards college and its’ required academic writing or the informative and explanatory writing of the trades. Teaching writing cannot be assumed in other content areas or an afterthought in our schools.

Common Core State Standards Addressed in this Unit

This unit was designed to address many critical CCSS writing standards. It focuses on CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3: *Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.* The goal of the unit is narrative writing. In their pieces, the unit will address CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.A: *Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally, as well as* CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.B *Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.* Students will also *Use temporal words and phrases to signal order* when writing to address CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.C. In a skill relevant to all writing genres, the unit will touch on CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.3.D *provide a sense of closure.* In addition to the writing pieces, there are mini-lessons scripted to enhance student work. CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.4 allows students to *with guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.* In addition, the skill of revision is

strategically addressed with CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.3.5 *with guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing*. With fidelity to the lessons in this unit, students will move towards proficiency on several writing standards.⁵

Learning Objectives

In this unit, the teacher gradually releases the workload to the students. I will model narrative writing and share the pen with students on familiar topics. After that, the goal is for students to examine exemplary texts to identify the story elements and determine how the author used imagery and vivid details to connect to the reader. Mentor texts including *The Relatives Came* and *Fireflies* will be used. After providing so much guidance and a sampling of examples, students will write their own nonfiction narratives using relevant and engaging details. Through the use of mini-lessons, students will identify and practice writing effective introductions, as well as revise their pieces to add more details and provide clarity. By the end of the unit, students should be able to publish at least one finished narrative.

Rationale

Nationally, writing an identified area of student weakness. The NAEP Foundation identifies just 1/25 students as proficient, and more alarming, just 1/100 students as advanced in the area of writing. NAEP claims that “When asked to think on paper, most students produce rudimentary and fairly run-of-the-mill prose.”⁶

After thirteen years of teaching the third grade, I have repeatedly identified writing as an area of need for my students. I have first-handedly seen the writing skills of my students get weaker and weaker from year-to-year. I suspect that the disappearance of writing on the state assessment eliminated the focus on writing for a few years. Now that writing is again being assessed, it is imperative that I not only teach writing aligned to the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), but that I bridge the gap of missing writing skills in the K-2 grade band.

When students enter the third grade, they have had instruction on writing complete sentences, the use of capitals and some punctuation (limited to periods, exclamation points, and question marks), and should be able to write one paragraph composed of an introduction, details, and a conclusion. The formulaic sentences are present. However, when scored against a Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) rubric, third graders fall flat. SBAC rubrics for Narrative Writing (both 2- and 4-point) are found at the end of the document.

Third graders lack voice and personality in their writing. Introduction sentences are either missing or follow the overused “*Let me tell you about...*” or “*I am writing*

about... ”. They lack hooks to draw the reader in. Their conclusions are similar in that they are absent or lackluster. If present, a typical third grade conclusion sounds like “Now you know all about...”

In writing, details are a chance for students to express their ideas or what they have learned. By the beginning of third grade, I expect students to include at least four to five details when writing a paragraph. Often, third graders are able to write a quantity deemed “enough,” but their details may lack cohesion and organization. Elementary writers sometimes include irrelevant information. They may repeat or omit important information. Reading a piece can sometimes feel stop-and-go or like a robot.

With these deficiencies evident, my unit is developed to get students over the hurdles that impede them from being a proficient writer. I have purposefully chosen resources that are available across the country and transcend district lines. The texts can all be purchased used for less than \$10 or found in other formats for free online.

Research behind the Unit

The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium and Common Core State Standards have outlined targeted and rigorous goals for my students. However, they leave the teacher to develop the instruction to get students to their proficiency benchmarks. This is a Catch-22. While I love the academic freedom, building a unit from scratch is intimidating and timely. Thus, I tried to find or create model texts, fantastic writing samples, and aligned rubrics on which to stand my unit.

When planning, I quickly realized that I needed to show students writing exemplars from which to model their own writing. Elementary students need explicit directions and modeling to be successful in both behavior and academics. *The Narrative Writing Toolkit* by Sean Ruddy encourages teachers to “Show them high-quality narratives from which they can learn, and help them analyze the strategies used in these examples.”⁷ Thus, I set out to find mentor texts to share with my class. I settled on *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant as one. In the text, a Virginia family is visited by their relatives for a few weeks. The text focuses on that event and goes into detail describing their hugs, their crowded sleeping quarters, and the sound of laughter from room-to-room. It is a perfect example of narrowing focus to an event. The imagery derived from the vivid details takes you right into their home. What a familiar story in so many families!

Killagon and Killagon said that “Mentor texts are based on the idea that writers learn by reading outstanding texts in a particular genre or style, and then imitate the strategies used by other authors in their own works,”⁸ and the text *Jabari Jumps* by Gaia Cornwall is another outstanding read aloud for students. Not only is the story

relatable to many of my students, but it is engaging and inspiring. In the text, the plot leads up to one major event- Jabari jumping off of a diving board. This mentor text is an exemplar in bringing in wonderfully developed characters and dialogue. The dialogue gives glimpses into the traits that define the children in the book. They are caring and empathetic and sometimes, careless.

The Narrative Writing Toolkit- Using Mentor Texts in Grades 3-8 believes that “a strong piece of narrative writing begins by engaging the reader in the story and orienting them with key information about the characters, setting, and situation.”⁷ Such is the case in two other mentor texts- *Fireflies* by Julie Brinckloe and *Hello, Harvest Moon* by Ralph Fletcher. Both of these texts engage the reader by introducing relatable characters like the children who flee their homes at dusk to chase fireflies or the kids that sit awake at night staring at the bright moon like a nightlight. Both texts provide vivid descriptions of setting and situation drawing the reader in. Making the reader long to be a part of the story. To see fireflies dance around the moon or to see the moon paint the animals of the night.

While such text may attract some of your students, others may enjoy a sillier story by Kotzwinkle, Murray, and Colman called *Walter, the Farting Dog*. Not your typical narrative, this mentor text is relatable to anyone with a loving pet at home. The story follows the loveable, yet stinky dog Walter. When reading, children fall in love with his character as developed by the sweet glimpses into his drafty day. The words are full of details about Walter like “He resolved to hold in his farts forever.” The imagery makes you laugh out loud! The authors also do a wonderful job of setting the scene- a familiar house- so well that you can almost smell the toots and hear the resulting sighs of the family. Despite the flatulence, readers desire a Walter of their own due to the brilliance of the authors’ crafty writing.

Unit Activities

Introduction to Narrative Writing: To introduce students to the idea of narrative writing, it is imperative to me that they have a shared experience from which to write about. This could be as simple as lunch or recess. However, if it is a topic unfamiliar to some or all students, I recognize that I need to provide the necessary background information via video, text, or allow online research.

Lesson One

In the first lesson, the teacher should model strong narrative writing. In a gradual release model, students should become familiarized with the idea of a narrative and see it modeled explicitly. For my first model, I will choose a topic familiar to me and all students- lunch. Prior to the lesson, I will plan my writing, so that I am purposeful

and planned. I plan to write a story (that the kids will think is true) about how I dropped my salad, and a fellow teacher came to my rescue with half of her sandwich.

Before I model writing my paragraph, I will model a think-aloud brainstorm including who did I sit near, what did I eat, what actions occurred, and how I felt. I sat near Teacher A and Teacher B. I was going to eat my salad, because I was hungry. Wait, starving! It fell on the floor (feeling sad). Mrs. B offered me half of her sandwich (feeling thankful). My brainstorm will not be complete sentences.

From my brainstorm, I will model organizing my ideas with numbers so that my story is told in sequence. (Some classes may also benefit from using Lucy Calkin's "Story Arc" as a script for their narrative writing.) While flashbacks do have a place in narrative writing, most third grade students are not ready for such an advanced skill. Once I have decided on order, I will begin to write my paragraph. I will write an introduction sentence naming the topic- lunch, 4-5 sentences of details, and a conclusion. The previous steps could be completed in one lesson or broken up over several days depending on the needs of the class.

Upon finishing the teacher model, it is imperative that I model reading aloud my piece. This is good practice for checking that the writing makes sense. It is a habit that I hope to instill in my students.

Lesson Two

In my plan to gradually release the students to independent writing, I want to move from my modeled lesson (all teacher workload) to a shared writing with my students. A shared writing invites the students to help me develop ideas and formulate sentences. I can do the writing, or I can call helpers up to literally take the pen. Again, I want to choose a topic with which we are all familiar. This could be a common exploratory, a past field trip, or a local event- snow day, school carnival, etc. For my shared writing, I will ask the students to help me write a paragraph on gym class.

To start our shared writing about gym class, the students and I will brainstorm. Students will first independently complete a web about gym class while I provide suggestions like "Who was there?" "What was the game called?" "How did you feel?" and monitor their work. After independent think time, students will share out whole-group, and I will record their ideas on the board. As I record their ideas, I will organize them into clusters- games, people, feelings, etc.

After finishing our brainstorm, the students and I will discuss what we want to focus our paragraph on and use majority rules to hone in on an idea. Once an idea is chosen and we know our direction, the students and I will decide on an order to the paragraph and number our ideas to provide organization.

While the students provide suggestions for an introduction, detail sentences, and a conclusion, I will record our draft on the board. I prefer not to call student writers to the board, as they focus on spelling and letter size, which slows our momentum down. After writing our draft, we will reread it as a class. I will provide questioning like “Does it make sense?” and “Are there any big ideas we left out?”

Lesson Three

Now that the students have had exposure to two narratives, they are ready to start independent practice. In the first lesson, I will share a video clip with students to give them a shared experience. Students will visit www.youtube.com and go on a virtual field trip to the Amazon Rainforest. I chose the Amazon Rainforest, so that all students are provided a level playing field. By choosing a location close to home, I know that some students would have visited the Washington Monument or Philadelphia Zoo. My remote location ensures that students are required to pay attention to the video, as they cannot rely on background knowledge. Other ideas include the Egyptian pyramids, the Galapagos Islands, a planet, or a safari depending on your students’ interests.

While on the trip, students will have a notes sheet (Appendix A) to record the plants and animals that they see. From there, they will write to the following prompt in their writing notebooks- *Share your day. Tell all about your field trip to the Amazon Rainforest.* Students will use their notes to write one or more paragraphs about their field trip. After allowing 15 minutes of silent, sustained writing, students will create a “snapshot” of their trip. Inside of a photograph frame (Appendix B), they will color in an illustration that they could have “snapped” on their field trip. Next, they will share their reading and picture with a partner. They will listen and look for similarities in their experiences.

Save this writing piece and illustration or have students put it safely into their writing folder, as they may choose it to revisit during a later mini-lesson.

Lesson Four

With several writing experiences under their belt, Lesson Four defines narrative writing for students. In this lesson, students will be provided with a graphic organizer (Appendix C). The word NARRATIVE will be introduced using call-and-repeat to practice saying and using the word. Narrative Writing will be defined as a type of writing, real or fictional, that tells a story. (A basic definition so that third graders can understand it.) Students will be asked to independently recall narratives that they have written or read in the past. Next, students will list the parts of narrative writing

including main idea, characters, setting, and supporting details. Using familiar stories, I will prompt students for these familiar story elements.

Next, we will watch a video that goes into more detail about narrative writing. It can be found at <https://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-narrative-writing-definition-types-characteristics-examples.html> which is a free site. This video introduces students to both fictional narratives and personal, nonfiction narratives as well as the characteristics of each.

Mini-Lesson

After some practice writing personal narratives, students will work on making sentences more descriptive. We will take a look at 3 exemplar sentences such as 1) On our trip to the rainforest, I was shocked by the size of the giant, yet beautiful, leopard. 2) The great green leaves covered my head like an enormous emerald umbrella. 3) The tiny tree frogs croaked louder than our ear-piercing fire alarm. Going through the sentences one at a time, we will have a class discussion about what makes the sentences so vivid. Students will be asked to use imagery to picture the scene in their heads. We will work together to identify figurative language and talk about how it amplifies the sentences.

Next, the class will read a sample of the story *Fire Flies* by Julie Brinckloe.

“The skies were darker now. My ears filled with the sound of crickets. My eyes stung from staring too long.”⁹

On a white board, students will draw a picture of what imagery comes to mind when they read this sentence. I will narrate my observations as I circulate asking “What do you hear?” “How does it feel outside?” “What can you see?” Students will share out their drawings. Then we will read a second sampling.

“Blinking on, blinking off, dipping low, soaring high above my head, making circles around moon, like stars dancing.”⁹

Following this sentence, students will turn-and-talk to identify what made this sentence so effective. Imagery, details, the precise language are all anticipated answers.

After reading excerpts of *Fire Flies*, the students will examine 3 sentences posted to the Smart Board. 1) I was scared of the storm. Using a think aloud strategy, I will walk through revising the sentence to make it more descriptive. “What scared me? The thunder and lightning.” 1) I was scared of the thunder and lightning storm. “What

made it so scary? The thunder was so loud. It was shaking my house! And the lightning was so bright that it blinded me.” 1. I was so scared when the lightning flashed and the loud thunder began to shake my house. “Recalling this, I realized that I was more than scared. I was frightened. I was terrified!” 1) I was so terrified when the lightning flashed and the loud thunder began to shake my house! I will then question the students, what did I do to better my writing? Adding sensory words made my writing more descriptive. Together, we will try another sentence. 2) After the rain, there were puddles outside. “How big were they?” Solicit student responses. “What did the puddles look like? Clear, muddy, wavy?” Using student support, I will rewrite the revised sentence with the added information.

With whole-group practice complete, the students will independently revise a sentence as an exit ticket. The final sentence is 3) My shoes got wet. In an exemplar response, I am looking for a better adjective than wet- perhaps soggy or soaked. I would also like to see more information added like *in the damp grass* or *and made a squishy sound when I walked*.

Lesson Five

Read aloud the story *The Relatives Came* by Cynthia Rylant. As students listen, let them either choose to complete a graphic organizer with the characteristics of a narrative (suggested Lucy Calkin’s “Story Arc”) or draw a snapshot of what part really resonated with them.

The Relatives Came is an exemplary text to use with third graders, because so many students have had interactions with their family members crowding in at the holidays, for a party, or on vacation. The characters are relatable. Some are loud, some quiet, some prefer space, but others are constantly hugging. The buzz of conversation in a house is a noise universal to humans. After reading, I can question “What were the aspects of a narrative? What was realistic? What event did the author focus on?” to start and generate conversation. From there, I can ask “Was this a personal narrative or fictional?” and “Why was it hard to tell the difference?” The realism of the story makes it believable and hard to distinguish from nonfiction.

One page of *The Relatives Came* says, “But none of us thought about Virginia much. We were so busy hugging and eating and breathing together.”¹⁰ These words paint a vivid picture of how tight the house was with so many guests. You can close your eyes and pictured kids squished next to grandma on a too soft couch cushion or cousins picking off of one another’s plates.

After reading, have students recall a memory that they share with their families. Generate some additional topics- holidays, a party, a sleepover, etc. From there, allow students to make a web with that topic in the middle. Brainstorming ~ 5min. to

generate ideas. Given 20 minutes, have students write a focused personal narrative about their family event. If they finish early or allowing 10 minutes after, illustrate a snapshot of that event. If I were a stranger peeking in the window of this event, what might I see?

Lesson Six

Like the stories we started the unit with, we will continue with the idea of a “snapshot.” Students will bring in their own photograph from home or they will draw a picture of an event that they remember. Allow several days for students to complete this portion of the task as they may need to get a photograph printed.

Students will then fill-out a graphic organizer using the 5 senses to describe the event in the picture. Ideas include a photo of a birthday party, a wedding, a sleepover, a summer activity, etc. A sample graphic organizer might feature a birthday party. I see a cake, presents, hats, streamers, friends, decorations, and balloons. I hear people singing “Happy Birthday,” laughter, and clapping. I smell the yummy cake. I taste the creamy, sweet icing and refreshing fruit punch. I feel the smooth wrapping paper, the crinkled streamers, the soft, spongy cake, and a light balloon.

After completing the graphic organizer, the lesson will pause for revision. During revision of ideas, students will work in their groups to add words and phrases to make their memories more vivid and descriptive. For example, if a student is writing about a birthday party and wrote “yummy cake,” the others in their group can help them to revise their writing to describe color like *as pink as bubble gum* or the *fluffy, sugary* icing. Students describing a camping trip and sleeping outside might revise their writing with descriptions like *the moon lit up the sky like a giant lightbulb* or *the stars sparkled like diamonds in the sky*.

Following revisions, students will have 15 minutes write at least one paragraph describing their snapshot. If they finish early, they will revise their writing to make it more descriptive or add an illustration to accompany the text.

Mini-Lesson

Now that we’ve been revising to make our sentences more descriptive by expanding them with more information, we are going to revisit the writing pieces that we have written to make the introductions catchier. When someone goes fishing, how do they catch a fish? What’s on the end of the line? Just as a fisherman hooks a fish, we are going to try to hook the reader.

Define the idea of an introduction sentence. The introduction is where you introduce the topic to the reader and try to peak their interest. Show students several

samples of familiar introduction sentences. Can they use clues in the sentence to identify the story?

Share a topic with the students like camels. On the board, have 3 prepared introduction sentences. Read each aloud, and have the students vote on the best one. Criteria for the “best” one can be effective, interesting, hooks the reader, is fun, etc. Ideas include 1) Let’s learn about Camels. 2) Do you know that camels have 3 eyelids to keep out the sand? 3) Camels are neat animals. As a class, discuss the pros (if any) and cons of each. Lead students to choosing that the interesting fact (2) is the most effective choice. Continue to try similar practice using different topics. Optimal sentence starters should include questions as well as facts. As you discuss more personal topics like family, friends, or a school event try incorporating dialogue starters as well.

After practicing introduction sentences, have students choose one of their pieces to revisit- the relatives’ piece, their field trip to the Amazon, or the story about their snapshot. Using an effective introduction (introduced in mini-lesson), the students will revise their writing to use a question, fascinating fact, or dialogue. This mirrors the idea of revision when adding more descriptive details.

Quick Write Prompts

As the year continues, here are a list of quick write prompts that students might respond to in their journals or during a writing block. Teachers may choose to have them be informal writing practice or a full piece depending on the focus of the class.

Ideas include holidays, thunderstorms, snowstorms, a playdate, a family vacation, art class, recess, a family feast, a party, a wedding, a new baby or family member, pets, a long car ride, a trip to the mall, seeing a movie, visiting the dentist, a grocery store visit, or a long summer day.

Conclusion

It is my hope that after implementing these lessons, students will be familiar writing nonfiction narratives using a general formula that will be successful; no matter the classroom or curriculum. The ideas of learning from mentor texts transcends grade level bands and schools Reading good examples of writing provides modeling necessary for students to be successful. Brainstorming, using graphic organizers, generating sentences, and revising our writing is great practice be it in narratives, when responding to a text, or when writing a piece for a standardized test. We do not have to wait for the 1/25 proficient students to enter our room, as teachers there is a lot that we can do to help students improve their writing!

End Notes

¹ Coker Jr., MacArthur, Philippakos, *Developing Strategic Writers through Genre Instruction*

² Gilbert & Graham, *Teaching Writing to Elementary Students in Grades 4-6: A National Survey. The Elementary School Journal*, 110, 494-518.

³ New York Times, *Unit 1: Teach Narrative Writing With The New York Times*

⁴ *National Commission on Writing 2003*, pg. 11

⁵ Common Core State Standards, <http://www.corestandards.org/>

⁶ NAEP Foundation, *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2011*

⁷ Ruday, Sean, *The Narrative Writing Toolkit*

⁸ Killgallon, D. & Killagon J., *Sentence Composing for Elementary School*, 2013

⁹ Brinckloe, J. *Fireflies*, 1985.

¹⁰ Rylant, C. *The Relatives Came*, 1985.

Rubrics



4-Point Narrative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–8)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Purpose/Organization	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, is fully sustained and the focus is clear and maintained throughout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an effective plot helps to create a sense of unity and completeness effectively establishes and maintains setting, develops narrator/characters, and maintains point of view* consistent use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas; strong connection between and among ideas natural, logical sequence of events from beginning to end effective opening and closure for audience and purpose 	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, is adequately sustained, and the focus is adequate and generally maintained:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an evident plot helps to create a sense of unity and completeness, though there may be minor flaws and some ideas may be loosely connected adequately maintains a setting, develops narrator/characters, and/or maintains point of view* adequate use of a variety of transitional strategies to clarify the relationships between and among ideas adequate sequence of events from beginning to end adequate opening and closure for audience and purpose 	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, is somewhat sustained and may have an uneven focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there may be an inconsistent plot, and/or flaws may be evident unevenly or minimally maintains a setting, develops narrator and/or characters, and/or maintains point of view* uneven use of appropriate transitional strategies and/or little variety weak or uneven sequence of events opening and closure, if present, are weak 	<p>The organization of the narrative, real or imagined, may be maintained but may provide little or no focus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is little or no discernible plot or there may just be a series of events may be brief or there is little to no attempt to establish a setting, narrator and/or characters, and/or point of view* few or no appropriate transitional strategies may be evident little or no organization of an event sequence; frequent extraneous ideas and/or a major drift may be evident opening and/or closure may be missing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text Off-purpose

*point of view begins at grade 7

4-Point Narrative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3–8)					
Score	4	3	2	1	NS
Development/Elaboration	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides thorough, effective elaboration using relevant details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences, characters, setting and events are clearly developed connections to source materials may enhance the narrative effective use of a variety of narrative techniques that advance the story or illustrate the experience effective use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that clearly advances the purpose effective, appropriate style enhances the narration 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides adequate elaboration using details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences, characters, setting, and events are adequately developed connections to source materials may contribute to the narrative adequate use of a variety of narrative techniques that generally advance the story or illustrate the experience adequate use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that generally advances the purpose generally appropriate style is evident 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides uneven, cursory elaboration using partial and uneven details, dialogue, and description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences, characters, setting, and events are unevenly developed connections to source materials may be ineffective, awkward or vague but do not interfere with the narrative narrative techniques are uneven and inconsistent partial or weak use of sensory, concrete, and figurative language that may not advance the purpose inconsistent or weak attempt to create appropriate style 	<p>The narrative, real or imagined, provides minimal elaboration using few or no details, dialogue, and/or description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> experiences, characters, setting, and events may be vague, lack clarity, or confusing connections to source materials, if evident, may detract from the narrative use of narrative techniques may be minimal, absent, incorrect, or irrelevant may have little or no use of sensory, concrete, or figurative language; language does not advance and may interfere with the purpose little or no evidence of appropriate style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text Off-purpose

2-Point Narrative Performance Task Writing Rubric (Grades 3-11)				
Score	2	1	0	NS
Conventions	<p>The response demonstrates an adequate command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> adequate use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates a partial command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling 	<p>The response demonstrates little or no command of conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> infrequent use of correct sentence formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unintelligible In a language other than English Off-topic Copied text <p>(Off-purpose responses will still receive a score in Conventions.)</p>

Holistic Scoring:

- Variety:** A range of errors includes formation, punctuation, capitalization, grammar usage, and spelling
- Severity:** Basic errors are more heavily weighted than higher-level errors.
- Density:** The proportion of errors to the amount of writing done well. This includes the ratio of errors to the length of the piece.

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Resources Used in Unit

Access to www.youtube.com
Fire Flies, Julie Brinckloe
The Relatives Came, Cynthia Rylant
Jabari Jumps, Gaia Cornwall
Hello, Harvest Moon Ralph Fletcher
Walter, the Farting Dog Ralph Fletcher
Blank paper for web
Story Arc paper
Lined Paper
Drawing Paper
Writing Notebook
Pencils
White Boards
Dry Erase Markers
Crayons
Markers

Appendices

Appendix A: Graphic Organizer for Lesson Three's Video

Appendix B: Snapshot Frame Clipart

Appendix C: Graphic Organizer Web for Narrative Writing/ Parts of a Narrative

Appendix A

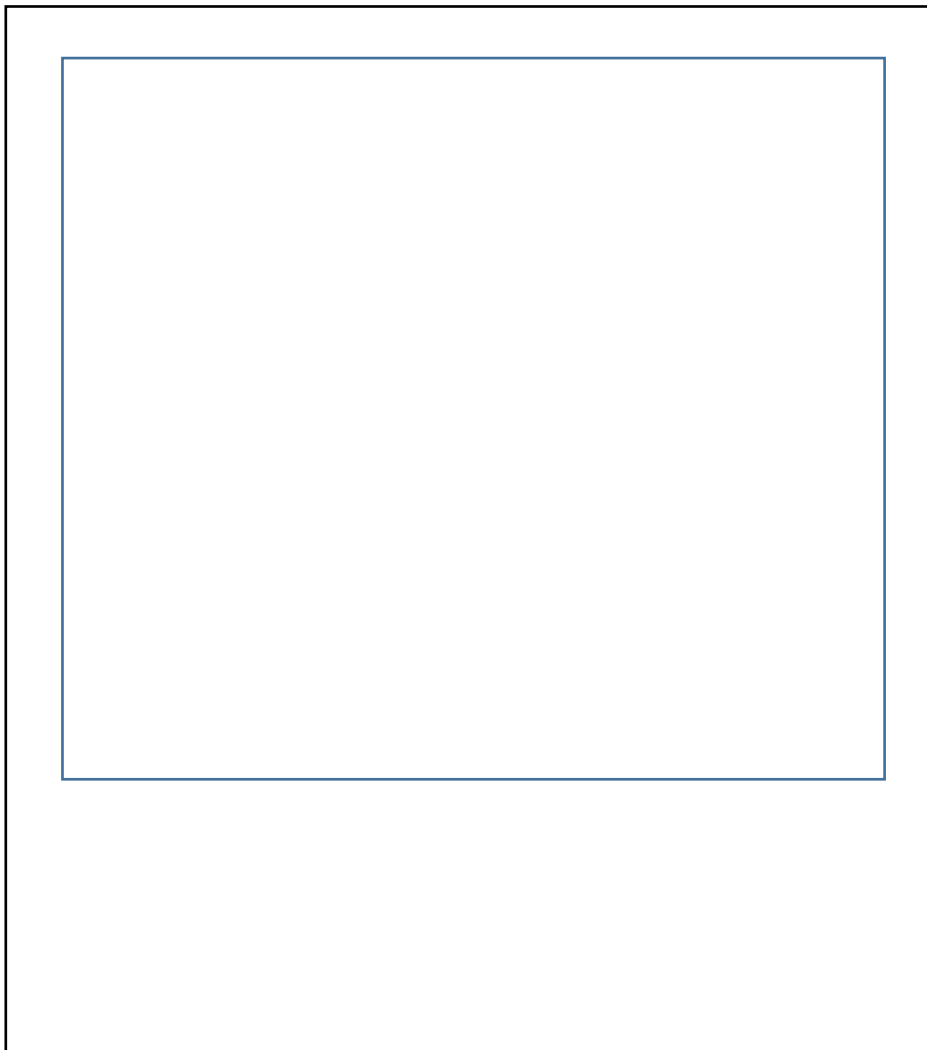
Video Notes

Animals that I see...

Plants that I see...

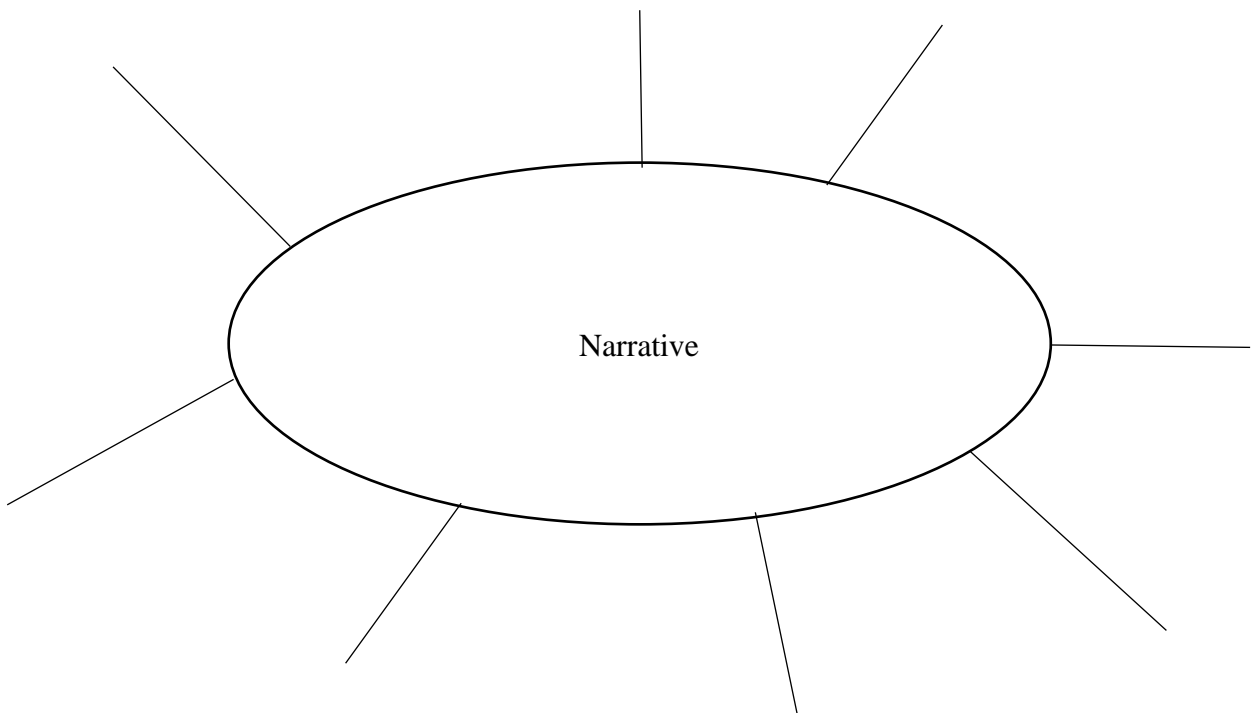
Other Notes...

Appendix B



Write a caption for your illustration

Appendix C



What are the parts of a narrative? _____
