

Essential Writing Lessons



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Target the essential lessons to accelerate student writing per unit.

4-PART SERIES

- **PART 1:** Prioritize the “info.”
- **PART 2:** Organize by genre.
- **PART 3:** Persuade & argue.
- **PART 4:** Note narrative non-negotiables.



PART 4

Narrative non-negotiables

Target the two required elements of every story—
the problem and its solution.

NARRATIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Plan narrative-writing experiences.

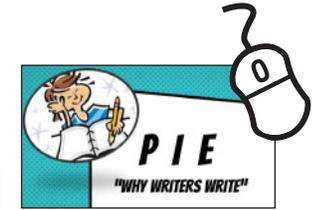
Understand the expectations.

COMMON CORE W3 | INDIANA W3.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

PURPOSE | TO ENTERTAIN

Generate a story or partial story that is rooted in a topic or text.



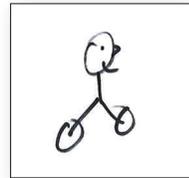
TRADITIONAL NARRATIVE GENRES

- **REALISTIC** (e.g., personal narratives, adventure story, mystery, memoir, etc.).
- **FANTASY** (e.g., fairy tale, fable, myth, etc.).

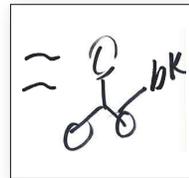
NARRATIVE RESPONSES TO TEXTS

- **CONTINUE** the story (e.g., What happens next/the next time).
- **REWRITE** the perspective.
- **INSERT** the missing part, scene, or page.
- Write **FICTION BASED ON FACT** (e.g., sci-fi, historical fiction, etc.).

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES



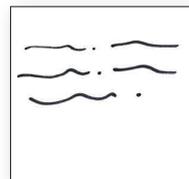
PICTORIAL WRITING



LABEL WRITING



LIST WRITING



SENTENCE WRITING

Target the essential writing skills/traits.

Essential Ingredients

IDEAS | The type of information included in the writing.



ORGANIZATION | The arrangement of the information in the writing.



CONVENTIONS | The writing's level of correctness.



Sophisticated Characteristics

VOICE | The attitude or tone conveyed within the writing.



WORD CHOICE | The specific and precise vocabulary within the writing.



SENTENCE FLUENCY | The flow of sentences across the writing.



NARRATIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Target essential skills.

STANDARDS VERBIAGE

- Orient the reader by establishing a situation and/or introducing characters.
- Tell about the events in the order in which they occurred.
- Use transitions/temporal words to signal event order.
- Include dialogue, sensory details, and details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings of characters.
- Provide a conclusion/sense of closure.



Narrative

Essentials

-  **Create a basic plot**
Make *something* happen to someone
-  **Hook & satisfy readers**
Start & end the story intentionally
-  **Sequence time & events**
Connect action with transitions
-  **Describe the action**
Use sensory details to develop key moments
-  **“Show” close-up details**
Describe main character(s) & setting(s)
-  **Set the right mood**
Reveal character feelings & setting tone

NARRATIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Define the shape of stories.

Clarify story versus description.

Readers expect a story to have a problem.

- Flat line
- Rocket ship
- Crash landing

Reveal the flag icon



- Construction flagger
- Lifeguard flag

Honor that stories require conflict.

The main character has a problem **with himself.**

The character must face a fear or make a difficult choice.

man *v.* self

The main character has a problem **with someone.**

The character disagrees or has a problem with one or more characters.

man *v.* man

The main character has a problem **with something.**

The character faces an animal, a disease, or weather that is beyond his control.

man *v.* nature

The character disagrees with a rule, law, belief, or value that a group possesses.

man *v.* society

man *v.* technology

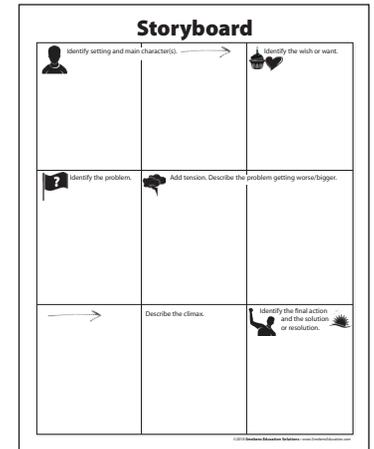
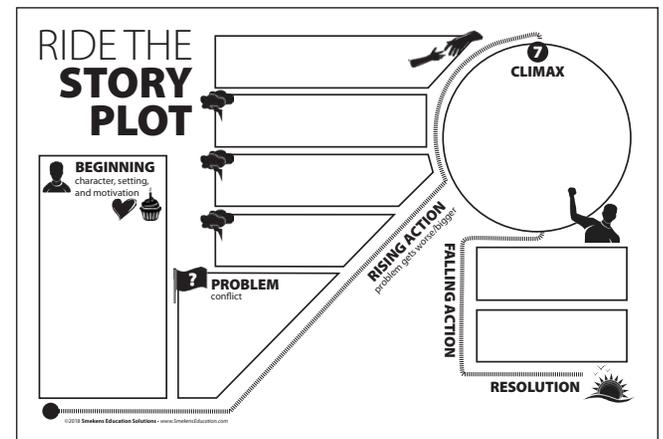


Create a basic plot

Make something happen to someone

Start with the middle.

Utilize the same reader note-taking tool when preparing to write a narrative.

Emphasize the story structure.

Determine the solution.



Reveal the icon.

- Solve the problem by having the character achieve his wish or want.
- Resolve the problem for the reader with an explanation/understanding.

Readers expect problems to get solved.

Someone helped.

Another character helped to make things better (e.g., someone came to the rescue, someone had an idea or advice, several characters offered support and teamwork, etc.).

Something helped.

The main character continued to try until the problem was solved (e.g., tried different ways, didn't give up, trial and error, good decisions/ attempts v. bad decisions/attempts).

Something changed.

These problems are not necessarily “fixed” by the end— but things “got better” when the character’s attitude or actions changed (e.g., he took a chance, he chose to be brave, he embraced a new attitude, he decided to change, etc.).

Or, things “got better” when the setting changed and time passed (e.g., the weather improved, the party came and went, time healed the wound, felt better in the morning, etc.).



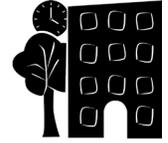
Hook and satisfy readers

Start & end the story intentionally

Orient the reader with a beginning.

Consider the most important character and setting details needed— if any.

- Determine who will face the problem.
- Introduce the where and/or when.



Identify Essential Character Details

 ?

MIDDLE: What's the problem?
I don't have a present for my mom's birthday.

END: How does it get solved?
I draw a picture of blue flowers to be her iPad home screen.

IMPORTANT CHARACTER DETAILS	 UNIMPORTANT CHARACTER DETAILS
Mom loves her iPad.	Mom loves Chinese food.
Mom's favorite color is blue.	Dad got Mom a new scarf.
Mom's birthday is today.	Mom is turning 30 years old.
Mom has my artwork all over the house.	Mom got me clothes for my birthday.
Mom loves flowers.	Mom has short black hair.
	Mom is really tall.
	We are going to Grandma's house for Mom's party.



NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

Go on to page 7

Beginning • Set Up

Middle • Mix Up

End • Fix Up

NARRATIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Stretch the middle.

Make the problem/conflict worsen with rising action.



Identify the type of supporting details that will develop the problem.



Sequence time & events

Connect action with transitions

Set up

Who is the story about?
Where does this happen?
When did this happen?

Mix up

What is the problem?
What is wrong?

Mix up

What makes the problem worse?
What other bad things happen?

Mix up

What makes the problem worse?
What other bad things happen?

Fix up

What happens at the end?
How does the character feel?
What does the character learn?

Storyboard

Identify setting and main character(s).

Identify the problem.

Identify the solution.

Storyboard

Identify setting and main character(s).

Identify the problem. Add tension. Describe the problem getting worse/bigger.

Identify the solution.

Storyboard

Identify setting and main character(s). Identify the wish or want.

Identify the problem. Add tension. Describe the problem getting worse/bigger.

Describe the climax. Identify the solution and/or resolution.

Name _____ Story/Title _____ Author _____

RIDE THE STORY PLOT

BEGINNING
character, setting, and motivation

PROBLEM
conflict

RISING ACTION
problem gets worse/bigger

FALLING ACTION

CLIMAX

RESOLUTION

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ALL SILHOUETTE ICONS & GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

NOW IT'S YOUR TURN!

Return to page 7

NARRATIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Move beyond personal narratives.

Expose students to 4 types of narrative-writing tasks.



Generate narratives in response to reading.

How should students incorporate evidence in a narrative response?

Then: TRADITIONAL WRITING PROMPT

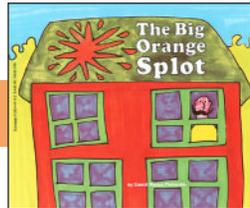
Narrative Writing

- Based on background knowledge.
- Generates a narrative response.
- Typically requires students to recall a personal experience.
- Allows for more than one possible response.

Now: READ-WRITE PROMPT

Narrative-Writing Task

- Typically based on a literary text.
- Generates a narrative response.
- Typically requires students to continue the story or rewrite it from another character's point of view.
- Requires multiple details from the original text(s).
- Allows for more than one possible response.



1

Continue the story.

2

Rewrite the perspective.

3

Insert the missing piece.

4

Write fiction based on fact.

Define what counts as evidence.

Review what students know as “evidence” when writing informative and persuasive responses.

Clarify that “evidence” in narratives means weaving in details from the original text.

Identify the details to include.

- Repeat setting details.
- Repeat character feelings, traits, thoughts, actions, words.
- Repeat plot (problem, solution, action, event, theme) details.

NARRATIVE NON-NEGOTIABLES

Move beyond personal narratives.

Narrative

Generate a story based on a problem

Expose students to 4 types of narrative-writing tasks.

Task Type	Key Ingredients	Mentor Text	Anchor Paper
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3

Insert the missing piece or page.

- Demonstrate mastery of the story arc.
- Expand on ideas merely mentioned.
- Note the details that happen before and after the inserted information.
- Include a transitional introduction and/or conclusion.



- Dissect deleted scenes from movies.



This is the missing page from _____ Title _____

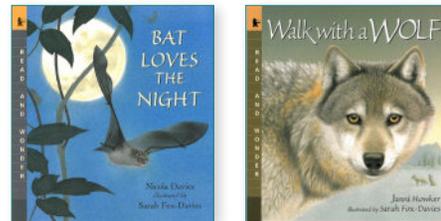
Before & After THE INSERT

ALREADY-KNOWN INFORMATION	ADDED PORTION	NOT-YET-KNOWN INFORMATION
<p>Mr. Plumbear has frizzy hair, palm trees and an alligator.</p> <p>The neighbor sipped lemonade with Mr. Plumbear.</p> <p>Mr. Plumbear's house is many colors and he worked at night to paint it.</p> <p>The neighbors like living on a neat street.</p> <p>Mr. Plumbear made his house look like a home of his dreams.</p>	<p>The neighbor started soccer on his house the next m...</p> <p>The neighbor changed houses in...</p> <p>The other neighbors changed houses.</p>	<p>With the missing information, you can see the story is still going on. The author wants you to fill in the missing information. Write your own conclusion using details from the original text.</p>

4

Write fiction based on fact.

- Gather details from the informational text, including:
- People/Subjects.
 - Setting.
 - Events/Activities.



- Generate an original plot revealing:
- Accurate character and setting details.
 - A realistic problem.
 - A plausible solution.

Original Text

THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH

What is the Great Pacific Garbage Patch?

When did it first form?

What is it?

How big is it?

What is it made of?

How does it affect the environment?

How does it affect the animals?

How does it affect the humans?

How does it affect the future?

Fiction BASED

INFO TEXT	FEATURES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clarity • huge accumulation of plastic • huge refractors • other people • other animals • the size of Texas • trash from human beings • Pacific Ocean • between California and Hawaii • just under water • surface • GPP • things washed down stream • things dropped with rain • things dropped into the ocean • washed by sea current • waste is broken into pieces • slowly swirling • decaying • releasing chemicals 	<p>SUBJECT CHARACTERS</p> <p>TIME & PLACE SETTING</p> <p>EVENTS PROBLEM & SOLUTION</p>

Write Fiction from Fact

Writing based on 'The Great Pacific Garbage Patch' informational text. Read and gather details from the original text to create a story, setting, and plot.

The Plastic Cup

You need to write a story based on the information you gathered. The plastic cup is the main character. Write a story about the plastic cup. Use the information you gathered to create a story. Use the information you gathered to create a story. Use the information you gathered to create a story.

Use evidence from the text.

Final thoughts...

Recognize the biggest takeaways.

Teach writing versus assign writing.

Write about topics and texts.

Prioritize the traits of ideas and organization.

Target middles over beginnings and endings.

Informative Essentials

- PART 1: Prioritize the “info.”
- PART 2: Organize by genre.

Persuasive

Argumentative Essentials

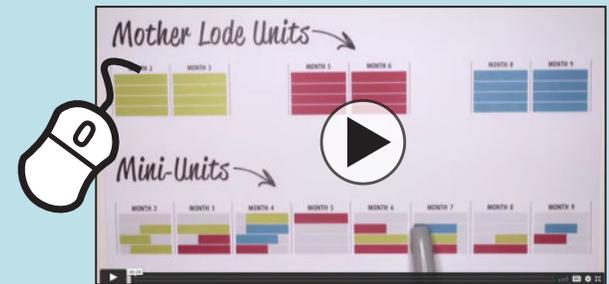
- PART 3: Persuade & argue.

Narrative Essentials

- PART 4: Note narrative non-negotiables.

Identify next steps.

1. List essential skills.
2. Identify lesson concepts to target each skill.
3. Determine quantity of instructional days needed.
4. Plot a 2-3 skills and then a first-draft task.
5. Plot a 1-2 MORE skills and time for a NEW first draft.
6. Plot a 1-2 MORE skills and time for ANOTHER new first draft.



Create a writing curriculum of mini-units.