

*The Noyce Foundation
Every Child a Reader and Writer*

UNIT DESIGN
Personal Narrative Unit of Study

Reading Work to Support a Genre Study in Writing Workshop

- Gather and study published personal narratives to become familiar with this type of writing
- Collect books to read in the personal narrative inquiry that are models for what will be taught
- Read aloud and have conversations with students about
 - responses as readers
 - ideas around why this narrative is important to the writer
 - elements of personal narratives
 - where and how personal narrative writers get ideas
 - the purpose(s) of personal narrative writing
- The teacher decides upon touchstones, asking:
 - Is this text an example of the kind of writing students will do?
 - Does this text help students envision possibilities to emulate in their own writing?
 - Is this text a good example of what I'm teaching into?
 - Can this text be read in one read aloud?

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Ideas for Collecting in Writing Notebooks******Over time, students will. . .***

- Revisit touchstone texts to discuss where and how personal narrative writers get ideas
- Try out the habits of mind of personal narrative writers, carry their writing notebooks with them and capture ideas from:
 - Every day events
 - Ideas that come from sharing stories with other writers
 - Stories in their lives
 - Ideas that come from reading personal narrative texts
 - Memories
 - Important people and places that they don't want to forget
 - Thinking about times they realized or learned something
 - Strong feelings
 - Rereading entries to spark new life stories
- “Story tell” with other writers to spark ideas
- Trust the process of discovery in the act of writing
- Share ideas with and get ideas from other writers
- Write every day
- Explore and discover thoughts while writing
- Develop a treasure chest of ideas to choose from when picking a topic to work on for publishing

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*Ideas for Choosing a Topic
Over time, students will. . .*

- Carefully reread entries and ask themselves,
 - Which WNB entry is really important to me?
 - Which entry can I say more about?
 - Which entry do I want to spend more time working on for our personal narrative publication?

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Ideas for Nurturing a Topic
Over time, students will. . .

- Carefully reread their writing, asking themselves why their topic is important to them and then
- Write about why their topic matters to them
- Find the focus for their writing and write small in terms of time
- Slow down time to convey what matters to the reader
- See the movie in their mind, asking where the story begins
- Not only write about what happens, but their response and internal thoughts about their small moment narrative
- Ask other possible questions to push thinking
 - What does this writing tell me about myself?
 - What does this writing tell me about the world?
 - Can I dig deeper and find a theme in my writing?
- Try possible ways to layer onto their writing
 - interview someone who was a part of a memory
 - Go to the special place in their writing
 - Look at photographs and other artifacts to jog memories
- Talk with fellow writers about their ideas and write from their responses

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Ideas for Planning a Draft
Over time, students will. . .

- Organize and structure the events, using a graphic organizer as a temporary guide, perhaps as a timeline or a storyboard, making sure the events support the meaning
- Think about where their narrative may begin and end, having determined the importance of the topic they've chosen and having determined a focus for their writing
- Reread their entries and think about which events to include and which events to delete in order to focus on what's important
- Refer to mentor texts that they want to emulate

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Ideas for Writing Draft(s) Outside of the Writing Notebook
Over time, students will. . .

- Write a first draft on separate sheets of paper, outside of the notebook, using their plan for the structure
- Remember that writing a draft is not recopying an entry – drafting is new thinking and it’s messy
- Approach the draft(s) as an opportunity to explore and play around with the sequence of events in their narrative
- Think of their drafts as the foundation for their writing in order to make decisions about what to include, delete, and ways to craft their writing
- Keep in mind that there’s no specific number of drafts that will ensure great writing – however, most likely, there will be many versions of the original draft

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Ideas for Revising
Over time, students will. . .

- Refer to mentor texts to learn from published writers
- Refer to mentor texts that use craft moves they want to try in their writing
- Reread and re-see their writing in order to make changes that will make their writing the best it can be
- Consider the importance in their writing and ask, Do the events and the details support what I want the reader to think about?
- Try the craft moves they learned about in mini-lessons and see if they enhance the meaning in their writing

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Ideas for Editing
Over time, students will. . .

- Proofread their writing as a habit of mind
- Use strategies taught during a skills block, outside of writing workshop, to edit personal narratives
- Use the one or two editing skills they learned during this personal narrative unit of study within their writing for this publication and within their future writing
- Polish their writing, using what they've been taught, for going public
- Use editing skills to enhance the meaning of their writing

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Ideas for Celebrating and Reflecting
Over time, students will. . .

- Publish their writing for a variety of audiences and purposes
- Go public and celebrate their writing in a variety of ways
- Reflect on their learning as writers and set goals for future writing