

Non-Fiction Personal Narratives: a Pre-fieldtrip Writers' Workshop Unit

Unit overview

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3a Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3b Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.3.3d Provide a sense of closure.

CCSS: ELA-SL.3.4a-g Oral Communication is used both informally and formally.

CCSS: ELA-SL 3.1a-d Successful group activities need the cooperation of everyone.

Unit EQ = How can a fact-based personal narrative best communicate a small moment in time?

Specific Lesson Objectives/Focus:

Lesson 1 –

Students will recall prior knowledge of good writing and begin to answer the EQ by listing on the board skills that they know good writers use.

Students will look at art cards to think through 3 prompts and write at least 3 seeds for at least 3 personal narratives, so that students can generate ideas for writing that include emotions and details.

Students listen to “Eleven” by Sandra Cisneros and, as a class, list the writing strategies she uses to make the reader feel like she is in that moment.

Students will look at their seeds and list details to elaborate on their ideas.

Lesson 2

Students will explore cards with 3 more prompts, using all 6 prompts to generate at least 3 more seeds for personal narrative.

Students will learn a way to remember the parts of a narrative.

Students will then choose one seed to elaborate upon, adding details and descriptive language.

Lesson 3

Students will review list of good writing (use of senses, emotions, similes...)

Students will see examples and non-examples of the strategy “show, don’t tell” then compare that list to their own writing to find places where they can revise their own writing to show with words instead of tell.

Lesson 4

Students will identify writing strengths (simile, idioms, metaphors and/or other devices they’ve studied this year) in a mentor text, then read their own writing and add those elements. The class will develop a list of skills to use as they revise and rewrite, thinking metacognitively about the process of writing.

Lesson 5

Good writers use strong leads and strong endings. Students will analyze models and their own narratives, then create strong leads and endings.

Lesson 6

Good writers revise, share, revise... then publish. Publishing for this narrative involves sharing each narrative when at the art museum with classmates and docents and chaperones.

Students will finish revising, then identify what makes a “reading” successful. Finally, students will practice reading their narratives aloud with a partner, and critique each other based on a rubric.

* Feel free to add additional mini-lessons, or skip lessons not needed based on your students’ prior knowledge and skills. Most lessons can be taught as 2 separate lessons if students need more time to write/reflect/revise.

