

# Reading and Writing with Independence

## Grade 3 Sample Unit of Study



**Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for  
Independent Reading**

**Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for  
Independent Writing**



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The Office of English Language Arts (ELA) develops policy and program recommendations to meet the educational needs of New York City Public School Kindergarten through Grade 12 students.

This unit of study has been developed with and for classroom teachers. Feel free to use and adapt any or all materials contained herein.

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## **Principles of Quality English Language Arts Instruction**

*Quality English language arts instruction must...*

address the unique needs of each learner and adapt instructional strategies to teach to the students' strengths, including a wide range of engaging materials, with multiple levels and genre so that there are multiple ways for students to experience literacy learning.

explicitly teach how to make meaning, using modeling and demonstration, and include time to practice what is taught. After modeling new strategies clearly, students practice skills while teachers observe and give pointed, differentiated feedback.

build upon what students are able to do independently, and extend this learning through various materials and supports to scaffold the students' learning.

maximize students' time reading and writing, especially the kind of authentic reading and writing that goes on in the world outside of school, and blend reading and writing into every subject area.

give students many opportunities to discuss what they read and write, both with teachers and with each other.

Adapted from NYC DOE Comprehensive Approach to Balanced Literacy K-6, 2003

## **INQUIRY IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM**

Knowledge does not easily pass from one source to another. We cannot “make” students understand. Students learn best when they look for and discover answers to their own questions; when they make their own connections and when inquiry is at the heart of learning.

### **Teacher’s Role**

The teacher is a mediator and facilitator for student learning. S/he may present a problem or question to students and ask questions such as: What can we find out about this topic? Why is it important? What impact has it had and why? What else do you need to know? S/he helps students think through strategies for investigations and ways to successfully monitor their own behavior. The teacher also helps students reflect on their work and processes.

### **Scaffold the Learning**

Throughout a learning experience, the teacher must scaffold the learning for students. Mini-lessons are planned around student needs to help move them towards successful completion of a task or understanding of a concept. You cannot expect students to write a research report if you have not supported them with note-taking skills and strategies. Breaking tasks into manageable sub-skills (while keeping the context real and meaningful!) also helps students experience success.

### **Students’ Role**

Students should be active participants in their learning. They must take responsibility for their learning, ask questions for themselves, take initiative, and assess their own learning. They must demonstrate independence (from the teacher) and dependence on others (in group projects) when and where appropriate.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is a tool for instruction. It should reflect what students know, not just what they don’t know. Teachers need to utilize more than one method of assessment to determine what students know or have learned. Assessment measures can be formal and informal; tasks can be chosen by students and by teachers; speaking, writing, and other types of demonstrations of learning can be employed.

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS SKILLS

### ***Reading Comprehension Skills***

- making connections (text to text, text to self, text to world)
- comparing and contrasting ideas
- identifying story elements
- identifying cause and effect
- making inferences
- drawing conclusions
- summarizing
- paraphrasing
- evaluating content
- distinguishing between fact and opinion
- finding and solving multiple-step problems
- decision making
- understanding different interpretations
- understanding author's point of view
- reading with fluency and phrasing
- using the vocabulary of time and chronology
- placing events in chronological order
- sequencing major events (plot points) on a timeline; reading timelines

### ***Research and Writing Skills***

- getting information; using various note-taking strategies
- organizing information
- editing writing
- revising writing
- reading and understanding non-fiction books; looking for patterns
- interpreting information
- applying, analyzing and synthesizing information
- supporting a position with relevant facts and documents
- understanding importance
- choosing sophisticated language for writing in different genre
- using conventional spelling and using dictionary when needed
- using writing conventions (grammar, punctuation)
- using sequence and order to plan and accomplish tasks
- creating a bibliography and/or webography

### ***Listening and Speaking Interpersonal and Group Relation Skills***

- defining terms; identifying basic assumptions
- recognizing different points of view
- developing empathy and understanding
- participating in class discussions
- participating in partnerships (talk, reading, and/or writing partners)
- participating in group planning and discussion
- cooperating to accomplish goals
- assuming responsibility for carrying out tasks

## **NEW RESEARCH ON CONTENT LITERACY AND ACADEMIC VOCABULARY**

Reading and writing in the content areas require our students to have high-level literacy skills such as the capacity to make inferences from texts, synthesize information from a variety of sources, follow complex directions, question authenticity and understand content-specific and technical vocabulary.

Every academic discipline has its own set of literacy demands: the structures, organization and discourse that define the discipline. Students will not learn to read and write well in any content area unless they understand these demands. They need to be taught the specific demands of the discipline and to spend a significant amount of time reading, writing, and discussing with their peers and their teachers.

To truly have access to the language of an academic discipline means students need to become familiar with that discipline's essence of communication. We do not read a novel, a science text or social studies text in the same way or with the same purposes.

The role of knowledge and domain-specific vocabulary in reading comprehension has been well-researched, and we understand that students need opportunities to learn not only subject area concepts, but vocabulary also in order to have the ability to read the broad range of text types they are exposed to in reading social studies.

New research has shown that one factor in particular—**academic vocabulary**—is one of the strongest indicators of how well students will learn subject area content when they come to school. Teaching the specific terms of social studies, science, or math in a specific way is one of the strongest actions a teacher can take to ensure that students have the academic background knowledge they need to understand the social studies content they will encounter in school.

For more information:

Alliance for Excellent Education

Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas June 2007

Vacca and Vacca

Content Area Reading. Literacy and Learning Across the Curriculum

Robert Marzano  
& Debra Pickering

Building Academic Vocabulary

## ENCOURAGING ACCOUNTABLE TALK IN CLASSROOM DISCUSSIONS

### **What is accountable talk?**

Accountable talk is classroom conversation that has to do with what students are learning. We know that students love to talk, but we want to encourage students to talk about the ideas, concepts, and content that they encounter in school every day. Accountable talk can be whole class or small group in structure. A teacher may often get students started, but real accountable talk occurs with student ownership and minimal teacher input. The teacher may function as a facilitator initially, but as accountable talk becomes an integral part of the school day, students assume more responsibility for their own learning.

### **What does it look like?**

Small groups of students are engaged in focused discussions around specific topics, questions, ideas or themes. Students are actively engaged and practicing good listening and speaking skills. Accountable talk is usually qualified by the use of appropriate rubrics.

### **What are rubrics?**

Rubrics in accountable talk are scoring tools that list criteria for successful communication. Rubrics assist students with self-assessment and increase their responsibility for the task.

### **Sample Student Accountable Talk Rubrics**

- Have I actively participated in the discussion?
- Have I listened attentively to all group members?
- Did I elaborate and build on the ideas or comments of others?
- Did I stay focused on the assigned topic?
- Did I make connections to other learning?

### **Why is student discussion valuable?**

Students' enthusiasm, involvement, and willingness to participate affect the quality of class discussion as an opportunity for learning. While it is a challenge to engage all students it is important to provide daily opportunities for students to interact and talk to each other about the topic being learned as it helps them develop insights into the content. An atmosphere of rich discussion and student to student conversation will help you create a classroom in which students feel comfortable, secure, willing to take risks, and ready to test and share important content ideas and concepts.

Studies prove that students who have frequent opportunities for discussion achieve greater learning than those who do not. In fact, research maintains that students retain 10% of what they read, 20 % of what they hear, 30% of what they see, and **70%** of what they discuss with others.

Shared speaking helps learners gain information and it encourages more knowledgeable learners to be more sophisticated and articulate in sharing their knowledge. They then are careful about the words they use and the way they are presenting their ideas to their peers because they really want to be understood. When students listen to others and match it with the ideas that they are formulating, it can shed new light on their thinking. This type of speaking and active discussion may show the students a new way to connect to their learning.

Sometimes students can overlook important ideas, but with discussion (reciprocal) students have the opportunity to compare, analyze, synthesize, debate, investigate, clarify, question and engage in many types of high level and critical thinking.

## ASSESSING STUDENT UNDERSTANDING

Assessment of student understanding is an ongoing process that begins with teachers establishing the goals and outcomes of a unit of study, and aligning assessment tools with those goals and outcomes. What teachers assess sends a strong message to their students about what content and skills are important for them to understand. Assessments evaluate student mastery of knowledge, cognitive processes, and skills, and provide a focus for daily instruction. Assessment is an integral part of the learning cycle, rather than the end of the process. It is a natural part of the curricular process, creates the framework for instruction, and establishes clear expectations for student learning.

The New York State Education Department ELA assessments are administered in January in 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades. These exams measure the progress students are making in achieving the learning standards. New York City also conducts periodic assessments throughout the year in grades three and up, which can be analyzed by teachers for individual student and class needs. Teachers should consult the school's inquiry team recommendations as well as use information from other school assessments to strategically plan instruction in areas where students need assistance to reach mastery.

The International Reading Association has adopted 11 standards for assessment:

1. The interests of the student are paramount.
2. The primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning.
3. Assessment must reflect and allow for critical inquiry into curriculum and instruction
4. Assessments must recognize and reflect the intellectually and socially complex nature of reading and writing....
5. Assessment must be fair and equitable.
6. The consequences of an assessment procedure are the first and most important consideration in establishing the validity of the assessment.
7. The teacher is the most important agent of assessment.
8. The assessment process should involve multiple perspectives and sources of data.
9. Assessment must be based in the school community.
10. All members of the educational community...must have a voice in the development, interpretation, and reporting of assessment.
11. Parents must be involved as active, essential participants in the assessment process.

Effective assessment plans incorporate every goal or outcome of the unit. Content knowledge and skills need to be broken down – unpacked-- and laid out in a series of specific statements of what students need to understand and be able to do. The teaching of content and skills is reflected in the daily lesson plans. Assessment should not be viewed as separate from instruction. Student evaluation is most authentic when it is based upon the ideas, processes, products, and behaviors exhibited during regular instruction. Students should have a clear understanding of what is ahead, what is expected, and how evaluation will occur. Expected outcomes of instruction should be specified and criteria for evaluating degrees of success clearly outlined.

When developing an assessment plan, a balance and range of tools is essential. Teachers should include assessments that are process- as well as product-oriented. Multiple performance indicators provide students with different strengths equal opportunity to demonstrate their understanding. Multiple indicators also allow teachers to assess whether their instructional program is meeting the needs of the students, and to make adjustments as necessary.

An effective assessment plan includes both *formative* assessments – assessments that allow teachers to give feedback as the project progresses – and *summative* assessments – assessments that provide students with a culminating evaluation of their understanding. Teachers should also plan assessments that provide opportunities for students to explore content in depth, to demonstrate higher order thinking skills, and relate their understanding to their experiences. Additionally, evidence of student thinking allows teachers to assess both skills and affective outcomes on an on-going basis. Examples of student products and the variety of assessments possible follow.

Sample of student projects	Sample assessment tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• reading logs</li><li>• reading reflections</li><li>• reading notebook entries</li><li>• writing notebook entries</li><li>• published stories/pieces</li><li>• student-made books</li><li>• songs and plays</li><li>• poetry</li><li>• booklets, brochures, or posters</li><li>• student-made PowerPoint projects</li><li>• I-movies; photo-essays</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• higher level analytical thinking activities</li><li>• portfolios of student work</li><li>• student writing, from drafts to final product</li><li>• student criteria setting and self-evaluation</li><li>• teacher observations</li><li>• checklists and rubrics</li><li>• conferences with individuals or groups</li><li>• group discussions</li><li>• anecdotal records</li><li>• teacher-made tests</li><li>• student presentations</li><li>• reflective journal entries</li><li>• student writing</li><li>• video and/or audio tapes of student work</li><li>• student work</li><li>• periodic assessments (Acuity, Scantron)</li><li>• NYS ELA exam results</li><li>• ECLAS-2 results</li><li>• EPAL</li><li>• Miscue analysis</li><li>• Running records</li><li>• Reading assessment records (DRA, DIBELS, W.R.A.P., etc.)</li></ul>

## **Unit Overview**

**Reading Unit of Study:** Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Writing Unit of Study:** Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Time Frame:** Four to Five Weeks

Reading, writing, listening and speaking are the heart of all teaching and learning in the elementary schools.

### **The Planning Process:**

Unit design begins with teachers engaging in brainstorming to collaboratively develop an **essential question** that is connected to the goals and essence of the unit. We define an essential question as a question that is multifaceted and open to discussion and interpretation. We believe that the essential questions chosen are important in terms of allowing teachers and readers to think about the complexities around reading and writing.

The planning process then proceeds with the selection of **shared language** highlighting the **academic vocabulary** important and specific to the success of the unit.

Next, a series of **focus questions** or guiding questions is formulated. These questions are content specific and will become the foundation for lesson development. Using a **backwards design planning process**, teachers then decide on a series of content and process outcomes for the unit.

**Learning experiences or potential teaching points (mini-lessons)** are considered utilizing the Weekly Planning template. This affords teachers an opportunity to look at a full week of teaching and learning possibilities and to see how the various lessons will connect, relate and build on each other.

Finally **sample lesson plans** are developed with specific recommendations for teachers, ideas for group or independent practice and exploration, reader assessment and suggestions for differentiation and extension.

This unit of study should ideally commence at the appropriate time of the year as determined by the needs of each classroom teacher and always in the best interest of optimal student learning. We recommend that it occur in the first semester since the strategies it presents will be built upon in further units that follow throughout the year.

**WORD STUDY STRAND**

**Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading  
Grade 3**

**How do readers build and sustain independent reading practices?**

**Question # 1:**

**How do readers establish habits for independent reading?**

- **Readers independently select a leveled book by thinking about accuracy, comprehension, and fluency.**
- Readers identify themselves as independent readers by thinking about genre and authors.
- Readers read for longer stretches of time by setting goals.
- **Readers read smoother and faster by paying attention to punctuation cues.**
- **Readers read fluently by using dialogue cues to alter their voice and tone.**

**Word Work:**

- Readers identify grade level high-frequency words.
- Readers notice and use punctuation marks.

**Question # 2:**

**How do readers construct meaning when reading independently?**

- **Readers retell the main idea by using details from the story.**
- **Readers retell by using story elements.**
- **Readers retell by noting events are told in sequence.**
- Readers synthesize by summarizing the important parts of the story.
- Readers monitor for sense by rereading confusing parts.

**Word Work:**

- Readers identify unfamiliar words.
- Readers comprehend unfamiliar words using context clues.

**Question # 3:**

**How do readers understand characters and their motivations when reading independently?**

- Readers identify characters by thinking about character traits.
- **Readers visualize by creating mental images of the characters, settings and events in the story.**
- **Readers identify with the main character by empathizing with the character.**
- Readers connect with the characters by comparing them to real life.
- **Readers monitor for sense by paying attention to a character's actions and motivations.**

**Word Work:**

- Readers identify and use key vocabulary (adjectives) to describe characters.
- Readers write about characters using complete sentences.

**Question # 4:**

**How do readers monitor for sense and connect details in the story?**

- **Readers accumulate parts of the story by reflecting on how the events fit together.**
- **Readers predict and confirm by using details from the story for support.**
- Readers revise original thinking by noticing when new details surface.
- Readers create meaning by determining importance in stories.
- Readers monitor for sense by retelling the main idea to a partner.

**Word Work:**

- Readers use key vocabulary to retell (sequencing words).
- Readers use resources to support meaning (dictionary, thesaurus).

**WORD STUDY STRAND**  
**Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing**  
**Grade 3**

**How do writers use craft to improve their writing?**

**Question # 1:**

**How do writers plan personal narratives?**

- Writers plan for writing by demonstrating knowledge of genre.
- **Writers plan for writing by learning how to use notebooks.**
- Writers plan for writing by thinking of a topic and sketching memories.
- **Writers plan for writing by thinking about important people, places, and events.**
- Writers plan for writing by thinking of times when something big happened.

**Word Work / Spelling:**

- Writers use grade level vocabulary and sentence structure.
- Writers use resources such as a dictionary, thesaurus, etc. to support meaning
- Writers use conventional spelling of grade level words.
- Writers use consonant digraphs (th, sh, ch, ph, wh) and blends (str, sp, sl, sm, bl, dr, etc.).

**Question # 2:**

**How do writers use focus and structure to create meaning?**

- Writers learn how to draft by rereading multiple entries.
- Writers learn how to retell an important event in sequence.
- Writers use timelines to add focus and detail to personal narratives.
- Writers develop structure by starting their piece at another point in the timeline.
- Writers develop structure by using a beginning, middle, and end.
- Writers use focus by visualizing memories.

**Word Work / Spelling:**

- Writers focus on sentence, paragraph and story structure.
- Writers use diverse and descriptive vocabulary.
- Writers use punctuation effectively.
- Writers use sequence and/or transitional words to illustrate and show a progression of time.

**Question # 3:**

**How do writers revise personal narratives to improve their writing?**

- Writers revise with an audience in mind by rereading for sense.
- Writers revise by adding internal thinking.
- Writers revise by adding details to the important parts.
- Writers revise by adding dialogue.
- Writers revise by rereading personal narratives with partner.

**Word Work / Spelling**

- Writers analyze sentence and paragraphing structure.
- Writers use quotation marks to show dialogue.

**Question # 4:**

**How do independent writers use craft effectively?**

- Writers reread and edit for capitalization and punctuation.
- Writers edit for spelling using a dictionary.
- Writers create a new personal narrative without assistance.
- Writers celebrate writing and reflect on growth.

**Word Work / Spelling**

- Writers use grade-level vocabulary to communicate ideas, emotions, or experiences.
- Writers categorize text structures.

### Suggested ELL Instructional Literacy Strategies (K-5)

**English Language Learner (ELLs)** in the general education classroom benefit from additional support. Teachers can help students develop academic skills to be used across the content areas of instructions throughout the day. Strategy lessons for ELL students may be chosen based on their New York State English level of English proficiency (see chart below). ELLs need to receive many demonstrations of how texts are constructed. In the chart below, you will see a variety of strategies that support ELLs before, during and after reading.

ELL Levels	Support Materials	Reading	Writing
<p><b>Beginner</b> Limited comprehension/ Simple language</p> <p><b>Student is able to:</b> Listen Point Act out actions Draw Choose</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> <li>• Language Structures/Prompts</li> <li>• Flash Cards</li> <li>• Sentence Strips</li> <li>• Visuals: pictures, magazines, videos, short films etc.</li> <li>• Auditory: books on tapes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate prior knowledge</li> <li>• Introduce vocabulary with content and visuals</li> <li>• Picture walk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use pictures</li> <li>• Labeling</li> <li>• List making</li> <li>• Match spoken words to the written word</li> <li>• Reproduce a familiar book</li> <li>• Concepts of print</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intermediate</b> Emerging Speech/Simple sentences/engage in conversation</p> <p><b>Student is able to:</b> Name/Retell Label/Define Group/Explain Answer yes-no/compare List/Describe Categorize/Role Play Count/Restate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> <li>• Language Structures/Prompts</li> <li>• Flash Cards</li> <li>• Visuals-Short films, silent film for role playing</li> <li>• Auditory</li> <li>• Documentary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate prior knowledge</li> <li>• Introduce story language</li> <li>• Build academic language by using new vocabulary throughout the day in content area instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Match spoken words to the written word</li> <li>• Write simple sentences</li> <li>• Punctuation</li> <li>• Multiple word context by utilizing graphic organizers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Advanced</b> Understands and produces complex sentences</p> <p><b>Student is able to:</b> Self monitor Self correct Analyze Debate Hypothesize</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Graphic Organizers</li> <li>• Language Structures/Prompts</li> <li>• Visuals- documents, films, silent for role playing.</li> <li>• Interactive Auditory eg. Note-taking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activate prior knowledge</li> <li>• Challenge students by asking questions to further enhance reading comprehension</li> <li>• Build academic language throughout the day in content area instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize graphic organizers to organize thoughts to produce more complex writing pieces</li> </ul>

\*Please note that these supports can also be useful with non-ELL students.

References:

Houk, Farin. Supporting English Language Learners. Heinemann, 2005.

Rollins Hurley, Sandra and Villamil Tinajero. Literacy Assessment of Second Language Learners. Pearson, 2001.

Tennessee ESL Resource Guide, 2008

## Teacher Background

### Reading Unit of Study:

#### Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

Readers sustain an independent reading life as a way to understand their world.

**Unit Understandings:** Our goal throughout the unit is to create independent readers. Students will learn to independently retell details from the story using story elements. They will learn to synthesize, predict, and revise for meaning. By the end of the unit, students will read fluently, build stamina and pay attention to punctuation and dialogue cues. They will also identify characters' actions and motivations.

### Assessment:

#### • *Formal Assessment*

Running records, ECLAS-2, DRA or other assessments chosen by the school

#### • *Informal Assessment*

Daily observations of and discussions with students during independent work time, conferring one on one and in small groups, and examination of student work

### Differentiation:

Differentiation during reading workshop is determined by teacher observation: how students select texts, how children take notes, reading behaviors.

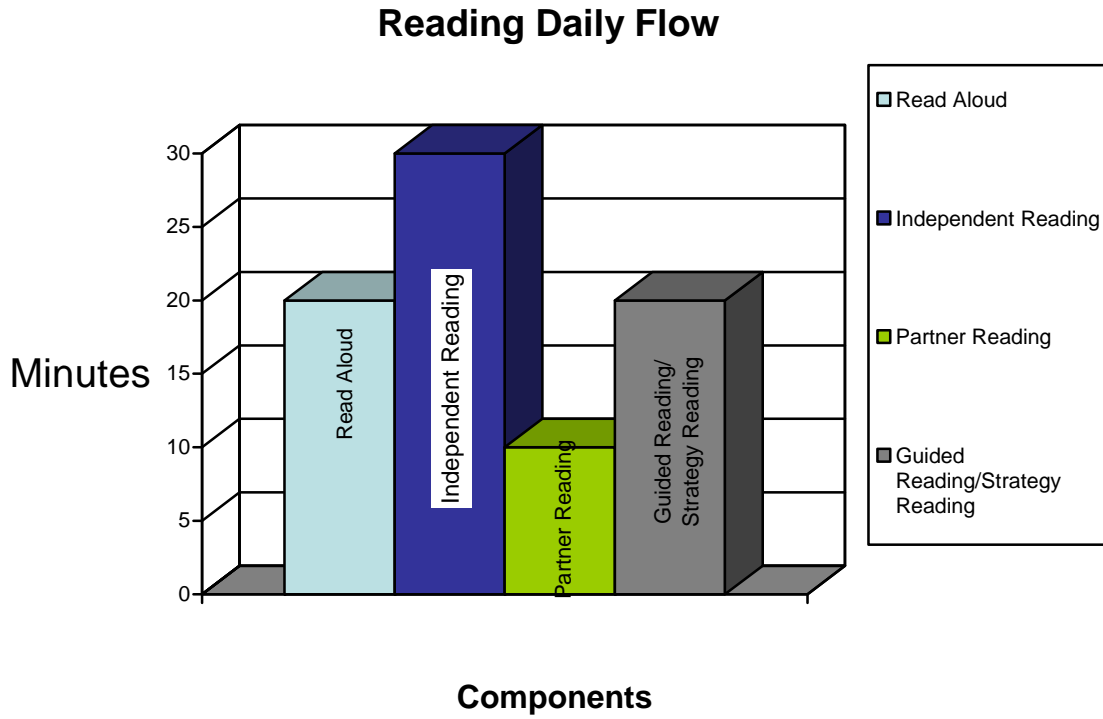
### Possible Structures:

- Small Groups (Guided Reading, Strategy Groups)
- Individual Conferences
- Partnerships
- Shared Reading

### Management and Routines:

Set up a system for leveled book selection. Here are some suggestions:

- Organize library according to leveled baskets (color coded and alphabetized from lowest to highest reading level).
- Include book baskets in library and on group tables based on genre and interest.
- Display books relevant to subjects being studied across the curriculum.
- Encourage students to explore library throughout the day.
- Students should independently select books during reading workshop.
- During conferences teacher will make sure that students are reading appropriate leveled books.



**It is suggested that word work be done daily to support Reading Workshop and Writing Workshop. Please follow the school's guidelines.**

## ELA ESSENTIAL QUESTION UNIT PLANNING GUIDE FOR READING

Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

### Essential Question:

**How do readers build and sustain independent reading practices?**

### Core Vocabulary:

Predict retell envision identify synthesize accumulate empathize main idea  
summarize character trait

### Focus Questions

- **How do readers establish habits for independent reading?**
- **How do readers construct meaning when reading independently?**
- **How do readers understand characters and their motivations when reading independently?**
- **How do readers monitor for sense and connect details as they read independently?**

### Student Outcomes

Readers will be able to:

- Retell details from the story using story elements.
- Keep track of what is going on in the story (summarize) to monitor for meaning.
- Make predictions and revise their thinking as they monitor for meaning.
- Read fluently, with expression, and attend to punctuation and dialogue cues.
- Identify characters' actions and motivations.

### Anchor Texts / Resources:

- Leveled books
- Chapter books

**Focus Question Planning Sheet for Reading Unit of Study**  
**How do readers build and sustain independent reading practices?**

Focus Questions	Possible Teaching Points (Sample Lessons included in this unit are in bold)	Word Work / Vocabulary	Suggested Assessment for Learning
<p><b>Question # 1:</b></p> <p><b>How do readers establish habits for independent reading?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Readers independently select a leveled book by considering accuracy, comprehension, and fluency.</b></li> <li>• Readers identify themselves as independent readers by thinking about genre and authors.</li> <li>• Readers read for longer stretches of time by setting goals.</li> <li>• <b>Readers read fluently by using punctuation cues.</b></li> <li>• <b>Readers read fluently by using dialogue cues to alter voice and tone.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers identify grade level high-frequency words.</li> <li>• Readers notice and use punctuation marks.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Informal observation</li> <li>• Running records</li> <li>• Small group work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question # 2:</b></p> <p><b>How do readers construct meaning when reading independently?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Readers retell the main idea of a chapter by identifying the big idea or important event.</b></li> <li>• Readers retell by using story elements.</li> <li>• <b>Readers retell by noting events are told in sequence.</b></li> <li>• Readers synthesize ideas by summarizing the important parts of the story.</li> <li>• Readers monitor for sense by rereading confusing parts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers identify unfamiliar words.</li> <li>• Readers figure out unfamiliar words using context clues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review written work</li> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Reader self-reflection on reading logs</li> <li>• Small group work</li> </ul>

Focus Questions	Possible Teaching Points (Sample Lessons included in this unit are in bold)	Word Work / Vocabulary	Suggested Assessment for Learning
<p><b>Question # 3:</b></p> <p><b>How do readers understand characters and their motivations when reading independently?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers identify characters by thinking about character traits.</li> <li>• <b>Readers visualize by creating mental images of the characters, settings and events in the story.</b></li> <li>• <b>Readers identify with the main character by empathizing with the character’s problem or the events in the story.</b></li> <li>• Readers identify and understand important story elements (conflict, plot).</li> <li>• Readers connect with the characters by comparing them to real life.</li> <li>• <b>Readers monitor for sense by paying attention to character’s actions and motivations.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers identify and use key vocabulary to describe characters (adjectives).</li> <li>• Readers write about characters using complete sentences.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review written work</li> <li>• Assessment of oral group share</li> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Small group work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Question # 4:</b></p> <p><b>How do readers use monitor for sense and connect details as they read independently?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Readers gain understanding of the story as they read by reflecting on how each event fits together.</b></li> <li>• <b>Readers predict and confirm by using details from the story for support.</b></li> <li>• Readers revise original thinking by noticing when new details surface.</li> <li>• Readers create meaning by determining importance in stories.</li> <li>• Readers monitor for sense by retelling the main idea to a partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Readers use key vocabulary to retell (sequencing words).</li> <li>• Readers use resources to support meaning (dictionary, thesaurus).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal observations</li> <li>• Reader self-assessment</li> <li>• Review written work</li> <li>• Observing independent and peer reading</li> </ul>

# **SAMPLE LESSON PLANS FOR READING**



## **Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading**

## Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

\* Please note: the lessons below contain samples of what a teacher might say to a class at different points during the lesson. Teachers should not consider this to be a script to read word-for-word, but an example of the kind of talk that should take place.

**Unit of Study:**      **Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading**

**How do readers build and sustain independent reading practices?**

### Question # 1:

**How do readers establish habits for independent reading?**

#### **Teaching Point:**

- Readers independently select leveled books by thinking about accuracy, comprehension, and fluency.

#### **Why/Purpose/Connection:**

- To teach strategies to select leveled books for independent reading.
- To build readers' understanding of the importance of selecting and reading a book that is "just-right."

#### **Materials/Resources/Readings:**

- Chart paper
- Markers
- Basket of varied leveled books (for modeling)
- Individual leveled books (for partnerships)

#### **Model/Demonstration:**

- Gather readers to the meeting area. As readers come to the meeting area, hand out two leveled books for each partnership to be used later in the lesson. For management, you might ask readers to sit on the books until needed.
- Explain, saying something like: "We've been selecting books to read from baskets on the table. Now we're almost ready to independently choose leveled books from the leveled library. Today readers will select leveled books by thinking about how well and accurately we read. One way to think about this is to use the 'five finger rule'."
- Choose a leveled book and model reading a page selected randomly to self-assess reading accuracy. Remind readers of the "five finger rule" which may have been learned in prior grades.
  1. Choose any page from the book and read it to yourself.
  2. For each word that you can't read, put up one finger.

3. When you finish reading the page, if all five fingers are up, the book is too difficult to read on your own.

*(Note: Don't choose the first page. It often introduces characters and setting and may include several names, which can be more difficult to read than the rest of the text.)*

**Model/Demonstration (continued)**

- Model an example of a book selection that is too difficult (five fingers raised by end of page) and then model another example of a book that may be too easy (no fingers raised by end of page). Explain that you think that the second book may be too easy for you, and that you want to choose a book that has some reading work to do.
- Ask readers to take out books. Have students read one randomly chosen page to a partner. Partner listens for mistakes read aloud. Partner puts up one finger for each error made by the reader. Reader decides if the book is just right by using the 5 finger rule.
- Gather readers together after two or three minutes. You may want to choose up to three partnerships to share how they decided a book was just right by thinking about their reading accuracy when using the five finger rule.
- Remind readers that one way readers select a leveled book is to think about how accurately they read the words.

**Reader Exploration/Practice:**

- Direct readers to select books at the table for independent reading. Remind readers how to decide if a book is just right by using the five finger rule for accuracy.

**Differentiation:**

- Individual/small group conference offering support for students with selection of leveled books by practicing the 5 finger rule.
- Individual/small group conference on self-selection of leveled books by thinking about interest (picture books, chapter books, genre, etc).

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather readers back to meeting area. Call on three to four readers (chosen while observing students at work) to share their success in selecting leveled books by thinking about accuracy and using the 5 finger rule.

**Assessment:**

- Informally browse and confer with readers while selecting leveled books. Ensure that strategy is being used by students. Make note of readers who may need additional support and assistance.

**Extension & Follow-up/Next Steps:**

- How to select a leveled book by thinking about comprehension.
- How to select a leveled book by thinking about fluency.
- How to select a leveled book by thinking about interest.

## I. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #1:** How do readers establish habits for independent reading?

**Teaching Point:** Readers pay attention to and use their punctuation cues to improve their fluency and comprehension.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Readers can improve their fluency by using punctuation cues to aid in reading leveled books. Readers learn to slow down or speed up individual reading rate based on punctuation cues. Improved fluency deepens comprehension.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book (for modeling)
- Photocopy of a page from a leveled book (one copy per partnership)  
*Teachers can use any leveled text that is appropriate for the majority of the readers in the class; for this lesson Pinky and Rex by James Howe is used. This book is approximately level L.*

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather students in meeting area. The children should sit next to their assigned reading partners. One reader per partnership holds photocopy of page from leveled book (or sits on it, for management).
- Explain to class that readers read fluently, that is, read smoothly and at a good pace, by paying attention to punctuation cues. Tell them that sometimes when readers read without paying attention to punctuation, it sounds like the paragraphs, sentences and words are jumbled together. Great third grade readers use punctuation cues to read smoothly.
- Show the book Pinky and Rex by James Howe to the class.
- Read page one, ignore punctuation cues and read words in one long list (e.g. “We’re going to the museum Amanda shouted she did not stop jumping we’re going to see the dinosaurs hurry up Pinky get dressed”).
- Point out that it is hard to understand because it sounds like one long sentence. Just like when a person crosses the street, it is important to pay attention to signs. Punctuation cues are signs in reading. These cues help readers understand reading and teach readers how to read it.
  - Periods tell readers to take a long pause.
  - Commas tell readers to take a short pause.
  - Exclamation points tell readers to read with excitement.
  - Quotation marks show that a character is speaking.

- Reread page one. Change your voice based on the punctuation cues, and read with emphasis (e.g. “*We’re going to see the dinosaurs! Hurry up, Pinky, get dressed!*”)
- Explain that punctuation cues can help readers distinguish between speakers in the story; that is, it is easier to figure out when the characters are speaking and which characters are speaking by paying attention to the punctuation. Punctuation helps you understand what is happening in books.
- Tell each partnership to share photocopy of the text.
- Ask partners to take turns reading leveled texts smoothly and fluently using punctuation cues to improve fluency. Listen to reading partners (about 1-2 minutes) to monitor reading fluency based on punctuation cues. Monitor for longer pauses for periods and shorter pauses for commas. Watch for students showing excitement for exclamation points.
- As an alternative to photocopied text, you may want to have text available on an overhead and have partners take turns reading the text smoothly and fluently using punctuation cues.
- Point out several examples of students successfully reading the punctuation.
- Remind readers to pay attention to punctuation cues to improve reading fluency.

**Reader Exploration/Practice:**

- Readers will read independently for about 20 minutes. Readers try out the strategy from the lesson.
- Readers will read with a partner for 20 minutes. (This is more than the usual time allotted to partnership work since partners play a key role in helping each other read the punctuation.) Tell partnerships that they should keep track of the places where they noticed each other doing a really good job reading the punctuation. You may want to encourage them to use post-its to note this work

**Differentiation:**

- Gather an individual and/or small group who need additional support. Use multiple copies (or photocopies of a page) of the same book to reinforce that readers pay attention to punctuation cues.
- Some readers will already be able to read fluently by paying attention to punctuation cues. These readers will work on reading dialogue with expression and emphasis.
- Some readers will already be able to read fluently by paying attention to punctuation, including dialogue cues. These readers will work on changing their voices based on the emotions being conveyed by the character(s), adjusting their pace and emphasis.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather readers at the meeting area after the reading time so that you can share some of the work you noticed during the conferences.
- One thing to highlight is a few students who paid attention to punctuation cues.

- Set readers up for more learning by highlighting something a reader or partnership did that will lead to the next day's teaching point, such as saying, "I notice readers changing their voice based on what the character is saying. This is another way to make your reading smoother and more fluent."

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences.
- Listen to partner talk.
- Meet with small groups or individuals and collect observations based on readers' work (reading rate).

**Next Steps:**

- Challenge readers to use new strategies to improve their fluency.

## II. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

#### Focus Question #1: How do readers establish habits for independent reading?

**Teaching Point:** Readers use dialogue cues to alter their voice and tone and help them read smoothly and fluently.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Using dialogue cues will aid students' comprehension of leveled books during independent reading.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book
- Photocopy of a page from a leveled book (one copy per partnership)
- Overhead projector
- Transparency with text you will read aloud to the class
- *Teachers can use any leveled text that is appropriate for the majority of the readers in the class; this lesson uses Pinky and Rex by James Howe. This book is approximately a level L.*

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather the students in the meeting area. The students should face the teacher and sit next to their assigned reading partner.
- Hand out one photocopy per partnership of the page from a leveled book. (You may want to ask students to put it on the floor nearby to avoid distractions.)
- Compliment the class on working hard on improving their fluency by learning how to use punctuation cues.
- You might say, "I have noticed that when some readers are reading aloud, it sounds like the narrator speaking for the whole book. Good readers change their voices when characters are speaking. (You might want to point out that this is something they hear you doing during read aloud all the time.) That helps us understand what we're reading and what we are hearing when people read aloud."
- Explain that there is a way to tell when characters are speaking, called dialogue cues. Dialogue cues give you hints that you should alter or change your voice and tone.
- Show the cover and read the title of the book to the class. Model reading a page from the book in a monotone voice, not attending to the quotation marks (e.g. *Wake... up... Pinky. Pinky's eyes popped open. His little sister, Amanda, was jumping up and down on his bed. Wake... up... wake... up she cried.*)

**Model/Demonstration (continued):**

- Ask the students if they can figure out who was talking. Call on one to explain (e.g. it must be Amanda, because she uses Pinky’s name; the book tells us Amanda is in the room and it says ‘she cried.’)
- Model reading a page from the book with a variety of tones, distinguishing between text in quotations and out of quotations (e.g. “*Wake up, Pinky!*” *Pinky’s eyes popped open. His little sister, Amanda, was jumping up and down on his bed. “Wake up, wake up!”*)
- Ask the class which way was easier to understand. Call on a student to explain his or her thinking. You might add, “It was easier to hear and understand the difference between when Amanda was speaking and when the narrator was describing what was going on because my tone of voice changed. It sounded like the character from the book. When a reader uses dialogue cues to change his or her voice it helps the reader understand what is happening.
- Show the students the text you just read (on the overhead projector) and have them tell you what the cues were that told you it was dialogue and showed you how to read it:
  - quotation marks,
  - exclamation points,
  - commas,
  - question marks,
  - periods
- Tell each partnership to look at the copy of the text they will be reading. (As an alternative, you may have a transparency with text on the overhead projector for children to work on together).
- Explain that each partnership will take turns reading from the leveled text using the dialogue cues to alter voice. Listen in (about 1-2 minutes) to the partnership to ensure that readers change tone of voice based upon dialogue cues.
- State observations of how students changed voices based upon dialogue cues and praise successful attempts.
- Remind students to alter voices based on dialogue cues to help better understand their books.

**Reader Exploration/Practice:**

- Students will independently read leveled texts using the strategy of changing tone of voice to reflect dialogue cues.
- At this point in the year, readers should be able to sustain independent reading for about 20-30 minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group, using multiple copies (or photocopies of a page) of the same book to reinforce the teaching point of changing their voice based on dialogue cues.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group as they listen to a book on tape and identify characters’ speaking and the voice of the narrator.

- Confer with an individual and/or small group to act out a story showing how voices are altered when different characters are speaking.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few students to bring leveled books to the meeting area. Students will share their work on the strategy of altering tone of voice based on dialogue cues. After demonstrating, students will explain how they used the strategy
- Share a fluency strategy that a reader demonstrated that has not been taught yet but will be taught in the next few days.

**Assessment:**

- Observe readers during independent work time to evaluate the use of dialogue cues. Take notes on reader actions. Assess for use of any other previously taught retelling strategy.
- Complete running records. Readers should be able to read an entire leveled book (at the “L – P” level) in a few days.

**Next Steps:**

- Readers will continue to learn several new strategies to improve fluency.
- Readers will continue to use retelling strategies to monitor for meaning.

### III. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

#### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #2:** How do readers construct meaning when reading independently?

**Teaching Point:** Readers retell the main idea of a chapter by identifying the big event.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Retelling with a focus on main idea will build student comprehension.
- Identifying the main idea will help students understand their reading.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book
- Post-it notes (large enough for children to write a sentence on)
- Any leveled chapter book depending on your class needs. This lesson uses Pinky and Rex and the Bully by James Howe. This book is approximately level L.

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather students on the rug. Students should bring their leveled books onto the rug and sit next to their assigned reading partners. Say something like, “We have been reading our chapter books and identifying story elements. As we read longer, how can we hold onto the story throughout the chapters?”
- Say something like, “Readers retell the main idea of a chapter by asking what the big event is in the chapter. We can use post-its to help us to remember the main idea when we get to the end of each chapter.”
- Begin reading Pinky and Rex and the Bully. Read chapter one to students and stop at the end of the chapter. Think out loud, such as, “How can I retell the main idea in this chapter? What big event happened in this chapter? First, Pinky was being bullied by Kevin. Next, Mrs. Morgan came and saw what happened. Then, Kevin lied and Mrs. Morgan believed him. Finally, Mrs. Morgan makes him tell what happened, but Pinky feels embarrassed.”
- Say something like, “I’ll write the main idea of the chapter on a post-it.” Write: “Chapter one main idea: Kevin bullies Pinky and Mrs. Morgan saves him.” Place it in the book.
- “Did you see the way that I stopped and retold the chapter to myself? I pushed myself to think about the main idea and not just keep going onto chapter two” Restate the teaching point.

**Model/Demonstration (continued)**

- Read chapter two and stop at the end. Tell the students to turn and retell the big event that happened in this chapter to their reading partner. Give the partner about two minutes to share and then gather the class. You may want to compliment the class on how well they retold the main idea of chapter two.
- “I heard you say the main idea was...” Write the main idea on a post-it and place it on the last page of chapter two. “Chapter two main idea: Pinky and Mrs. Morgan both like the color pink.”
- Send reading partners off to read independently. Remind readers to stop and retell the main points of the chapter and write the main idea on a post-it before reading the next chapter.

**Differentiation:**

- Students can read books at their own reading levels.
- Small group conference of the teaching point (retelling the main idea by asking, “What is the big event that happened in this chapter?”)
- Small group conference on retelling at the end of the page.
- Some students can work on making inferences about the character and predictions about events to come.
- Some students can arrange prewritten post-its in sequential order. Post-it work could be read aloud to reinforce the skill of retelling the main idea using post-its.

**Share/Closure:**

- Choose a few students to share their ideas on the main idea found in the chapter of their books.

**Assessment:**

- Assess through student observations during independent and partner work.
- Record conference notes used during small groups and individual conferences.
- Collect and analyze the post-its to gauge student understanding.

**Next Steps:**

- Students will be able to retell sequentially using post-its.
- Students will identify the problem and solution in a story.

## IV. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #2:** How do readers construct meaning when reading independently?

**The Teaching Point:** Readers retell by using the sequence of the events in the story.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- To build comprehension of the leveled book.
- To identify the theme in a book.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book
- Chart tablet
- Post-its
- Any leveled chapter book depending on your class needs. This lesson uses Pinky and Rex and the Bully by James Howe. This book is approximately level L.

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather students on the rug. Students bring their leveled books with them and sit next to their assigned reading partners. You might say, “We have been reading our chapter books and using post-its to hold onto the main idea found in each chapter.” State, “Now that we have finished reading and putting post-its in our books, we should push ourselves to use the post-its to think about retelling the entire book.”
- Remove post-its from Pinky and Rex and the Bully and stick them randomly on chart paper. State that readers can retell sequentially using post-its. Read the post-its aloud, out of order. Then think out loud and rearrange post-its in order of the events in the story, such as: “*Kevin bullies Pinky and Mrs. Morgan saves him. Pinky and Mrs. Morgan have something in common. They like the color pink. Kevin makes fun of Pinky again and Anthony comes over and defends him. Pinky decides to change his name and gives away his pink animals to Amanda. Pinky learns to be himself. Pinky defends himself against Kevin. Pinky gives Mrs. Morgan a present of paint brushes.*” You might state, “When I put the post-its in order, I can retell the story sequentially.”
- Have reading partners turn and retell Pinky and Rex and the Bully using the post-its. Notice aloud if you hear students use chronological/sequence terms such as first, next, later, then, at the end, finally, etc. and encourage this to help the retelling.
- Send students off to independently use post-its to retell their leveled books sequentially. Students will practice retelling their leveled books with their partners.

**Differentiation:**

- Students will be working in their leveled books.
- Small group conference of the teaching point—group practice retelling leveled books sequentially using post-its.
- Small group conference of retelling a chapter in leveled books.
- Small group conference to teach how one chapter is connected to the next.
- Some students can look across books in a series and determine similarities in character traits.

**Share/Closure:**

- Choose two to three students to share how they used post-its to retell their leveled books in sequence.

**Assessment:**

- Have students reflect on the usefulness of post-its in retelling sequentially.
- Use conference notes from student observation.

**Next Steps:**

- Students will create a timeline of events from their leveled books.
- Students will note changes in character from the beginning of the book to the end.

## V. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #4:** How do readers monitor for sense and connect details in the story?

**Teaching Point:** Readers will visualize to create a mental image of the character, the setting, and the events in the story.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Visualizing or creating a mental image helps students create meaning as they read. This is another strategy to help readers “hold on” to the story.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book
- Use any leveled text that is appropriate for the majority of the readers in the class. *It is preferable to use a text that the majority of the class has not yet read in order to assess the students’ ability to visualize. It is easier to teach this skill using a book that all students can easily read, so that text challenges don’t interfere with comprehension.* This lesson uses Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend by James Howe. This book is approximately level L.

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather the readers in the meeting area. The students face the teacher and sit next to their assigned reading partner.
- You may want to compliment the class on their hard work reading for meaning.
- Explain that it is very important that readers think about what they read. Reading is not simply being able to read all the words on the page, but to understand the story.
- Tell the class something like, “Today, you will learn another strategy to improve your comprehension of your leveled books. You will learn to visualize by creating mental images, or pictures in your mind, of the character, setting, and events in the story.”
- Share how readers become stronger readers by picturing what is happening. This is also called envisioning. Envisioning is creating an image of the story in your mind. As books become more challenging there are often fewer pictures. It is the reader’s job to create mental images or pictures in their mind as they read. Explain that it is similar to reading Harry Potter. There are no illustrations in Harry Potter, but a great reader will stop and visualize what Harry looks like as he flies through the air at a quidditch match. Model possible reader responses, such as, “I see a 14 year old boy with brown hair, and glasses. He has a scar on his forehead. His legs are straddling a long wooden broom. He is zooming through the air and his clothes are flying behind him.” Another reader response might be, “I can picture a stadium like Yankee Stadium filled with people cheering. Harry’s

- face has a big smile as he twists and turns in the sky because he loves to play this game.” A final response might be, “His hands are gripping his broom as he struggles to stay on.” Picturing details about the character and the setting helps the readers better understand the story.
- Explain that each reader will have a slightly different image of the story, but the main details should be consistent. For example, someone might picture the stadium looking like Yankee Stadium, while someone else might picture a soccer stadium. We all have different experiences and we use this background to create images as we read.
  - Show the cover and read the title of the book to the class, Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend.
  - Read page 10: *“What’ll we sing now?” Rex asked as the fwap-fwapping of the windshield wipers reminded everyone of the steady drizzle that had kept them company since they’d left home an hour earlier. ‘How about “Rain, rain, go away”?’ Pinky’s father suggested. ‘Can’t we camp out in the rain?’ The problem is setting the tent up,’ Rex’s father explained. ‘But I’d say there’s a good chance this rain will stop before we get to-’ There was a crash of thunder, followed by a downpour so heavy Pinky’s father had to pull over to the side of the road.”*
  - Model for the students, such as, “I can visualize or see a big station wagon. Buckled in the backseat are Pinky and Rex and in the front seat are the two dads. I can visualize Pinky and Rex staring out the window as the rain comes down in buckets. I can see the lightning and hear the thunder. I can see that Pinky and Rex look nervous, their eyes are wide and their mouths are open. The children are nervous because all this rain will mean they won’t be able to go camping. The two fathers are smiling and keep glancing out the window because they are trying to make the children feel better. I can also see the trees all around them and a dirt road with few cars because they are in the country.”
  - Note that the mental image included story elements (characters, setting, and events).
  - You might say, “I am going to read another passage from Pinky and Rex. While I read, I want you to create a mental image of the character, setting, and events in this part of the story.”
  - Read page 39 from Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend (without showing the pictures). *“Later, after both families had eaten dinner at Rex’s house and day was turning softly and slowly to night, Pinky and Rex were swinging side by side in Rex’s backyard. They called out a list of all the best things about the weekend adventure they’d just had. There were so many, it was hard to decide which was the very best. Then Rex shouted, ‘Just us and our dads!’”*
  - Ask readers to describe their mental image to a partner. Listen in (for about 2-3 minutes) to the partnerships, making sure that students are explaining what they see and visualizing after reading the text.
  - Have a few students share, especially those who describe facial expressions and/or setting well. Note that some students can do this almost automatically while others will need to practice.

- Remind students to stop and visualize important parts of the text using the characters, setting, and the events in the story to create a mental image. Remind students that these mental images will help readers better understand what they read.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Direct readers to independently read leveled texts using the strategy of creating mental images of the characters, setting, and the events of the story.
- At this point in the year, readers should be able to sustain independent reading for about 20-30 minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group, using multiple copies (or photocopies of a page) of the same book to reinforce the teaching point of visualizing to create mental images in the text. Some students may benefit from sketching mental images as well (this should be a quick pencil sketch, not an elaborate drawing with colored pencils or markers).
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach that readers add on to mental image by using their prior knowledge of setting.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach how readers can revise mental images as the book progresses.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. A few readers (about 2-4 that the teacher has picked ahead of time as a result of his/her observations) will bring leveled books to the meeting area. Readers share how to use the strategy of visualizing characters, events, and setting to create a mental image to help make meaning. (You may want to mark the appropriate pages for the readers who will be sharing.)
- Share a strategy a reader demonstrated that has not been taught but will be taught in the next few days.

**Assessment:**

- Observe readers during independent time to evaluate the use of the strategy that was taught. Take notes on reader actions. Assess for use of any other previously taught retelling strategies.
- Collect readers' post-its or page from reading journal to evaluate use of strategy.
- Evaluate learned strategy by listening in to partner talk.
- Readers should be able to read an entire leveled book (at the L – P level) in a few days.

**Next Steps:**

- Introduce new strategies to improve their comprehension through the visualization of the character, setting, and the events of the story.
- Challenge readers to continue to use prediction and retelling strategies to monitor for meaning.

## VI. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #2:** How do readers construct meaning when reading independently?

**The Teaching Point:** Readers predict using character traits and accessing prior knowledge.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Predicting how a character will act based on what a reader knows about a character from earlier in the story or from other books in a series helps readers understand the story.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Post-it notes
- Any leveled chapter book depending on class level. This lesson uses Pinky and Rex and the Bully by James Howe. This book is approximately level L. It also uses Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook by Barbara Park. This book is approximately level M.
- Character trait chart for Pinky and Rex and the Bully
- Character trait chart for Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook

#### Model Demonstration:

- Gather students at the meeting area. Have students bring their leveled books and sit next to assigned reading partners.
- You might say, “We have been reading our chapter books and learning about story elements. We have been looking closely at the main character. Today, I’d like to show you how readers make predictions using what they know about the characters in their leveled books.”
- Explain: “I chose to read a story to you from the Junie B. Jones series because I know that this is a character that we know well. Before I read Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook, I’d like to think about what I already know about Junie B. Jones before reading. I know that she is loud and loves to show off. She brags about everything. Okay, now I’m ready to read to you.”
- Begin reading chapter one of Junie B. Jones Is Not a Crook, stop on page 3 and think out loud, such as: “I predict that Junie B. will show off her new black furry mittens in school and then tell her friends and annoy everybody.” Write predictions on a post-it and place it on page 3.
- Point out your thinking to the class, such as: “Did you see how I reflected on what I already know about Junie B. to make my prediction about what she’ll do with the black furry mittens?”
- Display Pinky and Rex and The Bully.

- You might say, “Listen carefully as I read Pinky and Rex and The Bully. Take a minute to think about what you already know about Pinky and Rex to help you make predictions.”
- Begin reading Pinky and Rex and the Bully. Stop on page 2.
- Ask reading partners to turn and share their predictions about Pinky and Rex and the Bully. Listen in to partner predictions.
- Redirect the class’s attention. Invite a partnership to share their prediction and record it on a post-it note. Display post-it about Pinky and Rex and the Bully on a pre-written character trait chart.
- Review post-it notes on the character trait chart. You may want to praise your students’ effort.
- Send readers off to read independently for 20 minutes while stopping and recording predictions. Remind readers to predict while using prior knowledge, record predictions on post-its and stick them in leveled books.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with individual and/or small groups with shared text to practice stopping and recording predictions on post-its.
- Confer with individual and/or small group how to retell events at the end of the page or chapter.
- Confer with individual and/or small groups on making inferences about the character and predicting possible outcomes.

**Share/Closure:**

- Invite a few students to share ideas on the main idea found in today’s reading.

**Assessment:**

- Assess through student observations.
- Record and analyze conference notes used during individual and small group conferences.
- Collect post-it notes for analysis.

**Next Steps:**

- Readers will be able to retell events in a story sequentially using post-it notes.
- Readers will identify the problem and solution in a story.

## VII. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #3:** How do readers understand characters and their motivations when reading independently?

**Teaching Point:** Readers will identify with the main character and empathize with the character’s problem or the events in the story.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- When readers have feelings about characters in their books they learn to empathize. This is another strategy to help readers “hold on” to the story.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book
- Photocopy of page 10, Pinky and Rex
- Select a leveled text that is appropriate for the majority of the readers in the class. This lesson used Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend and Pinky and Rex Go to Camp by James Howe. These books are approximately level L.
- Strategy charts
- Post-its and/or reading journal
- Pencil for each reader
- Wipe-off board with markers
- Pre-written post-it with empathetic response for characters in Pinky and Rex
- Overhead projector and transparency for text to be shared or enlarged text (from poster maker or transcribed onto chart paper. See below for text.)

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather readers in meeting area. Students face the teacher and sit next to their assigned reading partner. Readers should be sitting with books, post-it and reading journals nearby.
- You may want to compliment the class on working hard on the previously taught reading strategy to reinforce that skill.
- Explain that it is so important that readers always think about what they are reading. Reading is not simply reading all the words on the page, but is about understanding the story. You might say, “Did you ever read a story and get angry or sad, or happy, like the character was? Today, you will learn another strategy to improve your comprehension by identifying with the main character, by empathizing or showing compassion for the character.”
- You may explain, “When a reader understands the character, it helps them to better comprehend the story. You will learn a special word to describe having compassion for another person, and understanding their feelings, which is

- empathy.”** You may want to write the word on the board for all the readers to see.
- Explain that we empathize all the time in our lives, such as “We have empathy or feel badly for a classmate when they strike out in baseball. We think the player might be embarrassed about striking out and we feel a little embarrassed too. Another example of empathy is when you see your friend crying after falling on the playground, and you feel like crying too. They are sad and hurt, and that makes you feel sad too.
  - Explain that each reader may empathize with the character in a different way.
  - Display the cover and read the title of the book to the class: Pinky and Rex and the Double –Dad Weekend.
  - Read page 10, “ ‘What’ll we sing now?’ Rex asked as the fwap-fwap-fwapping of the windshield wipers reminded everyone of the steady drizzle that had kept them company since they’d left home an hour earlier. ‘How about “Rain, rain, go away”?’ Pinky’s father suggested. ‘Can’t we camp out in the rain?’ ‘The problem is setting the tent up,’ Rex’s father explained, ‘but I’d say there’s a good chance this rain will stop before we get to – ’ There was a crash of thunder, followed by a downpour so heavy Pinky’s father had to pull over to the side of the road. ‘Then again, maybe not,’ said Rex’s dad, reaching into the glove compartment and taking out a book. ‘What’s that?’ Rex asked. Her father showed them the cover, 101 Things to Do With Your Kids. ‘Let’s hope at least a few of them are indoors,’ he said. Pinky and Rex looked at each other and broke into song. ‘Rain, rain, go away. Come again another day.’”
  - Model stopping and empathizing with the main character(s), such as: “I feel so sorry for Pinky and Rex. Because of the rain they won’t be able to go outside to camp. They must feel so disappointed because I know if I was planning on a camping trip with my best friend and then it started to rain, I would be so upset.” Say, “This is a spot that is important to the story so I am going to write my idea down on a post-it (reading journal) so I can talk about it with my reading partner.” Use pre-written post-it to display empathy.
  - Reinforce that readers identify with the main character by empathizing, or understanding their feelings. This helps readers understand the story more.
  - Explain that the students will work in partnerships to record notes on post-its that show students identifying with the main character by empathizing.
  - Give the students background on the story. You might say, “Pinky is writing a letter to Arnie who is an advice columnist.” Explain that each partnership will try to identify with the main character (Pinky) by empathizing.
  - Display the following text on an overhead or enlarged on chart paper: “*My mom and dad are making me go away to camp and this is not something I want to do. It all started because my best friend is going so my mom and dad got this idea that I wanted to go too, but I don’t (like I said). Please answer my letter soon because camp starts in three weeks and if I have to go I will probably run away, which I don’t want to do either because the whole thing is I don’t want to go anywhere. I want to stay home where I belong.*”

- Have partners read the text and practice empathizing. Listen in (about 2-3 minutes) to the partnerships ensuring that readers are trying to identify with Pinky by empathizing. Have readers record this work on post-its.
- Collect a few post-its (about 3-4) that partnerships have made and read those to the class. Read post-its that show feelings for Pinky and those that connect with how Pinky is feeling. Have partnerships share post-its.
- Remind students that their work today is to stop and identify with the main character by empathizing. This work should be done on post-its or in their reading journals. Also remind students to continue to read for meaning using any of the previously taught strategies. Refer to one of the strategy charts in the classroom.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Direct students to use the strategy of identifying with the character through empathy.
- At this point in the year, students should be able to sustain independent reading for about 20-30 minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group, using multiple copies (or photocopies of a page) of the same book to reinforce the teaching point of empathizing with the main character in order to better understand the text
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach that readers can empathize by using prior knowledge of the event or problem.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach how readers can revise feelings about the character.
- Act out a class conflict and have students try to feel empathy for people on both sides of the conflict.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few readers (about 2-4) to bring leveled books to the meeting area. Readers will share using the strategy of identifying with the main character by empathizing with the character in leveled texts.
- Share any strategies that readers have demonstrated that have not been taught, but will be taught in the next few days.

**Assessment:**

- Observe readers during independent time to evaluate the use of the strategy of identifying with the main character by empathizing. Take notes on reader actions. Assess for use of any other previously taught visualization strategy.
- Collect readers' post-its or pages from his/her reading journal that give evidence of their use of this strategy.
- Collect post-its or index cards with conflicts and/or events where readers talk about empathizing with characters. Check student understanding of empathy.

**Next Steps:**

- Introduce readers to several new strategies to improve comprehension by identifying with the character(s) in the story.
- Challenge readers to use prediction, visualization, and retelling strategies to monitor for meaning.

## VIII. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #4:** How do readers monitor for sense and connect details in the story during independent reading?

**Teaching Point:** Readers monitor for sense by paying attention to characters' actions and motivations

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Readers can read for meaning through the lens of character. Readers can analyze characters' actions to construct meaning.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled book
- Overhead projector or Smart Board
- Transparency of pages 3-4 of Pinky and Rex Go To Camp (for overhead)
- Previously selected leveled text that is appropriate for the majority of the readers in the class; this lesson uses Pinky and Rex Go to Camp and Pinky and Rex by James Howe. These books are approximately level L.)

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather the students in the meeting area. Students face the teacher and sit next to their assigned reading partner. Students do not need their books with them.
- You may want to compliment the class for the work they have been doing reading for meaning.
- Explain that they will be learning another strategy to improve their comprehension, saying something like: "One way readers improve comprehension is to read with a careful eye, paying attention to characters' actions and motivations."
- Share a story, such as: "People are always analyzing, or looking closely at, an individual's actions. For example, when a mommy sees her baby sucking his thumb, holding onto his blanket, and yawning, the mommy figures out that the baby needs a nap. The baby can't talk yet, but his actions give the mommy information that she can analyze."
- Explain: Readers can learn if they look closely or analyze a character's actions. They can understand their books more deeply.
- Show the cover and read the title of the book to the class, Pinky and Rex.

**Model/Demonstration (continued):**

- Turn to page 1-2 and read *“Wake up, Pinky!” Pinky’s eyes popped open. His little sister, Amanda, was jumping up and down on his bed. ‘Wake up, wake up!’ she cried.”*
- Explain, saying something like: “When I look closely at Amanda’s actions I can tell that she’s really excited. When someone speaks with a lot of emotion that shows me that the character is excited. Amanda was so excited that she is waking up her brother Pinky. I also think that she is excited because she’s jumping up and down on the bed. I remember when I was a child and I was excited I would jump up and down on my bed. I can guess that something important will happen to the children that they are excited about.”
- Show a second example from the book and have the children turn to one another and talk about their analysis of the character’s actions.
- Reinforce how readers analyze a character’s actions. Explain that readers need to analyze a character’s actions in order to understand or make meaning in their books.
- Read from page 3-4 of Pinky and Rex Go to Camp: *“Rex just finished singing the Camp Wackatootchee song. Rex beamed. ‘Isn’t that the greatest song?’ she asked. ‘Uh-huh,’ said Pinky flatly, ‘the greatest. Um, Rex, I have to clean up my room now.’ And he turned and headed up the stairs. Rex followed after him. ‘What’s the matter, Pinky?’ she said. ‘I thought you wanted to go to sleep-away camp.’ ‘I do,’ said Pinky. He led Rex into his room, which wasn’t messy at all. ‘Who said I didn’t?’”*
- Explain that each partnership will analyze Pinky and Rex’s actions to figure out how the characters are feeling. Display the transparency of the page on the overhead projector, or use enlarged text or Smart board. For about 1-2 minutes, listen to partnerships insuring that readers are analyzing Pinky and Rex’s actions to understand the characters’ feelings.
- Call on students to share their analysis of the text, for example, “Rex is singing the camp song so she is very excited to attend camp, while Pinky is trying to change the topic or make up an excuse so he might be nervous about going to camp.”
- State how authors use specific actions or words to show what a character is feeling, such as Pinky’s *flat* voice or Rex *beaming*.
- Remind the readers to stop and analyze, or pay attention to, characters’ actions and statements to make meaning in their books.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Direct readers to independently read and try out the strategy of analyzing characters’ actions and words to understand how the characters feel.
- At this point in the year, readers should be able to sustain independent reading for about 20-30 minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with small group and use selected passages to practice stopping and analyzing character's words and actions.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach that readers revise thinking of characters' actions as readers read forward in the book.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach how readers compare/contrast characters' actions in one book to another book in that same series.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few readers (about 2-4, chosen ahead of time based on your observations) to bring their books to the meeting area. Have students share how they used the strategy of analyzing characters' actions to understand their feelings.
- Share a strategy a reader demonstrated that has not been taught but will be taught in the next few days.

**Assessment:**

- Observe readers during independent time to evaluate the use of the strategy of analyzing characters' actions and words to make meaning in leveled texts. Take notes on reader actions. Assess for use of any other previously taught retelling strategy.
- Collect readers' post-its or page from reading journal to evaluate use of strategy.
- Evaluate learned strategy by listening in to partner talk.
- Readers should be able to read an entire leveled book (at the "L – P" level) in a few days.

**Extension & Follow-up/Next Steps:**

- Introduce readers to several new strategies to improve comprehension through the character analysis.
- Challenge readers to use retelling strategies to monitor for meaning.

## IX. Sample Lesson Plans for Reading

### Unit of Study: Reading Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Reading

**Focus Question #4:** How do readers monitor for sense and connect details in the story?

**Teaching Point:** Readers will understand that a story is made up of many sections, each one important to the main idea. Readers accumulate parts of the story by reflecting on how the events fit together.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- To teach readers to accumulate the text as they read to understand how the beginning of the story connects to the middle, which connects to the end of the story.

#### Materials/Resources/Readings:

- Leveled books
- Post-its and/or index cards
- Leveled text that is appropriate for the majority of the readers in the class. The two books used should be books that the whole class is familiar with from read aloud. This lesson uses: Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend and Pinky and Rex Go to Camp by James Howe. These books are approximately level L.

#### Model /Demonstration:

- Gather students in the meeting area. The students face the teacher and sit next to their assigned reading partners. Students should have their leveled book nearby.
- You may want to compliment the class on the hard work they have been doing (give specifics).
- Explain that it is very important that readers always work on understanding what they are reading. Reading is not simply reading all the words, but is about understanding the story. You might say, “Today, you will learn another strategy to improve comprehension of leveled books. You will learn to accumulate parts of the story by reflecting on how the events fit together.”
- Explain what it means to accumulate or think about how each part of the text fits together. Each part of the story or each chapter is like a puzzle piece. You are gathering the pieces of the puzzle. When the puzzle pieces join together, the whole picture becomes complete. It is the same way with reading a leveled book. When a reader thinks about each chapter and how that chapter fits with the main idea of the story, the story becomes clearer.

- Display Pinky and Rex and the Double-Dad Weekend. Remind the class of the main idea. You might say, “Let me think about each of the chapters in this book and see how they fit together. I know Pinky and Rex were really excited to go on a camping trip with their fathers. They were naming all of the fun outdoor events they would do. But then it started to rain so hard that they went to a cave instead. They couldn’t set up the tents, so they decided to go camping in a hotel room instead. That was as much fun as sightseeing in the cave.” Think aloud and show “inside fun.” Next, flip to the last chapter. A quick read shows several “inside fun” events for Pinky and Rex. Synthesize these events, showing students how the accumulated parts of texts fit together. You might say, “This makes me think that Pinky and Rex learned that they can have fun just by being together with family and friends.”
- Explain that reflecting on each chapter helps you summarize what the story is about. Show readers how to look at the chapter titles and/or post-its to remember the story. You might say, “Accumulating parts of the story and fitting them together helps readers understand the meaning behind the story.”
- Display Pinky and Rex Go To Camp. Remind the class that this is a book that we know well and have used for many different reading strategies. Each reading partnership will work on accumulating the parts of the story by reflecting on how the story fits together.
- Listen to each partnership as they work on this task. Listen in for 2-4 minutes. Prompt the students to think about certain chapters or parts if you notice reading partnerships omitting them. Encourage partners to try to come to a conclusion about the text.
- Spend a few minutes sharing a particularly strong example of partners whose discussion included all the main events of the story. For example, “I heard readers saying things like: ‘At first Rex was so excited about sleep-away camp, while Pinky kept avoiding the issue. Pinky’s sister, Amanda kept saying all the horrible things that would happen to them at sleep-away camp. Pinky decides to write a letter to Arnie to ask his advice on how to avoid sleep-away camp. In the meantime, Pinky’s mom is so excited about camp that she takes him shopping for all new camp supplies. Pinky still does not know what to do and he becomes more miserable at the idea of camp. Then Pinky’s mom sees the letter in the newspaper and approaches him. Pinky confesses that he does not want to go away to camp. Pinky’s mom tells him that he does not have to go. Pinky runs to tell Rex, but then she admits to being nervous about going away too and is so glad that Pinky is coming. In the end, Pinky and Rex both go to camp and love it.’” Share the conclusion that students have come up with, such as: “The main idea is that friends and family can help you out of a difficult situation. Also, sometimes others can relate to or understand the difficult situation you face because they have felt that way too.” Or, “You need to be honest with people who care about you. They will try to help you.”
- Explain that it is important for all readers to accumulate the text by reflecting on how all parts of the story fit together.

**Students Exploration/Practice:**

- Direct readers to independently read in their leveled texts using today's strategy.
- At this point in the year, readers should be able to sustain independent reading for about 20-30 minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group, using multiple copies (or photocopies of a page) of the same book to reinforce the teaching point of accumulating the text by reflecting on parts of the story.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach that readers can predict based upon their knowledge after they accumulate the text.
- Confer with individual and/or small group, using a story map or story element chart.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group to teach how readers can write a paragraph on their ideas about the main character in the story based upon their reflections.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few readers (about 2-4) to bring books to the meeting area. Readers share the strategy of accumulating the parts of the story by reflecting on how the events fit together.
- You may also share a strategy a reader demonstrated that has not been taught but will be taught in the next few days.

**Assessment:**

- Rotate through the students during independent time to evaluate the use of the strategy. Take notes on their actions. Also assess for use of any other previously taught comprehension strategy.
- You also may want to collect readers' post-its or the page from their reading journal that shows evidence of their use of this strategy.
- You may collect index cards with chapter names and assess learning by checking on the success students had in ordering the chapters.
- You may want to record a partner talk about a shared text.
- Readers should be able to read an entire leveled book (at the "L – P" level) in a few days.

**Next Steps:**

- Students will continue to learn several new strategies to improve their comprehension by closely studying characters in their leveled texts.
- Students will continue to use prediction, visualization, empathy, accumulating the text, and retell strategies to monitor for meaning.

## Teacher Background

**Writing Unit of Study:** Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Unit Understandings:** Our goal throughout the unit is to create independent writers. Students will learn to independently plan personal narratives. Students will learn to use focus and structure to create meaning. They will revise personal narratives. By the end of the unit, students will use writing conventions to help them understand the world.

**Please note that many of the lessons in this unit are modeled after techniques and methods licensed by Teachers College Reading and Writing Program.**

**Assessment:**

- Informal Assessment  
Daily observations of and discussions with students during independent work time, conferring one on one, in small groups, and student work
- Collect student writer's notebook

**Differentiation:**

Differentiation during reading workshop is determined by teacher observation; for example, how the students retell by through sequencing, how students think about what to write, how students add details, how students edit through using resources, and so on.

**Possible Structures:**

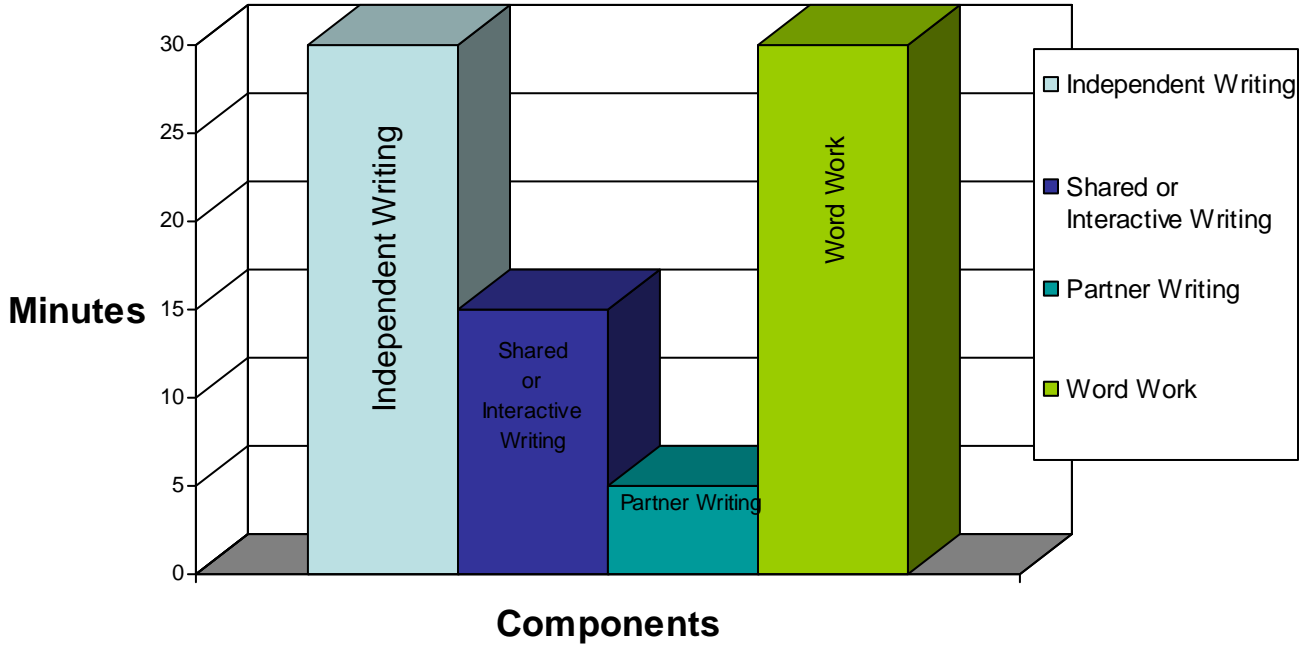
- Small Groups (Shared Writing, Strategy Groups)
- Individual Conferences
- Partnerships
- Peer Editing

**Management and Routines:**

Set up a system for writing time. Here are some suggestions:

- Designate an area for writers notebooks and writing folders.
- Display reference books such as dictionaries and thesauri.
- Create an area for editing tools such as pencils, pens, staplers, post-it notes, and erasers for students.
- Display interactive word wall in a central location.

### Writing Daily Flow



**It is suggested that word work be used daily to support reading and writing. Please follow the school's guidelines.**

## ELA ESSENTIAL QUESTION UNIT PLANNING GUIDE FOR WRITING

Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

### Essential Question:

**How do writers use craft to improve their writing?**

### Core Vocabulary:

word wall dictionary thesaurus writer's notebook punctuation cues internal thinking dialogue focus narrative structure  
sequence retell

### Focus Questions

- **How do writers plan personal narratives?**
- **How do writers use focus and structure to improve their writing?**
- **How do writers revise personal narratives to improve their work?**
- **How do independent writers use craft effectively?**

### Writer Outcomes

Writers will be able to:

- Plan for writing by using a writer's notebooks effectively.
- Plan for writing by thinking about important people, places, and events.
- Improve their work by retelling important events in sequence and writing stories that include a beginning, middle and end.
- Revise by adding internal thinking and dialogue.
- Improve the mechanics of their work by rereading and editing capitalization, punctuation and spelling.

### Anchor Texts / Resources:

- Writers notebooks, word wall, dictionary, thesaurus, pens/pencils/editing tools

**Focus Question Planning Sheet for Writing Unit of Study**

<b>Focus Questions</b>	<b>Possible Teaching Points</b> (Sample Lessons included in this unit are in bold)	<b>Word Work / Vocabulary</b>	<b>Suggested Assessment for Learning</b>
<p><b><u>Question # 1:</u></b></p> <p><b>How do writers plan personal narratives?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers plan for writing by demonstrating knowledge of genre.</li> <li>• <b>Writers plan for writing by free- writing moments in notebooks.</b></li> <li>• Writers plan for writing by thinking of a topic and sketching memories.</li> <li>• <b>Writers plan for writing by creating lists of important people, places, and events.</b></li> <li>• Writers plan for writing by thinking of times when something big happened.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers use grade level vocabulary and sentence structure.</li> <li>• Writers use consonant digraphs (th, sh, ch, ph, wh).</li> <li>• <b>Writers convey meaning by using diverse and descriptive vocabulary.</b></li> <li>• Writers use punctuation effectively.</li> <li>• Writers use sequencing and/or transitional words to illustrate and show a progression of time.</li> <li>• Writers write legibly.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and review writing portfolio</li> <li>• Writing rubric</li> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Self-assessment rubric</li> </ul>

**Focus Question Planning Sheet for Writing Unit of Study**  
(continued)

<b>Focus Questions</b>	<b>Possible Teaching Points</b> (Sample Lessons included in this unit are in bold)	<b>Word Work / Vocabulary</b>	<b>Suggested Assessment for Learning</b>
<p><b><u>Question # 2:</u></b></p> <p><b>How do writers use focus and structure to improve their writing?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers learn how to draft by rereading multiple entries.</li> <li>• <b>Writers improve their writing by retelling important events in sequence.</b></li> <li>• Writers improve their writing by using timelines to add focus and detail to personal narratives.</li> <li>• Writers improve their writing by starting at another point in the timeline.</li> <li>• <b>Writers improve their writing by including a beginning, middle, and end.</b></li> <li>• Writers use focus by visualizing memories.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers focus on sentence, paragraph and story structure.</li> <li>• Writers use punctuation effectively.</li> <li>• Writers use sequence and/or transitional words to illustrate and show a progression of time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and review writing portfolio</li> <li>• Writing rubric</li> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Self-assessment rubric</li> <li>• Review reader's rate and progression through the writing cycle</li> </ul>

**Focus Question Planning Sheet for Writing Unit of Study**  
(continued)

<b>Focus Questions</b>	<b>Possible Teaching Points</b> (Sample Lessons included in this unit are in bold)	<b>Word Work / Vocabulary</b>	<b>Suggested Assessment for Learning</b>
<p><b><u>Question #3:</u></b></p> <p><b>How do writers revise personal narratives to improve their work?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers revise with an audience in mind by rereading for sense.</li> <li>• <b>Writers revise by adding internal thinking.</b></li> <li>• Writers revise by adding details to the important parts.</li> <li>• <b>Writers revise by adding dialogue.</b></li> <li>• Writers revise by rereading personal narratives with a partner.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers analyze sentence and paragraphing structure.</li> <li>• Writers use quotation marks to show dialogue.</li> <li>• Writers use grade-level vocabulary to communicate ideas, emotions, or experiences</li> <li>• Writers categorize text structure.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Peer share/edit</li> <li>• Informal observation</li> <li>• Review writers notebook</li> </ul>

**Focus Question Planning Sheet for Writing Unit of Study**  
(continued)

<b>Focus Questions</b>	<b>Possible Teaching Points</b> (Sample Lessons included in this unit are in bold)	<b>Word Work / Vocabulary</b>	<b>Suggested Assessment for Learning</b>
<p><b><u>Question #4:</u></b></p> <p><b>How do independent writers use craft effectively?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Writers use craft effectively by rereading to edit for punctuation.</b></li> <li>• <b>Writers use craft effectively by editing for spelling using a dictionary.</b></li> <li>• Writers create a new personal narrative without assistance.</li> <li>• Writers celebrate writing and reflecting on growth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writers use grade-level vocabulary to communicate ideas, emotions, or experiences.</li> <li>• Writers use grade level vocabulary and sentence structure.</li> <li>• Writers use resources such dictionaries, thesauri etc. to support meaning.</li> <li>• Writers use conventional spelling of grade level words.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain and review writing portfolio</li> <li>• Use writing rubric</li> <li>• One-to-one conferences</li> <li>• Peer share/edit</li> <li>• Self-assessment rubric</li> <li>• Formal assessment including a writing rubric</li> </ul>



# --SAMPLE LESSON PLANS

## FOR WRITING



### **Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing**

## I. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

\* Please note: the lessons below contain samples of what a teacher might say to a class at different points during the lesson. Teachers should not consider this to be a script to read word-for-word, but an example of the kind of talk that should take place.

**Unit of Study:** Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Focus Question # 1:** How do writers plan personal narratives?

**Teaching Point:**

- Students plan for their personal narratives by free-writing moments in notebooks

**Why/Purpose/Connection:**

- Free-writing will help students come up with topics for their personal narratives.

**Materials:**

- Teacher's writers notebook
- Students' writers notebook
- Pencils
- Chart of strategies to capture moments in notebooks

**Model/Demonstration:**

- Gather writers in meeting area.
- You might say, "Class, I read your writing and I was so impressed with how well you captured moments in time! One way we can expand on this work is by moving from writing folders to writing notebooks. Writers notebooks are tools that writers use to record ideas and plan for writing."
- Show your writers notebook to class and state something like, "This is a writers notebook. It is a tool that writers use to record ideas and plan for writing." Browse the pages and explain that each entry is dated and is not a complete story. Show students that writers use both sides of the page in writer's notebook.
- You might say, "One way writers capture moments is by free-writing. This is when writers write about everything that happened in one moment in time. Let me read you an example of free-writing from my notebook. (For example) *Last week I forgot my purse in the shopping cart at the store. I was almost home when I noticed it was gone. I frantically ran back to the store and found that it was still in the shopping cart. I couldn't believe it! I was so relieved!* Free-writing helped me capture every detail from the moment."
- Restate teaching point that writers plan for writing by free-writing moments in notebooks.
- Direct students to think of a moment to write about. Ask students to share the moment with a partner. Listen to conversations, checking that stories have details.

- Gather students together. Have two or three students share moments.
- Remind students that writers plan for writing by free writing moments in notebooks.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Students create notebook entries by free-writing personal narratives. Students write independently for twenty to thirty minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Some students might benefit from additional practice free-writing shared class moments into writer's notebooks.
- Some students might benefit from sketching personal narratives in writer's notebooks.
- Some students might benefit from creating lists to brainstorm ideas around one topic, or from creating a semantic map or web of their ideas.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Have two to three writers share free writing in writer's notebooks.
- Add strategy of free-writing to chart of strategies to capture moments in notebooks

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences
- Meet with small groups or individuals and collect observations
- Listen in on partner storytelling
- Collect writer's notebooks and review content of the moments captured.

**Next Steps:**

- Teach writers to plan for writing by creating lists of possible writing topics.
- Teach writers to plan for writing by quickly sketching scenes of personal narratives.

## II. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

**Unit of Study:** Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Focus Question #1:** How do writers plan personal narratives?

**Teaching Point:**

- **Writers plan for writing by creating lists of important people, places, and events**

**Why/Purpose/Connection:**

- Creating lists of people, places, and events that are important to students will help them come up with ideas for writing, and can help organize their writing.

**Materials:**

- Teacher's writer's notebook
- Students' writer's notebooks
- Chart of strategies to capture moments in notebooks

**Model/Demonstration:**

- Gather writers in meeting area.
- Remind the class that writers capture a moment before it is forgotten by free-writing, sketching pictures or making lists in writer's notebooks. Tell the class that free-writes, sketches and lists are examples of ways of "capturing" moments in our writer's notebooks so that we can go back to them and use them later.
- Refer to class-created chart of strategies (which should be visible from the meeting area).
- Explain that writers plan for writing by creating lists of important people, places, and events.
- You might say: "One time, I was having difficulty thinking of what to write in my writer's notebook and wasn't sure where to begin. I decided to think of important people, places and events and found it to be very helpful. Let me see if I can find a list I made of important people, places and events to help me plan my writing."
- Browse writer's notebook with the class and show an example of a list recording important people in the writer's life.
- You might say something like, "Oh, here's a list I created of important people. My list includes my mom and dad, my brother, my teacher, my best-friend Tim and my karate teacher. I can use one of these people to write an entry in my writer's notebook."
- Restate teaching point that writers make a plan for writing by creating lists of important people, places, and events.
- Direct writing partners to think of important places. Listen to conversations, ensuring that ideas are realistic.

- Gather students together. Have two or three writers share important places.
- Remind writers that writers plan for writing by creating lists of important people, places, and events.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Students create notebook entries by creating lists of important people, places, and events. Students write independently for twenty to thirty minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Some students might benefit from additional practice creating lists of important people, places, and events.
- Some students might benefit from working with partners to create lists of important people, places, and events.
- Some students might benefit from using graphic organizers to brainstorm topics to write about in writer's notebooks.
- Some students might benefit from learning to pick an idea to write more about in writer's notebook.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Have two to three writers share lists of important people, places, and events.
- Add strategy of creating lists of important people, places, and events to chart of strategies to capture moments in notebooks

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences.
- Meet with small groups or individuals and collect observations.
- Listen in on partner work.
- Collect writers notebooks and review lists created.

**Next Steps:**

- Teach students to choose one important person, place, or event and write a notebook entry about it.
- Teach students to plan for writing by storytelling with a writing partner.

### III. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

**Unit of Study:** Writing Habits Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writings

**Focus Question #2:** How do writers use focus and structure to improve their writing?

**Teaching Point:** Writers strengthen their pieces by using varied and descriptive vocabulary.

**Why/Purpose/Connection:**

- Strong vocabulary makes writing more interesting.
- Using descriptive vocabulary makes writing easier to understand.

**Materials:**

- Writers notebooks
- Writing folder
- Chart paper, markers
- Chicken Sunday by Patricia Polacco (The book you choose should already be familiar to students.)
- Pre-written personal narrative, transcribed onto chart paper

**Model/Demonstration:**

- Gather writers to the meeting area.
- Remind them of the work that has come before. You might say, “We have been learning many different strategies to plan personal narratives.”
- Explain, “Writers use varied and descriptive vocabulary in personal narratives to make their writing easier to understand and more interesting.”
- Say something like, “Writers, before we continue our drafts on our favorite family member, let’s talk for a bit about Patricia Polacco. You all know that she is an author that I admire for her personal narratives and memoirs. She vividly retells and captures moments by using descriptive vocabulary through her narratives. Let’s see how she does this.”
- Hold up and show the book Chicken Sunday to students. Briefly retell the story.
- Turn to page 3, and point to the second paragraph. “Ms. Polacco writes: *How we loved to hear Miss Eula sing. She had a voice like slow thunder and sweet rain.*” Stop and comment on the description, such as, “The way she describes Miss Eula’s voice gives me chills. I think about how loud thunder is and how rain feels during the summer. I like how she put those two images together. How about when Mr. Kodinski saw the Pysanky eggs made by the children?” Turn to page 16 and point to the last paragraph: “...*Then his eyes glistened and his mouth curled into a warm smile...*” Look and point to the illustration and back to the text. You might say, “As I read this, I can imagine Mr. Kodinski looking at those

- Pysanky eggs and remembering his childhood. He smiles and his mouth curls up at the ends as if he doesn't want the memories to leave."
- Say something like, "Using varied and descriptive vocabulary like Ms. Polacco does makes narratives vivid and clear. When you notice the descriptive language you really stop and think about it. Writers choose colorful words to help capture a feeling or thought."
  - Display chart of pre-written narrative.
  - Point and say something like, "Remember when I wrote about my godmother being my favorite family member? Well, I'm going to reread it, but I want to add some descriptive vocabulary to my narrative." Reread narrative and then pause to reflect. Say something like, "My godmother is the best! She really knows how to put a smile on everyone's face. Her smile is great and warm. Her happiness comes from helping and doing deeds for others. My godmother is also a good cook. She can cook or bake just about anything. Nothing is better than eating a piece of her pie. I love her for being there for me and my family throughout the years."
  - Say something like, "I think that I can add some descriptive vocabulary to my narrative. To which sentences can I add a splash of color? What kind of descriptive words come to mind when I think of her smile and cooking?" Make a list on a separate sheet of chart paper of some possible words which writers may come up with. You may hear things along the lines of "beautiful, tireless, awesome, sunshine, dimples, apple pie, genuine, etc."
  - Direct students' attention to the chart with the narrative and post the list next to it. Say something like, "Now looking at my narrative and list, let's add a few descriptive words to the narrative. This is a form of editing." Use appropriate editing marks to illustrate while adding in and eliminating words and punctuation. Add descriptive vocabulary through shared writing, getting input from students and writing their ideas on the chart paper.
  - Reread edited pre-written narrative. For example, you might see something like, *My godmother is the best! She really knows how to put a smile on everyone's face. Her **winning** smile is great and warm like the **sunshine**. Her happiness comes from **tirelessly** helping and doing deeds for others. My godmother is also an **awesome** cook. She can cook or bake just about anything. Nothing is better than eating a piece of her **flaky, hot, cinnamon** apple pie. I love her for being there for me and my family throughout the years.*  
Elicit from students which version of the narrative they prefer.
  - Tell students, "Including a few descriptive vocabulary words to the narrative makes our narrative or story more enjoyable to read! The story now has descriptive vocabulary which creates a more clear picture of my godmother.
  - Say something like, "Writers use varied and descriptive vocabulary in personal narratives to help readers understand their writing."

### Student Exploration/Practice:

- Writers will go off and select a draft from their writing folder to which they will add descriptive vocabulary for 30 minutes. Writers should use editing techniques that have been taught to insert and eliminate words.

**Differentiation:**

- Work with an individual and/or small group to create a word list of descriptive vocabulary in writers notebooks that could be used for future writing.
- Some writers may need additional word work writing a list of more descriptive words. You may want to organize this in categories, such as words to describe colors, words to describe feelings, words to describe textures, etc.
- Some writers may partner up and edit drafts for descriptive vocabulary.
- Some writers should use a thesaurus to find alternate descriptive vocabulary.

**Share/ Closure:**

- Gather writers at the meeting area after editing.
- Highlight the work of students who effectively used descriptive vocabulary in personal narratives. You may want to praise writers who found alternate words that are explicit in conveying meaning.
- Set writers up for future learning by highlighting something an independent writer did which will lead to the next day's teaching point. You might say, "I noticed a few students editing by including varied and descriptive vocabulary. However, what if you can't think of a word? Where do writers find varied vocabulary terms to use? A dictionary and thesaurus are resources that assist writers with finding diverse, descriptive and varied vocabulary."

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences.
- Meet with small groups or individuals to view individual word lists of descriptive vocabulary.
- Examine drafts in writing folders.

**Extension & Follow-up/ Next Steps:**

- Challenge writers to use new strategies to improve diverse and descriptive vocabulary in other personal narratives.

## IV. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

**Unit of Study: Writing Habits Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writings**

**Focus Question #2:** How do writers use focus and structure to improve their writing?

**Teaching Point: Writers improve their work by retelling important events in sequence.**

**Why/Purpose/Connection:**

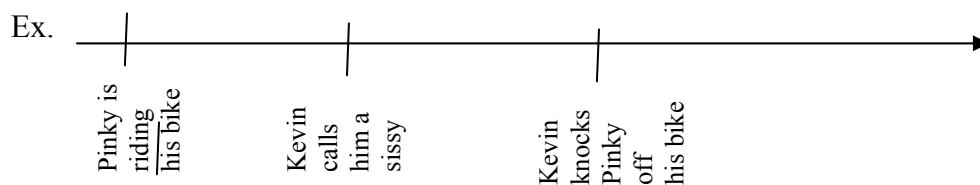
- Using sequence strengthens a story’s structure.
- Putting events in sequence helps writers tell their story.
- Adding sequencing to the gathering techniques they already use will aid students in their writing.

**Materials:**

- Pinky and Rex and the Bully by James Howe, or an equivalent book that will be familiar to the class and a similar level (L).
- Chart paper, markers
- Writers notebook
- Pencils

**Model/Demonstration:**

- Gather writers in meeting area.
- Remind students that writers create a story by thinking about important people, places and events, and this is something we have been working on.
- Explain that writers improve their work by retelling an important event in sequence.
- Review the story Pinky and Rex and the Bully. You might say, “Remember the story Pinky and Rex and the Bully and how Pinky felt that he had to give up his favorite things? Well, let’s retell the story in sequence focusing on the important events.”
- Display Pinky and Rex and the Bully. Open to page 1, Chapter 1, titled “Sissy.” Show the picture on page 1 and ask something similar to, “What was the first major event that occurred in this chapter?” After calling on 2 to 3 students, chart their responses and agree, saying something like, “Yes, Pinky is being called a girl, a sissy and gets knocked off his bike by Kevin. I am going to create a timeline of events that is in sequence and shows the order of these events.”
- Demonstrate beginning to create a timeline (see below). Elicit a few more events to join the ones you have put on the timeline.



### Model/Demonstration (continued):

- Tell writers about the second technique they have been using for capturing moments and gathering story ideas, and connect it to sequence as well. You might say: “We often capture moments with a free-write. For example, last week, I forgot my purse in the shopping cart at the store. I used a free-write to record everything that happened in that moment. When I noticed it was gone, I ran back to the store and found that it was still in the shopping cart. Free-writing about this moment helped me capture every detail from the moment.” I can make sure that after I do my free-write, that I included everything in order. First I was shopping. Next I lost my bag. Then I went back for it and finally, I found it.
- Continue with a third technique the students have been using, and connect it to sequencing too. For example, “We can also capture moments with a sketch. We’ve talked about how some writers hold onto events by sketching to help them quickly outline the most important details from the scene. For example, I showed you how yesterday, it was raining and I quickly sketched a picture of the rain dripping down the window to capture the way it looked. Underneath the picture, I wrote a little description of what I was seeing and feeling. Sketching this scene helped me capture the image of this scene before losing it. Now I can go back to the scene and think about the order of what was going on. First I noticed the rain, then I thought about my feelings, next I decided not to let the rain make me sad” (and so on).
- Remind writers that writers notebooks are tools used to capture moments from our lives to eventually write full, detailed stories about. Some ways that writers make sure they capture these moments are by creating timelines, free-writing, and sketching pictures.

### Student Exploration/Practice:

- Encourage writers to try at least two of the ways that writers capture moments in writing notebooks and pay attention to sequence when doing so.
- Direct writers to do a free-write to capture every detail from a moment in writer’s notebooks.
- Direct writers to sketch a simple picture to capture the image of a scene in writer’s notebooks.
- Have writers try out creating a story timeline

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group and help generate possible topics.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group and identify examples of free-write, sketches and lists that were successful capturing a moment.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group and brainstorm other ways to capture moments (webs, charts, outlines).

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few writers (about 2-4) to bring their writers notebooks to the meeting area. Writers will share using the strategy of retelling the important parts in sequence.
- Share any strategies readers have demonstrated that have not been taught, but will be taught in the next few days.

## V. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

### Unit of Study: Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Focus Question #2:** How do writers use focus and structure to improve their writing?

**Teaching Point:** Writers improve their work by using a beginning, middle, and end.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Including a beginning, middle and end will help students' writing become more focused.
- Using a beginning, middle, and end will aid students' understanding of their own writing and that of classmates.

#### Materials:

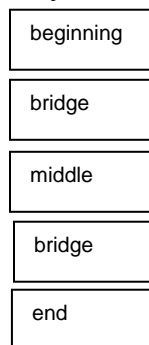
- Teacher's writers notebook
- Students' writers notebooks
- Post-it notes (Pre-written beginning, middle, end and 2 bridge post-its)
- Pre-written story on chart paper
- Writer's notebook
- Chart paper
- Pencils
- Markers

#### Mini-lesson:

- Gather writers in meeting area.
- You may want to compliment the class on hard work retelling an important event in sequence.
- Explain, saying something like, "It is important to produce stories that have a beginning, middle, and end. As we write more and more, our stories should begin to sound and feel like the stories we read. Most stories we read are interesting because they have a beginning, middle, and end. As we write more and more, we should begin to move away from stories that are lists of details or opinions and should begin to evolve, or move toward, more developed stories."
- Give an example of undeveloped writing, such as, "I sat down. I read a book. I went to sleep." Explain that although these are examples of writing, they don't make for very interesting stories. Interesting stories have a beginning, middle, and end.
- Demonstrate the following strategy. You might say, "I know a useful way to write an interesting story with a beginning, middle, and end." Affix 5 post-it notes to a piece of chart paper in front of the class. Explain that the first post-it is for the beginning, the third post-it is for the middle, and the fifth post-it is for the end of

the story. Explain that the post-its in between the beginning, middle, and end are like the bridges or details that connect the beginning to the middle and the middle to the end of the story. Label the second and fourth post-it, “bridge.”

For example:



- Browse your writers notebook with the class and choose one topic from a previously created list to write a story about. For example, “Oh, here’s a list I recorded of embarrassing moments. Let me read a few that I recorded: ‘going to school with two different shoes on, my mom telling the whole family about my teddy bear collection, oh, and falling during my baseball game on the way to 1<sup>st</sup> base.’ That was pretty funny! Maybe I’ll write about that. But before I write, let me figure out what the beginning, middle, and end of the story are and what details should come in between.”
- Direct writers’ attention to the chart paper with the 5 post-its affixed to it. Start with the first post-it. You might say, “The first post-it is labeled ‘beginning’, so I should write the detail that came first there.” Write on post-it, “I was up at bat during the biggest baseball game of the season.” Continue: “Hmm, what happened next...?” Say and write on second post-it (labeled ‘bridge’) something like, “The pitcher pitched the ball and I swung as hard as I could.” Direct the students’ attention to the third post-it. You might say, “The third post-it is labeled ‘middle’, so I should write the detail that came in the middle of the story there.” Write on this post-it, “I ran toward first base and tripped over my own foot.” Continue, “Hmm, what happened after that...? I only have two more post-its, so I need to wrap up my story soon.” Say and write on the fourth post-it (labeled ‘bridge’) something like, “I picked myself up as fast as I could and dashed toward first base.” Direct the students’ attention to the fifth post-it. Say and write, “The fifth post-it is labeled ‘end’, so I should write the detail that came last there.” Write, “My foot stepped on first base before the first baseman caught the ball. I was safe!”
- Read post-its. Say, “The post-its show how the parts of the story fit together. The five post-its form one interesting, unified storyline.”
- Remind writers that interesting stories have a beginning, middle, and end. Encourage writers to use post-its to help them plan stories that have a beginning, middle, and end.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Encourage writers to select a topic from their writer’s notebook.
- Students tell a story based on selected topic across five post-its that include a beginning, middle, and end and the two bridges which come in between. Affix post-its to a page in writer’s notebook.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group to help assist topic choice and to help determine what the beginning, middle and end should be.
- During conferences, identify students who successfully label and complete a series of post-its with a beginning, middle, and end.
- Encourage students who are ready to use two bridge post-its between the beginning, middle and end to include more details in their stories.
- Confer with an individual and/or small group and encourage students who would benefit from color coding post-its beginning, middle and end in yellow and bridges in blue (or any alternating colors).
- Encourage students who would benefit from doing so to use a timeline to place post-its in sequential order.
- For students having difficulty, you may want to encourage them to practice telling a story across five fingers and then transfer these ideas to post-its.
- For students having difficulty, you may want to encourage students to practice orally retelling their story to help plan their story before moving on to using post-it notes.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few writers (about 2-4) to bring writer’s notebooks and share their post-its.
- You may want to have a student share a series of post-its that include two “bridge” post-its between each section instead of one.

**Assessment:**

- Observe writers and browse writer’s notebooks during independent writing time to evaluate the effective use of post-its in writer’s notebook.
- Observe writers and browse writer’s notebooks during independent writing time to evaluate that the details on each post-it are an appropriate beginning, middle, end, or bridge.
- Collect writer’s notebooks and review post-its.

**Next Steps:**

- Writers will choose one series of post-its to draft a story about.

## VI. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

### Unit of Study: Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Focus Question #3:** How do writers revise personal narratives to improve their work?

#### Teaching Point:

- Writers revise by adding internal thinking.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- To teach writers to make their work easier to understand by adding internal thinking.
- To teach writers to add interest to their pieces by adding internal thinking.

#### Materials:

- Teacher's writers notebook
- Students' writers notebooks
- Chart paper
- Pre-written personal narrative on chart paper (leave blank spaces to add internal thinking, or double space the entire narrative so that there is room to revise).
- Pre-written chart of four internal thinking questions

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather students in meeting area.
- You may want to compliment the class on the effort they've been making in their writing work.
- You might say, "It is important to understand what a character is thinking when events occur in a story. Sometimes a writer tells the reader what a character is thinking. This is called 'internal thinking.' Internal thinking helps the reader have a clear picture of what is going on the story by showing what the characters are thinking and feeling."
- Display and read aloud your pre-written personal narrative, for example: "*I looked up and saw the scoreboard with Sasha's scores. It was a low score since she slipped during her final jump. I skated onto the ice. The music for my routine began. I lifted my arms above my head and got ready for my first move.*"
- Explain, saying something like: "Although this scene is dramatic, without internal thinking, it is hard to know what the character is thinking and feeling. Including the characters' thoughts and feelings will make the scene more dramatic and intense."
- Take out internal thinking chart.
- Read the first sentence of narrative and prompt students to discuss with a partner the answer to first question on internal thinking chart: "How do you think the character is feeling when she sees Sasha's score?" After a few quick moments of

discussion, call on a few students to answer the question. Choose and record one of the students' responses.

**Model/Demonstration (continued):**

- Continue with each question in the same way, discussing each and recording a response for each:
  - “How do you think the character is feeling as she skates onto the ice?”
  - “What do you think the character might say to herself as she begins her routine?”
- Reread the original entry to the class:  
*I looked up and saw the scoreboard with Sasha's scores. It was a low score since she slipped during her final jump. I skated onto the ice. The music for my routine began. I lifted my arms above my head and got ready for my first move.*
- Reread the final entry you created together, for example,  
*I looked up and saw the scoreboard with Sasha's scores. I was shocked! It was a low score since she slipped during her final jump. I was so surprised. She was the best skater here. I skated onto the ice. I could feel the butterflies in my stomach. I wanted to throw up. The music for my routine began. The music felt so peaceful. I remembered all the times I practiced and knew it would be okay. I lifted my arms above my head and got ready for my first move.*
- Remind writers, “It is important to understand what a character is thinking when certain events occur in a story. Internal thinking in a story helps the reader have a clear picture of what is going on the story by showing what the characters are thinking and feeling. Don't forget to use internal thinking in your writing.”

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Students browse through writer's notebooks and select an entry that does not include internal thinking. Rewrite the entry to include internal thinking.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group and help assist adding internal thinking.
- Identify students who select entries that lack internal thinking and are able to successfully rewrite the entry to include internal thinking.
- Encourage students who are able to write a new entry that includes internal thinking.
- Have a small group of students write four internal thinking questions on index cards to assist their writing.
- Have a small group use post-its to plan out the placement of internal thinking within their writing.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area. Invite a few writers (about 2-4) to bring their writer's notebooks and share an original entry that did not include internal thinking and the newly rewritten entry with added internal thinking.

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences.
- Make observations in small group work
- Assess the correct use of internal thinking in their entries.

**Next Steps:**

- Writers will write a new entry that includes internal thinking.

## VII. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

### Unit of Study: Writing Habits Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writings

**Focus Question #2:** How do writers use focus and structure to improve their writing?

**Teaching Point:** Writers revise by adding dialogue.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- Using dialogue will strengthen writers' pieces.
- Using dialogue will make writers' pieces easier to understand and more interesting.

#### Materials:

Chart paper, marker

Two pre-written paragraphs (one with dialogue and the other without) on chart paper

Writer's notebook

Writing tools

#### Model/Demonstration:

- Gather students to the meeting area.
- Remind students that they have been learning many different strategies to create meaning.
- Explain that writers revise by adding dialogue. Tell students that dialogue conveys the characters' feeling and thoughts with the audience.
- You should have a personal experience or event to share with the class. Write it twice ahead of time (once with dialogue and the other without). An example might look like what follows below.
- You might say, "Remember the entry I read to you from my writer's notebook about leaving my purse in the grocery cart? Well, I wrote about the experience twice. One version just tells what happened and the other tells what happened and includes dialogue." (Remind writers what dialogue is.)
- Show the first paragraph to writers. Read aloud what was already written on chart paper. For example:

*My experience at the grocery store last Friday was almost a nightmare. I remember loading all of the bags into my folding cart. I returned the store's cart back to the cart area at the front of the store and pushed it into the others making a train. As I began walking, pushing my cart, I felt as if I was forgetting something. I pulled my grocery list out of my pocket and noted that I had bought them all. I couldn't figure it out, so I walked through the automatic door and kept going. I went down the street and stopped at a street light. All of a sudden I realized that I was reaching for my phone, which I keep in my purse, and my purse was gone! I checked the bags in my cart—no purse. My heart felt like it was pounding out of my chest as I raced back to the grocery store. I pushed open the glass door and rushed over to the carts. Thank goodness I was the last customer to use a cart-- my purse was still there.*

- Explain to students that the experience was written by retelling important events in sequence, which is a good start, but that adding dialogue can show the feelings and thoughts of the character and make the piece bigger.
- Display the second paragraph to students. Read aloud the piece with dialogue.  
*My experience at the grocery store last Friday was almost a nightmare. I remember loading all of the bags into my folding cart. I remember thinking to myself, "I hope my husband is at home to help me take these bags up the stairs." I returned the store's cart back to the cart area at the front of the store and pushed it into the others making a train. As I began walking, pushing my cart, I felt as if I was forgetting something. I pulled my grocery list out of my pocket and said to myself, "Yep, that's everything. I didn't leave anything out." I couldn't figure it out, so I walked through the automatic door and kept going. I went down the street and stopped at a street light. All of a sudden I realized that I was reaching for my phone, which I keep in my purse, and my purse was gone. I said to myself "Where's my phone and my PURSE!" I checked the bags in my cart—no purse. "Oh, no!" I cried. My heart felt like it was pounding out of my chest as I raced back to the grocery store. I pushed open the glass door and rushed over to the carts. I said aloud, "I hope my purse is there—my money and house keys are in it! Thank goodness I was the last customer to use a cart-- my purse was still there. "Thank goodness!" I sighed in relief.*
- Ask writers to give you feedback on both pieces. Which do they think feels more interesting/stronger?
- Note that using dialogue adds more personality to the piece and is another way to show what the character is thinking at that time. After student responses and comments, conclude the teaching point that writers revise by adding dialogue.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Writers will go back to their last draft and revise written work by adding dialogue.
- Writers will independently use the strategy for about 20-25 minutes.

**Differentiation:**

- Confer with an individual and/or small group and use leveled books to show how dialogue is used.
- Work with students who need help adding dialogue to drafts.
- Encourage students who are able to use dialogue vocabulary (such as whined, gasped, sighed, wondered, whispered, and so on) to do so.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area with their writers notebooks. Choose three writers to share how they revised using dialogue. Students will read aloud drafts.
- Share a strategy a writer demonstrated that has not been taught but will be taught in the next few days.

**Assessment:**

- Collect writer's notebooks to examine drafts.
- Observe students informally/formally to evaluate use of revision by adding dialogue.
- Take notes on trends you witness among students for future lessons.
- Assess for use of previously taught strategies.

**Extension & Follow-up/Next Steps:**

- Students choose another entry and practice the teaching point as a draft in their writers notebooks.
- Teach writers to revise by adding internal thinking.

## VIII. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

**Unit of Study:** Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writings

**Focus Question #3:** How do writers revise personal narratives to improve their writing?

**Teaching Point:** Writers improve their work by rereading to edit for punctuation.

**Why/Purpose/Connection:**

- Editing for punctuation makes students' writing easier to read by themselves and others.
- Editing for punctuation makes students' writing easier to understand.

**Materials:**

- Chart paper, marker
- Two paragraphs on chart paper (from the story used in lesson VII) with punctuation removed
- Writer's notebook
- Writing tools

**Model/Demonstration:**

- Gather writers to the meeting area.
- Remind writers that we have been learning many different strategies to understand our writing and make it easier to understand by others, and that one way writers do this is to reread and edit for punctuation.
- Display and read prewritten passage. You might say, "Remember the entry I read to you from my writer's notebook about leaving my purse in the grocery cart? I revised my draft by adding dialogue. Now it is time to edit by checking for punctuation cues. This is because the punctuation allows the reader to read the text smoothly and fluently and to understand the dialogue. Today, we are going to focus on how to revise our writing by editing for punctuation."
- Read to the class: *My experience at the grocery store last Friday was almost a nightmare I remember loading all of the bags into my folding cart I remember thinking to myself I hope my husband is at home to help me take these bags up the stairs*
- Explain that the passage is hard to understand because it sounds like one long sentence. Just like when a person walks down the street, it is important to pay attention to signs. Punctuation cues are signs in reading. These cues help readers understand reading and teach readers how to read it. Call on children to tell you what each of the punctuation marks is used for (for example, periods tell readers to take a long pause, commas tell readers to take a short pause, and exclamation points tell readers to read with excitement. Quotation marks tell the reader that someone is talking or thinking and show exactly what they say.)

**Model/Demonstration (continued):**

- Tell the class that you will now reread your story while listening to where you need to add punctuation cues.
- Reread the passage, while stopping and adding punctuation cues on the chart paper.
- Reread passage using punctuation cues: *My experience at the grocery store last Friday was almost a nightmare. I remember loading all of the bags into my folding cart. I remember thinking to myself, "I hope my husband is at home to help me take these bags up the stairs."*
- Explain, saying something like, "It is easier to understand the story because punctuation cues tells the reader when to stop, pause, or change voice. Readers take longer or shorter pauses depending on the punctuation. Readers use punctuation cues to improve fluency and understand what is happening in the story."
- Display second pre-written passage. Tell students to read it silently, thinking about missing punctuation cues.
- Ask writers to tell you what punctuation is missing and their reasoning.
- Mark and write punctuation cues in proper areas as writers orally assist. As a class, reread the pre-written passage. You may want to praise the writers' work in editing for punctuation.
- Send students off to do the same work in their own writing.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Writers independently edit personal narratives for punctuation. Writers continue to write personal narratives for 30 minutes in writer's notebook.

**Differentiation:**

- Students may work in small groups to edit for punctuation cues.
- Writing partners may work together to edit each other's personal narratives for punctuation cues.
- You might want to create an editing checklist that writers can use as they edit for punctuation (see resources).

**Share/ Closure:**

- Gather students and share how punctuation cues signal an idea, thought and expression.

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences.
- Listen to peer editing.
- Meet with small groups or individuals and collect worksheets based on editing for punctuation cues.

**Extension & Follow-up/ Next Steps:**

- Teach writers to edit for capitalization of proper nouns.
- Teach writers to edit for proper placement of end punctuation when using quotation marks for dialogue.

## IX. Sample Lesson Plans for Writing

### Unit of Study: Writing Habits: Acquiring Strategies for Independent Writing

**Focus Question #4:** How do independent writers use craft effectively?

**Teaching Point:** Writers edit for spelling using a dictionary.

#### Why/Purpose/Connection:

- To teach writers that they can independently improve the spelling of their piece.
- To teach writers that their piece is easier to understand by readers when it contains standard spelling.

#### Materials:

Teacher's writers notebook

Students' writers notebooks

Dictionary

Word wall

Prewritten paragraphs on chart paper featuring spelling errors

#### Mini-lesson:

- Gather writers in meeting area.
- You may want to compliment the class on their hard work in editing their personal narratives.
- Explain, saying something like, "Class, it is important to spell words correctly. If words are not spelled correctly, it can be difficult to understand the story. Now that you are older, you need to take more responsibility for your spelling. When you were younger, you didn't know as much about words, but since you are stronger readers now, you should also be stronger spellers. For words you don't know, the word wall and a dictionary should be used as tools to help you correct misspelled words. (Many children will be familiar with the dictionary from second grade, so you may want students to raise hands if they used one last year.)"
- Show prewritten paragraph, for example, *I was at the amuzement park and about to go on my favrite ride, "The Eliminator." I could feel my nees shaking and my hands sweating. I was fritened. This was going to be the best ride of my life. I had ben waiting for this moment all year.*
- Explain, saying something like, "This is an entry I wrote that has some spelling mistakes. When you read this, some of it might not make sense because you can't read all the words."
- You might say, "I know that in our classroom we use writing tools to help us edit. Two writing tools I can use to edit my spelling are the word wall and the dictionary. I already checked the word wall and I know I spelled those words correctly. Now I need to use a dictionary."

- Reread passage, stopping at first misspelled word (amusement). Say the word, and say something like, “This doesn’t look right. I need to check my spelling in the dictionary. Let me look under the letter a, the first letter of the word. Here it is.” Model correcting spelling error.
- Repeat model for each misspelled word. Stop at last misspelled word and have writing partners talk about the steps to find a word in the dictionary
- Gather writers and review the steps of finding a word in the word in the dictionary (find the letter, using letter tabs if the dictionary has them, look at the guide words at the top of each page, looking across the words alphabetically to find the word you need)
- Remind writers of the difficulty reading stories with misspelled words. The word wall and a dictionary are tools to help to correct misspelled words.

**Student Exploration/Practice:**

- Writers independently edit personal narratives for misspelled words by using the word wall and dictionary to correct errors..
- Writing partners meet to edit each other’s personal narrative for misspelled words.

**Differentiation:**

- Students might benefit from individual and/or small group work on identifying misspelled words.
- Some students might benefit from additional support in using a dictionary to correct misspelled words.
- Writers might benefit from adding frequently misspelled words (also known as spelling demons) to a personal word wall.

**Share/Closure:**

- Gather the whole class in the meeting area to share how using a dictionary helped in editing personal narratives. Have students share any tips they discovered in finding their misspelled words or in using the dictionary or word wall.
- Remind writers that editing for spelling makes our writing make more sense.

**Assessment:**

- Conduct individual conferences
- Observe students at work
- Student self-assessment
- Review personal narratives to check for editing of misspelled words

**Next Steps:**

- Teach writers to use technology in the classroom to edit.
- Teach writers to prepare personal narrative for publishing by creating a class rubric.
- Have the children keep track of the words they need to spell, and periodically add a few (that several children have mentioned) to the word wall.
- Use the word wall frequently so that students are familiar with every word on it and with the spelling of those words.

# TEMPLATES RESOURCES



Grade:

**ELA Unit Planning Guide**

Unit:



**Essential Questions:**

Core Vocabulary:

Focus Questions



- 
- 
- 
- 



**Student Outcomes** (Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking, Word Work)

Think about what you want the students to know and be able to do by the end of this unit.

Anchor Texts/Resources

### Focus Question Planning Sheet

<b>Focus Questions</b>	<b>Possible Teaching Points</b>	<b>Word Work / Vocabulary</b>	<b>Suggested Assessment for Learning</b>
<u>Question #</u> :	•	•	

## **Sample Lesson Plans for Reading**

**Unit of Study:**

**Focus Question:**

**Teaching Point:**

**Materials:**

**Mini-lesson:**

**Differentiation in Instruction:**

**Share / Closure:**

**Extension & Follow-up:**

## **Sample Lesson Plans for Writing**

**Unit of Study:**

**Focus Question:**

**Teaching Point:**

**Materials:**

**Mini-lesson:**

**Differentiation in Instruction:**

**Share / Closure:**

**Extension & Follow-up:**

### Punctuation Editing Checklist Template

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Punctuation Editing Checklist**

I used periods at the end of sentences.

I used exclamation points to show excitement.

I used commas so the reader can pause.

I used question marks when a character asked a question.

I used quotation marks to show what a character was saying.

I tried another type of punctuation I know about. It is called \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Here is the sentence where I tried it:**  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## GLOSSARY

<b>accuracy:</b>	Without errors or mistakes
<b>assessment:</b>	Methods of evaluating student progress in reading and writing skills and strategies. Some assessment methods are informal (teacher observation, looking at writing samples, listening to students read) and others are formal (running records, school generated rubrics, state mandates tests, and assessment benchmark kits, such as, ECLAS 2, Teachers College, or DRA). Assessment determines future instruction and small group work.
<b>character trait:</b>	Distinguishing feature(s) of a character.
<b>comprehension:</b>	The act of or ability to understand
<b>conventional spelling:</b>	Common letter pattern used in words or spelling of a word according to the English dictionary
<b>dialogue:</b>	Conversations between characters
<b>digraph:</b>	Two letters which create one sound. Consonant digraphs are sh, th, wh, ph and ch.
<b>envision:</b>	To picture a story in one's mind.
<b>fluency:</b>	Reading fluency: To decode and comprehend grade level written language with ease and skill. Writing fluency: To write on a given topic with ease, speed and skill
<b>guided reading:</b>	A small group structure comprised of 3-5 students working at the same reading level. Students work using multiple copies of the same text to learn and practice a specific reading strategy predetermined by the teacher from assessments.
<b>high frequency words:</b>	Words that are used most frequently in children's writing and reading. These are sometimes known as sight words, or word wall words. Students use these words to facilitate their reading and writing, without having to sound out the words.

<b>inference:</b>	A conclusion drawn from reasoning; to construct a logical theory after thinking about the evidence.
<b>informal observation:</b>	Quick assessment of student progress while students are engaged in independent work.
<b>interactive writing:</b>	Usually occurs in the meeting area at a designated time. Students are actively engaged writing an enlarged text in a whole group while teacher is guiding writing process. Conventional spelling and punctuation is used. Students create the final work as a whole class, with teacher guiding and facilitating the work.
<b>internal dialogue/ internal thinking:</b>	Thoughts and feelings of characters expressed in stories either through quotations or intimations.
<b>intonation:</b>	Manner of articulating words or speaking using a certain pitch of voice.
<b>“just right” books:</b>	Books that match the reading level of the reader and can be read with 95-96% accuracy with excellent comprehension
<b>leveled books:</b>	Books that are categorized by a system to match student reading ability. Books referred to in these units have been leveled by the system created by Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell.
<b>main idea:</b>	Most important or central focus of a text or section of a text.
<b>narrative:</b>	A story or account that has a plot and sequence of events.
<b>personal narrative:</b>	Written story from a writer’s life.
<b>prediction:</b>	To use what is known to figure out what might happen next.
<b>punctuation cues:</b>	Symbols in reading and writing that help reader make sense of the text. Punctuation cues dictate how the text is to be read. For example, period, comma, ellipsis, semicolon, colon, question mark, exclamation point, dash, and quotation marks.

- read aloud:** Teacher reads text to the class. In an interactive read aloud, the teacher reads a text with a purpose in mind. The teacher has prepared places in the text to teach a particular strategy, and stops at certain points for discussion and teaching.
- retell:** To restate something that has been read, heard, or experienced.
- sequence:** The progression of details or events in succession.
- shared reading:** Occurs when the entire class reads from one enlarged text with a single purpose in mind. Shared reading could be with a poem, song, a big book, or a short text.
- story elements:** Important details from a text: Plot or Event, Character, Setting (time and place), Movement of Time, and Change. These features form the essential elements of the story.
- story structure:** How a written and/or oral story is set up and/or organized.
- strategy lesson:** Guided reading lesson that focuses on a particular strategy.
- transitional/  
invented spelling:** Spelling of a word based on the students' current phonemic knowledge. The spelling is transitional because it is replaced by conventional spelling as children gain more sight words and more control of spelling conventions. By third grade, very few words should be spelled with transitional spelling; these words should be sophisticated and challenging (faroshous for ferocious, for example) and will be replaced by conventional spelling when the student edits his or her work.
- word wall:** A visible and accessible classroom tool that consists of grade-level sight words, organized alphabetically, which students are expected to be able to read and spell. These words should include words that will have high utility in helping students spell new words, such as teacher (can help spell reach, peach, each, teaching, bleacher, etc.)
- writer's notebook:** A notebook designed for students to record lists, sketches, story ideas, writing entries or other work related to their writing life.

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