

Unit 1 -

Living the Life of a Writer/Personal Narrative August/September/October

Focus:

“Building a community of writers, telling the stories of our lives, becoming independent writers, learning from other writers, and publishing our stories” (The Noyce Foundation, 2005, p. 11)

You can follow The Noyce Foundation’s Living the Life of a Writer – Kindergarten by referring to the scripted unit in the important websites list above.

I have integrated Living the Life of a Writer and Personal Narrative (pictures and labels) into one unit that tends to span 2-3 months depending on my class each year. The following are the mini-lessons I teach. If it is a Living the Life of a Writer lesson I will refer to it as LLW – Lesson #.

September - Mini-Lessons and Living the Life of a Writer Lessons (The Noyce Foundation, 2005).

Week 1 – Oral Story Telling and Rituals and Routines

1. Writer’s Workshop – Structure/self portrait/share all pictures in a class book (LLW – Lesson 5). I teach the structure of writer’s workshop the first day and I have them use their work time to draw a self-portrait.
2. Writer’s Workshop – Oral Story Telling – Read At the Beach or another simple narrative. Work time is circle time and students share a story of something they’ve done. (LLW – Lesson 1).
3. Writer’s Workshop – Oral Story Telling – Turn and Talk (LLW – Lesson 2).
4. Writing PBA (On demand writing prompt – September) Pre-Assessment.
“Draw me a picture of something real that happened to you. You can draw a story about going to the park, going to the beach, or something real you have done with your family. You can add words if you know how.”
5. Writer’s Workshop – Turn and Talk Oral story telling. Remind students how to turn and talk.’ Practice by telling favorite color. Model sharing a story with a partner. Students turn and talk, tell partner a story. Students draw a picture of story. (LLW – Lessons 3)

Week 2 – Oral Story Telling and Rituals and Routines

1. Writer’s Workshop - Turn and Talk. Oral Story Telling. Draw a picture. (LLW – Lesson 4).
2. Writer’s Workshop - Turn and Talk. Oral Story Telling. Draw a picture. Working Card. (LLW – Lesson 4 and teach a ritual) My “I am working card” is a laminated card with green on one side and red on the other. The green side says “I am Working” and then red side says “Miss Miller.” The rule for writer’s workshop is to keep working and working and working. If you need help, flip the card to Miss Miller and keep working.

3. Writer's Workshop – Mini-Lesson – Good Illustration referring to the illustration checklist. Please see Unit 1 resources for a copy of my illustration checklist. Review - Turn and Talk. Oral Story Telling. Illustration Checklist. Draw a picture. Working Card. Share.
4. Writer's Workshop - Turn and Talk. Oral Story Telling. Illustration Checklist. Draw a picture. Working Card. Share. Review of previous day.

Week 3 – Show Action and Publish

1. Writer's Workshop – Good writers show action in their pictures by turning their people side ways. Mini – lesson (5) work time (20) share (5).
2. Writer's Workshop – good writers choose a story to publish... (LLW - Lesson 22). Mini – lesson (5) work time (20) share (5)
3. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's make their stories better by adding details...(LLW - Lesson 23
4. Writer's Workshop – publish writing by adding a cover, title, author, and cover picture – Teacher writes title for student in marker on cover.
5. Writer's Workshop – Publishing Party!!! Students share work and we celebrate writing!!! Circle time sharing ... “My story is about when I went to the...” Share with friends. Celebrate!!!

Week 4 – Adding Labels – 1 Letter – Refer to Illustration Check List and remind students that they are writing/drawing personal narratives – “A real story that happened to me.”

1. Writer's Workshop – Directed Draw – Bust – I teach students how to draw a person from the waist up.
2. Writer's Workshop – (LLW- Lesson 12) – Using ABC chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.
3. Writer's Workshop – (LLW- Lesson 12) – Using ABC chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.
4. Writer's Workshop – (WLL- Life Lesson 14) – Using Name chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.
5. Writer's Workshop – (LLW - Life Lesson 14) – Using Name chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.

October – Mini-Lessons (Friedenbach, B. 2007) and Living the Life of a Writer Lessons (The Noyce Foundation, 2005).

Week 1 – Labeling 1 letter and rituals and routines

1. Writer's Workshop – (LLW - Lesson 12) – Using ABC chart to add 1 letter – introduce writing supply caddy and writing paper at tables (students do not get up).
2. Writer's Workshop – (LLW - Lesson 12) – Using ABC chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.
3. Writer's Workshop – (LLW - Lesson 14) – Using Name chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.
4. Writer's Workshop – (LLW -Lesson 14)– Using Name chart to add 1 letter – reinforce lesson.

5. Direct Draw – A person Running – Action Add Details... Running through the park...

Week 2 – Adding details to setting and characters – reinforce labeling with letters

1. Writer's Workshop – Writers add details to their pictures to show where story is taking place. Add something unique.
2. Writer's Workshop – Writers add details to their stories to show how their characters are feeling.
3. Writer's Workshop – Draw/Writers write about a specific problem. (Draw a picture of when I fell off my bike)
4. Writer's Workshop – Writers remember their stories by rereading their pictures telling the story again and again to find out more that they can add.
5. Writer's Workshop – Writers tell who the characters are in the story by putting labels with the characters names on the picture. Provide words on board. (mom, dad, sister, brother, Name Chart??? etc.)

Week 3 – Phonetic Writing – Words and Phrases

1. Writer's Workshop – Writers use to tell where the story takes place by adding a title or a label at the top of the page.
2. Writer's Workshop – Writer can tell what happened by writing at the bottom of the page.
3. Writer's Workshop – Writers say a word slowly and listen to hear what sound is at the beginning at the word.
4. Writer's Workshop – Once strategy writers use to remember a story is to tell it across their fingers saying what happened first, then afterwards, and then at the end.

Week 4 – Revise and Publish

1. Writer's Workshop – Good Writers choose one of their best stories to publish. Make a good writing check-list. Mini –Lesson on picking a good picture with good writing and maybe a title. Work Time – Pick a good picture. Share story with buddy and tell them why you chose this story.
2. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use check list to revise. (I made my picture better by adding).
3. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use the check list to revise again. Mini – Lesson (4-5 min) Work Time (20 min) Pull small groups during work time to help add words. Share (5 min).
4. -Writer's Workshop – Good writer's make cover's for their stories with a picture on the front with something important that happened in their story and a title on the front. Share their stories. Publish!

Unit 1 – Resources –

Illustration Checklist

Good Writer's Checklist

Unit 2

Non-Fiction – Procedural – How-To
November/December/January

Mini – Lessons – Non-Fiction Writing: How-To Books (Friedenbach, B. 2007)

“To begin a unit on How-To books, tell children that writers not only use their writing to tell the rich stories of their lives, or to label their environment or write to celebrate others, but also to *teach* others. Writers can teach all about a topic, in which case the writing is informational (facts that are grouped together), or they can teach people how to do something, in which case the writing is procedural (steps that move through time). This unit focuses on the latter. In writing these books, children draw and then tell about the sequence of steps they hope the learner will take” (Friedenbach, 2007, p. 1).

Read Alouds – It is great to read How-To books during this time. Reading A-Z has a book about how to make a snow man and Peanut Butter and Jelly: A Play Rhyme by Nadine Bernard Westcott is great as well.

Oral Language – During the first two weeks of this unit when we are only doing the hands-on activity and charting, I have my children chant the steps to each chart over and over throughout the day. For example, “First you roll the dough, next you spread the sauce, then you sprinkle the cheese, after that you put on the toppings, then you bake it, last you eat it.” We chant this over and over either by students echoing or chanting together.

Hands On Activities and Chart Ideas:

Example

- 1 – Pizza
- 2 – Peanut butter and Jelly
- 3 – Cheese Sandwich
- 4 – Wash Hands
- 5 – Brush Teeth
- 6 – Pack- Up
- 7 – Get ready for bed
- 8 - Cereal
- 9 – Chocolate Milk
- 10 – Getting dressed in the morning

November –

Launch - I typically launch this unit by taking a field trip to Round Table Pizza, where the students learn how to make a pizza. Then, we return to class and chart how to make a pizza in the How-To graphic-organizer. I model drawing in the How-To graphic organizer and then each student draws their own graphic organizer and labels each box with a transition word and maybe another word. For example, First

dough, next sauce, then cheese, after that pepperoni, then oven, last eat it. I typically chart the transition words and then encourage students to label the vocabulary words phonetically.

During the first two weeks of this genre, we do the activity, chart it whole class, and then make our own individual charts. Students store individual charts in folder to save for writing/publishing. Typically, during these weeks it takes two days per activity. Day one students do activity and chart it whole class. Day two students chart the task individually. Students can label their chart but are not writing sentences or publishing a book.

Week 1 – Hands-on Activity and Chart –

1. Make a Pizza at Round Table – Chart Steps Whole Class (First roll the dough, next spread the sauce, then sprinkle the cheese, next put on the pepperoni, then put it in the oven, last you eat it! (6 steps)
2. Class draws and labels independently how to make a pizza.
3. Make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and whole class chart the steps (6 steps)
4. Class draws and labels independently how to make a PB&J
5. Wash Your Hands and whole class chart how to wash your hands.
Independently draw and label a chart today too!

Week 2

1. Make a Grilled/Cold cheese sandwich and whole class charts it (6 steps)
2. Class draws and labels independently how to make a grilled cheese sandwich.
3. Whole class brushes teeth/pretends and charts and labels it.
4. Class draws and labels independently how to brush your teeth.
5. Whole class charts how to pack up and labels chart. Students independently draw and label.

(Now all students should have 5 or 6 charts of things they know how to do in 6 or less steps)

December - Functional/How To – Writing and Publishing (Friedenbach, 2007)

- Write and publish two books
- Each child chooses their own topic to write about out of the previously completed charts.
- Students receive word banks with vocabulary for their topic and whole class makes a list of useful other words
- Students who need extra support all choose/are directed to do pizza the first time and PB&J the second time and work in a small group with the teacher.
- Teacher/Parent possibly pulls high achieving students for a small group to discuss adding extra sentences using senses. Example: “Next you roll the dough. The dough is yellow and feels cold.”

- Teacher may choose to have students work on one page at a time in which case all students write the first sentence using a sentence frame and then teacher encourages students to try to add more sentences using a Good Detail Sentence chart. Teacher models adding more sentences on her/his book using the aforementioned chart.

Week 1

1. Writer's Workshop – Choose a Topic and draw pictures in a book of stapled paper. This is the beginning of writing their 1st published piece.
2. Writer's Workshop – Write Words and finish pictures.... Introduce word banks... based on what they chose...
3. Writer's Workshop – Write Words and finish picture... Pull high kids discuss how they can add detail sentences. Use how to make a snowman.
4. Writer's Workshop - Title Page
5. Writer's Workshop – Cover, Share, Publish!

Week 2

1. Writer's Workshop – Choose and Draw pictures
2. Writer's Workshop – Writing and Pictures – pass out word banks
3. Writer's Workshop – Write and pictures... small group add detail sentences...
4. Writer's Workshop – Title Page
5. Writer's Workshop – Cover, Share, Publish

Unit 2 Resources –

How-To Graphic Organizer

How-To Writing Book

Word Banks

Unit 3

Non-Fiction – Informational – Animals January/February/March

Mini- Lessons - Non-Fiction – Informational – Animals (Friedenbach, 2007)

“A second way that writers teach, in addition to procedural writing, is by writing all about a topic on which they are experts. In this unit, rather than ask students to research a new topic, you will ask them to write about a topic they love and already know about. This leaves students free from the burden of research as they learn to flex their non-narrative writing muscles. Their focus will be on writing facts they know and learning the features of all about books” (Friedenbach, 2007).

Depending on academic level of your class, the teacher can turn the first book into *shared writing*, where the teacher and students collaborate and write the first book together on chart paper and then students copy the writing into their own individual book. Or, the teacher can choose to begin the non-fiction animal writing unit by allowing children to choose their own topic and each student writes on a different animal. The first few years I taught this unit I began with a *shared writing* book and then went into an independent book. The last two years I have felt comfortable enough to do two independent books.

- I send home the student’s non-fiction animal book for 1 week prior to launching this unit and ask parents to help their students become an expert by reading the book lots of times, and searching through the book for their animals food, habitat, description, movement, babies, and interesting facts.
- Most kindergartners cannot read the books themselves but if the book is read to them a few times at home then they can typically find the information they need using pictures.

Week 1 – Becoming an Expert – Even though children are encouraged to choose an animal they know and love, we still spend a week researching the animal using pictures and filling out the graphic organizer. The graphic organizer is six boxes with a heading on each: description, habitat, eating, movement, babies, and interesting facts.

1. How do we become an expert? Read, read, read, watch movies, go on the internet, go to the library, observe the animal in nature or at the zoo, etc.. Look closely at the pictures to learn about your animal. Share information with buddy.
2. Graphic Organizer – Description – Model how to draw a picture and label the body parts.
3. Graphic Organizer – Habitat and Eating
4. Graphic Organizer – Movement and Babies
5. Graphic Organizer – Interesting Facts

Week 2 – Writing the Book – For the first book I typically have students do one page at a time and I differentiate by encouraging higher students to write multiple sentences where as my lower students are encouraged to write one sentence possibly using a sentence frame.

1. Good Beginnings Chart – Brainstorm good beginnings – I know all about _____, _____ are interesting animals., This book is all about _____, _____ are exciting animals., etc... Model how to draw a good picture of your animal and write an introduction sentence.
2. Description Chart – Brainstorm body parts and chart - tail, paws, claws, whiskers, eyes, nose, fluke, fins, flippers, blow hole, stripes, colors, fur, etc... Model how to write a few simple descriptive sentences. Whales are big and blue. Whales have a fluke. Whales have a blow-hole. Encourage phonetic spelling for any word they don't know. Give sentence frames to students who need it. *Remind students that all sentences on the description page must describe the animal.*
3. Eating Chart – Brainstorm Possible Animal Food – fish, plankton, shrimp, leaves, grass, berries, nuts, honey, eucalyptus leaves, zebras, sharks, dolphins, etc... Model simple eating sentences. Whales eat fish, shrimp and plankton. Plankton are tiny animals. Fish are all different sizes. *Remind students that all sentences on the eating page must be about what the animal eats.*
4. Habitat Chart – Brainstorm habitats – forest, plains, jungle, desert, ocean, river, etc. and discuss what each habitat has like trees, grass, water, etc... Model a few simple habitat sentences – Whales live in the ocean. The ocean is blue. The ocean has salt water. *Remind students that all sentences on the habitat page must be about the habitat.*
5. Movement Chart – Brainstorm animal movements – run, walk, jog, sit, swim, jump, climb, etc. Model adding simple movement sentences: Whales can swim in the ocean. Whales can jump out of the ocean. *Remind students that all sentences on the movement page must be about how their animal moves.*

Week 3 – Writing the Book and Publishing the Book

1. Babies Chart – Discuss whether the animal is a mammal and the babies are born alive and drink milk from their mothers or whether the animal is oviparous and lays eggs. Chart baby facts including baby names – pups, kitten, puppy, calf, chick, joey, lamb, etc. Model possible baby sentence. Whales are mammals. Whale babies are born alive and drink milk from their mothers. Whale babies are called pups.
2. Interesting Fact – Add an interesting fact you didn't put in another part of the book. Have students re-read their writing book and then look through their animal book and see if they can find something they didn't write yet. Model finding an interesting fact – Blue whales have two blow holes.
3. Conclusion – Chart good endings – Now you know all about _____, I hoped you liked learning about _____, This book was all about _____

_____, _____ are interesting animals., _____ are cool., I like _____.

4. Edit and Revise – Add any facts you wanted to add but didn't get to, make the pictures better by adding details, check words for capitals, spaces, and periods.
5. Cover and Publish – Students draw a cover and write a title and Publish/Share!!!

Week 4 and Week 5 – Animal Books at Your Own Pace

- Make sure to have the charts from the previous book hanging around your classroom for students to refer to.
- Have students choose a new animal and fill out the graphic organizer during the first two-three days of this cycle
- As students finish their graphic organizers, give them an informational blank book and allow them to work independently/at their own pace
- Mini-lessons should model the at grade level/intervention group pace
- This cycle is a great time to pull strategy groups to challenge higher students while intervention students are working on drawing the pictures/writing one sentence per page
- Possibly chart what each page should have: picture of animal, habitat, and details, labels, and at least 2 sentences... (adapt to meet your students abilities)
- Allow students to revise/publish at their own pace.

Unit 3 Resources

Animal Informational Graphic Organizer

Animal Writing Book

Unit 4

Personal Narrative – Sentences – Beginning, Middle, End March/April/May

Mini-lessons – Personal Narrative/Small Moments (Friedenbach, 2007)

“In this unit students learn to value and write about small moments in their lives. Students learn to hold on to important memories and tell stories about them with their partners to rehearse for writing. A small moment is made into a full blown story by using details to show what happened and bring out the author’s feelings. Writers reread their writing and revise by exploring how else they can bring the story to life and tell the truth” (Friedenbach, 2007, p. 1).

Additionally, working collaborative with colleagues, we worked on helping students write a beginning, middle, and end to their story.

Second – Narrative Unit (Friedenbach, 2007)

- Now that students have built their writing skills, I feel they are ready for a second unit of narrative.
- I feel narrative is the easiest to differentiate and that’s why I repeat the unit.
- During this unit, I add lots of charts to the students’ folders for them to use as resources during their writing.
- Students publish at least two narratives.
- 1st book – collect stories for two weeks of mini-lessons/ publish for one week
- 2nd book – collect stories for one week of mini-lessons/ publish for one week

March/April

Week 1

1. Writer’s Workshop - Re-Introduce Narrative – Emphasize character and setting told in first sentence. Chart 5 Fingers, Character, Setting, Big detail(Problem/Excitement), Little details, Feeling/closing.
2. Writer’s Workshop – Good writers think of a BIG detail to build their story around. Either an excitement or a problem. Write a story together. (We walked to Safeway for a field trip)
3. Writer’s Workshop – Write about Safeway using five finger method.
4. Writer’s Workshop – Good writer’s use many small details to explain the big detail.
5. Writer’s Workshop – Good writer’s use a good ending to conclude their story. Chart good endings.

Week 2

1. Writer’s Workshop – Good writer’s use feelings throughout their writing. Feelings can change through the story. Refer to feelings story/do feelings chart. Interactive writing using feeling story.

2. Writer's Workshop – Remind students of the feelings chart. Think of a story when you had different feelings and write.
3. Writer's Workshop – Good writers revise. Capitals, spaces, periods... Go back to interactive writing and revise.
4. Writer's Workshop – Think of new story using five finger ...

Week 3

1. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's find their best writing in their folder and finish their story/make their pictures better.
2. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's revise their writing using their good writing checklist.
3. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's revise their writing using their good writing checklist.
4. Writer's Workshop – Title Page
5. Writer's Workshop – Cover and Publish

Week 4

1. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Charts on the walls.
2. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Charts in their folders.
3. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Good beginnings.
4. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Transition words.
5. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Good Endings.

Week 5

1. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. 5 finger chart.
2. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Sight word page in folder.
3. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Sight word wall/Walls.
4. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing. Illustration Rubric/Illustration Check list.
5. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's use classroom resources to assist them when their writing.

Week 6

1. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's find their best writing in their folder and finish their story/make their pictures better.
2. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's revise their writing using their good writing checklist.

3. Writer's Workshop – Good writer's revise their writing using their good writing checklist.
4. Writer's Workshop – Title Page
5. Writer's Workshop – Cover and Publish

Unit 4 Resources –
My Illustration Checklist
Five Finger Narrative
Good Beginnings
Transition Words
Good Endings
Feelings
Sight Word Page

Reference:

- Friedenbach, B. (2007). SCUSD adapted Teachers College Writing Curriculum Calendar 2007.
- The Noyce Foundation. (2005). *Living the Life of a Writer * Kindergarten*. Every Child a Reader & Writer. Retrieved from http://www.noycefdn.org/documents/ecrw/curriculum/llw/LLW-0K-00_Curriculum.pdf
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