

INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS DOCUMENT

English I – English Language Arts and Reading

UNIT: 02

TITLE: Literary Texts: Analysis and Composition

SUGGESTED DURATION: 25 DAYS

UNIT OVERVIEW:

Introduction

This unit bundles student expectations that address the analysis and composition of literary works, including fiction, literary/narrative nonfiction, poetry, and drama. This unit focuses on analyzing genre characteristics, literary elements, and literary devices in these four genres of literary texts. Readers read literary texts in order to learn about the world by making connections to and analyzing literary elements such as theme, setting, plot, characterization, historical context, literary devices, etc. The unit also focuses on applying these genre characteristics, literary elements, and devices to original literary texts. Writers write literary texts in order to depict their ideas about a topic in a creative and engaging way.

Prior to this Unit

In Unit 1, students developed the skill of self-selecting text/s and learned basic comprehension and response strategies, including annotating and notetaking in order to interpret and infer text meaning. Students learned foundational skills for the research process and practiced the writing process, specifically the importance of planning before drafting. In addition to reading and writing skills, students also practiced effective collaboration and discussion skills.

During this Unit

In reading, students read multiple fictional, literary/narrative nonfiction, poetry, and drama texts to identify and analyze the similarities and differences in genre characteristics, literary elements, and literary devices commonly employed in these texts as well as how these features impact an author's message. Students analyze perspectives and themes represented in the texts while employing strategies to support comprehension such as interacting with the text through notetaking and annotating. Students study the concept of author's message (theme), literary elements and devices, genre characteristics, author's craft, historical context, and the relationship between these features. Students also utilize text evidence to support their inferences with special attention given to ensuring well-connected text evidence is utilized to support ideas and conclusions. They then utilize these genre characteristics and literary elements and devices in their own writing. Additionally, students conduct light research to aid in the creative process of writing their own original literary text.

In writing, students engage in writing as a recursive process as they brainstorm, draft, revise, edit, and publish two literary texts. Students apply author's craft and genre characteristics learned during reading comprehension activities and assignments to their own writing products. In revising, students review their texts for focus and coherence. In editing, students apply conventional and purposeful use of previously learned grammar and spelling skills to enhance the reader's and audience's experience.

After this Unit

In future units, students will explore informational and argumentative texts and the genre characteristics and devices associated with these genres. They will continue using annotation and notetaking strategies to increase comprehension and understanding of informative and argumentative texts. They will also continue to apply steps of the writing and research processes to future writing products such as the rhetorical analysis and argumentative research essay. As students write in a variety of genres throughout the units, they will develop voice and apply author's craft to their own writing. Word study, collaboration, and discussion are ongoing skills throughout all units.

Additional Notes

Although not explicitly taught, students continue to use strategies for collaboration, listening, speaking, and acquiring and using new vocabulary.

When possible and applicable, choosing culturally relevant texts for classroom assignments and assessments may prove helpful in encouraging student engagement and achievement in the ELAR classroom.

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As suggested by TEA, the TEKS in this unit are meant to be integrated with emphasis on the connections between listening, speaking, reading, and writing. There should be daily opportunities for students to discuss, read, and write. Students will continually develop their knowledge and skills with increased complexity over time.

Research

The resources cited below are relevant to this unit and future units because they focus on best practices for empowering students to be readers and writers.

In *Writers ARE Readers*, authors Lester Laminack and Reba Wadsworth (2015) suggest that writing opportunities come perfectly with reading texts. They suggest that writing and reading are not mutually exclusive, but have “flipsides” that propel writers to provide insight into what they read and readers to use what they read in order to write. High school students should participate in integrated study of reading and writing and throughout the school year.

Laminack, L. L. & Wadsworth, R. M. (2015). *Writers are readers: Flipping reading instruction into writing opportunities*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ralph Fletcher (2011) has written many books about the writing workshop. In the book *Mentor Author, Mentor Texts*, he emphasizes the need to have students read shorter pieces so that they have time within the literacy block in order to play with and apply author’s craft to their own writing. This book in particular has suggested pieces and lessons throughout, but any short piece that is part of a district’s curriculum is appropriate.

Fletcher, R. (2011). *Mentor author, mentor texts: Short texts, craft notes, and practical classroom uses*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

As the National Council of Teachers of English (2016) states in their position statements, “Writing grows out of many purposes.” In process writing, writers’ purposes develop as they consider crafting their writing toward an audience. Randy Bomer (2011) elaborates on NCTE’s position statements, “When writing for readers, we are making a particular something—a kind of text crafted in a specific way in order to achieve a purpose with respect to the people who will read it. We write to take action, to accomplish something, and knowing the purpose for which we are writing is essential for making all the shaping decisions that actually form the text” (pg. 200). In Language Arts classrooms, we point students toward audiences other than the teacher in order for students to “experience thinking about an audience, believing in a purpose, planning a text that could achieve that purpose, and designing a work process that will produce that text” instead of writing simply “to get a good enough grade” (pg. 200).

In preparing for a draft that supports the writer’s purpose and audience, writers collect a variety of information to support their eventual draft. Bomer suggests a variety of strategies for gathering and collecting around a topic such as collecting concrete facts and information on the topic, the history of the topic, descriptions from direct observation of the topic, the science of the topic, and how different people think differently about the topic and what arguments they could have about it (pg. 197). This authentic and focused inquiry and research enhances and focuses students’ purposeful writing.

Bomer, R. (2011). *Building adolescent literacy in today’s English classrooms*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

National Council of Teachers of English (2016). *Professional knowledge for the teaching of writing*. Retrieved from <http://www2.ncte.org/statement/teaching-writing/>

For writers to try out writing in a particular genre for an audience, they first immerse themselves in the reading of a variety of texts of that genre, reading to understand and enjoy the author’s craft. Then, when writers prepare to craft their own original compositions in that genre of choice, they reread those examples with the “eyes of a writer,” carefully analyzing characteristics of the genre and authors’ craft to inform and support their own craft. (Ray, 2006). Ralph Fletcher

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(2011) points out that writers study a range of broad to very narrow and focused choices and craft such as subject or theme, structure, craft element, tone or language, and words or phrases.

Fletcher, R. (2011). *Mentor author, Mentor texts: Short texts, craft notes, and practice classroom uses*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Ray, K. W. (2006). *Study Driven: A framework for planning units of study in the writing workshop* (1st ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Jeff Anderson focuses on a strategy that asks students to look at mentor sentences and texts. Through inquiry, students draw conclusions about what authors are doing well (such as capitalization, punctuation, word choice, etc.) in order to impact meaning. Mentor sentences allow students to see examples of powerful and appropriate craft as it relates to sentence construction so that they can emulate those choices in their own writing.

Anderson, J. (2007). *Everyday editing: Inviting students to develop skill and craft in writer's workshop*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

In his book, *Write Like This*, Kelly Gallagher stresses the importance of using real world mentor texts and teacher modeling as a way to teach authentic writing. He says that students must “be able to move beyond telling me what the text says; I want them to be able to recognize how the text is constructed.” He concludes that his formula is “Teach your students real-world writing purposes, add a teacher who models his or her struggles with the writing process, throw in lots of real-world mentor texts for students to emulate, and give our kids the time necessary to enable them to stretch as writers.”

Gallagher, Kelly, 1958-. (2011). *Write like this: teaching real-world writing through modeling & mentor texts*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.