

WRITING

"There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you." — Maya Angelou, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*

YEAR AT A GLANCE

Writing

September - Oct.

Instructional Focus:

-Use life experiences to write sequenced **personal narratives**.

Grammar Focus:

Text Structures
Parts of Speech
Complete Sentences

Instructional Texts:

Short Cut, by Donald Crews
Big Mama's, by Donald Crews
Fire Flies, by Julie Brinkloe
Writing, by Ralph Fletcher

October - Nov.

Instructional Focus:

-Learn and use knowledge about character and plot development to **craft a fable**;

Grammar Focus:

Text Structures
Parts of Speech
Complete Sentences

Instructional Texts:

Akiak, by Robert J. Blake
Stickeen by John Muir
Balto by Natalie Standiford
Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner



Writing Workshop

Writing instruction is delivered using a “workshop” model. This model allows students to receive strategy instruction, practice skills, and develop writing stamina. Instruction takes place in three different ways.

– *Whole Group Instruction*

Daily

Students are given daily mini-lessons on all elements of writing including generating and organizing ideas, grammar and writing mechanics, and developing a personal voice. Each lesson provides students with a model or demonstration of the skill, time for active engagement with the skill, and time to reflect and share learning. Writing lessons are integrated into our work in all subject areas and units of inquiry.



November - Jan.

Instructional Focus:

-Take organized notes using a graphic organizer;

-Write an organized **informational text** about Earthquakes or Volcanoes;

Grammar Focus:

Text Structures
Parts of Speech
Complete Sentences

Instructional Texts:

a variety of texts about *Earthquakes, Volcanos, and Natural Disasters*;

February - March

Instructional Focus:

-Generate opinion statements and support ideas with personal examples to write a **persuasive essay**;

Grammar Focus:

Text Structures
Complete Sentences

Instructional Texts:

Chicken Soup For The Kids Soul

April

Instructional Focus:

-Construct a **book based on research** content questions using a variety of informational texts;

Grammar Focus:

Text Structures
Complete Sentences

Instructional Texts:

Natural resources

May - June

Instructional Focus:

-Write a variety of poems in different formats;

Grammar Focus:

Text Structures
Parts of Speech
Complete Sentences

Instructional Texts:

a variety of books on Michigan



– Small Group Instruction Weekly

Through regular assessment and observation, students' individual skills are documented and discussed with each student during writing conferences. As strategy needs are determined, students are grouped and given additional, small group instruction in the area of concern or to review previously taught skills that are not yet being demonstrated.



– Individual Instruction Weekly

Students will engage in writing conferences with both the teacher and their peers to receive feedback on their writing assignments.

Individual writing goals are set and reviewed at each conference.

Writing Units

The following Writing Units are provided by the ROSD to teach the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). These units were developed by educators the Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators (MAISA). Use the following link for more information about MAISA: <http://gomaisa-public.rubiconatlas.org/Atlas/Public/View/Default>

– *Writing True Stories* (done with the **Organizing Communities** PYP unit)

4-5 Weeks

The Common Core State Standards require third grade students to write narratives in which they establish a situation and introduce a narrator or characters with naturally unfolding sequence of events. Additionally, students are expected to use details including dialogue, descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings, use temporal words and phrases to signal event order, and provide a sense of closure. The goal of this unit is for students to write well-elaborated true stories based on students' experiences. Students will immerse themselves in age-appropriate narrative stories to discern how these texts tend to go and to gather possible true story ideas. They will draw on everything they've learned from writing small moment stories from Kindergarten - Second Grade and their study of craft. Additionally, students revisit qualities of good writing to create their personal narratives or true story pieces. They will select their best work to revise, edit, and publish.

Special attention will be given to reviewing routines and rituals in order to develop a community of independent writers. Students will learn to work in effective partnerships so they can support one another in cycling through the writing process at their own pace, developing increased independence and self-reliance.

Lessons are designed to teach writers how to navigate through the process: generating story ideas, rehearsing for writing, drafting, rereading, revising and then starting on another piece. At the end of the unit, children will choose their best work and revise this more deeply and extensively to share with an audience. The unit culminates with a celebration of writing growth, recognizing students' growing knowledge of good writing, their increasing repertoire of writing strategies and their success with cycling through the writing process.

– *Writing Fables* (done with the **Storytelling** PYP unit)

3-4 Weeks

Unit Abstract (from MAISA Unit): Third grade writers learn to imagine stories from ordinary moments by creating believable characters to write realistic fiction stories. They study published texts to envision possibilities for their story scenes and characters. Students choose an idea and begin developing it, creating believable characters. Writers then plan and draft event sequences using a story mountain. They elaborate using description, action, dialogue, and thoughts. The turning point of the story is expanded by imagining it through their characters' eyes. Students experiment with characters' internal story and the final resolution of the story. They create strong leads and endings and revise their writing. Edition

emphasizes increasing the sophistication of sentence structures for effect. This unit culminates with a celebration of published writing for an audience beyond the teacher.

–*Informational Writing* (done with the **Dynamic Earth** PYP unit)

4-5 Weeks

The ability to read and write information texts is a critical skill that adults use regularly in both their personal lives and in the job market. Therefore, it is important for elementary students to have a strong foundation with both reading and writing within this text type. The range of information writing, however, is very broad. Such writing includes text genres such as nonfiction books, pamphlets, websites, feature articles, textbooks, research reports, encyclopedias, atlases, guidebooks, and blogs. It is a challenge to pinpoint one type of information text as its own entity, because the text type tends to match the information to which it belongs. For example, information writing written by a travel commentator would most likely be in the text type of a brochure, whereas more specific information about a topic may appear in a feature article or encyclopedia. There is, however, one thing every information text type has in common - each of them expects the writer to teach readers about a topic. Given this correlation, the following unit engages third graders to create an engaging information book about a topic of their own expertise.

It is true, in the subject of writing especially, that the writer can only engage readers in a topic if the writer herself is engaged in that same topic. It is important then, for young writers to write about self-selected topics of great personal interest, in order to focus on learning the appropriate structures of information writing.

Common Core Writing Standard 2 states that third graders can do the following: 'Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.'

This standard goes further to expect appropriate structure (W.3.2.a.), elaboration (W.3.2.b.), linking words (W.3.2.c.), and conclusions (W.3.2.d.). In its entirety, Common Core Writing Standard 2 expects third graders to organize their information writing within a voice-filled structure, and this unit was created to meet every goal within Common Core Writing Standard 2. Teachers will also find that some sessions of this unit will meet the more sophisticated expectations of Grade 4, such as paragraph structure and headings (W.4.2.a.), as well as various information text structures (R.4.4.).

Later in the school year, in the second information writing unit, MAISA will focus on standard W.3.7, which expects students to also participate in research during their writing projects. It is expected that the following unit of 'Information Writing: Personal Expertise,' will set-up a solid foundation for third graders to later add the complex task of researching within an information text type.

–*Personal Essays* (done with the **We The People** PYP unit)

4-5 Weeks

Third graders have strong opinions about their world. They want a phone, longer lunch time in school, or better playground equipment for the park near their home. They will make an argument for just about anything around them. This unit is geared to harness all that energy and begin to build a persuasive essay.

The focus will be around building a strong persuasive essay that includes a strong claim with reasons and convincing evidence. Writers will learn their voices have power and that power can ultimately make changes in their lives.

Through a study of mentor text, third graders will learn how opinion writers structure their persuasive essay in order to convince their reader to make a change. They will look at qualities of good writing that makes opinion writing powerful and moves the reader to take action. They will further develop and strengthen their writing by cycling through the process of planning, revising, editing, and publicly sharing their opinions with a real audience

– *Content Area Research* (done with the **Human Impact** PYP unit)

4-5 Weeks

Educators often find it advantageous to integrate subject areas, fostering the learning that mimics real life. Not only do students need to understand the connections between reading, writing, and content area subjects, but teachers can also help them gain knowledge in a way that is true to today's global economy: being comfortable within several disciplines. To this end, the MAISA writers from the reading group, writing group, and social studies group teamed up to integrate the three areas together.

This unit is a culmination of the writing work that third graders have been doing this entire year. Students have been on a journey, learning how to engage audiences and elaborate ideas. They have drafted, revised, and celebrated their great efforts all year long. Particularly within information writing, students have already grasped the foundational skills necessary to structure their work (See MAISA Unit #3 - 'Information Writing: Personal Expertise,' for a unit directed on information writing structures) and now, this final writing unit will bring third graders into the world of research writing within the content area of Social Studies. This unit will provide repeated practice of important information writing skills, but now adding the complex task of research.

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Assessment

– *State/District Assessments*

There is no state mandated writing assessment for 3rd graders at the current time. District assessments include a Pre and Post written text for each instructional unit. These assessments are administered and scored in a standardized manner and are aligned to the CCSS (see Unit Assessments).

– *Unit Assessments*

Each writing unit is assessed using a pre and post writing sample, scored on a district-provided rubric. Pre and post scores are compared to determine student growth. Each unit also results in a process piece (produced over the course of the unit to practice each strategy lesson) which is also scored using the unit rubric.

– *Formative Assessments:*

Our class will be doing weekly Quick Writes to assess grammar usage and mechanics. In a Quick Write, students have three minutes to write about a given topic. These pieces are scored for capitalization, punctuation, spelling and agreement of pluralization and verb tense.



PYP Unit Connections

– *Who We Are: Culture Clash*

This unit explores the history of Michigan from prehistoric time through statehood. Students will use the unit ideas and conversations about Native American and European cultures to help them think about their own culture, experiences, and firmly held beliefs. These personal thoughts will then become the basis for writing a personal essay. Within this unit students will also produce an informational paragraph on one of the Three Fires tribes.

– *Where We Are in Place & Time: Location, Location, Location*

This unit has students engaged in researching the natural resources of Michigan using specific questions to drive their research. This unit is highly tied into the Research Reading Unit which has students gathering and organizing ideas, as well as the IB PYP Unit which connects the those ideas to a larger, world picture of the state of natural resources in the world, how they are consumed and the need for conservation.

– **How We Express Ourselves: *Storytelling***

After exploring a variety of oral tradition genre (fables, folktales, myths and legends), and how these stories teach a moral or lesson, students write an original fable. Students will use a lesson learned in their own life to explore writing a personal narrative with deeper detail and meaning.

– **How The World Works: *Dynamic Earth***

In this unit, students explore the forces within the Earth responsible for it's ever-changing crust. Through this unit, students research and take organized notes using graphic organizers about earthquakes, volcanos and other natural disasters. Students then use this information to create subtopics and write an informational paragraph for each, creating a multi-paragraph informational text.

– **How We Organize Ourselves: *Organizing Communities***

During this unit, students will explore their own lives to find special “small moments” to write about. Through lessons on descriptive details, incorporating thoughts and feelings, and organizing ideas effectively, students will learn to “show, not tell” their stories through character actions, dialogue, effective transitions. PYP unit connections are made through the analysis of problems and our experiences solving them.

– **Sharing The Planet: *Human Impact***

After learning about how natural resources are used to make products and, the economic and environmental impact of manufacturing, students will write a poem to express thoughts about a theme they uncovered in the lessons. Students will apply all previously used convention, organization, and voice lessons previously taught.