

# **Teaching Students To Read & Write A Memoir**

**A Sample Unit of Lessons for  
Middle School Teachers**

**Jefferson County Public Schools  
Version 2.0**



## **TEACHING STUDENTS TO READ & WRITE A MEMOIR**

This unit combines a group of lessons designed to teach students the skills and strategies involved in writing a memoir and reading a variety of literary works. The unit was designed for middle school students, but lessons can easily be adapted for use with younger or older students.

The following lessons are included in the unit:

- Lesson 1      Making the Connections to Texts that Good Readers Make
- Lesson 2      Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir
- Lesson 3      Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir
- Lesson 4      Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir
- Lesson 5      Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir
- Lesson 6      Narrowing the Topic
- Lesson 7      Narrowing the Focus – Writing a Purpose Statement
- Lesson 8      Interviewing Someone Who Also Knows About the Subject
- Lesson 9      Being Aware of the Reader’s Need – Developing the Subject Through Questions
- Lesson 10     Exploring Imagery in Literature
- Lesson 11     Exploring Imagery and Figurative Language in Description
- Lesson 12     Figurative Language in Literary Text
- Lesson 13     Exploring Sensory Details
- Lesson 14     Writing Standards and Beginning to Draft
- Lesson 15     Conferencing and Adding Details
- Lesson 16     Writing Emotions, Thoughts, and Insights – Making the Importance of the Relationship Clear to the Reader
- Lesson 17     Crafting the Lead
- Lesson 18     Crafting Another Lead
- Lesson 19     Writing Physical Descriptions Using Imagery or Figurative Language
- Lesson 20     Incorporating Physical and Sensory Description in the Memoir
- Lesson 21     Writing the Conclusion
- Lesson 22     Writing the Title
- Lesson 23     Word Work to Develop Effective Word Choice
- Lesson 24     Editing and Publishing the Memoir

Open Response Question – “Coffee”

Appendix      Extensions/Accommodations for ECE and Other Diverse Learners

**UNIT:** Memoir

**Kentucky Core Content:** The student writes a Memoir that is focused on a purpose; communicates with an audience; has evidence of choice and/or suitable tone; shows depth of idea development supported by elaborated, relevant details, has logical, coherent organization; has controlled and varied sentence structure; employs acceptable, effective language; and has few errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization relative to length and complexity.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MEMOIR:**

- It focuses and reflects on the relationship between the writer and a particular person, place, animal, or object.
- It explains the significance of the relationship.
- It leaves the reader with one impression of the subject of the memoir.
- It is limited to a particular phase, time period, place, or recurring behavior in order to develop the focus fully.
- It makes the subject of the memoir come alive.
- It maintains a first person point of view.

**SUPPORTING SKILLS AND PRIOR LEARNINGS:**

In order to write a proficient Memoir, the student should be able to:

- narrow topic and focus.
- identify audience and purpose.
- use prewriting strategies e.g. brainstorm, visualize, draw, freewrite, web, cluster, and other graphic aids.
- use an individual voice.
- develop characters through thoughts, characters, words.
- use dialogue effectively.
- use sensory details.
- choose language appropriate to audience and purpose.
- write a lead which engages the reader and sets the context for reading.
- create a single impression of the subject of the memoir.
- place ideas and details of the memoir in meaningful order.
- focus on the purpose of relating the significance of the relationship between the writer and the subject of the memoir.
- organize the memoir into paragraphs.
- use transitions between ideas.
- conclude the memoir effectively.
- discuss the writing with teacher and others and use their questions, comments, and suggestions to aid revision and editing.
- add, delete, or change writing to improve organization and support, sharpen focus, achieve clarity, and refine language and sentences.
- write complete sentences, making subjects and verbs agree.
- use correct end punctuation, commas, quotation marks, apostrophes.
- use a variety of strategies to spell correctly.

- share writing with its intended audience.
- assess effectiveness of writing based on proficient criteria.
- reflect on his/her process used in developing the memoir.
- produce a published copy that is neat and legible.

### TEACHER NOTES:

This unit is an adaptation of the intermediate unit – *Teaching Students to Write Memoir*. In addition to adapting specific lessons to fit the middle school, several reading lessons have been intertwined with the writing lessons. While the writing remains in the Personal/Expressive category, the reading lessons that have been added, for the most part, tend to focus on the Literary Reading core content. A variety of reading materials have been used – picture books, excerpts from short stories and novels, JCPS student samples, and textbook series excerpts.

An emphasis has been placed on modeling what good readers do and think.

Using the text *Strategies that Work – Teaching Comprehension to Enhance Understanding* as a reference, specific activities are included that refer to connecting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, and synthesizing. It is important that you not only read a piece aloud, but that you literally think aloud. Struggling readers usually don't know how or what good readers think about as they read. For struggling readers, reading is just about the words. Good readers know that reading is about the connections, questions, visualizations, inferences, and synthesis.

The first lessons in teaching memoir involve exposing students to the characteristics of memoirs through the use of literature and are primarily reading lessons. Text-to-text and text-to-self connections are emphasized (see *Strategies That Work*). In each lesson, you are directed to read the story to the students first for enjoyment and discussion. Then reread it to the students, asking them to listen like a WRITER—in other words, think about and pay attention to the writing craft. You might read the literature example one day just to talk about the story, and then reread the story the next day (or in a separate session) to explore specific writing purposes.

Using literature for instructional purposes is very powerful! Use the literature whenever possible to model instruction. Use literature at the beginning of the unit, and then use literature again and again (looking at specific parts or the whole thing) throughout the development of the unit. Sometimes you will find that one story or piece of literature can be used in multiple ways and lessons throughout the students' creation of a piece of writing. As the story becomes more and more familiar with each rereading, you will be asking your students to focus on different elements of the writing craft. (For example, one time you might use the literature to see how the writer describes his subject. Another time you might look for the author's use of specific nouns or powerful verbs. A third time you might be focusing attention on the writer's lead or conclusion.)

When you find a piece of literature in a particular genre that allows you to teach so many different lessons, HOLD ONTO THAT BOOK! You've just found a

TOUCHSTONE TEXT. That is a text or book that can be used in a myriad of ways and lessons to teach the writer's craft.

Many pieces of literature are used in these lesson plans for teaching how to write a good Memoir, and additional titles are suggested. Please note that there are few published texts. There are many others, of course, that you may use as examples of memoirs. Begin to explore your own classroom library for books that you already have that are written about relationships. Oftentimes, memoirs can be found embedded in larger pieces of personal writing such as autobiographies. You are encouraged to use these excerpts as stand alone memoirs when they meet the requirements of a memoir. Once the students have a knowledge of what a memoir is, tell them to watch for examples of the genre.

Picture Books. Many of the suggested texts include picture books. These books help your visual learners, struggling readers, and reluctant readers by getting their attention and imagination. These books should not be used as writing models. Because most of the picture books available are not developed to the level of complexity required by Kentucky writing, they should be used as tools to introduce certain concepts, genres, writing techniques, etc. and must be supplemented with grade appropriate writing models.

Using your own writing and modeling all the steps you will ask students to do is also very powerful! Don't be afraid that your writing isn't good enough! You don't need to be a professional writer. You just need to model how you put your thoughts on paper. Let your students observe your thinking about choosing a topic, narrowing a topic, deciding upon a purpose and audience for the piece, developing your details, picking specific and descriptive words, and using other strategies. Students feel empowered when they see you struggle or make mistakes, but continue to write; it frees them to do the same. The interactions between you and students when referring to your writing will build strong relationships that will foster risk taking. Your students will learn much from the literature, but they will learn just as much from your modeled writing, too.

Pacing. You, the classroom teacher, are the best judge of the amount of time to spend on any given lesson. Do not feel pressured to complete each lesson in one day, or be afraid to combine some lessons into one. Some of the lessons will go quickly; others may take a longer time frame or a couple of days. Watch your students—they will be your best indicators for the time needed to comfortably, reasonably, and effectively cover this material. It is unlikely that all of your students' writing skills will be in exactly the same place. We have found it necessary to guide some students more closely than others. In order for writers to produce good writing it is sometimes necessary to reteach a lesson to one student, while skipping it for another.

Writer's Notebook. Throughout the unit, reference is made to a Writer's Notebook (Atwell, 1988). When used, this term refers to an ongoing notebook or folder that students keep throughout the year. Some teachers combine a Writer's Notebook with a reading journal and call it a Literacy Journal (Rief, 1992). Whatever you decide to call

it in your classroom, it is an invaluable tool for teaching, learning and reflecting about writing and reading. If students keep all writing-to-learn activities, mini-lessons, freewriting, webbing, clustering, etc. in this journal, it is easy for you to refer back to past readings and writings when introducing new ideas, genres, and techniques. Additional sections in the Writer's Notebook could include personal vocabulary lists, writing ideas, doodles, drawings – the list is endless. Students can even paste articles and cartoon strips they find intriguing. Likewise, if you keep a Writer's Notebook right along with your students, you have an invaluable tool to teach from. Be careful, however, that the Writer's Notebook doesn't become a diary. It may contain some personal writing, but it is a learning and teaching tool. You should have students do drafts on loose-leaf paper instead of in their notebooks. This allows you to read and assess the writing more easily.

Finally, most teachers who use Writer's Notebooks also maintain a system of Working Folders in the classroom where students keep good drafts. These drafts are often used to gather portfolio appropriate pieces and make putting together a state assessed portfolio much easier.

You will notice that there are many prewriting lessons in this unit before the students actually begin their rough drafts. These prewriting lessons focus on reading, talking, thinking, and “playing with the craft.” Some of these lessons can be done during your Read Aloud time and then completed or carried over into the Writing time.

**Add or modify. Not all of the supporting skills required to produce a proficient Middle School Memoir may be covered by lessons in this unit. Read through all the lessons first to get an overall picture of this unit. Then add additional lessons or modify lessons to address the supporting skills that are needed by your students.**

**This unit is just one sample. There are many combinations of lessons that will make a successful unit.**

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Making the Connections to Texts that Good Readers Make

**LESSON 1 OBJECTIVE:** Students will make text-to-text and text-to-self connections.

**CORE CONTENT:** Literary Reading

1. RD-M-x.0.10- Connect information from a passage to students' lives and/or real world issues.

**VOCABULARY:** text-to-text, text-to-self, connecting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, synthesizing

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Chart paper

Writer's Notebook or Reading Journal

Literature example of memoir that focuses on the relationship of the writer and another person and/or short fiction that focuses on the relationship between characters. Possible examples include:

*Uncle Jed's Barbershop* by Margaree Mitchell

*Rudi's Pond* by Eve Bunting

*Through Grandpa's Eyes* by Patricia MacLachlan

*My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco

*Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco

*The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida

*Thundercake* by Patricia Polacco

Selections from *Kentucky Maker Papers* (Memoir, Grades 4-8)

“My Special Friend”

“Her Loving Touch”

“Typical Sisters”

Selections by Maya Angelou

Student samples from *Merlyn's Pen*

(*Teacher Note:* Prior to this lesson review adopted textbook series to find appropriate selections for class readings. Although this lesson is taught as part of the Memoir Writing Unit, literary readings are appropriate to use in teaching the supporting skills necessary for good writing.)

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Preview the chosen text in order to identify personal text-to-text and text-to-self connections you will share with the class.

**Before reading,** discuss with students what good readers do: making connections, questioning, visualizing, inferring, and synthesizing. Tell students that good readers make connections to the books they read either by connecting it to another book they have read (text-to-text) or to something in their own life (text-to-self).

Explain to the students that the first time you read aloud you simply want them to listen to the story. After reading the story, ask the students if the story reminded them of



anything from their life or another story or book they have read. Point out that some students made text-to-text or text-to-self connections. Explain that these connections are what engage good readers. Have students make an entry in their reading journals that includes the title of the story you just read and their personal connections to the story.

Next, tell the students you are going to re-read the story, only this time you are going to include your own text-to-text and text-to-self connections. Remind them that you are doing out loud what good readers do in their heads. **During the reading**, model using the phrases “This reminds me of \_\_\_\_\_”, “That’s like \_\_\_\_\_”, “She/he is just like my \_\_\_\_\_”, so that students will use them as they write down their own connections. **After reading** and thinking aloud, review your connections on the overhead or on chart paper. Ask students to make a note of any new connections they made as you shared yours.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

To reinforce connections to text for the learner who requires practice of new ideas, select several of the stories to read and respond to. For the students needing visual cues, supply them with a cloze procedure paper so the students can fill in the blanks with their reflections. When presenting the lesson, try to minimize the use of complex sentence structure and sophisticated vocabulary that could interfere with the student’s comprehension.

- **ENRICHMENT:**

Have students designate a page for Text-to-text and one for Text-to-Self in their Reader’s Journal. Students could preview several books/stories you plan to share in class and make notes about connections on the appropriate pages.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

If a computer is accessible to your classroom, set up a database that includes several book/story titles you are asking the students to preview. After students have read each book, ask them to add to the database text-to-text or text-to-self connections. In addition, some students may want to add new books/stories to the database.

### **ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

During individual conferences, review and discuss the notes students made in their Reader’s Journal. Inaccuracies, incoherence, etc. can be addressed at this time.

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir

**LESSON 2 OBJECTIVE:** Students will understand the characteristics of a memoir that focuses upon the relationship of the writer and another person.

**(Teacher Note: Lessons 2 – 5 all focus on the characteristics of memoir writing with emphasis on the different subjects, e.g. person, place, object, or animal. Depending on the block of time available, these lessons may be combined.)**

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

Literary Reading

2. RD-M-x.0.8- Make predictions, draw conclusions and make generalizations about what is read
3. RD-M-x.0.10- Connect information from a passage to students' lives and/or real world issues.
4. RD-M-x1.0.14- Analyze the relationship between events in a story and a character's behavior.

**VOCABULARY:** character, traits, characteristics, personality traits, analyze

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Chart paper

Writer's Notebook

Literature example of memoir that focuses on the relationship of the writer and another person or short fiction that focuses on the relationship between to characters. Possible examples include:

*Uncle Jed's Barbershop* by Margaree Mitchell

*Rudi's Pond* by Eve Bunting

*Through Grandpa's Eyes* by Patricia MacLachlan

*My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco

*Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco

*The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida

*Thundercake* by Patricia Polacco

Selections from the *Kentucky Marker Papers* (Memoir, Grades 4-8)

“My Special Friend”

“Her Loving Touch”

“Typical Sisters”

Selections by Maya Angelou

Student samples from *Merlyn's Pen*

**(Teacher Note:** Prior to this lesson, review adopted textbook series to find appropriate selections for class readings. Although this lesson is taught as part of the Memoir

Writing Unit, literary readings are appropriate to use in teaching the supporting skills necessary for good writing.)

### TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:

Choose one of the above titles (or any other picture book or personal writing that focuses upon the relationship of the writer and another person) that you have already read to the students for their enjoyment and discussion. **Before you read**, tell the students that you are going to reread the story and that they should “listen as a writer.” (Writers listen to stories differently than others. They listen for the craft of writing.) Ask the students to listen for what they believe is the writer’s purpose for writing this story-- the one main thing that the author wanted the reader to know about the subject that he is writing about. **After reading**, point out that this particular piece is called a memoir. It focuses on the writer and a special, memorable, important person in the writer’s life, either in the present or past.

Refer back to the story to talk about the following questions. As class discussion occurs, make note of general answers on the overhead or chart paper to keep students focused on the elements of memoir.

- Who is the story about?
- What is the relationship between the subject and the writer?
- What is the writer’s purpose? In other words, what does the writer want you to know about this relationship?
- What is the one impression that the writer wants you to have about his/her subject?
- How does the writer show you how important his/her subject is in the piece? Through his/her thoughts? Through his/her feelings about the subject? Through the details and description?
- Does he/she share memories of experiences or events that he/she shared with the person?
- Where is this person now?
- What are the writer’s thoughts or feelings about this person now? (These are his/her insights.)

Explain to students that what you have just done is to **analyze** a piece of writing for text features. The process of **analyzing** – looking at the parts that make up the whole – is a process that will be repeated in many genre.

After you have done this kind of “writing talk” about the reading piece, model creating a list of significant people in your own life. Refer back to the list you made during the previous Text-to-Self lesson, if possible. For each person that you write on the chart, tell who it is, what his/her relationship is to you, and why this person is important to you. (On the chart, it’s only necessary to write the name or relationship of the person being talked about. The extra oral discussion is intended to help clarify thoughts for the students. For example, you might say, “My cousin Jean is important.” You would write “Jean,” but you would offer more information orally as to why this person is significant. The purpose of this kind of discussion or “think aloud” is to let the children “hear” your thinking and to help students think of more possible memoir subjects.

Next, ask students to quickly jot down in their Writer's Notebook any people who came to their mind while you were talking. Allow the students the opportunity to talk about important people in their lives. During this conversation, ask each student to keep his/her Writer's Notebook handy. Encourage the students to listen to their peers' stories with a writer's ear – that is, listen for those personal connections – just like they did in reading. As new ideas come to mind, jot those down in the Writer's Notebook.

(Teacher's Note: Discussion should include whole class, small group, and/or pairs. Limit the small group and pair discussion time to 7 – 9 minutes. Walk through the room monitoring discussions and bringing individual students back on task.)

End the lesson with quiet writing time. Ask students to review the list they have created and have them freewrite about one or all – depending on time. Their focus should just be to recall significant details and memories of that person. Model this on the overhead or chart paper.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

For students with limited vocabulary, provide examples of the vocabulary words as well as defining them. Students with auditory difficulties should be provided with a printed list of the questions to be answered. To help students organize their thoughts, employ the use of a graphic organizer, preferably a web.

- **ENRICHMENT:**

Encourage students to complete independently character sketches about the significant people on their list.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Use database created in Lesson 1 to have students locate additional texts to read.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Circulate around the room, trying to listen in on as many conversations as possible. Comment on the lists the students are creating and add to your own list so that you are modeling the behavior and actions you want the students to engage in. Make a note of any student who needs extra guidance and meet with him or her separately. Review Writer's Notebook entry during student/teacher conferences.

## My Way

I first found this special place when my mom and dad split up. My dad moved out for a while into a trailer out by a pond, woods, and creek. When my dad moved out, I visited him every weekend. But at this point in time I felt like nothing was going my way. But that all changed.

I was outside by the pond one day when I noticed a creek. It went behind the pond and downhill toward the woods. After a few minutes I walked to the creek and jumped into the carved land on a small remaining piece of land. The creek was calm as if it were being drunk out of cup. It went downhill on limestone rocks with rigid holes making it possible to climb the slanted hill.

After a while, I began to slide down the hill with the calm current into the woods. I would slide down any way I could think of. I would slide on my stomach face forward, feet forward, backwards on my back etc. etc. Then when I got tired, I would sit right in the middle of the downward slope, letting the water rush against my back as if I were a rock going about my business. When I was rested I would go right back to sliding again.

Then I began to build bridges and dams with floating pieces of rock in the creek. I remember one of the bridges I built was strong enough to hold my sister and I at the same time. It was right at the end of the downward slope. It was really neat. I remember one night a big storm hit and knocked it over. I tried to rebuild it but most of the pieces were gone.

I even made my own seat in the middle of the downward slope. To make it, I rolled a humongous rock down into the creek. As it hit the limestone, it broke off in the very center of the rock. It formed the rock into an almost perfect version of a chair. It was almost as if it were carved by a professional. I couldn't help myself, I carved my name into the back of the chair (it took a long time!). Although the rock was more like a shrunken version of a chair it took almost exactly the same time. I loved it. I loved it so much I did my homework in it. It was almost as if I were addicted to it like tobacco. Sometimes when I was mad about my mom and dad splitting up, I would sit in the chair and think about all the good times we all had together, or I would think about something else just to get it off my mind. It usually always worked. I remember one day I fell asleep in the seat. I woke up to a feeling like a thousand needles stabbing me at the same time. I had fallen asleep and fell in the water. Why it was so cold I don't know because it was 90 degrees outside, but the water felt 90 degrees below. That was the last time I fell asleep in that seat.

After a few more months my mom and dad got back together and tried to work things out. For all I know that special creek could be bone dry now, but at least I know there was at least one place where everything seemed to go my way.

## River Times

“I caught one!” I would happily yell every time I caught a fish. I go to the Ohio River with my family all the time in the summer. I have had so many wonderful times at that river. It is my favorite place to go in the summer with my family.

One of the great times I’ve had at the Ohio River was when we were fishing and the water level was low, (which is the best time to fish). There was what seemed like a thousand people there because usually there aren’t very many people that fish there. Some crazy people in there early twenties apparently decided that they wanted to go swimming where everyone was fishing. One of the swimmers got tangled up in some fishing lines and started getting pulled under the water. When the fishers tried to reel him in, they pulled him under, and if they left him there he would drown anyway. Of course, my dad, the big calm hero went and called 911. When the Ambulance and the firemen arrived, my parents made us leave. While on our way home, we saw three new trucks heading to where that man was in trouble.

About a month later the river was back up to its normal level and it was harder to catch fish. I remember complaining to go home because it was boring not catching fish. The only fish any of us caught in the first hour was a little blue gill that we used as bait. When we were about to leave, my dad put out his last line with no hope of even catching an old can. To his great surprise, he was almost jerked into the water. After catching his balance again, he noticed that his fishing rod was about to snap! I went over and tried to help, but I did no help. My dad’s rod flew out of his hands and under the water. We just stood there watching the rod sink under the water and bubbles shoot up when it went down. We knew my dad was angry so we went home. I laugh whenever I think about that.

Something else that happened in that same summer at the Ohio River was very scary. My family and I were in the fossil garden looking for good fossils to examine. There were few other people looking for fossils too. Some people had a huge Dalmatian that they had taken with them to walk I guess. That Dalmatian was more hyper than a four year-old on a sugar spree. It was dragging its owners all over the place, especially when it smelled a dead fish. I laughed when I saw them being dragged around by their dog. That made me think of me trying to walk my dog, Midnight, who could pull me around the block easily. Back to what I was saying, we were looking for fossils near the Ohio River. We started leaning over to the water to see all of the fish swimming around. A few seconds after we started looking in the water, that dog unnoticeably came up behind us. “WOOF, WOOF” The dog barked as loud as possible. My dad was so surprised he started falling into the water, screaming. We all grabbed him and pulled him up before he hit the water. My dad got furious and we had to calm him down before he got too mad. We led him to the car and went home so he could play with Midnight and calm down. It was so hard not to laugh when he did that, but I didn’t.

The Ohio River is one of my favorite places because that is one of the only places that my family spends time together.

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir

**LESSON 3 OBJECTIVE:** Students will understand the characteristics of a memoir that focuses upon the relationship of the writer and a place.

**(Teacher Note: Lessons 2 – 5 all focus on the characteristics of memoir writing with emphasis on the different subjects, e.g. person, place, object, or animal. Depending on the block of time available, these lessons may be combined.)**

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

Literary Reading

5. RD-M-1.0.13- Describe literary elements (e.g. characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view) in a passage.

**VOCABULARY:**

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Chart paper

Writer’s Notebook

Literature example of a memoir that focuses on the relationship of the writer and a particular place. Possible examples include:

*Letter to the Lake* by Susan Swanson

*When I Was Young in the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant

“My Way” JCPS student sample attached

“River Times” JCPS student sample attached

*(Teacher Note: Prior to this lesson, review adopted textbook series to find appropriate selections for class readings. Although this lesson is taught as part of the Memoir Writing Unit, literary readings are appropriate to use in teaching the supporting skills necessary for good writing.)*

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

**Before reading,** explain that good readers visualize – or create pictures in their minds – and that is one of the reasons good readers are engaged.

Read aloud to the students one of the above stories or any other literature book that focuses on the importance of a place with the character. Read for enjoyment. Read to talk about the story and the pictures. Read to laugh or to cry or just to think.

Encourage think alouds – both your own and the students.

**During reading,** ask the students to close their eyes and really try to form a picture or “visualize” the place in the story. Now reread the story to the students. As in the lesson before, tell the students that this time they will listen to the story as a writer. Point out that this piece is also a memoir because it focuses on the writer and a special, memorable, important place that is significant to the writer, either in the present or the

past. As you read, remind students to make text-to-text and text-to-self connections like they did with significant people, and continue to think aloud.

Refer back to the story to talk about the following questions. As class discussion occurs make note of general answers on the overhead or chart paper to keep students focused on the elements of memoir.

- Where is this place?
- What is the writer’s purpose in writing this book – what’s the one main idea that he/she wants you to think about this place?
- What descriptive words or ideas does the writer use to tell about this place?
- What memories does the writer share with you when telling about this place?
  - How does the writer show you the importance of this place? Through his/her description of it? Through his/her feelings about it? Through his/her thoughts about it?
- How does the writer feel or what does he/she think about the place now?  
(his/her insights)

Remind students that what you have just done is to **analyze** a piece of writing for text features. The process of **analyzing** – looking at the parts that make up the whole – is a process that will be repeated in many genre. Make a class chart of important places by listing your ideas and the students’ ideas of significant places. These questions may help everyone think of more ideas:

- Where is a favorite place in your house? In your yard? In your neighborhood?  
At a relative’s house?

After you have done this kind of “writing talk” about the reading piece, model creating a list of significant places in your own life. Refer back to the list you made during the previous Text-to-Self lesson, if possible. For each place that you write on the chart, tell where it is, give a brief description, and explain why this place is important to you. (On the chart, it’s only necessary to write the name of the place. The extra oral discussion is intended to help clarify thoughts for the students. For example, you might say, “The swing on my Grandma’s front porch.” You would write “Grandma’s swing,” but you would offer more information orally as to why this place is significant. The purpose of this kind of discussion or “think aloud” is to let the student “hear” your thinking and to help students think of more possible memoir subjects.

Next, ask students to quickly jot down in their Writer’s Notebook any place that came to their mind while you were talking. Allow the students the opportunity to talk about important places in their lives. During this conversation, ask each student to keep his/her Writer’s Notebook handy. Encourage the students to listen to their peers’ stories with a writer’s ear – that is, listen for those personal connections – just like they did in reading. As new ideas come to mind, jot those down in the Writer’s Notebook.

(Teacher’s Note: Discussion should include whole class, small group. Limit the small group and pair discussion time to 7 – 9 minutes. Walk through the room monitoring discussions and bringing individual students back on task.)

End the lesson with quiet writing time. Ask students to review the list they have created and have them freewrite about one or all places on their list – depending on time.



Their focus should just be to recall significant details and memories of that place. Model this on the overhead or chart paper.

Teacher's Note: Generally speaking, when a writer writes about the significance of a place, it is somewhere about which the writer has a lot of memories and has been many times. If a writer chooses to write about a place that he has only been to one time, the piece will probably sound more like a personal narrative—the story of one significant event.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

For students who are more visual than auditory learners, show the pictures in the book to the class as you read. Read more than one of the example stories for students who need more exposure to different places being written about and to increase their understanding.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Use the internet to locate examples of memoir.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Circulate around the room, trying to listen in on as many conversations as possible. Comment on the lists the students are creating and add to your own list so that you are modeling the behavior and actions you want the students to engage in. Make a note of any student who needs extra guidance and meet with him or her separately. Review Writer's Notebook entry during student/teacher conferences.

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir

**LESSON 4 OBJECTIVE:** Students will understand the characteristics of a memoir that focuses upon the relationship of the writer and an animal.

**(Teacher Note: Lessons 2 – 5 all focus on the characteristics of memoir writing with emphasis on the different subjects, e.g. person, place, object, or animal. Depending on the block of time available, these lessons may be combined.)**

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

Literary Reading

6. RD-M-1.0.11- Explain the meaning of passage taken from texts appropriate for middle level students.
7. RD-M-1.0.14 – Analyze the relationship between events in a story and a character’s behavior.
8. RD-H-1.0.14- Critique the author’s word choice, style, content, and use of literary elements.

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Chart paper

Writer’s Notebook

Literature example of a memoir that focuses on the relationship of the writer and an animal. Possible titles include:

Excerpts from *All Creatures Great and Small* by James Herriot

*Emma’s Lamb* by Kim Lewis

*April’s Kittens* by Clare Newberry

“The Funniest Dog Ever” in *Kentucky Marker Papers* (Memoir, Grades 4-8)

“My Special Friend” in *Kentucky Marker Papers* (Memoir, Grades 4-8)

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

**Before reading,** remind students that like all good readers, they have made connections, questioned and visualized. In addition, good readers also make inferences. Inferring is taking information you know, adding new information, and coming up with a new or improved idea. Provide this example or one like it for the students:

“You see a woman with a frown on her face holding a leash in her hand. You know a dog leash would usually indicate that she owns a dog. You know a frown usually means you are unhappy. What can you infer about the woman, the leash, and the frown?”

Probable answers should include “The woman lost her dog...” Tell the students what they just did was to infer something that wasn’t stated. Good readers take the information given and combine it with what they already know to understand the author’s meaning.

Read aloud to the students one of the above stories or any other literature book that focuses on the importance of an animal with the character. Read for enjoyment. Read to talk about the story, the pictures. Read to laugh or to cry or just to think. Encourage think alouds – both your own and the students.

Now reread the story to the students. As in the lesson before, tell the students that this time they will listen to the story as a writer. Point out that this piece is also a memoir because it focuses on the writer and a special, memorable, important animal that is significant to the writer, either in the present or the past. **During reading**, remind students to make text-to-text and text-to-self connections like they did with significant people and places, and continue to think aloud.

**After reading**, refer back to the story to talk about the following questions. As class discussion occurs, make note of general answers on the overhead or chart paper to keep students focused on the elements of memoir.

- What is the writer’s purpose in writing this book – what is the one main idea that he/she wants you to know about the animal?
- How does the writer help you understand the relationship by telling stories or giving examples of the relationship?
  - What details does the writer include that make the animal seem real to you?
  - What descriptive words or ideas does the writer use to help the reader get a picture in his/her mind?
- How does the writer show the importance of this relationship? Through his /her thoughts? Through his/her feelings? Through the use details and descriptions?
- How does the writer feel about or what does he think about this animal now? (insights)

After you have done this kind of “writing talk” about the reading piece, model creating a list of significant animals in your own life. Refer back to the list you made during the previous Text-to-Self lesson, if possible. For each animal that you write on the chart, tell where it is, give a brief description, and explain why this animal is important to you. (On the chart, it’s only necessary to write the name of the animal. The extra oral discussion is intended to help clarify thoughts for the students. For example, you might say, “My dog Max,” or “ My hamster Mickey. ” You would write “Max,” but you would offer more information orally as to why this animal is significant. The purpose of this kind of discussion or “think aloud” is to let the student “hear” your thinking and to help students think of more possible memoir subjects.

Next, ask students to quickly jot down in their Writer’s Notebook any animal that came to their mind while you were talking. Allow the students the opportunity to talk about important animals in their lives. During this conversation, ask each student to keep his/her Writer’s Notebook handy. Encourage the students to listen to their peers’ stories with a writer’s ear – that is, listen for those personal connections – just like they did in reading. As new ideas come to mind, jot those down in the Writer’s Notebook. (Teacher’s Note: Discussion should include whole class, small group. Limit the small group and pair discussion time to 7 – 9 minutes. Walk through the room monitoring discussions and bringing individual students back on task.)

End the lesson with quiet writing time. Ask students to review the list they have created and have them freewrite about one or all animals on the list – depending on time.

Their focus should just be to recall significant details and memories of that animal. Model this on the overhead or chart paper.

**(Teacher Note: Because some students don't have pets, this might be a good lesson to combine with another lesson.)**

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

To bypass written output difficulties, permit students to dictate their responses and have someone else transcribe for them.

- **ENRICHMENT:**

Encourage students to identify other stories and novels that include animals as one of the main characters. Record powerful descriptions or passages in their notes for future reference.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Complete an internet search for memoir focusing on the writer and his or her pet.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Circulate around the room, trying to listen in on as many conversations as possible. Comment on the lists the students are creating and add to your own list so that you are modeling the behavior and actions you want the students to engage in. Make a note of any student who needs extra guidance and meet with him or her separately. Review Writer's Notebook entry during student/teacher conferences.

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Understanding the Characteristics of Memoir

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

Literary Reading

RD-M-x.0.8 Make predictions, draw conclusions, make generalizations about what is read.

**(Teacher Note: Lessons 2 – 5 all focus on the characteristics of memoir writing with emphasis on the different subjects, e.g. person, place, object, or animal. Depending on the block of time available, these lessons may be combined.)**

**VOCABULARY:** adjectives, synthesizing

**LESSON 5 OBJECTIVE:** Students will understand the characteristics of a memoir that focuses upon the relationship of the writer and an object.

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Chart paper

Writer’s Notebook

Literature example of a memoir that focuses on the relationship of the writer and an object.

Possible titles include:

Velveteen Rabbit by Margery Bianco

The Bat Boy and His Violin by Gavin Curtis

Owen by Kevin Henkes

“Bob” (student sample)

*Strategies That Work*

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

The day before you teach this lesson, talk to students about a special object that is significant to you now or in the past. If possible, have your object or a replica in hand during this initial discussion. Explain the significance of this object. You may share anecdotes about you and this object, possibly including how you got it and when. Allow children to ask you questions, even handle the object.

Ask students to identify an object that holds special meaning for them. Encourage students to identify more than one because you are going to ask them to bring either the object or a replica/picture/drawing to class the next day.

The next day, explain that the story you are reading today is another memoir, but that it focuses on the relationship of the writer and a significant object, either from the past or in the present. Read aloud the student sample “Bob.” Read it to enjoy the first time.

**Before you reread** “Bob” to the students, introduce the reading activity “Reading for the Gist” found on page 151 of *Strategies that Work*. This process involves students using many strategies to help them make sense of what they read. **During reading**, focus the students’ thinking on both the events of the piece as well as their reactions to the events through brief notes on the overhead and in their notebooks. These notes include their questions, predictions, important ideas, and visual images. These reading responses help the reader to synthesize by putting all of the parts together. The synthesizing process is difficult, especially for middle school students. Many readers do synthesize, but just don’t realize it. When students “get it,” they are synthesizing.

**After reading**, refer back to the story to talk about the following. As class discussion occurs, make note of general answers on the overhead or chart paper to keep students focused on the elements of memoir.

- What is the object?
- What descriptive words, phrases, or ideas does the writer use to describe the object? (adjectives)
- What memories does he/she share about himself/herself and the object?
- How does the writer show you the importance of this object? Through his/her thoughts? His/her feelings? Through the details and description?
- Is “how he/she got this object” important in his/her piece? Why or why not?
- What insights does the writer share? (how he/she feels or thinks about the object now)

Now that you have shared an object memoir, model for the students on the overhead or on chart paper the kinds of thoughts or emotional connections you have with your object. At this point, you need to share the memory through storytelling. Literally, tell the story behind the object emphasizing the significance.

Next, have students use their objects and freewrite in their Writer’s Notebook about the story behind their object and its significance. In small groups, have students share their object and the story behind it. Depending on the size of the group, limit the sharing time, but be sure to build in question and answer time to clarify questions for the listeners.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

For students who have difficulties getting started and who may feel overwhelmed with writing at this point, incorporate “backward teaching,” reading aloud one of the example books. Demonstrate how the author may have developed his ideas from a web or other graphic organizer and how the brainstorming technique preceded the web.

- **ENRICHMENT:**  
Encourage students to attempt to synthesize other passages, excerpts, and books. Follow-up with one-on-one oral discussions about their understandings. This leads to conversation about books with other students.
- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**  
Internet search.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Circulate around the room, trying to listen in on as many conversations as possible. Comment on the lists the students are creating and add to your own list so that you are modeling the behavior and actions you want the students to engage in. Make a note of any student who needs extra guidance and meet with him or her separately. Review Writer's Notebook entry during student/teacher conferences.

## **BOB**

He stood about eight inches tall. He was originally pink, but his color faded to a dingy beige from all the hugs and kisses I gave him and from all the many adventures we had together. The color of his eyes never faded, though. They were as blue as the sea, and he had a tiny white nose and furry little ears that stood straight up in the air. He was a pink bunny whom I called Bob.

“I love you,” I’d say as I held him close to my chest and gave him a big kiss. He would squeak whenever I squeezed his pink belly, which is probably what I remember most about him.

At night he would keep me company and protect me from the Bogey Man. I held him close to me so that nobody would dare take him away from me. He was so warm, cuddly, and soft! He was like a warm, furry puppy, but he smelled like he had been loved on and possibly drooled on a little, too.

We had lots of adventures together on Grandma and Grandpa’s swing in the backyard, but the one adventure that I remember most was the time we went to the grocery store with my mom.

We had already left the grocery store and were on our way back home in the car when I realized that Bob was missing. I began screaming and crying, “Bob! Mommy, I can’t find Bob!”

Mom reassured me that Bob was probably sitting on a shelf in the grocery exactly where I left him, but I was not convinced. Mom knew that she had no choice but to return to the store and try to find Bob.

Mom took me by the hand and led me to the manager’s office, where the lost and found was located. There sat Bob, acting as if nothing had happened. “Bob, don’t wander away from me again,” I scolded.

Nowadays Bob lives at my grandmother’s house. His belly doesn’t squeak anymore -- it sounds like you’re squeezing an empty plastic ball when you hug him. His nose is almost worn off on the end. He’s no longer pink, and some of his fur is a little sticky on the ends. When I was about five years old, I had many other toys, but Bob will always remain the toy I love the most.



**UNIT: MEMOIR****TOPIC:** Narrowing the Topic**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing**VOCABULARY:** conferencing: peer, self, teacher**LESSON 6 OBJECTIVE:** Students will use a variety of strategies to select the most important possible topics from the personal lists that they have generated in their Writers Notebooks.**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Writer’s Notebook  
 Charts about the topics, generated in previous lessons  
 Graphic aids  
 Highlighters or different colored overhead pens

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

The students have already generated many ideas for memoirs through the reading, brainstorming, and talking that has taken place in the previous lessons. In this lesson, students will draw from the group-generated charts and the lists in their Writer’s Notebooks and will narrow the list to a few significant memoir topics. This is an example of self-conferencing.

Model the variety of ways students can narrow their topics. For example, refer to your personal list in your Writer’s Notebook of the important people in your life, past or present. Use the following guiding questions to cut the “people” list down to one or two people.

- Is this subject (person, place, thing, animal) really important to me now or in the past?
- Do I have strong feelings about this subject?
- Do I have stories to tell about myself and this subject?
- Will I enjoy writing about this?

Use “thinking aloud” to show kids how you shaved your list to one or two—highlight them. Remind students that there were 4 different categories – people, place, animal, and object – and that they should use the same process just modeled for each of these categories. You may need to model another category depending on the class or individual students.

Once students have highlighted their top choices in each category, have students choose their top three topics overall. Model this process for all students to see. Explain that good writers spend time narrowing their focus by exploring several topics. Now that students have narrowed their choices to three, direct them to use webs, clusters, or other appropriate graphic aids to organize their thoughts. Allow students to share their choices with their peers in order to determine audience interest. Model how to talk about your

memoir subject with a partner. Model the speaker’s job and the listener’s job. (The speaker’s job is easy—just tell lots about your subject. The important thing is to stay on the subject. The listener’s job is easy—listen to the speaker and ask questions to help the speaker say even more about his/her subject.) Stress to the students that the goal is to tell “a whole bunch” about their subject—description, memories, etc.

End the lesson with a quiet freewrite time in the Writer’s Notebook. Encourage students who are still undecided to write about all three. This should lead to an obvious choice for a memoir. However, feel comfortable helping some struggling students make a choice based on what they have said or what they wrote.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

Students who resist freewriting should be encouraged to draw, doodle, write phrases or snippets of information about their topics. Briefly scribing for the struggling writer to get them started is also an excellent strategy. All of these activities should be valued in the prewriting phase.

For reluctant writers, pair students with a more proficient student. In addition, visual cues of the senses may help the student generate stronger vocabulary and images for his/her memoir.

- **ENRICHMENT:**

Students may look for other stories about relationships to create a reading list.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Create a spreadsheet page so students can rank their topic choices incorporating common spreadsheet skills.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Circulate around the room, trying to listen in on as many conversations as possible. Comment on the lists the students are creating and add to your own list so that you are modeling the behavior and actions you want the students to engage in. Make a note of any student who needs extra guidance and meet with him or her separately. Review Writer’s Notebook entry during student/teacher conferences.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Narrowing the Focus – Writing a Purpose Statement

**LESSON 7 OBJECTIVE:** Students will identify an author’s purpose of a literary work. Students will begin to narrow their focus by writing a purpose statement.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing  
Literary Reading

RD.M-x.01 Identify an author’s purpose in literary informational, persuasive, and practical/workplace materials.

**VOCABULARY:** focus, purpose

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Writer’s Notebook  
Chart paper  
Literature that you have used in previous lessons

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Writers always have a reason or **purpose** for writing stories. There is something that the writer wants the audience (the reader) to know about the subject. Review the literature books that you have shared with your students to model memoir. Complete a purpose statement for each one. The purpose statement says:

The writer is writing about \_\_\_\_\_ (his subject). Most of all, the writer wants us (the reader—his audience) to know that \_\_\_\_\_ (about him and his subject)

For example, in Owen by Kevin Henkes, you might complete the author’s purpose statement this way: “The author wrote a memoir about Owen and his blanket. Most of all the writer wants us to know that the blanket was so important to Owen that the blanket was always with him.”

In the book The Batboy and the Violin, the author’s purpose statement might say: “The writer is writing about the boy and his violin. Most of all the writer wants us to know that the boy loved playing the violin more than anything else.”

Model the completion of the purpose statement for your own memoir for the students.

Now the students will **narrow the focus** of their memoir by writing a purpose statement of their own. They must decide what is the most important thing that they want their audience to know about their subject.

Talk to students about their own subject choices and purpose statements aloud. Have as many students as possible share their statements aloud. Now, students will write their statements in the Writer's Notebook.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

For those learners exhibiting off-task behaviors and/or a reluctance to begin the assigned task, use a timer to increase awareness and time on task.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Collect a copy of each student's purpose statement to assess student understanding of the purpose of his or her memoir topic choice. Address individual students who seem to be struggling during the next class period.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Interviewing Someone Who Also Knows About the Subject

**LESSON 8 OBJECTIVE:** Students will complete an interview with someone who shares first-hand memories of the student's subject. The purpose of this interview is to help add to the memories by recalling more information or stories about their subjects.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** relevant details

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Interview Sheet (an example is included with these lesson plans)

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES:**

The interviewing process will be a homework project. The purpose is to interview someone who knows the student and his/her subject and ask that person questions about the subject. That person may be a friend, neighbor, relative, etc. For example, if the student is writing about Grandma, then he/she will want to talk to someone else who knows Grandma. The student will talk to this person in order to remember more and to think more about the subject. If the student is writing about his/her dog, then he/she needs to talk to someone who knows his/her dog.

Hopefully everyone in the class will have someone with whom to talk. If not, the student can simply talk to you or another person about the subject of his/her memoir. It won't be quite as powerful as interviewing someone who knows the subject, but it will give the student more opportunity to reminisce about his/her subject.

Model the interview process. It would be helpful if you had already completed the interview sheet with someone meaningful to you prior to the lesson. Then you could show the students how your interview sheet has been completed including **relevant details**. The students will use the Interview Sheet to record the stories or memories that are discussed in the interview.

When the assignment is completed, allow for an opportunity for the students to share some of this information with the class. Save the Interview Sheet for future use.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

Provide a tape recorder for those students having trouble writing the answers to their interview questions. Students should be allowed to give an oral presentation of their interview findings. For those students with speech disorders, allow the

student to have a peer or a teacher available who can decode his/her articulation patterns during discussions, presentations, etc.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Use a word processing to organize notes.

Use the teleconferencing center or email to interview someone beyond the classroom.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Conference with students about information gathered from the interview.

INTERVIEW NOTES

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

I talked to \_\_\_\_\_ about \_\_\_\_\_.

We talked about the time that: (at least three different events, experiences)

Here is other information that we talked about that I don't want to forget about my subject:

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Being Aware of the Reader’s Needs - Developing the Subject of the Memoir through Questions

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**LESSON 9 OBJECTIVE:** Students will think about additional information that the reader will need to know in order to have a clear understanding about the memoir subject and its relationship with the writer.

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Writer’s Notebook  
Subject for memoir  
Copy of the Questions List for each student – included in this lesson  
Overhead of Questions List

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Remind the students of what they have done so far in thinking about their memoir. (They have chosen a topic, narrowed the focus, decided upon a purpose.) Today they will consider some additional information that they might want to use in their memoirs—information that the reader will want or need to know to have a clear understanding of the subject and its relationship with the writer. The students will review a list of questions, determining which questions to answer.

You will see that there is a different set of questions for each type of subject. (While some questions apply to all subjects, some do not.) Not every question will apply to each child. For example, if a student has chosen his mom as the subject of his memoir, the question asking “When did you first meet?” is pretty silly, but other questions would be relevant.)

You model this process first. Select the question list that matches your subject. Review the questions out loud and share your thinking as you determine the questions meaningful for your piece. Write both the question and answer to each question. If you run into questions that don’t apply, explain why you’re not answering them. Answers may be phrases or sentences.

Next, students will review the questions and write those questions and responses that are meaningful to their memoir in their Writer’s Notebook. Label this page Questions List and Answers. Have students partner share.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

Pair students and have one read the question while the other responds with quick answers in writing. Then switch the roles. The sharing will be embedded in this



activity. For students needing additional clarification of the assignment, follow the modeling segment with a guided practice allowing those students who may be confused to practice the activity with your support.

**2. TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Use word processing to organize information.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Questions may be collected and graded for completion and clarification or you may assess based on your observation of paired sharing.

**QUESTIONS LIST:  
WHAT THE READER WILL NEED OR WANT TO KNOW**

**Questions for memoirs when the subject is a person:**

2. How long have you known this person?
3. When did you first meet and how did you meet?
4. What do you like about this person?
5. How has this person helped you?
6. Is there one thing that he or she always says?
7. How do you feel about this person?
8. What have you learned from this person?
9. What's the first thing you notice when you see this person?

**Questions for memoirs when the subject is a place:**

3. What are your feelings when you think about this place?
4. When was the first time that you went to this place?
5. What's your favorite thing to do in this place?
6. Who else comes to this place?
7. If you could change one thing about this place, what would it be?
8. How often do you go there?
9. Does everyone feel like you do about this place?
10. Is this place the same today as it was in the past?
11. What's the most important object in this place? Why?

**Questions for memoirs when the subject is an animal (pet):**

- What physical feature of this animal do you like the best?
  - What's the first thing you notice about this animal when you see him?
9. Pretend this animal is with you right now. Close your eyes. What would you be doing with it?
  2. What is this animal's favorite thing to do?
    - ÿ When did you get it?
    - ÿ How did you get it?
    - ÿ How do you feel when you are with it?
  10. Does everyone feel the way you do about this animal?
    - ÿ What's one funny thing that it does?
    - ÿ How does this animal help you or how do you help it?

**Questions for a memoir when the subject is an object:**

- How did you get this object?
2. How long have you had it?
  3. How do you feel when you're with it?
  4. Where is it right now?
  5. Has it changed any since you first got it?
  6. What's your favorite thing to do with it?
  7. Does everyone feel like you do about this object?
  8. How has it helped you?
  9. Is there a time when you really need it?
    - ÿ What if you lost it?

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Exploring Imagery in Literature

**LESSON 10 OBJECTIVE:** Students will explore how the use of imagery and figurative language enhances the reading experience.

**CORE CONTENT:** Literary Reading

RD-M-x.0.9 Reflect on and evaluate what is read.

RD-M-1.0.16 Identify literary devices such as foreshadowing, imagery, and figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole).

**VOCABULARY:** imagery, descriptive language, prediction, inference

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

**Suggested texts containing descriptive passages:**

*Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou

*The Watson's Go to Birmingham -1963* by Christopher Paul Curtis

Overhead transparency of two selected passages containing vivid description and class copies of the text.

Highlighter pens or colored pencils

Overhead transparencies of two selected passages containing vivid descriptive passages of about 100 words

Student copies of one of the passages

*(Teacher Note:* Prior to this lesson, review adopted textbook series to find appropriate selections for class readings. Although this lesson is taught as part of the memoir writing unit, literary readings are appropriate to use in teaching the supporting skills necessary for good writing.)

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

*(See Goodbye Round Robin – 25 Effective Oral Reading Strategies* for more information about oral reading activities and strategies.)

**Before reading,** ask students if they have ever read books or stories that were so detailed that they could imagine the scenes from the story. When writers use words to create these “mind” pictures they are helping you to form a mental imagery. Imagery helps the reader comprehend the story because it encourages him or her to make predictions and use inferences to figure out meanings. The lesson today will help students identify when imagery is used in a text.

**During reading,** the teacher should stop periodically and share his/her thinking about the passage with the class. Explain exactly what images come to mind while you

read. Using the overhead copy, highlight parts where the language enhances your ability to create a mental image. Continue modeling this process to the end of the passage.

**After reading**, distribute student copies of the second passage. This time the students will highlight passages as you read. Now read the beginning of the second passage – just the beginning. After students have highlighted the passage, ask them to share what images came to mind while you read. Share your impressions. Note the similarities and differences in the images. Ask the students to continue reading and marking the passages. Organize students into small groups to discuss how the language in the text help them form images.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

- Use of a peer reader.

- Tape record independent passage.

- **ENRICHMENT:**

- During independent reading, students may record in their Writer’s Notebook vivid descriptive passages they encounter.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

- Prepare a text template, which allows students to use the tool bar to highlight passages containing descriptive language.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Review student notebooks for descriptive passages.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Exploring Imagery and Figurative Language in Description

**LESSON 11 OBJECTIVE:** Students will explore writing description by using imagery and figurative language.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** figurative language, simile, metaphor, and personification

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Chart paper or overhead transparency  
Create several sentences lacking in descriptive details.

Select passages from the adopted text containing examples of similes, metaphors, and personification.

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Imagery and figurative language, language used to create an effect, are very similar. They both make use of description that creates vivid pictures in the minds of the reader. The most common types of figurative language are similes, metaphors, and personification.

Similes are used to compare two different things using “like” or “as.”

*Example: The metal edge of the chair was as sharp as a razor’s edge.*

Metaphors compare unlike things without the use of comparison words.

*Example: The road was a ribbon winding through the maze of trees and hills.*

Personification is a form of figurative language that gives inanimate objects or animals human characteristics.

*Example: The wind reached down and plucked the leaves from the lawn.*

In this lesson, the students will take some “plain” description and make it more powerful through the use of imagery and figurative language. Model how you can take a “plain” descriptive sentence and magically make it more powerful.

First, write a sentence on chart paper or the overhead that describes a person, place, object, or animal. Make this sentence very plain in description.

(Example: The dog was fat.)

Tell students that this sentence contains description, but that it is not very interesting or powerful because it does not put a clear picture in the reader’s mind.

Rewrite it using a simile. (Remind students that a simile is a comparison using “like” or “as.”)

*The dog was as fat as a giant pillow.*

Rewrite the sentence using a metaphor.

*The dog was a giant lumpy pillow waddling down the road.*

Rewrite the sentence using personification (and a little humor).

*The dog’s food bowl spoke to him.*

Allow the whole group to continue this guided practice. Revise several other “plain” descriptive sentences using imagery or figurative language. Instruct students to use the thesaurus to locate synonyms for boring descriptive terms (good, small, old, etc.) and make a list of alternative word choices. It will be helpful to practice each of the possible memoir subjects: place, animal, person, and object.

Students will now practice this skill with a partner. Provide some “plain” descriptive sentences for each pair of students. They will use similes, metaphors, and personification, as appropriate, to create more powerful description. Have students share their revisions.

Teacher’s note: The same “plain” sentences may be given to every pair of students to compare the variety of responses, or you may provide each pair with two different “plain” sentences. Students may also write their own “plain” sentence to revise.

This activity may be repeated several times as a “sponge” or warm-up activity at the beginning of subsequent classes to provide extra reinforcement.

- **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS:**

To strengthen storage and retrieval of information, incorporate visuals, play-acting, and additional examples of similes, metaphors, and personification.

- **TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Have students develop a metaphor or simile as a power point presentation or a Claris Works slide show.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Monitor student pairs as they revise “plain” sentences and collect their revised sentences as exit passes at the end of the class period.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Figurative Language in Literary Texts

**LESSON 12 OBJECTIVE:** Students will recognize the use of figurative language in literature to enhance the reader's comprehension and understanding of a text.

**CORE CONTENT:** Literary Reading

RD-M-1.0.11 Explain the meaning of a passage taken from text appropriate for middle-level students.

RD-M-1.0.16 Identify literary devices such as foreshadowing, imagery, and figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole).

**VOCABULARY:** figurative Language, text-to-text, text-to-self

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Choose a literary text from the following adopted text series:

*Timeless Voices, Timeless Themes* (Prentice Hall)

*Elements of Literature* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston)

*Reader's Choice* (Glencoe/McGraw Hill)

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Many of the text series come with pre-recorded audiotapes or CD's to use for read alouds, or the teacher may choose to read the text to the class. Although students may see others reading silently (parents, teachers, peers), they need to hear the language read aloud to understand what a proficient reader sounds like.

ÿ Before reading aloud, pre-read the text to check pronunciation of unusual words and to prepare for any dramatic effects during the course of the reading.

10. Remind students to listen for the meaning of the story, as well as any language that is specific to understanding the text.

12. After reading the text, engage students in a discussion of what was read. Include questions about the author's purpose for the piece, introductions, organization of events, endings, images created by the language. Ask if they made any text-to-self connections during the reading. Ask students to point out examples that they heard in the reading of figurative language: similes, metaphors, personification.

You may read only the first part of the text to "hook" them, and then instruct them to read the remainder independently or in pairs using Paired Reading or Mentor Reading.

• **EXTENSIONS/ACCOMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

(See Appendix for additional extensions/accommodations.)

Students may also choose to listen to the story on the tape or CD.

• **ENRICHMENT:**

Students may choose to create their own tape of a selected passage.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Exploring Sensory Details

**LESSON 13 OBJECTIVE:** Students will learn to include sensory details.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** sensory details

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Transparency of a literary text containing descriptions involving sight, sounds, tastes, touch and smells.

Transparency of “Sensory Details Chart” (see attached)

A very large, bright red delicious apple

*(Teacher note: You may want to bring a variety of items to use for this activity as you explore the use of adjectives in describing objects. Choose items that are fuzzy, fluffy, prickly, smelly, etc. so students will have a variety of sensory experiences.)*

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Descriptive details involving the five senses help the reader experience what the writer experienced. These “sensory details” help the readers recall their own experiences with sight, sound, taste, touch, and smells and invite the readers into the story, thereby enhancing the readers’ understanding of the text.

Place the apple in a spot where students can observe it and ask student to answer the following questions in their Writer’s Notebooks using as much description as possible:

- How would you describe the way this object looks?
- How would you describe the way this object feels when it is touched?
- How would you describe what this object smells like?
- What sounds would this object make if you took a big bite out of it?
- How would you describe the taste of this object?

Ask students to share their answers to the questions. As they answer, record their responses on the overhead or chart paper under the appropriate headings.

Using a passage from a suggested text (You could be brave and write your own example.) or other source, read the passage aloud from the overhead and ask students to point out phrases or sentences which help them “see” the experience. Using the Sensory Details Chart, write the passage in the appropriate section. Go through the entire text noting which descriptions are best at creating sensory images. Point out passages that make use of comparisons using similes and metaphors and remind students that comparisons are used to show similarities between subjects. Pay attention to details that involve the five senses.



Instruct students to review their work for places where sensory details would enhance the reader's understanding.

**13. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

For the learners who need more practice, continue with a second activity involving objects the students are not familiar with. Again, ask them to employ the senses when describing. This activity will avoid responses such as, "looks like an apple," "smells like an apple," and so on.

**14. ENRICHMENT:**

Students fluent in using sensory details may continue writing on their memoirs independently.

**15. TECHNOLOGY:**

Create a multi-column chart using the toolbar.  
Add students' imagery and figurative language to class database.

**ASSESSIN THE LEARNING:**

Ask students to write a sensory description of another object as an exit pass. Collect as they leave and review for appropriate description.

**SENSORY DETAILS CHART**

**SIGHT**

**SOUND**

**TASTE**

**TOUCH**

**SMELL**

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Writing Standards and Beginning to Draft

**LESSON 14 OBJECTIVE:** Students will become familiar with the skills necessary to write a proficient memoir in the middle grades and begin first drafts.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** Proficient

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Transparency and a copy for each student of page 73 *Kentucky Marker Papers* Memoir Supporting Skills List for Grades 4-8  
Chart paper  
Teacher pre-writing  
Highlighters

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Remind students that you have been reading and sharing memoirs for several days to help them become familiar with this form of writing. Give each student a copy of the Memoir Supporting Skills List found in the *Kentucky Marker Papers*. Explain to them that these are the skills that proficient writers exhibit when they write memoirs. Focus on the following as specific and necessary to the memoir:

- Focuses on the purpose of relating the significance of the relationship between the writer and the subject of the memoir
- Narrows topic; limits memoir to a particular phase, time period, place, or recurring behavior
- Leaves the reader with a single impression of the subject
- Writes in first person.

Remind the students that the other skills are important but apply to all types of personal writing. Copy the above skills onto a chart to be hung in the classroom to guide students as they draft. Have students keep their copy of the skills list in their Writer's Notebook or folder (according to your system of management) to use as a self-check throughout the drafting and conferencing process.

Model the rough draft process for the students.

- **Skip spaces and write on every other line**
- **Write only on the front of each sheet. Get a new sheet to continue writing.** (The back sides will be used for revision purposes later on.)

Model how you refer to your prewriting, graphic aids, and questions in your Writer's Notebook as you begin to write. (You may want to make an overhead of pages from your Writer's Notebook.) This modeling could take many forms – maybe you

organize your freewriting, create a final guiding web, highlight passages from your freewriting. . .whatever you would do as a writer.

Direct students to begin their own rough drafts with you. Inform the students that the last ten minutes of class will be devoted to sharing what they have written either in small groups or as a whole class.

You will only write for a few minutes – either on the overhead or in your own Writer’s Notebook. Do this just long enough to set the tone for the writing session. You will then need to circulate throughout the room encouraging, questioning, responding, etc. to student writing. Focus on those students who seem to be struggling to get started – help them organize their prewriting, ask them to reread previous memoirs, etc.

As students write, you will conference with individuals. The goal during this writing time is to get every student started on his or her memoir. Stop class in time to share.

**16. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

To help the student with writing difficulties that require a scribe (documented on his/her IEP), have the student dictate the story to you or a capable peer, watching as it is written. The student and teacher or peer should read chorally (together at the same time). This activity will increase word recognition and fluency. For students developing their ability to monitor their own learning, highlight the four bullets on their individual skills lists.

**17. TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Students should be allowed to draft on a computer if available.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

While you are circulating, make note of those students who are working on his or her draft. Continue this assessment during the sharing time to ensure that all students have made progress towards a draft. Meet individually with those who are struggling.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Conferencing and Adding Details

**LESSON 15 OBJECTIVE:** Students will continue to work on the rough draft, incorporating peer conferencing.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** Conferencing: self, peer, teacher/student

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:** Student Drafts  
Peer Conferencing Forms

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

After students have completed a good portion of their memoir drafts, allow opportunities to read and revise. Peer conferencing is one way to provide more chances for all students to have an audience that can help them in the revision process.

When you incorporate peer conferencing, be sure to be specific about the role of the conferencing partner. One way to ensure both a praise and a prompt is to have the conferencing partner state one thing that he or she liked about the piece and ask one or two questions that he/she wants to know more about. You will model this process before expecting students to do this effectively by letting the students do peer conferencing with you. Also allow students to role model the conferencing process. (They will need multiple opportunities to see how the process works so they will be effective in their peer conferencing.)

After you have modeled peer conferencing and your partner has given you both praise and questions, model how you will revise your piece by adding the peer conferencing partner's suggestions or details to your piece.

Review the guidelines given in yesterday's lesson for writing the rough draft.  
**Continue as many sessions as needed in order for students to write, conference, and revise.**

**18. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE**

**LEARNER:** Provide a Peer Conferencing Sheet to guide peer conferences. See attached or refer to your textbook resource materials.

**19. ENRICHMENT:** Students may continue drafting and revising at their own pace.

**20. TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Use the toolbar to revise and edit.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:** Collect the Peer Conferencing Form to evaluate student writing and conferencing effectiveness. Return the forms to the author for revision.

**PEER CONFERENCING FORM**

Author's Name \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Conference Partner's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Topic of Writing Piece \_\_\_\_\_

**PRAISE**

What I liked about this piece was...

**QUESTIONS**

How come... ?

Who is...?

Where did...?

**PROMPTS**

I don't understand...

I want to know more about...

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Writing Emotions, Thoughts, and Insights - Making the Importance of the Relationship Clear to the Reader

**LESSON 16 OBJECTIVE:** Students will discover that writers make the importance of the relationship clear to the reader by including thoughts, emotions, and insights in the retelling of the memories.

**CORE CONTENT:**

WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

RD-M-1.0.8- Make predictions, draw conclusions, and make generalizations about what is read.

**VOCABULARY:** clarify, predict, confirm, summarize

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Rough draft

Overhead copy of “A Teacher’s Lessons Live Far Beyond a Classroom” by JCPS student and a copy for each student

Teacher Rough Draft

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

**Before reading**, share with the students that sometimes writers will tell the thoughts and feelings they had when the events occurred. Sometimes the writers will tell the thoughts and feelings they have now when they think about the events that occurred in the past. These thoughts and feelings are called *insights*.

In order for a memoir to be truly successful, the writer needs to make sure that he or she has included some thoughts, emotions, or insights both from the past and the present. Sharing thoughts, emotions, and insights will help the reader understand the importance of the relationship and often make personal connections.

Hand out to each student a copy of “A Teacher’s Lessons Live Far Beyond the Classroom.” Use the reading strategy Directed Reading-Thinking Activity DRTA (For more information on DRTA, see *Reading at the Middle and High School Levels – Building Active Readers Across the Curriculum*, Educational Research Service) to encourage students to use their own reasoning abilities. Briefly, the activity asks the student to

- Predict
- Read
- Confirm
- Summarize.

Based only on the title, ask the students to make a prediction about the topic. As students make predictions, add them to a list on the overhead. Clarify why the students made the predictions they did. On what did they base their predictions?

**During reading**, ask the students to read the selection to determine if their predictions were accurate. If not, discuss and clarify why some predictions were right and some were wrong. **Remind students that good readers make predictions oftentimes based on text-to-self connections.**

Using the selection, direct students to analyze the text for the following:

- Identify the most important lesson the writer learned from the subject.
- How can you identify this lesson based on the writing?
- How did the writer's life change as a result of this relationship or experience?
- How can you know this based on the writing?

Identify specific places in the selection where the writer used insights, emotions, and thoughts. Then show the students how and where you can add those details to your piece. Reread the memoir to show students how thoughts, feelings, and insights help the reader understand the relationship better.

**After reading**, have the students pair off or get into groups of 3. One student will read his/her piece to the partner(s). The partner(s) will ask the two important questions:

- What did you think and how did you feel at the time that these memories happened?
- What do you think and how do you feel about these memories now?

The students will answer these questions. The revising partner(s) may help the writer decide where and how these details will go in their pieces. The student who is reading his/her memoir will add the revisions to his/her own memoir.

Partners will then switch roles.

## **21. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

To teach written language, teach the special learners to self-talk through the initial stages of writing their memoir. Remind them to connect their feelings to their topics. Assist the student with visual and verbal cues to develop the lead.

### **ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

While the students are in peer conferences, you should visit each group to determine understanding of DRTA.



# A Teacher's Lessons Live Far Beyond a Classroom

by  
an eighth grade student

At some point in our lives, we have all been touched by someone — a person whom we admired, a person who inspired us.

A former teacher of mine touched my life in that way. Lois King, my sixth-grade language-arts teacher, always inspired and showed me how much she cared.

“If you can keep your head when all about you are losing theirs and blaming it on you; If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you, But make allowance for their doubting too...”

Those lines, from Rudyard Kipling's “If,” remind me of Mrs. King. I can recall many times when she told us, her students, not to worry what other people think of us. We were always to have a smile on our faces, no matter how gloomy things looked. Gosh knows, Mrs. King always had a big smile on her face.

“Trust Yourself...”

Mrs. King reminded us to believe and trust ourselves — to do what we honestly believe is right. An old saying that Mrs. King had on her desk sticks out in my mind: “What may be popular may not always be right; what may be right may not always be popular.”

*“...And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise...”*

Don't try to be someone you're not; be yourself. Those are some things Mrs. King instilled in her students. I can still hear her strong voice, planting those words in our minds.

*“...If you can dream – and not make dreams your master; If you can think – and not make thoughts your aim...”*

Dreams and goals were important to Mrs. King, but she was wise enough not to allow us to dwell on our hopes and fears.

I can recall many field trips when Mrs. King was just as happy as could be. We would go hiking, rafting or visit museums, and her powerful and amusing laughter kept everyone on track.

I remember well when our school experienced some dangerous and severe weather, almost a tornado. I was scared as I could be. Not to fear, though, Mrs. King was there! Not only was she there to ease my pain, but she recited that familiar poem, “If.”

*“...If you can meet with triumph and disaster and treat those two impostors just the same;”*

She did.

*“... Or watch the things you gave your life to broken, And stoop and build'em up with wornout tools...”*

In other words, move on, no matter the circumstances of life. Mrs. King had her ups and downs in life, but she did that.

Shortly after school ended for the summer of my sixth-grade year, I learned Mrs. King had cancer. In the fall, she could not return to her job. I began writing her small notes to keep her spirits up.

Then in winter, basketball season began, and Mrs. King's seventh-grade son, Robby, played on Westport Middle's team. The day that Kammerer played Westport, Mrs. King walked into the crowded gym, and the first thing I noticed was her smile – it was so big! The next, her laughter – it filled the room.

When the buzzer signaled for the game to begin, Mrs. King gave me a hug and I returned to my seat.

That day is special to me because I was able to see and talk with Mrs. King – for the last time.

When I learned that Mrs. King had died May 6, I did not take the news well. At the funeral home, with that special poem, "If," clutched in my right hand, it hurt so much to see that strong, woman whom I'd admired, incredibly, lifeless.

But as I went forth to say good-bye, her laughter and motivating voice rang in my head. It was a comforting sound that allowed me to understand that Mrs. King's spirit will forever live. She had the will that said, "Hold on."

**UNIT:** Memoir

**TOPIC:** Crafting the Lead

**LESSON 17 OBJECTIVE:** Students will write a beginning for their memoir

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** leads, introduction

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Purpose statement and all of the rough drafts of the memoirs  
Literature examples such as *Owen* and *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

A good lead is engaging. It gives the audience a reason for reading by presenting the topic to the reader and sometimes giving the reader some clues about why the writer is writing this piece. The lead shows why this subject is important to the writer.

Introduce the different types of leads using the attached handout adapted from Ralph Fletcher.

When you look at different memoirs in the literature books that you've read with the students, you'll see a wide variety of leads. Some of them begin very simply and to the point like *Owen* and *Uncle Jed's Barbershop*. These leads are summarizing leads. They tell you the subject that they are writing about and share some degree of emotion or thought about that topic.

Write a straightforward lead for your memoir. Check your lead by answering these questions:

- Does my lead fit with the purpose of my memoir?
- Does my lead give the reader a clue of the importance of this subject to the writer?

Now students will write a lead. This should follow the same guidelines as the rough drafts, that is, writing on every other line and only on the front of a page.

Students should share the leads with the class.

**22. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE**

**LEARNERS:** To teach written language, teach the special learners to self-talk through the initial stages of writing their memoir. Remind them to connect their feelings to their topics. Assist the student with visual and verbal cues to develop the lead.

- **ENRICHMENT:**

Have students write an example of each of the types of leads on the handout.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Collect student generated leads to review and assess for effectiveness. Return to student and follow up in teacher/student conference.

## Writing Effective Leads

All of the following leads are possibilities to begin a memoir about the relationship between the writer and his/her favorite blanket. Having a variety of leads and of strategies for writing leads gives you tools for your writing toolbox. After writing the options, you'll naturally choose the best one.

Choose a topic. Try different leads for this same topic. Write an example of the following types of leads for your topic. Which is the most effective and why?

### THE DRAMATIC LEAD

Example: I wouldn't make it through the night without it.

### STARTING IN THE MIDDLE OF A SCENE

Example: I was sure we'd find the blanket ripped and dirty.

### LEISURELY LEAD

Example: When I looked into my Grandma's linen closet, I was amazed by the patchwork of color. Never had I seen so many different blankets. There were soft, fluffy chenille ones and old worn brown ones. Some were still in their clear plastic wrap, while others seemed to sag off the edge of the shelf. Tucked in the middle, barely visible, with just a faded yellow corner sticking out, was the one I wanted.

### BEGINNING AT THE ENDING

Example: I joyfully pulled the tattered corners around me and sighed as I settled into the corner of the chair.

### INTRODUCING THE NARRATOR

Example: I used to think I was different from everyone else – that I had a secret friend that no one else had. But, as I've grown older and shared childhood memories with new friends, I've come to realize that lots of people had special relationships with inanimate objects. You know that special bear, t-shirt, pillow or in my case, blanket? Yes, I admit it. I had a "blankie." Did you?

### THE MISLEADING LEAD

Example: "Only insecure, immature baby's need to drag their blankets around with them!"

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Crafting Another Lead

**LESSON 18 OBJECTIVE:** Students will try a different kind of lead this time.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** All of the previous drafts and yesterday's lead  
Literature books

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Examine literature samples that you have read to the students during this unit. How did the leads work and which leads were the most engaging and interesting?

Barry Lane in his *Reviser's Toolbox*, (Discover Writing Press, 1999), discusses categories of leads:

Big Potato Leads - Jump into the middle of a memory.

Snapshot Leads - Create a picture in the reader's mind with description.

Talking Leads - Start with a line or two of dialogue.

Thinking Leads - Start with a thought inside the writer.

Model how you can create a lead using one or more of these approaches. Discuss the lead(s) that students thought were the most engaging and interesting.

Now students are ready to try another lead. Have students share these in small groups or in the whole group. Which lead is more effective? Which one is more engaging?

**23. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNER:**

Simplistic sentence structure and idea development are characteristics of pieces produced by students with writing difficulties. While conferencing may help the special student improve their lead, care should be given that the student's lead remains her or his own.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Collect student-generated leads to review and assess for effectiveness. Return to student and follow up in teacher/student conference.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Writing Physical Description Using Imagery or Figurative Language

**LESSON 19 OBJECTIVE:** Students will write more physical description about their subject using figurative language.

**CORE CONTENT: WR-M-1.2** Personal Writing

**VOCABULARY:** Snapshot

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Writer’s Notebook  
Overhead transparency or chart paper  
Thesaurus

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Teach students to use the strategy of The Magic Camera (adapted from *After The End: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision* by Barry Lane).

Writing a description of a topic is like creating a “snapshot” using words. A snapshot image is focused on the small details that allow the reader to get a personal glimpse of the topic of the memoir. Snapshot images are created by “focusing” in on the details that make a subject unique.

Students have had several lessons on the use on imagery and figurative language to develop descriptive writing; now they will use what they have learned to create a physical description of their memoir topic. The teacher should model on the overhead or chart paper. Refer to previous prewriting in Writer’s Notebook and other graphic aides (Teacher note: Although students may have chose an animal, a place, or an object to write about, for this purpose of this lesson, use a person).

Ask students to think about the subject (person, place, animal, and object) they are writing about in their memoirs. Imagine that subject in the middle of a plain, white page. Tell students to use an imaginary camera to focus on their subject. Ask them to take a picture or “snapshot” of that subject frozen in time and write a snapshot picture of that subject in their Writer’s Notebook.

When they are finished, ask them to read over their snapshot descriptions for details. The following characteristics are useful in encouraging detailed physical descriptions of a person:

Physical Characteristics

1. Describe color and shape of eyes.
2. Describe hair color, texture, and length.

3. Describe the subject's body build, structure, or physical characteristics that would help the reader identify this subject.
4. Describe physical features that would be useful in determining your subject's age.
5. Describe the movement of this subject, or the way it appears.
6. Other unique characteristics that help the reader know more about the subject (i.e., they way they laugh, sounds they make, or sounds associated with a place.)

Remind students that as writer, it is their job to help the reader get a picture of the subject in his/her mind. Using their responses, have students create a descriptive paragraph of their memoir character.

In revision groups of no more than four, revise the descriptive paragraphs by offering suggestions for creating clear images. Groups should select the best paragraph and explain what helped the reader "see" the image. Use copies of paragraphs to create a bulletin board display of descriptive passages.

Have students save the list of descriptive sentences along with other prewriting to use for drafting their memoirs.

**24. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS:**

Allow students to draw their characters to help them focus on physical characteristics of their subject. For auditory learners and those with writing difficulties, allow students to read their stories into a tape recorder. They can then listen to their stories and decide where they need to add sensory details. For students with attention deficit problems, make sure their work area contains only those necessary items for memoir writing.

**25. TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Students may use computer to create a descriptive paragraph and insert a picture using the drawing feature.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

During teacher-student writing conferences, review the students' snapshot to see if it meets the criteria of a description.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Incorporating Physical and Sensory Description into the Memoir

**LESSON 20 OBJECTIVE:** Students will incorporate physical and sensory details meaningfully into their memoirs.

**CORE CONTENT: WR-M-1.2** Personal Writing

**RESOURCES MATERIALS:** Rough draft  
Writer's Notebook - Physical Description (which includes imagery, figurative language, and sensory details)

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

In previous lessons, the students have explored the power of strong description and sensory details. These snippets of descriptive details have been recorded in a list on one page in their writers' notebooks. Students may or may not have included these details as they wrote their rough draft, but now is the time when they can reread and revise their pieces and add the description in meaningful places.

Remind them of the purpose and power of description: why writers use it and, therefore, why they will also want to use description. You will model the process of deciding which description you want to use and where it will go in your own rough draft. Review your description and sensory details list with your students. Talk about which descriptive details you especially like or you think will help the reader get a clear picture of the subject of your memoir.

Model how you decide where that description would fit in the piece (rather than simply being tacked onto the beginning or end). Show them how you can take bits and pieces of the description and immerse them into the piece so that it makes sense. Reread your rough draft so that the students can hear the powerful difference that description makes.

**Teacher's note:** The students may not need or want to use all of their descriptive words or phrases, but every student's piece should contain some descriptive language that strengthens the writing. Now, students will revise by adding descriptive information and sensory details to their pieces.

**26. EXTENSIONS/ ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

For auditory learners and those with writing difficulties, allow students to read their stories into a tape recorder. They can then listen to their stories and decide where they need to add sensory details. For students with attention deficit problems, make sure their work area contains only those necessary items for memoir writing.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Continue individual assessment during teacher/student conferencing.



**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Writing the Conclusion

**LESSON 21 OBJECTIVE:** The student will explore how to write an effective conclusion.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:** Literature or pieces of writing  
Chart paper or overhead  
Purpose Statement  
Transparency of “Top Ten Worst Endings Ever!”

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

According to Ralph Fletcher and Joann Portalupi in *Craft Lessons*, “The ending just may be the most important part in a piece of writing. The final words leave a lasting impression on the reader.” (page 68) The effective conclusion is one that does not leave the reader hanging. It will tie up or refer back to the lead in some way. It will leave the reader remembering and understanding the importance of the relationship of this subject and the writer. It will leave the reader with that understanding of the “one most important thing that the writer wanted to know about the subject.” Often the conclusion will let the reader know where the subject of this memoir is now or if it has changed. It may include insights about how the writer feels about the subject now.

Put the transparency of the “Top 10 Worst Endings Ever!” on the overhead covered. Invite different students to present the endings starting with #10. By the time you get to #1, students should get the idea that bad endings impact their whole piece. Introducing common “bad” endings takes the sting out of telling a student that he or she has a bad ending. It also empowers other students during peer conferencing because they can refer to the list, especially if you make a chart and display it.

Examine some endings in the literature books or in other samples of writing. How do they work? Make a list of the different endings. Talk about which ones the students like best and why?

Share three different conclusions for your memoir. Think-aloud the process of choosing the final conclusion. Ask students for input.

Students will write and/or revise their own conclusions. Encourage some to attempt different conclusions to change the reader’s final response to the memoir.

**27. EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNER:**

For students who are significantly weak in writing skills and who may need peer examples for support, stop class after a few minutes and ask for volunteers to share what they have written so far.

**28. TECHNOLOGY EXTENSIONS:**

Present the “Top Ten Worst Endings Ever!” as a power point presentation.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Refer to the endings when assessing the whole piece.

## **TOP TEN WORST ENDINGS EVER!**

10. **TALK TO YOU LATER.**
9. **AND THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED. THAT'S THE END.**
8. **....THEY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.**
7. **THAT'S ALL I KNOW. I HOPE YOU LIKED MY ...**
6. **FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL OR EMAIL.**
5. **THEN ALIENS CAME DOWN AND ATE THEIR BRAINS.**
4. **I HOPE YOU LIKE THIS AND GIVE ME A GOOD GRADE.**
3. **SUDDENLY, THE ALARM WENT OFF. I WOKE UP AND IT WAS ALL A DREAM. THE END.**
2. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.**
1. **THE END!**

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Writing a Title

**LESSON 22 OBJECTIVE:** Students will create a title that captures the essence of the piece and creates reader interest.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:** Literature books that you have read to students

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Refer to the books that you have read to the students as examples of memoirs. Examine each title. Does the title point to the important character in the story? Does it refer to a central event? Which title do the students like the best? Which title do they like the least?

In *Craft Lessons* by Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi (page 72), students are invited to think about the title as a doorway into the memoir. They suggest that the students generate a list of eight to ten different choices of titles. Then students are to think like the reader and ask, “What does each title say about the story?” “Which doorway do you want the reader to enter?”

Model this process for the students. Then have the students make this list prior to making a final choice for a title.

**EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNER:**

Students who lack motivation may feel overwhelmed by the requirement of eight to ten possible titles. Allow these students to develop three to five possible titles, but do not penalize the student for a shorter list.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Evaluate the effectiveness of the chosen title.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Word Work to develop effective word choice

**LESSON 23 OBJECTIVE:** Students will explore how word choice impacts reading comprehension.

**CORE CONTENT:** Literary Reading

RD-M-1.0.2 Use knowledge of synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms to comprehend a passage.

RD-M-1.0.3 Identify words that have multiple meanings and select the appropriate meaning for the context.

**VOCABULARY:** denotation, connotation, synonyms, antonyms, homonyms

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Overhead copy of the fifth grade memoir “My Special Friend” found in *Kentucky Marker Papers*

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

The words writers choose affect the reader’s response to the subject. At this age students are encouraged to use a broader vocabulary. Unfortunately, many students simply use the thesaurus and substitute any word that seems to fit. It is important for students to understand that words cannot simply be substituted without recognizing the impact of connotation and denotation.

Ask the students if they would rather be described as cheap or thrifty? The two words have the same dictionary meaning or denotation, but different connotations. Connotations are the feelings and associations that have come to be attached to certain words. Most people wouldn’t mind being called thrifty, but cheap has a negative feeling or connotation.

Check to see if you need to teach the meaning of synonym, antonym, homonym by asking student to define each of these terms. Some students may know these terms, while others may need a little reminder. Use whatever you feel is necessary to help students recall meanings of these terms (e.g. Synonym = same, Antonym = opposite).

Explain to students that this activity will help them understand the importance of choosing the right word to convey meaning. Using the overhead, underline key words in “My Special Friend” that have a specific meaning in the text. Ask students to substitute the underlined word with a synonym and see how the meaning of the text is affected. As students offer suggestions, list them on the overhead or chart paper. Sometimes the substituted word takes on a humorous connotation. Other times, the total meaning is changed. Use this to reinforce the importance of developing vocabulary skills.

Direct students to use these same strategies while revising their memoir drafts.

**EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE LEARNERS:**

Some students may need an abbreviated passage to complete this activity

**ENRICHMENT:**

Students with advanced language skills may need to use unfamiliar words like the following: finicky, dispute, ambled, delved, curtly, skirting, elude, incredulously, ashen, sentries

**11. TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:**

Word process the final draft.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:**

Check student drafts for accuracy after this activity.

**UNIT: MEMOIR**

**TOPIC:** Editing and Publishing the Memoir

**LESSON 24 OBJECTIVE:** Students will edit and publish their memoir.

**CORE CONTENT:** WR-M-1.2 Personal Writing

**RESOURCES AND MATERIALS:**

Each student's rough draft marked for editing  
*Write Right!*, *WriteSource 2000*, or any writing textbook

**TEACHING STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES:**

Using CUPS or any other ethical marking system, mark each rough draft for editing errors prior to this lesson. You may decide to form small groups to address particular editing concerns. You may decide to teach a mini-lesson to the whole class on an editing concern that nearly everyone has. Your students may be able to use *Write Right!*, *WriteSource 2000*, or any writing textbook to correct their own errors.

When students have corrected the editing concerns that you have marked, you may decide to have them work with a partner to find additional errors.

Students should write a final draft of their memoir. You should find a way to “publish” their work. Here are some possibilities:

- Give one class set of memoirs to another class to read. Have the students write a note to the author telling what they liked about the piece.
  - Create a class anthology by putting the memoirs in a binder and making a decorative cover. The anthology can stay in the classroom or in the school library.
  - Enter the pieces in a contest such as Young Authors.
  - Display pieces in the hallway or bulletin boards for others to read.
  - Submit the memoirs to magazines or on-line sites that publish children's work.
- (Ask your librarian for a copy of *Magazines for Kids and Teens* to find out magazines that publish student writing.)

You will need to assess the memoirs. You can use the Primary Continuum or the Fourth Grade Skills List for memoirs in the Kentucky Marker Papers. You may even refer to the ninth grade Marker Paper memoir to compare your students' skills with competent writing models in the High School Marker Papers. You will want to include any criteria that match the strategies and skills you have taught.

**EXTENSIONS/ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ECE/OTHER DIVERSE**

**LEARNER:** For the struggling writer with incomplete and run-on sentences and lack of sequence, coherence, and closure in story development, teach, reteach and display steps of the editing process.

**TECHNOLOGY CONNECTIONS:** Word process the final draft.

**ASSESSING THE LEARNING:** Read and score final draft of student memoir using the Kentucky Holistic Scoring Guide. Assess and annotate student progress using the *Kentucky Marker Papers*.



**OPEN RESPONSE QUESTION**

Grade 6-8 Reading

Type of Passage: Literary

**COFFEE**

**CORE CONTENT ASSESSED:**

- Identify an author's purpose in literary materials.
- Reflect on and evaluate what is read.
- Identify literary devices such as foreshadowing, imagery, and figurative language.
- Connect information from a passage to student's lives and/or real world issues.

**Coffee**

**by a JCPS 12 grade student**

Heavy footsteps meet the ground heel first on the hallway floor. The feet don't know where to walk to avoid creaks hiding within the old wood. The comforting rhythm of Daddy's steps and the sound of the wood, a sound only I can hear, tell me the day is beginning.

Awake and lonely in my bed, I listen for the shower to turn on. Then I slip out from the cold, gritty covers. Little feet with the same heel-heavy steps travel down the dark hall to a warmer, safer bed. My head sinks into the pillow that leaks feathers and smells of Old Spice. A soft yellow sheet and knotted bedspread drape so soothingly over me. The room is dark, but I focus with half-opened eyes on familiar shapes: a cluttered fireplace, the dresser three times my height, the closet too full to shut, and the doorway he'll come through when the water stops.

I breathe. I feel how warm my toes and fingers are. My Care Bear nightgown is too small for my eight-year-old body. We will save it for my little sister.

My bathrobed daddy pats my tangled, brown hair. My eyes close and I melt deeper into softness. He lays his three-piece suit on top of me and then fumbles in the dark for an undershirt. I love the warm weight of his cheap consignment suit. I know it's almost time for breakfast because his tie has been tied and he is buckling a worn-out watch to his young wrist.

Together, our footsteps sing with the wood in the dark hallway down the back stairs, past the window and the mirror. We enter a rested kitchen. The fast, bright light stabs my nighttime eyes.

While I sit at the round breakfast table, Daddy makes coffee and fills a bowl with raw oatmeal. He carries to the table a hot mug, a spoon, milk, and the sugar container. He sets the coffee in front of me and asks, “Buki, it’s too hot. Will you blow on it?” The smell of black coffee is the purest, most heavenly scent I have experienced. I breathe in its rich smoke as I watch him chop at this concoction with a spoon, back and forth, back and forth, till he takes a bite. He closes his mouth. “Hummmph,” he sighs so pleasantly.

I walk him to the door by the blue Chinese carpet. He puts on a coat not warm enough for the cold winter day. “Goodbye, Buki. I love you.” He hugs me so tightly and then shuts the door behind him. From the window, I watch him scrape ice from his ugly, brown Caprice that matches his suit so perfectly. His breath almost covers his face as he turns to my window. My little hand waves and catches a kiss sent to Buki. The car growls and roars and takes him to the hospital or to the office.

I frown at the big house that holds me; its embrace is cold and lonely. I climb the front stairs and find the bed that used to be warm. The pillow still smells so sweet, and I think, “There will be more coffee tomorrow.”

**In order to help the reader understand the writer’s purpose in writing this piece, the author uses a variety of literary devices. Read the memoir “Coffee,” written by a JCPS student before answering the following questions:**

- a. Describe the writer’s purpose in writing this piece.**
- b. Explain how the writer’s use of figurative language helps the reader understand the writer’s purpose.**

**Use examples from the text to support your answer.**

Scoring Guide for “Coffee”

- 4 Response addresses the question of writer’s purpose by describing the special relationship between father and daughter established during the morning rituals, and by explaining how the writer’s use of sensory details creates an effective tone for the reader to experience. The response offers new insights and interpretations about this relationship.
- 3 Response indicates the student’s understanding of the author’s purpose for writing this memoir and explains how sensory details and figurative language help create mental images for the reader to see.
- 2 The response indicates the student has some understanding of the literal purpose of a memoir but may not develop thoughts regarding the relationship between the characters. The response may include definitions of the terms of imagery and literary terms without making connection to the writer’s purpose
- 1 Response indicates a lack of understanding of the memoir genre. The response may focus on repeating the meaning of terms without making connections to their use in understanding the writer’s purpose.
- 0 Response is blank or makes no sense.

## **Extensions/Accommodations for ECE and other Diverse Learners**

Students with disabilities may require additional accommodations.  
Refer to IEP (Individual Education Plan)

### **Organize and Structure**

- ÿ **Establish routines to insure that students have consistent opportunities to process information and to maintain an effective learning climate.**
  3. Activate prior knowledge with a written or verbal review of key concepts at the beginning of class.
  4. Present the agenda for the lesson and task expectations verbally and in written form.
  5. Establish well-defined classroom rules. Have students model and rehearse behavioral expectations.
  6. Set clear time limits. Use a timer to complete tasks.
  7. Utilize student's peak learning times to teach important lessons.
  8. Use verbal/nonverbal cues and frequent breaks to keep students focused.
- ÿ **Plan and organize classroom arrangement to minimize disruptions and enhance efficiency.**
  9. Allow adequate space for effective traffic patterns, furniture, and equipment.
  10. Arrange classroom to limit visual and auditory distractions.
  11. Provide preferential seating (near teacher, good view of board, special chair or desk) to increase attention and reduce distractions.
  12. Keep student's work area free of unnecessary materials.
- ÿ **Display and use visuals, posters, objects, models, and manipulatives to increase memory, comprehension and establish connections to core content. Examples include....**
  13. Mnemonic devices such as COPS (Capitalization, Organization, Punctuation, Spelling).
  14. A model of the final product before beginning an experiment, project, lab, etc.
  15. Posters of steps for specific learning strategies (open response, writing process, formulas).
- ÿ **Use varied student groupings to maximize opportunities for direct instruction and participation.**
  16. Use of one-on-one and small group instruction for students who require additional support.
  17. Carefully consider student abilities, learning styles, role models, type of assignment, etc., when grouping students for cooperative learning and with peer partners.
  18. Collaborate, co-teach, or consult with ECE, Comprehensive Teachers, etc.
- ÿ **Prior to instruction, design and organize content to strengthen storage and retrieval of information.**
  19. Design instruction that incorporates a multi-sensory approach (visual, auditory, tactile/kinesthetic) to insure that all learning styles are accommodated. Include

- demonstrations, simulations, hands-on activities, learning strategies, and mnemonic devices.
20. Identify and focus on information critical for mastery. Determine the content students need to know (vs. what is nice to know). Organize instruction around the *big* ideas.
  21. Design an agenda showing exactly what the students will learn.
  22. Sequence presentation of content from easier to more difficult.
  23. Prepare study guides, a copy of class notes, or graphic organizers ahead of time. Allow some students to use partially completed copies during the lesson.
  24. Provide simplified versions of books and materials with similar content.
  25. Design specific management procedures to insure acquisition of content and task completion using...
  26. Planners, agendas, assignment sheets, homework/personal checklists, folders, notebooks, and/or parent notes.
  27. Written as well as verbal cues/prompts, color-coding, symbols, picture clues.

### **Instruct Explicitly**

#### **ÿ Present and pace explicit instruction to reinforce clear understanding of new concepts and make connections to prior learning.**

- Teach, model and rehearse learning strategies pertaining to the content of the lesson including organizational guides, cooperative learning skills, and memory/mnemonic devices. (KWL, Venn Diagrams, SQRW = Survey Question, Read, Write, etc.).
- Introduce new concepts by clearly connecting them to prior knowledge using key vocabulary, chapter review questions, agenda, syllabus, etc. Present in both written and verbal form.
- Present assignments/directions in small steps/segments.
- Use short phrases, cue words, and signals to direct attention (my turn, your turn, eyes on me).
- Adjust the volume, tone, and speed of oral instruction.

#### **ÿ Frequently monitor students to enhance memory, comprehension, and attention to content.**

- Use frequent and varied questioning strategies. Target higher order thinking skills.
- Call on students by name. Restate student responses. Provide positive and corrective feedback.
- Use and model 'think aloud,' self-questioning, problem solving, and goal setting techniques.

### **Reduce**

#### **ÿ Condense main ideas and key concepts to avoid overload and allow for developmental mastery.**

- Modify requirements of assignments based on information critical for mastery.
- Provide clear, visually uncluttered handouts/worksheets.

- Adapt assignment and test formats. Use alternate modes such as short answer, matching, drawing, true/false, and word banks.
- Break tasks into manageable segments. Adjust duration of instruction and independent work.
- Reduce redundancy and unnecessary practice.
- Use activities that require minimal writing. Avoid asking students to recopy work.
- Adjust amount/type of homework and coordinate assignments with other teachers.
- Provide credit for incremental learning.

### **Emphasize and Repeat**

#### **ÿ Use repeated practice/targeted cues to increase retention of essential concepts and to develop ability to monitor own learning.**

- Provide frequent, but short, extra practice activities in small groups.
- Have student read/drill aloud to self or peer partner.
- Highlight text or use coding methods for key concepts.
- Use bound notebooks and/or learning logs to store vocabulary, facts, references, and formulas.
- Allow students guided practice and test taking strategies before assessments.
- Frequently restate concepts/directions using short phrases.
- Use computer activities, games, and precision teaching drills for practice activities instead of worksheets.

### **Motivate and Enable**

#### **ÿ Enhance opportunities for academic success to remediate faulty learning/thinking cycles and to reduce failure.**

- Create unique learning activities including skills, posters, clay models, panoramas, dramatizations, etc. (see textbook manuals for alternative activities).
- Offer students choices of topics/projects and alternative methods to demonstrate knowledge (oral tests/presentations, illustrations, cooperative groups, etc.).
- Allow flexible timelines for assignment completion, homework, and testing with retakes.
- Consider the students learning styles when designing extent of involvement in a learning activity.
- Extend time for students to process ideas/concepts, which are presented in lectures/discussions.
- Use technology such as taped text, word processors, scanners, and audio feedback software.
- Provide spare material and supplies.
- Provide personal word lists/spelling aids for written assignments.
- Adjust grading procedures to reflect individual goals, only correct answers, and percent of completed work. Allow extra credit projects to bring up grades.

ÿ **Enhance opportunities for behavioral success to reduce frustration and confusion.**

- Increase positive comments and student interactions (make 3 positive statements for every one negative statement).
- Use positive and specific verbal/nonverbal praise. Provide immediate feedback.
- Review rules regularly. Provide varied rewards and consequences.
- Maintain close physical proximity to students especially during independent work sessions.
- Alert students several minutes before transitions occur.
- Use personal contracts and goal setting which match the student's needs, interests, and abilities.
- Teach self-monitoring skills using progress charts/reports. Gradually wean students from artificial incentives.
- Maintain regular communication with parents.

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