

Detailed Writing Lessons for The Personal Narrative

Day 1: Starting the Writing Workshop

The lessons provided in this resource are adapted from Book 1, *Launching the Writing Workshop of Units of Study for Teaching Writing Grades 3-5* by Lucy Calkins. This resource has been provided for all 4th grade teams at each campus. While this resource is not necessary for planning and facilitating the lessons outlined here, you may be interested in referring to the resource for examples of teacher language and other ideas. To order additional kits, please visit: <http://www.unitsofstudy.com/default.asp>

Terms Used Throughout this Resource

- **Writer's notebook:** a composition type book that accommodates multi-leveled assignments; used by students to collect ideas for writing, store personal entries, gathering memories, keeping occasional assignments, etc. Often travels with students during share/reflect time & to/from home
- **Writer's Portfolios:** a place where students can store completed, cumulative writing. May contain sequence of rough drafts, mentor texts, unit-specific rubrics, collected materials from writing-in-progress folders.
- **Writing-in-progress folders:** a folder for collecting drafts, rubrics, guide sheets, and mentor texts; sometimes, a two-pocket folder containing loose-leaf papers.
- **Mentor Texts:** A piece of literature that is chosen and used by an individual to study a particular genre.
- **Exemplar or touchstone texts:** previously read texts that the teacher/students return to over-&-over to study the craft of writing (ex. Leads, character development, noun/verb agreement, punctuation, etc.) If allowed, teachers sometimes make copies of pieces of that text for which students may refer to as they are writing.

Minilesson:

1. Name the teaching point by telling students that you will teach them ideas for generating personal narratives.
2. To get started with selecting what to write about, Teacher poses the following prewriting topic and writes on a chart: *Think of a person who matters to you and list clear small moments you've had with that person. List moments that you remember with crystal-clear clarity.*
3. Teacher models the entire process described above by writing on chart paper or other medium for all to see.

Independent Writing:

4. Explain to the students that what you've demonstrated is what they will now do.
5. Students think of someone that matters to them and lists on their fingers 2-3 little moments they especially remember.
6. Students are to zoom in on the most important part and make a thumbnail sketch to quickly show the order of their story.
7. Students then tell a partner their story, including all the tiny details.
8. Next, students are to return to their writing area and in silence, write the stories they have just told.

Peer Sharing:

9. Convene students in the meeting area and have a quick recap of the expectations for peer sharing.
10. Have students sit with a partner that has been assigned by the teacher using numbered paper (containing 1 and 2 followed by student names.) Students sit knee-to-knee as they take turns discussing a person who matters to them. The intent is to let students practice the art of establishing partnership conversations.
11. Students then recall and share one thing that was learned during the day's writing lesson with their partners, taking turns so that each has an opportunity to talk.
12. Post the *Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing* chart in a place for all students to see, as it will be developed over time with the students.

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing

- Think of a person who matters to you, then list clear, small moments you remember with him or her. Choose one to sketch and then write the accompanying story.

Day 2: Generating more writing

Minilesson:

1. Remind children that today and every day the writing workshop will begin with a minilesson. Remind them of what happens in a minilesson.
2. Name the teaching point by telling students that you will teach them a second strategy for generating ideas for personal narratives.
3. Teacher poses the following prewriting topic and adds it to the chart: *Think of a place that matters to you, then list clear, small moments you remember there. Choose one to sketch and then write the accompanying story.*
4. If possible, teacher shows students an exemplar or touchstone text that centers around a place. Teacher then talks about how the author might have used that strategy to get an idea about what to write and then of episodes that have happened in that place. It is important to choose just one episode to write about.
5. Teacher and students think of a place that matters to all (example: playground, cafeteria, library, etc.)
6. Together, they generate a list of small moments that happened in that place.
7. Students choose one idea and partner-share their stories orally.

Independent Writing:

8. Students are sent to their writing spots where they quietly begin to write.
9. After they have been writing awhile, teacher stops the class for a **mid-workshop teaching point**. Teacher says, *I want to also teach you that we can look at the stuff of our lives and let the things around us remind us of memories. Sometimes writers look at the things near us, and let those objects jog memories.*
10. Teacher models by providing his/her own special object and does a “think- aloud” based on the memory that object sparked.
11. Teacher adds this new strategy to the chart and reminds students that writers can use any of these strategies when they finish one entry to be able to start another entry.
12. Students return to the entry in progress.

Peer Sharing:

13. Gather whole group (sitting with a writing partner) to sum up, share, and celebrate. Remind students that we are working on writing quickly and for longer periods of time, much the same as runners do as they often push themselves to run farther and faster.

14. Teacher poses the following question, *What can you do to push yourself as a writer, like some people push themselves as a runner? Talk with your partner about your plans for how to push yourself to write more.*
15. Teacher circulates and makes notes on some of the conversations s/he heard.
16. Reconvene group and discuss some of the thoughts students expressed. The intent is to help students identify ways they can begin to build stamina for writing.

Strategies for Generating Personal Narrative Writing

- Think of a person who matters to you, then list clear, small moments you remember with him or her. Choose one to sketch and then write the accompanying story.
- Think of a place that matters to you, then list clear, small moments you remember there. Choose one to sketch and then write the accompanying story.
- Notice an object, and let that object spark a memory. Write the story of that one time.

Day 3: Qualities of Good Writing: Focus, Detail, and Structure

Minilesson:

1. Tell children that today's teaching point will begin with focus.
2. Teacher explains that when we think of a topic and then list specific instances, sometimes those specific instances are still too big.
3. Writers know that to write a story that draws readers close to listen, it helps to write about a small episode, something that happened in twenty minutes, or even in just three minutes! It is important to zoom in on one small story and to tell the parts of the story that matter, leaving out sections that don't matter. Writers retell the sequence of events in our stories, writing with details, telling the story in a step-by-step way.
4. Teacher creates a chart titled *Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing* and posts it for all to view.

***Qualities of Good Personal Narrative
Writing***

- Write a little seed story, don't write all about a giant watermelon topic.
- Zoom in so you tell the most important parts of the story.

5. Together, discuss how the first bullet point helps us think about not only *what* we're going to write about but also *how* we'll write our stories so that they really affect our readers. Usually when we think of a person, place, or object, for example, what comes to mind first are great big *watermelon* topics. To get to a really good story, it helps to select a particular, smaller subject, and tell not a watermelon story but a little seed story. Teacher provides explicit models to demonstrate the difference between *watermelon topics* and *seed stories*.

***Possible Ideas for Identifying Watermelon vs. Seed
Stories:***

- Fun times I have with my dog (watermelon)
- When I spotted my dog at the pound and realized he was the one for me (seed)
- When the person who is now my best friend arrived in our classroom and we met each other for the first time. (seed)
- My best friend (watermelon)
- The year I was on the soccer team and we won six games and lost two (watermelon)
- The time Susan and I found a quarter that had been frozen in ice and we chipped it out (seed)

6. Students will practice distinguishing between big topics and focused stories. Teacher will provide a series of ideas and ask students to identify either *watermelon* or *seed* story.
7. Together with a writing partner, students look over the entries in their notebooks and identify "watermelon story" or "seed story"
8. Encourage those students who have written *watermelon topics* to look for possible *seed stories* within.

Independent Writing:

9. Students explore and develop their identified seed stories from any larger topics they may have written (*watermelon topics*).

Peer Sharing:

10. Convene the group and have students sit with a writing partner.
11. Students share any additions they have made and Teacher notes possible exemplars of students who have developed a seed story.
12. Begin a discussion about what to do when you think you are finished writing.
13. Teacher scribes ideas as students discover ways to extend their writing. Continue to add as students come up with additional ideas.

When I'm Finished

- After I finish one entry, I should start another one because some of mine are very short.
- Return to one already written and see if I can zoom in some.
- Spend less time talking and more time writing.
- Return to my entry ideas and add more moments to my list.
-
-

Day 4: Writing with Specific Details

Minilesson:

1. Tell children that today's teaching point will begin with writing with specific details.
2. Teacher selects an exemplar from the class that shows how a student extended his/her own writing by telling *exact* details. As a result, the student may have created a movie in his/her head.
3. Teacher provides a specific example to help students understand this idea. One possible idea might be to show how a photographer zooms in on one tiny part of a larger picture. For example, instead of photographing a whole meadow, a photographer might just zoom in on three daisies within that meadow.
4. Students work with a writing partner to check for places in their own writing where they could apply this technique of using exact details.

Independent Writing:

5. Students return to their writing area and work on adding exact details to their writing.
6. Teacher circulates and provides support as needed, reminding students that "true details" do not need to have specifically occurred in the event, but if they make sense in the context of the story, the author has the license to include them.

Peer Sharing:

7. Teacher adds to the criteria chart and reminds students to use this chart periodically in their writing to extend their sentences.
8. Students share with a writing partner the places where they have added exact details.

Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing

- Write a little seed story, don't write all about a giant watermelon topic.
- Zoom in so you tell the most important parts of the story.
- Include true*, exact details from the movie you have in your head.

* (True details need not have specifically occurred in the episode, and the author has literary license to include them if they are realistic).

Day 5: The Writer's Job in a Conference

Teachers tend to ask the following questions during a conference. This lesson prepares students to answer them.

- *What are you working on as a writer?*
- *What are you trying to do as a writer?*
- *What will you do today in your writing?*

Minilesson:

1. Tell children that today's teaching point will center on the writing conference and the structure in which they will be participating.
2. Teacher explains that during the writing conference, the child's job will be to talk to the writing teacher about their thinking.
3. The teacher will want to know what they are trying to do as a writer, what they've done so far, and what they are planning to do next.
4. The teacher will begin the conference by interviewing the writer, asking questions about their writing (not their topic).
5. The teacher's job will be to observe writing behaviors that will move the writing forward.
6. Set children up to practice their roles in the conference by asking questions you might ask of the writer. The student's role will be to think about the answer, and look to the charts posted if unsure what to say. For now, the conference will be a "thinking" one and will not be shared orally as students practice how to focus on the specific questions.
7. Teacher poses the following question and allows students thirty seconds to silently answer the question: *What are you working on today as a writer?*
8. Students turn and talk to their writing partner about what they are thinking. A further question might be posed: *What are you trying to do as a writer?*
9. Teacher pulls group back together and asks students to consider the following question silently for thirty seconds and then to share with their partner: *What will you do today in your writing?*

Independent Writing:

10. Students go to their writing area and work on adding exact details to their seed story. If students finish one story, remind them that they can add exact details to another seed story. Remind them of your 'When I'm Finished' chart.

Peer Sharing:

11. Students listen to and think about their partner's writing and name what is working well in it. (Partner 1 reads what they wrote today, while partner 2 talks specifically about what worked well and where this occurred). Repeat for second partner.

Teacher Tip: Sometimes students write a summary instead of a story. To help with this, suggest that students make a movie in their mind detailing exactly, *What happened first? Where was I?* If the partners decide that the entry is not yet a story, consider having the writer start again, telling exactly what happened first and then next.

Day 6: Building Stories Step-by-Step

Minilesson:

1. Explain that personal narratives are often organized chronologically, told as a sequence of events and not a description of events.
2. Model what it means to storytell an event. For example, instead of: *I went swimming with my best friend. It was hot. He showed me how to flip backwards.* A personal narrative would say, *On Saturday John and I spent the whole day in the neighborhood pool. When we couldn't think of any other games to play, John asked, "Do you know how to do a backwards flip underwater?"*
3. Explain that writers tell their stories step-by-step, getting the memory in their head and then thinking, 'What happened first, then next, then next.'
4. Model telling a story step-by-step using one of your own stories.
5. Ask students to turn to a partner and storytell an event. For this practice, choose an event they all have in common, like a fire-drill.
6. Listen in as students tell each other the story.
7. Highlight the storytelling of a couple of students who resisted describing the event and instead told the story step-by-step.

Independent Writing:

8. Restate the goal for today. *'From now on, whenever you are writing a story, don't just talk all about what happened; instead describe what happened first, then next, and next. Start today by rereading your stories from yesterday and making sure you have told them as stories.'*
9. Students will continue to work in their writer's notebooks.

Peer Sharing:

10. Ask one or two students who wrote their stories step-by-step to share their work with the class. Ask students, *'What did these writers do that all writers do?'*

Teaching Tip: For students who struggle with oral storytelling or with sequencing events, you could offer them the option of creating a storyboard to help them move through their narrative step-by-step. You could create a template that looks like this:

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Carefully consider which students would benefit from using this template. For some students, doing so will only delay their drafts; for others, the necessity of doing so will support their drafts.

Day 7: Choosing a Seed Idea

In this lesson you will be solidifying the foundation for writing focused pieces throughout the year. You'll want to consider how to make this conversation public in order to continue to build on these ideas later.

Teaching Tip: Today represents a change for your students as writers. For the first time this year they will be taking one small idea – a seed idea – and thinking about how to turn it into a complete story for publication. This will be a good time for you to take stock of your students as writers, considering: What seems to be getting better? What hasn't changed?

As you review the work in your students' writer's notebooks, try to make both general observations about your students as a whole and observations specific to small groups or individual students. Find a way to record your observations so that they can guide your whole group instruction and your individual conferences with students.

Minilesson:

1. Tell students you'll teach them to choose one entry to develop into a publishable piece. *Today I want to teach you that writers don't just write one entry and then write another and another as we have been doing. As writers, after we collect entries and ideas for a while, we reread and we find one story, one entry that especially matters to us and we make a commitment to that one entry. We decide to work on it so it becomes our very best writing ever.*
2. Using *Roxaboxen* or any favorite narrative text as a reference, explain to the students that writing allows authors: *to take the stuff that is all around them in their lives – the little stories – and hold one small piece of life in their hands, declaring it a treasure.*

Teaching Tip: It is not necessary to use the exact text mentioned above for this lesson. Select any favorite narrative text that illustrates the idea of small treasures all around us – the stories of our lives – that can be used to write a publishable piece.

3. Model how you go back to your entries and you reread them and think about whether one of your entries might be worth developing into a story that you'd like to publish.
4. Ask students to tell their partner three specific things they saw you doing in order to choose an entry that mattered to you.

Independent Writing:

5. Restate the goal for today's writing time: *Today, and whenever it is time for you to stop collecting entries and begin working on one writing project, remember that you – like writers everywhere – can reread your entries and think, 'Which of these really matters?' Look for entries that draw you in, that seem to be saying, 'Pick me!'*

Choosing a Seed Idea

- Carefully reread all of your entries.
- Ask yourself, 'Does this really matter to me? Does it say something about me?'
- Star the entries that seem like possibilities.
- Come back to all the starred entries and choose the one that's saying 'Choose me!'
- Choose the entry that you have a lot to say about.

6. Students work in their writer's notebooks to choose a seed idea to develop into a published piece.

Closing:

7. Provide time for students to read books and stories that remind them of what they want to write.

With your seed idea in mind, take some time to read one of these books. Read it and reread it until you get the sound and the feeling in your bones. Feel the mood and the shape. You'll want to feel that so that you can create it with the entry you've chosen.

- Collection of mentor texts about seed moments.
Possible examples might include:
 - *Emily* by Michael Bedard
 - *The Sleeping Porch* by Karen Ackerman
 - *The Sunsets of Miss Olivia Wiggins* by Lester Laminack

Day 8: Revising Leads: Learning from Published Writing

Minilesson:

1. Tell students that writers improve leads by studying the work of authors and then applying their techniques.
2. Explain that leads in stories matter not only for the reader, but for the writer as well. *A great lead sets us (writers) up to write a great story.*
3. Discuss with students ways that writers can improve their leads – reading beautiful leads written by other authors and closely examining their work. Writers can ask themselves: *What exactly has this author done that I could try?*
4. Demonstrate or model how to study the work of mentor authors. Think aloud as you study the lead of a mentor author and say, *Watch how I study the lead of (author) from (title of book).* Read and then reread the lead quietly. Then say, *I read it once, then reread it. I'm trying to figure out the feeling for the lead. I'm thinking, What has (author) done that I could do? The first thing I notice is ...*
5. Chart the elements the mentor author included. They might include: main character doing a specific action, main character saying or thinking something, another character doing an action.
6. Model taking what you've noticed and applying it to your own story or a class story, being explicit about what and how you are revising. You might say, *I decided to add action and a clearer picture of the setting to my lead.*
7. Share a lead written by one student.
8. Ask children to revise the lead out loud with a partner.

Independent Writing:

9. Restate the teaching point. *When you go back to your tables to write, think about what you have learned about writing leads and then try out three or four different leads in your notebook. Try starting with the setting, or actions, or dialogue, or a combination of these.*

Peer Sharing:

10. Name what you hope that your students learned from the demonstration on leads. Add this lesson to the *Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing* chart.
11. Share the work of one or two students who wrote several possible leads

***Qualities of Good
Personal Narrative Writing***

- Write a little seed story; don't write all about a giant watermelon topic.
- Zoom in so you tell the most important parts of the story.
- Include true, exact details from the movie you have in your mind.
- Begin with a strong lead—maybe use setting, action, dialogue to create mood.

Day 9: Writing a Draft

In this lesson, teacher will show students that one way writers draft is by writing fast and long in order to get a whole story down on paper as it comes to mind.

Minilesson:

1. Explain to students that there are some kinds of writing that you have to do very fast. Like riding a bicycle, to stay up, we need to pedal fast and go full speed ahead. In order to tell a whole story and make listeners feel what we want them to feel, it helps to write fast and long. *Today, we'll write the same stories that we told each other...only better!*
2. Explain that when drafting, students will use loose-leaf notebook paper, write on only one side, and skip lines.

Independent Writing:

3. Students reread the lead that they wrote in their writer's notebooks.
4. Take out loose-leaf notebook paper for writing the story. Students touch the pages as they tell the whole story, spreading across pages, and then go back to page one.
5. *Reread the lead and remember the beginning of the event. Pretend you are storytelling to listeners. Make them feel whatever you want them to feel. Start writing and write fast, keeping your eyes on the true story.*

Peer Sharing:

6. Have students take a moment to reread what they wrote today and then choose a phrase or sentence that they particularly love. Have students share these lines or phrases.
7. Ask students to share how the strategy of storytelling a story to a partner and to ourselves and writing fast and long helped them.

Day 10: Revising Endings - Learning from Published Writing

Minilesson:

1. Remind students how they have been writing fast and long on their drafts and how they worked really hard to write leads that would capture and hold the attention of the reader. (Read some examples of leads that students have revised.)
2. Explain that a secret that many beginning writers don't know is that writers work just as hard - or maybe even harder - on endings. *Today, I am going to teach you to work on your endings by using one of our mentor texts (that we have read before).*
3. Explain that we want to be sure that our ending fits with the idea that we are writing about and that it stays with the reader. Examine an ending.
4. Teacher rereads the mentor text and asks students to think about what the author did to make the ending powerful.
5. Teacher models drafting a strong ending that ties together important ideas for his/her story.

Independent Writing:

6. Remind students that writers work hard on endings. Writers study endings from mentor texts, make plans for their endings, and then write rough draft endings.
7. Student will reread drafts asking themselves "What is the important message I have conveyed?" Students reread and mark places that seem especially important. The ending should somehow relate to these ideas.
8. Students work quietly rereading and marking important actions, words, images that could maybe be woven into the final scene or image. Have students try several endings for their piece (important action, dialogue, images).

Peer Sharing:

9. Name what you hope that your students learned from the demonstration on endings. Add this lesson to the *Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing* chart.
10. Share the work of one or two students who wrote several possible endings.

Teaching Tip: It is not necessary to use the exact text mentioned above to learn about writing endings. Select a narrative text with which children are already familiar and that has an ending that is succinct and memorable and has moves in it that children can see. Do not only read the last line of the text. Usually an author regards both the lead and the ending of the story as longer than one or two lines.

- Try a mentor text, such as *Fireflies!* By Julie Brinckloe.

Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing

- Write a little seed story; don't write all about a giant watermelon topic.
- Zoom in so you tell the most important parts of the story.
- Include true, exact details from the movie you have in your mind.
- Begin with a strong lead—maybe use setting, action, dialogue to create mood.
- Make a strong ending—maybe use important actions, dialogue, images, and whole-story reminders that make a lasting impression.

Teaching Tip: As you read your students' writing, checking conventions, determine areas of need for future mini-lessons: punctuation, consistent tense, etc.

Day 11: Starting a Second Piece

Minilesson:

1. Celebrate your students' rough drafts!
2. Name the teaching point: *Some of you have reached the end of your drafts while others still have a lot to write. Either way, you should not need to line up beside me and ask, "What do I do now?" You are in charge of your writing – writers make their own writing decisions."*
3. Explain that only each writer can decide when a story is done. In the next week, all students will write a second story; some starting today, and some tomorrow or the next day. *After each student has written two stories, we will look back on them both and choose one we like best to revise again, edit, and publish.*
4. Explain how to chart to keep tabs on progress through the writing process.

<i>Monitoring My Writing Process</i>	1st Piece	2nd Piece
Gather entries		
Select and develop one seed idea		
Storytell to rehearse for writing		
Read mentor texts		
Draft leads-try actions, dialogue...		
Choose paper, plan across pages, copy lead		
Write draft with each part on separate page		
Reread and revise for clarity		
Draft endings-important actions, etc.		
Revise and edit now or wait until later		

Teaching Tip: Make sure the language you use on your *Monitoring My Writing Process* chart matches the language you've been using to explain each step in the unit on personal narrative.

Independent Writing:

5. Students decide where they are in the process: *Before we begin writing today, think about where you are. Look over your folder and ask yourself which steps you have already done for your first piece? Do I need to use my writer's notebook to start a second piece?*
Teacher circulates to confer and assist.

Peer Sharing:

6. Ask students to examine their work for examples of some qualities of good writing from the class chart.
7. Ask a few students to share what they are doing that is working well.

Teacher Tip: Be sure to share exemplar (or touchstone) texts during read aloud. Point out places that these expert authors exemplify the qualities of good personal narrative writing.

Day 12: Timelines as Tools for Planning Stories

Minilesson:

1. Tell students that you will teach them another strategy for developing a story idea: making timelines.
2. Model strategy by making timeline with your own writing idea.
3. Explain how making a timeline helps to set parts of the story in order. The timeline can be used to remind us what happened first, second, next, and after that.

Example Timeline:

- 
- Lunch
 - Brought frisbee to yard
 - Threw frisbee
 - Mud puddle
 - Bee drowning
 - Saved bee
 - Bee stung me
 - Stepped on bee
 - Ran away
 - Got frisbee

Independent Writing:

4. Set students up to try the strategy. Have them recall an event the class experienced together; help them make their own timelines of that event.

Peer Sharing:

5. Celebrate that they are imagining starting points for their second piece of writing.
6. Add this new strategy to the *Monitoring My Writing Process* chart.

<i>Monitoring My Writing Process</i>	1st Piece	2nd Piece
Gather entries		
Select and develop one seed idea		
Storytell to rehearse for writing		
Read mentor texts		
Draft leads-try actions, dialogue...		
Choose paper, plan across pages, copy lead		
Write draft with each part on separate page		
Reread and revise for clarity		
Draft endings-important actions, etc.		
Revise and edit now or wait until later		
Create a timeline		

7. Explain that timelines can be used to help Writers focus and revise our writing before it is even written. Give an example...*In realizing that I really want to zoom in on my story, I can cross out the part about lunch. It doesn't really matter to the story.* Ask students to consider revising the timeline of the class' story.

Day 13: Timelines as Tools for Planning Stories

Minilesson:

1. Remind students that yesterday we learned that writers can get ready to draft stories by making timelines. This helps to tell the order of events. We can also cross out parts that are not important to the story before we begin to write.
2. Name the teaching point: *Writers can also zoom in on just one dot of a timeline, expanding that single dot into a timeline of its own.*
3. Show students an example of a timeline that has been made from a small part of another one (from your timeline or from the class).

Independent Writing:

4. Ask students to try this new strategy. Students read over their timelines and choose an important dot to expand upon.
5. Partners share the story of just one dot on their timelines so that the partner can make a movie in his or her mind.
6. Students may choose how to get started or progress with second story and draft.

Closing:

7. Explain that writers can keep themselves on track by making and sticking to plans and goals. Writers can do this by looking back at first completed piece and by thinking, "What did I do in this piece that I want to always do as a writer?" (Share some strategies used by some of your students.)
8. Get with partners, look over each other's first pieces, and create some goals for your future writing, starting with this piece.

Day 14: Writing From Inside a Memory

Minilesson:

1. Review with students that writer's don't just sit down in front of a blank sheet of paper, pick up a pencil, and write. Instead, as writers, we live in a way that gets us ready to write. We look for possible stories, gather entries, then select an entry that matters to us, storytell to our friends and ourselves, and draft and revise timelines of the story sequence. We often explore different leads and plan how our story will lay out across pages.
2. Name the teaching point: *Today I want to teach you that writing personal narratives well involves reliving episodes from our own lives.*
3. Point out to students that we all have memories (good and bad) that are seared into our minds forever and give some examples. As writers, we can go back and relive not only life-changing events, but also small moments that for some reason really matter.
4. Model how you write by reliving. *I'm going to close my eyes and think deeply about a memory. I remember exactly where I was...*

Independent Writing:

5. Ask students to try this strategy by reliving an important moment from the day before and write it down as they lived it. Have one student share or the teacher can share one student's writing as an example.
6. Give students some time to think and write.

Peer Sharing:

7. Students share what they wrote with partners. Allow a few students to share with the group, if time.
8. Add to the criteria chart *Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing*.

Qualities of Good Personal Narrative Writing

- Write a little seed story; don't write all about a giant watermelon topic.
- Zoom in so you tell the most important parts of the story.
- Include true, exact details from the movie you have in your mind.
- Begin with a strong lead—maybe use setting, action, dialogue to create mood.
- Make a strong ending—maybe use important actions, dialogue, images, and whole-story reminders that make a lasting impression.
- Relive the episode as you write it

Teaching Tip: Keeping charts alive in the classroom is very important. It's not enough to hang them on the walls and expect students to look at them or use them. The more a chart is referred to, the more likely it will be used by the students.

Day 15: Paragraphing to Support Elaboration

Minilesson:

1. Celebrate how the students are writing from inside their stories (reliving) and not summarizing from a distance.
2. Explain how writers use paragraphs to group ideas in their stories. For example, each dot on the timeline is probably one grouping or one paragraph. Teacher shares an example of her writing on chart tablet divided into paragraphs. Explain that from now on, as they write, they will chunk their stories into paragraphs.
3. Set children up to practice the strategy on a class text with partners.

Independent Writing:

4. Ask students to reread their drafts and draw a box around the sentences that go in a chunk. Explain that when they make the next draft, they can put in the paragraphs.
5. Students continue to draft.

Peer Sharing:

6. Gather whole group to share and reflect on successful uses of this minilesson.
7. Show an example of a student's writing who used paragraphing.

Day 16: Paragraphing to Support Elaboration

This is the second of two lessons on paragraphing. As the writers in your classroom develop, you will want to revisit this lesson throughout the year, in order to layer on specific times when paragraphing is needed (change of place, time, speaker, etc...) and to support sequence and summary in reading.

Minilesson:

1. Point out that many of the students' paragraphs are tiny, a signal that their pieces are underdeveloped.
2. Name the teaching point: Tell students that tiny paragraphs signal a need for elaboration. *This means you need to say more about a topic, a moment, a scene before moving to the next paragraph. It's great to elaborate in your first drafts as you write, but you can also go back to a complete draft and realize there are places where you need to say more.*
3. Teacher models how to add ideas and elaborate a paragraph of her writing.
4. Set students up to practice the strategy on a class text with partners. (Ask a student's permission if using a piece of writing.)
5. Partners read over the draft and think about the elements of effective narrative writing. *Does the piece include dialogue? Small actions? Thoughts? The setting? If you can find out what is not there, then you know one way to elaborate. Partners discuss what could be added.*

Independent Writing:

6. When students write today, ask them to remember to elaborate on their sentences and paragraphs by adding actions, dialogue, descriptions, and thoughts.

Peer Sharing:

7. Remind students of the day's teaching on elaboration. Invite students to share an example of elaboration.

Teaching Tip: As you confer with students, prompt them to elaborate and revise by asking questions, such as "What's the most important part of this story? What's the heart of this story?" Have students reread drafts to answer these questions.

Day 17: Revision: Developing the Heart of a Story

Minilesson:

1. Remind students of the work they've been doing; rally their energies toward revision.
2. Name the teaching point: Revision is not about fixing errors; it is about finding and developing potentially great writing, sometimes by adding more to the heart of the story.
3. Students will reread both pieces they have written and decide which one has special promise; and that is the piece that will be revised and published.
4. Spotlight what one student did (as you conferred yesterday) in a way that illustrates the teaching point. Retell the story of that process pointing out what the student did to find and develop the heart of her story.
5. Practice this work on a class story. Reread. *Think and tell your partner where the heart of this story might be for you. Make a movie in your mind of what happened at that part and tell your partner how you'd stretch that part out.*

Independent Writing:

6. Students return to their chosen draft to make their story the best in the world.

Peer Sharing:

7. Highlight a student who took the minilesson to heart. Tell the story of that student's work in a way others can learn from.

Day 18: Using Editing Checklists

Minilesson:

1. Explain to students that there are many self-help books published, such as *How to Become a Millionaire*, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, etc. Tell students that it is time for the part of the writing process called editing and that they deserve a self-help text that can act as a personal coach on editing.
2. Name the teaching point: Writers use editing checklists to remind us of strategies we can use to edit our writing. (attached)
3. Distribute editing checklists for students to keep in their writing folders.
4. Teacher uses chart-sized editing checklist to explain the process to the students.

Independent Writing:

5. Students read through their drafts with partners, focusing on one item on the checklist.
6. Ask students to reflect on the editing process. Students will then ask a writing buddy to help edit. Students exchange papers and be another pair of eyes for their partners. Have students select a different color pen or pencil and put on their best 'editing glasses'!

Teaching Tip: Using a different color pen or pencil, or one with a special flair to it, can be a tool that inspires editing: a fancy editing tool can spark kids to make changes just for the thrill of using it – especially when it comes to correcting spelling and punctuation.

Teaching Tip: At some point, the students will need to assess their writing and decide which editing tasks they need to add to their own editing checklists. The checklist is also a place you can add items you and the child discuss in conferences and strategy lessons. This helps to hold the student accountable for all of the minilessons taught.

Name _____ Date _____
 Title: _____ Unit of Study: _____

Reread your writing carefully. Put a check mark in each box under “Author” as you complete each editing item. Once all the boxes are checked, give this editing checklist to the teacher for the final edit.

Editing Checklist	<i>Author</i>	<i>Teacher</i>
1. Clarity - Read, asking, “Will this make sense to a stranger?” Find confusing spots and rewrite to make them clearer. Note places where you stumble as you reread and revise to make them easier to read.		
2. Punctuation - Read, paying attention to the actual road signs you’ve given readers. If you followed the punctuation as you’ve written it, will the piece sound the way you want it to sound? Have you guarded against sentences that run on and on? Have you punctuated dialogue?		
3. Spelling - Do your words look correctly spelled to you? Circle ones that feel as if they could be wrong, try them again, get help with them. Check that the words on the word wall are correctly spelled.		
4. Paragraphs - Narrative writers use a new paragraph or a new page for each new episode in the sequence of events. Do you paragraph to show the passage of time? Do you also paragraph to show changes in who is speaking?		
Optional Items:		
Punctuation For strugglers... Have I written with periods and capital letters? Do I avoid using <i>and</i> or <i>so</i> to combine lots of short sentences together into one run-on sentence? For more experienced writers... Have I used complex punctuation and varied sentences to help readers read my story with expressiveness and in a way that creates the mood I want to create? Have I used a mentor author to give me ideas for new ways to use punctuation to create a powerful effect in part of my story?		
Spelling When tackling long and challenging words, have I tried to record every sound I hear in the word? Have I used what I know about how other words are spelled to help me spell parts of the challenging word? Have I reread my spelling and circled the parts of words that I think could be wrong? Have I used spellings I know (and especially those on the word wall) to help me tackle words of which I’m unsure?		

Day 19: Publishing: A Writing Community Celebrates

As you decide what Author Celebrations will look like in your classroom, consider these things:

- Would invited guests provide a purpose for reading the published pieces aloud?
- Will every student read their piece aloud for the whole audience or will students read to small groups?
- Will the celebration include refreshments?
- If there will be an audience, should they be given a purpose for listening to and commenting on the stories?
- How will the work that is celebrated today, be shared with a greater audience?

An Author's Celebration – The First of the Year!

1. This first celebration should make your writers feel proud of what they have accomplished and should strengthen their motivation for writing.
2. Plan to celebrate children's change into writers rather than celebrating exquisite writing. The children's work should stand as examples of their best work so far.

One Way to Organize the Celebration:

3. Set-up four sharing stations in your classroom that will accommodate one author's chair and 8-10 audience members.
4. Bring guests into the room and explain the structure for the celebration, comparing it to a reading you've attended at a bookstore.
5. Explain that at each sharing station 5-6 authors will be sharing their stories and will be available to answer 1-2 questions about their life as writers from the audience.

Making the Celebration Public:

6. With your writers, you can prepare a Bulletin Board to display their work for the whole school to enjoy.
7. Students can be given stickers or crayons to decorate their pieces before they are posted on the board.