

Young Writers' Month (K-6)

Lesson Sequence with Model Text Recommendations

by the Fall 2017 EDUC 411 Elementary Language Arts & Literacy Skills students with Prof. McMyne: L. Casselman, J. Carpenter, C. Crum, R. Damm, M. Lamb, K. Peterson.

OVERVIEW

Each year, Lake Superior State University partners with Bayliss Public Library, a Superior District Library to encourage a month of writing narratives, similar to NaNoWriMo, for student writers. This year's writing theme will be: who's your hero? Students in grades K-6 are encouraged to participate, writing narratives about real-life or fictional heroes.

This year's Young Writers' Month will take place from October 12 – November 11, 2017 and will culminate with a publication party and optional open mic event on November 11 from 1-3pm, celebrating young writers, at Bayliss Public Library in Sault Sainte Marie. At the Young Writers' Month publication party, students will be encouraged to read their narratives to adults, to one another, and/or to the HOPE therapy dogs who will attend the event. There will be an optional open mic for older students to read their stories, as well as a sheet cake by Ella Cakes.

At the end of the publication party event, students will be encouraged to put their hero narratives on display in the children's room at Bayliss. All stories on display in Bayliss or left with Prof. McMyne at the end of the event will be considered for the 2017 LSSU Young Authors anthology. Students who are unable to attend the publication party may still submit their stories for display and anthology consideration by Nov. 11 to Prof. McMyne or a student in EDUC 411 with an entry form. Entries may be mailed to Prof Mary McMyne, Department of English, Lake Superior State University, 650 W. Easterday, Sault Sainte Marie, MI 49783.

Students will learn about heroes not only within the stories they are reading but also think about real life heroes and characteristics of heroes. Students will then use this knowledge to write their own story about heroes. This lesson can be adapted for students in grades K-6.

ACTIVITIES

PART ONE: READING A HERO STORY

- Engage students in a whole class discussion determining what characteristics make up a hero, making a chart on the board.
 - Teachers of younger students may wish to capture hero characteristics in pictures.
 - Older students may enjoy using PollEverywhere to text one-word hero characteristics to a projection screen.
- Read aloud and enjoy a short story featuring a hero of any sort with the students. Some of the texts we recommend for this purpose are:
 - *What Do You Do With a Problem?* by Kobi Yamada (4-minute read-aloud available on YouTube)
 - "The Little Hero of Holland" from *Children's Book of Virtues* by William J Bennett
 - *The Bravest Dog Ever: The True Story of Balto* by Natalie Standiford (15-minute read-aloud available on YouTube)

- *Jackie Robinson* by Kenneth Rudeen
- *Eleanor* by Barbara Cooney
- *Johnny Appleseed* by Stephen Kellogg
- *5-Minute Hero Stories* from DC Super Friends
- With the whole class, analyze the narrative structure of the chosen hero story with a developmentally appropriate level of detail. (The narrative writing anchor standard, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3, becomes more specific for upper grades, requiring students to compose narratives with a beginning, middle, and end, using details, characters, transitions, dialogue, etc.)
 - Capturing and saving the notes from this discussion, either in a graphic organizer, a First-Then-Next-Last chart, or on a flipchart, will help students brainstorm their stories in part two. Sample graphic organizers follow this lesson plan.

PART TWO: WRITING A HERO STORY

- Discuss examples from the story and real life examples as a whole class, filling out a Venn diagram showing heroes in fictional stories and real life.
- Introduce Young Writers' Month and explain that each student must create a story about a hero. Ask them to look at the Venn diagram to help brainstorm whether they will write about a real-life hero or a fictional one.
 - Writing a story "in the air" with the students as a whole-class can help model the thinking students might use to invent their own stories.
- Remind students that they must have clear characters and plot and that their story must have a sequence of events that makes sense, as the class discussed last time.
 - Students may benefit here from reviewing their graphic organizer or the flipchart from part one.
- Students will be given time to start thinking about their stories and writing down their ideas; students may use whatever format makes sense to them in order to organize their ideas. Students may benefit from using graphic organizers, if they wish.
- Once they show the teacher their ideas they may then begin writing their story.
- Peer editing may be done, as time allows, in order for students to create the best story they can.
 - Developmentally appropriate graphic organizers may be used to assist students in peer editing; a sample peer editing graphic organizer follows the entry form.

STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.W.3 Write narrative to develop real or imagined experiences or event using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.CCRA.L.1 Demonstrate command of conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing and speaking.

RATIONALE

This lesson begins with a read-aloud for entertainment because according to Cox (2014), “engaging students with literature to ensure their experiences with books are meaningful is a key element in the practice of integrated teaching with literature” (p. 69). Reading aloud to students makes reading more enjoyable, increases student vocabulary, and allows teachers to model enjoyment of reading to students. Remember, the “single most important activity for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children” (Koralek, 1999, p.1). Recommended texts for this activity have been chosen for their instructional qualities and students’ abilities to relate to them. “Relating to a story” is important to students’ aesthetic enjoyment of texts because when children relate to characters, they can better imagine the story and “experience sympathy” (Parsons, 2013).

REFERENCES

- Cox, C. (2014). *Teaching language arts: a student-centered classroom*, 6th edition. Boston, Allyn and Bacon.
- Koralek, D. (1999). Reading aloud with children of all ages. *Young Children Journal*. 5, 1-6.
Retrieved from <https://www.naeyc.org/files/yc/file/200303/ReadingAloud.pdf>

ANTHOLOGY RUBRIC

Below is the rubric students in EDUC 411 will be using to select stories for the anthology. These rubrics are provided here, for teacher information only. Teachers wishing to share this information with students should adapt the below rubrics before sharing with them with students.

K - 2nd Grade

- ☐ Hero narrative characteristics
- ☐ Clear sequencing, with a beginning, middle, and ending
- ☐ Creative and entertaining
- ☐ Compelling details
- ☐ Ending follows logically from the beginning and middle

3rd - 6th Grade

Hero narrative characteristics	0	1	2	3
Clear opening	0	1	2	3
Natural flow of events (sequencing)	0	1	2	3
Descriptive details	0	1	2	3
Careful word choice	0	1	2	3
Creative and entertaining	0	1	2	3
Developing theme	0	1	2	3
Attention to punctuation, conventions of language	0	1	2	3
Ending follows logically, balancing surprise and closure	0	1	2	3

ENTRY FORM



Young Writers' Month

Child's Name (please print): _____

Grade (circle one): K 1 2 3 4 5 6 Teacher: _____

School: _____

Title of Story: _____

Phone Number: _____

Permission of Parent or Guardian:

I give Lake Superior State University permission to “publish” – that is, publicly display my child’s story for the community – at Bayliss Public Library, a Superior District Library. I give Lake Superior State University permission to publicize my child’s name, to recognize my child’s work, and if the story is selected for print publication, I give permission for LSSU to print the story in a one-time-only limited edition anthology, which will be distributed back to my child, other students, teachers, and members of the local community, free of charge.

SIGNATURE: _____

Students who are unable to attend the publication party may still submit their stories for display and anthology consideration by Nov. 11 to Prof. McMyne or a student in EDUC 411 with an entry form. Entries may be mailed to Prof Mary McMyne, Department of English, Lake Superior State University, 650 W. Easterday, Sault Sainte Marie, MI 49783.

Mark your calendars! The Young Writers Month celebration will be Saturday, November 11 from 1-3pm at Bayliss Public Library, a Superior District Library in Sault Sainte Marie.

SAMPLE NARRATIVE WRITING GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS

Name _____

Narrative Pre-Writing Sheet

Topic			
Who?			
Where?			
What happened first?	What happened second?	What happened third?	What happened last?



Narrative Writing

Name _____

Narrative Writing: Problem Helper

Topic Idea:

Setting (who, where, when):

The problem:

Beginning of the Problem _____

Middle of the Problem _____

End of the Problem _____

Conclusion:

Name _____

Character Traits

Title _____

Character:

Trait:

Trait:

Trait:

Evidence:

Evidence:

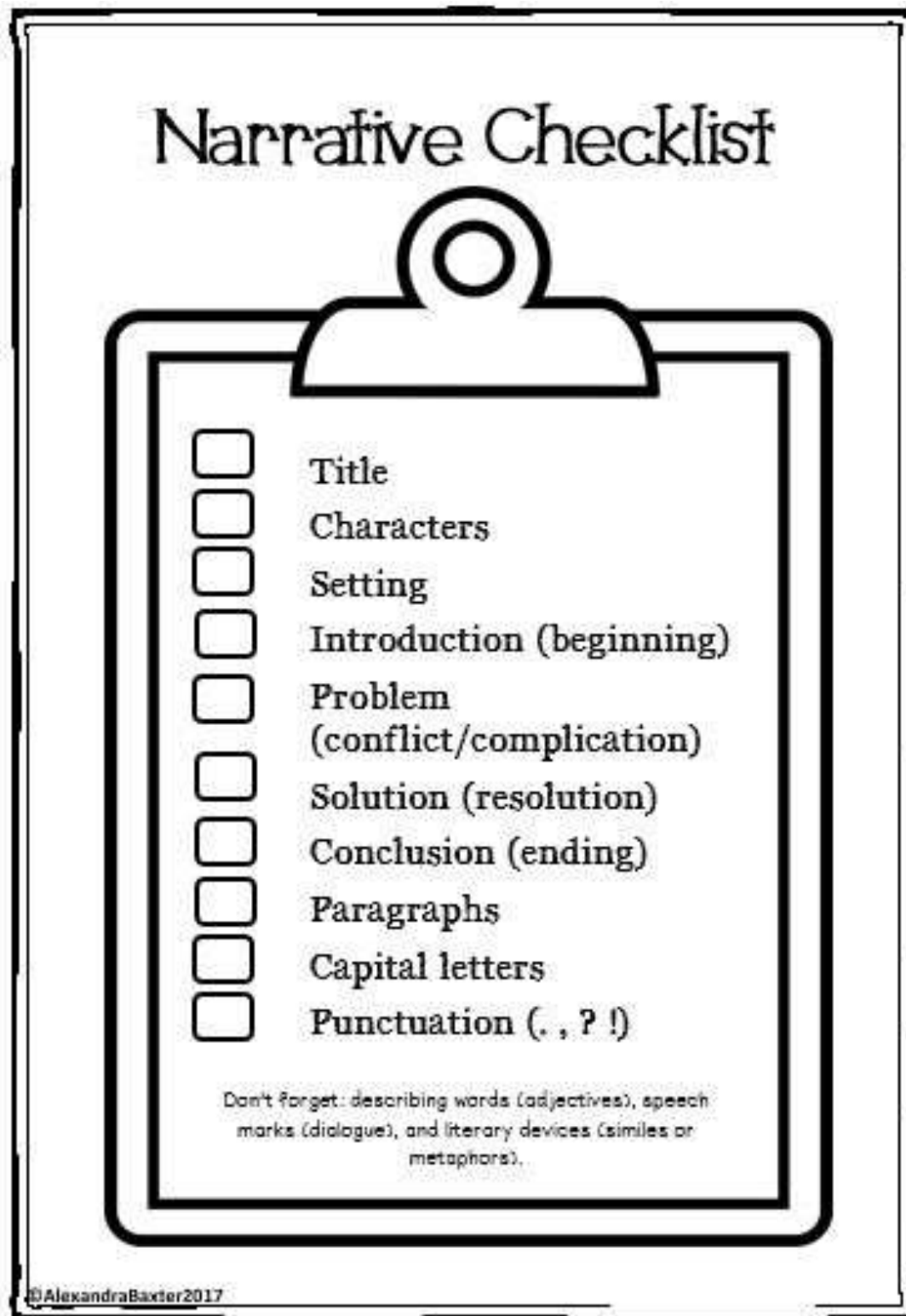
Evidence:

Whitneyslp

Story Map:

Characters:	Setting:	Problem:
Plan:		Resolution:

SAMPLE PEER EDITING GRAPHIC ORGANIZER



A graphic organizer titled "Narrative Checklist" designed to look like a clipboard. The title is at the top in a large, serif font. Below it is a large, empty rectangular box with a thick black border, representing the checklist area. To the left of this box is a vertical column of ten empty square checkboxes. To the right of the checkboxes, the following items are listed in a serif font: Title, Characters, Setting, Introduction (beginning), Problem (conflict/complication), Solution (resolution), Conclusion (ending), Paragraphs, Capital letters, and Punctuation (, ? !). Below the list, a smaller line of text reads: "Don't forget: describing words (adjectives), speech marks (dialogue), and literary devices (similes or metaphors)." At the bottom left corner of the entire graphic, there is a small copyright notice: "©AlexandraBaxter2017".

Narrative Checklist

- ☐ Title
- ☐ Characters
- ☐ Setting
- ☐ Introduction (beginning)
- ☐ Problem
(conflict/complication)
- ☐ Solution (resolution)
- ☐ Conclusion (ending)
- ☐ Paragraphs
- ☐ Capital letters
- ☐ Punctuation (, ? !)

Don't forget: describing words (adjectives), speech marks (dialogue), and literary devices (similes or metaphors).

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