Lesson 9: Writing a Pourquoi Tale: Describing the Central Problem and the Character Response

CCS Standards

- **W.3.3:** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- **W.3.3a:** Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- **W.3.3b:** Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- **W.3.4:** With guidance and support from adults, produce writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose.
- **W.3.5:** With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing.
- **L.3.2:** Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- **L.3.2c:** Use commas and quotation marks in dialogue.
- **L.3.3:** Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.
- **L.3.3a:** Choose words and phrases for effect.

Daily Learning Targets

- I can write the middle of a pourquoi tale that describes the central problem and how the character responds to the problem. (W.3.3a, W.3.3b, W.3.4, W.3.5)
- I can use dialogue and descriptions in my pourquoi tale to show rather than tell the response of characters to situations. (W.3.3b, W.3.4, W.3.5)

Ongoing Assessment

- Middle of a pourquoi tale (W.3.3a, W.3.3b, W.3.4, W.3.5)

Agenda

1. **Opening**

   A. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

2. **Work Time**

   A. Mini Lesson: Dialogue and Description (15 minutes)

   B. Preparing for Independent Writing: Acting Out the Middle of a Pourquoi Tale (10 minutes)

   C. Independent Writing: Middle of a Pourquoi Tale (25 minutes)

3. **Closing and Assessment**

   A. Choosing a New "Why" Question (5 minutes)

4. **Homework**

   A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt to respond to in the front of your independent reading journal.

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- In this lesson, students write the middle of their pourquoi tale (W.3.3, W.3.3a, W.3.3b). A mini lesson briefly introduces students to the use of dialogue and description to show rather than tell character responses to a situation, including punctuation rules for dialogue (W.3.3b, L.3.2c).

- It is important that the mini lesson is mini. Students will continue to learn and practice these narrative writing skills, and it is important that they have enough time to work on their writing.

- Students begin by acting out the middle of their pourquoi stories. Model this for the group using the work of students who require additional support with their writing and ideas, and carefully choose actors who will have a lot of ideas to help build out the problem and character response they have been given.

- In the interest of time, students revise and edit their pourquoi tale as they go. Those who require more writing time may not be able to thoroughly revise and edit their pourquoi tales, but this isn't an emphasis of this unit.

- Students who finish quickly or require an extension can illustrate the middle of their story.

- The research reading students complete for homework helps to build both their vocabulary and knowledge pertaining to frogs and specifically frog adaptations. By participating in this volume of reading over a span of time, students will develop a wide base of knowledge about the world and the words that help describe and make sense of it.

How it builds on previous work:

- Students have already planned their story. In the previous lesson, they wrote the beginning of the story, and in this lesson they continue to build on the story.

- Continue to use Goals 1 and 2 Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

Areas where students may need additional support:

▪ The idea of showing rather than telling is challenging for students of this age to understand and is addressed only briefly in this lesson. Consider finding additional examples of showing rather than telling in narrative writing to share with students.

▪ Some students may require more time to orally tell the middle of their story with a peer or an adult before writing.

▪ Some students may require support with writing. Consider allowing those students to use word processing software, a slant board, speech-to-text technology, or a scribe.

Assessment guidance:

▪ Use the appropriate sections of the Narrative Writing Rubric to guide your feedback as you view student work.

Down the road:

▪ Students will continue writing their pourquoi tale over the second half of this unit.

▪ Students will write a new pourquoi tale for their End of Unit 1 Assessment in Lesson 13 and will begin planning this in the next lesson. The scaffolding in the lessons leading up to the assessment will help them understand the steps they need to take to write a pourquoi narrative independently.

In advance:

▪ Post: Learning targets, Why? anchor chart.

Technology & Multimedia

▪ Work Time C: Students type their drafts using Google Docs or other word processing software.

▪ Work Time C: Students complete the middle of their drafts in a word processing document, for example a Google Doc using Speech to Text facilities activated on devices, or using an app or software like Dictation.io (https://dictation.io/speech)

▪ Closing and Assessment A: Students record themselves reading their stories so far using software or apps such as Audacity (http://audacity.sourceforge.net) or GarageBand (http://www.apple.com/mac/garageband/).

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided in part by CA ELD Standards 3.I.A.4, 3.I.C.10, 3.II.A.1.

Important points in the lesson itself

▪ The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs by continuing the draft-writing process that is often typical of U.S. education, transferring notes and thoughts into narrative prose.

▪ ELLs may find it challenging to layer sophisticated language concepts onto an already challenging task of writing an original narrative. For example, students must not only apply an understanding of narrative text structure by writing about the central problem, but they must also grapple with dialogue and "showing rather than telling." So that students are not

overwhelmed, encourage them to write the middle of their stories as best as they can, without concern for dialogue. Once they have successfully written about the central problem, help them find ways to add dialogue and show instead of tell.

Levels of support

For lighter support:

- Invite students to briefly paraphrase the beginning, middle, and end of both the model narrative and the completed class narrative. This will refresh students' understanding of the narrative structure and help contextualize the day's work.

For heavier support:

- Showing rather than telling may be a new concept for some ELLs. Both showing and telling in the literary sense require language; showing does not involve using illustrations, but rather it is a less direct way of communicating through words. During Work Time A, call on students to help act out the scenario recalled from "Why the Poison Dart Frog Is So Colorful." This will give students another chance to participate kinesthetically while providing a concrete example for the rest of the class. It will also scaffold the activity in Work Time B, when students will act out their own narratives in pairs. Use the actors to illustrate the teaching point. Example: "When Mohammed just acted out the scene when the cave caught on fire, did he say he was scared? No, but you knew he was scared because his cave was on fire and he was calling for help! He was showing and not telling. How would you write about that?"

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiple Means of Representation (MMR):** In this lesson, some students may need additional support understanding showing rather than telling in writing: Provide some direct instruction in advance. Share examples and non-examples using familiar or high-interest texts that show not tell via dialogue and description. Share what this text would sound like without the dialogue and description so students can hear the difference between telling and showing in a narrative.
- **Multiple Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** This lesson offers several opportunities for students to engage in discussion with partners. For those who may need additional support with expressive language, facilitate communication by providing sentence frames to help them organize their thoughts. This way, all students can benefit from peer interaction.
- **Multiple Means of Engagement (MME):** In this lesson, some students may need support to remember the goal for the work they are doing with their porquoi tales. These students benefit from consistent reminders of learning goals and their value or relevance. Recall that students who may struggle with sustained effort and concentration are supported when these reminders are built into the learning environment.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- central problem, dialogue, dried grass (L)

Materials

- ☑ Narrative Texts handout (from Lesson 2; one per student and one to display)
- ☑ "Why the Poison Dart Frog Is So Colorful" (from Lesson 3; one to display)
- ☑ Narrative Planning Graphic Organizer: New "Why" Question (from Lesson 5; one per student)
- ☑ Pourquoi tale (begun in Lesson 8; added to in Work Time C; one per student)
- ☑ Narrative Writing Checklist (from Lesson 8; one per student and one to display)
- ☑ Narrative Writing Checklist: Lesson 9 (example, for teacher reference)
- ☑ Narrative Template: New "Why" Question (from Lesson 8; one per student)
- ☑ Exit Ticket: A New "Why" Question (one per student)
- ☑ Why? anchor chart (begun in Lesson 2)

Opening

A. Reviewing Learning Targets (5 minutes)

- Direct students' attention to the posted learning targets and select a volunteer to read the first target aloud:

  "I can write the middle of a pourquoi tale that describes the central problem and how the character responds to the problem."

- Underline the words *central problem*. Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

  "What is a central problem?" (the problem that drives the plot of the story and makes it interesting and engaging for the reader)

- Display and invite students to retrieve their **Narrative Texts handout**, focusing them on the criteria about the middle of a story. Invite students to make connections between these criteria and the learning target.

- Select a volunteer to read the second learning target aloud:

  "I can use dialogue and descriptions in my pourquoi tale to show rather than tell the response of characters to situations."

- Underline the word *dialogue*. Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

  "What is dialogue?" (characters talking)

"How can dialogue help us better understand characters?" (explains what they are think-ing and feeling—their responses to a situation)

- Focus students on the criteria about dialogue and description on their Narrative Texts handout. Invite students to make connections between these criteria and the learning target.

- Explain that today students will write the middle of their pourquoi tale using their Narrative Planning Graphic Organizer: New "Why" Question.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may benefit from visual supports: Provide the opportunity to draw or sketch definitions, act them out, or list synonyms for key terms in learning targets, such as *middle*, *pourquoi tale*, *describes*, *central problem*, *responds*, *dialogue*, *descriptions*, *showratherthantell*, *response*, and *situations*. (MMR)

- For ELLs: Discuss the noun form of *central* and its meaning. Example: "What word does *central* sound like?" (center) "Right, the *center* is in the middle of something, so when we are talking about the *central* problem, the problem is right in the middle of our focus. That problem is the most important thing in the story."

Work Time

A. Mini Lesson: Dialogue and Description (15 minutes)

- Tell students that in narrative stories, we want to show, not tell. Showing makes readers feel like they are actually there because they can use their imaginations to go to that place and situation. Telling takes the fun out of the readers' experience.

- Explain that we can show character responses through dialogue and description, and this is a technique students need to use when they write the middle of their narrative later in the lesson.

- Display and select volunteers to read **"Why the Poison Dart Frog Is So Colorful"** aloud.

- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

  "So what is the central problem here?" (Ranna accidentally sets the cave on fire.)

  "How did the character respond to the problem?" (He runs to the back of the cave with the frogs and squeezes through a crack in the wall.)

  "Where is the problem introduced in the story?" (when Ranna knocked over the torch)

- Display the following section of the story: "One day Ranna was playing a hunting game with his frog friends. He accidentally knocked over one of the torches that lit up the cave. The torch fell onto the dried grass Ranna used for a bed and set it on fire!"

- Explain to students that this is where the problem is introduced. Focus them on the words *dried grass*. Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

  "How does this description of the grass show readers rather than telling them?" (It ex-plains why the bed caught fire and why the fire seemed to be so scary so quickly. Dried grass burns very quickly. This isn't explained, but we understand that from the descrip-tion of the grass.)

"Where in the story do we see the character response to the problem?" (when Ranna screams and runs into the back of the cave)

■ Display the following section of the story: "'Help! Please help me,' Ranna screamed. He knew he had to find a way out! He ran for the entrance, but it was in flames. He reached down to pick up Drab, Ash, and Grey. But his little friends hopped away from him. He followed them, but they just hopped more quickly, deeper and deeper into the cave."

■ Point out the dialogue in this paragraph, specifically the words, "Help! Please help me."

■ Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

"How did Ranna feel about this situation? How do you know?" (He was very afraid. We know because he screamed for help.)

"How does this dialogue show rather than tell Ranna's response to the problem?" (It shows that he was afraid and wanted someone to help him rather than explaining that he was scared.)

"How is dialogue punctuated here?" (quotation marks around the words that are said aloud and a comma at the end inside the quotation marks)

■ Refocus students on their Narrative Texts handout, specifically on the following sub-bullets under "Narrative texts may use dialogue to show how characters react to events":

– Example: "Help! Please help me," he screamed.

– The words spoken should have quotation marks around them.

– A comma at the end inside the quotation marks before the rest of the sentence.

■ Display the following section of the story: "Ranna thought, 'How strange; it seems to be getting cooler.' Then he saw a giant crack in the cave wall! Ranna scooped up the three frogs and wriggled through. First, Ranna took a deep breath of fresh air. Then, he bent down to see if Drab, Ash, and Grey were all right."

■ Tell students that even though this is a thought rather than something said aloud, it is still dialogue because it is considered internal dialogue—something a character is saying to himself rather than aloud. Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:

"How does this show rather than tell?" (It describes the change in temperature without saying it directly.)

"How is it punctuated?" (comma before the dialogue and a period at the end because it is the end of the sentence)

■ Add these criteria to the Narrative Text anchor chart as sub-bullets under "Narrative texts may use dialogue to show how characters react to events":

– Example: Ranna thought, "How strange; it seems to be getting cooler."

– Thinking is internal dialogue.

– A comma before dialogue if the sentence begins before the dialogue; a period at the end of the dialogue if that is the end of the sentence

■ Explain to students that they should follow these punctuation criteria when adding dialogue to the middle of their narratives.

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students with auditory processing needs: Consider posting discussion questions or giving them to these students before the discussion. (MMR)

- For students who may need additional support with reading comprehension: Consider highlighting or underlining their individual copies of "Why the Poison Dart Frog Is So Colorful" in advance. This will help the students focus on smaller sections rather than scanning the whole text for where the problem is introduced, how the description of the grass shows rather than tells, where the reader sees the character response to the problem, etc. (MMR)

- For ELLs: To illustrate the concept of dialogue, draw speech bubbles on the board and write character dialogue inside of them. Model transferring the dialogue verbatim to prose format with quotation marks around it to show that both styles mean the same thing. Explain that in narrative writing, we use quotation marks to show when characters are speaking. In illustrations and comic books, we can use speech bubbles.

Work Time

B. Preparing for Independent Writing: Acting Out the Middle of a Pourquoi Tale (10 minutes)

- Invite students to retrieve their **Narrative Planning Graphic Organizer: New "Why" Question** and **pourquoi tale** and spend a few minutes reviewing what they have written so far and what they have planned for the middle of their narratives. Remind them that there are two middle boxes, one about the problem and one about how the character responds to the problem.

- Explain that students are going to act out the problem and how the character responds to it in pairs.

- Model this by selecting a student to work with in front of the rest of the class. Select other students to play the roles of the characters. Provide the actors with the problem and the character response(s). Give the actors a minute to think before asking them to perform for the group.

- Repeat with another student.

- Invite students to pair up to act out the middle of their narratives together. Explain that if their story has more than two characters, they may need to play the roles of multiple characters to make it work.

- Circulate to support students as they act out the middle of their stories. Question students about the problem and character responses:

"What is the problem?"

"Why does the character respond in that way? If you encountered that problem, how might you react?"

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs: Pair students with a partner who has more advanced or native language proficiency. The partner with greater language proficiency can serve as a model in the pair and clarify any confusion during the activity.

Work Time

C. Independent Writing: Middle of a Pourquoi Tale (25 minutes)

- Display the **Narrative Writing Checklist** and invite students to retrieve their own copies. Read the criteria relevant to the middle of a story and invite students to either highlight or draw a symbol next to them as a reminder of the criteria for this lesson. They should choose a highlighter or symbol that is different than the one used in Lesson 8. Refer to the **Narrative Writing Checklist: Lesson 9 (example, for teacher reference)** for which criteria to focus on in this lesson.

- Ensure that students understand what each criterion of the checklist requires of their writing.

- Remind students that the Narrative Writing Checklist is for all pieces of narrative writing. Invite them to consider the Characteristics of My Pourquoi Tale column, where they can add criteria specific to this particular piece of writing, a pourquoi tale. Go through each of the rows they have highlighted/marked with a symbol and ask them to consider any specific criteria for this piece of writing. Refer to the Narrative Writing Checklist (example, for teacher reference) for ideas on how to provide general guidance for all students. Where there isn't specific criteria, this is because the criteria is precise enough already or because it will be specific to the individual pourquoi tale.

- Give students 5 minutes to add anything specific to their particular pourquoi tale to the Characteristics of My Pourquoi Tale column of their checklist.

- Focus students on the length of the middle of the "Why Do Polliwogs Wiggle?" class narrative. Tell students that the middle of their stories should be no more than five sentences long.

- Invite students to turn to an elbow partner to say the middle of their story aloud before they write it down.

- If productive, cue students to listen carefully and seek to understand:

  "Who can tell us what your classmate said in your own words?" (Responses will vary.)

- Ask students to take out their **Narrative Template: New "Why" Question**.

- Remind them to use the domain-specific words recorded in the back of their Vocabulary Logs, along with the words about frogs recorded on the domain-specific Word Wall, in their stories where appropriate. Remind students that this will help make their writing precise.

- Invite them to begin writing.

- Write the following directions on the board for students who might finish quickly:

- Write the middle of your story on the Problem and Response pages. Make sure it follows on from the beginning.

- Read everything that you have written so far, twice (beginning and middle).

- Fix any errors and revise your writing based on what you notice.

■ Find someone else who has finished and pair up with him or her to read each other's work and make kind and helpful suggestions using the criteria on the Narrative Writing Checklist.

■ Practice reading your story so far aloud.

■ Circulate to support students in writing the middle of their stories. Provide reminders of the recommended length.

■ Invite students to record 'Y' for 'Yes' and the date in the final column of their Narrative Writing Checklist if they feel the criteria marked on their checklists have been achieved in their writing in this lesson.

■ Focus students on the learning targets. Read each one aloud, pausing after each to use a checking for understanding protocol for students to reflect on their comfort level with or show how close they are to meeting each target. Make note of students who may need additional support with each of the learning targets moving forward.

Meeting Students' Needs

■ For students who may need additional support organizing materials: Consider modeling where to place the Vocabulary Log, graphic organizers, and Narrative Writing Checklist on students' workspace. Think aloud how best to use these resources, including how to return to the Narrative Writing Checklist as a reminder of criteria during Work Time C. (MMAE, MME)

■ For ELLs: Model using the Narrative Writing Checklist and Narrative Planning graphic organizer to write five sentences so that students are clear about the process.

■ For students who may need additional support understanding the purpose of the Characteristics of My Pourquoi Tale column: Allow them to work with a partner to add specifics to their checklist. (MMAE)

■ For ELLs and students who may need support organizing their ideas in writing: Provide sentence frames for prompting and support. Example: "__(Character)__ saw __(event)____. (Character)__ exclaimed, '_____!'" (MMAE)

Closing and Assessment

A. Choosing a New "Why" Question (5 minutes)

■ Distribute **Exit Ticket: A New "Why" Question**.

■ Tell students that in the End of Unit 1 Assessment in Lesson 13, they will write a new pourquoi tale based on a new "why" question.

■ Focus students on the **Why? anchor chart**.

■ Invite them to select a new question to write about and invite them to write this question on their exit ticket.

■ Explain that they will have time to plan this narrative before the assessment.

Meeting Students' Needs

■ For ELLs: Some students may need additional support with organizing ideas for writing: Think aloud writing a new "why" question before distributing the exit tickets. For students who need heavier support, consider transcribing their questions. (MMAE)

Homework

A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt to respond to in the front of your independent reading journal.

Meeting Students' Needs

■ For ELLs and students who may need additional support with reading and writing: Refer to the suggested homework support in Lesson 1. (MMAE, MMR)