

Upper Grades- Lesson Topic: Writing (Narrative writing)

Unit Description:

In this unit, students will read a narrative story, have the opportunity to Skype (see above technological tools section) with the author of that story, and then write their own narrative story. For this lesson, it will be up to the teacher to determine which story is grade level appropriate for their students, but the website <http://www.katemessner.com/authors-who-skype-with-classes-book-clubs-for-free/> offers a comprehensive list of authors who Skype for free for upper grade level books. Teachers should decide which book they are going to have their students read and then contact the author to set up the Skype session. The book should match the type of writing you will have your students work on (i.e. fiction or nonfiction). Skype sessions with the author are usually only about 15-20 minutes so make sure students are prepared with questions before the session begins. This unit will last several months as a whole because students will have to individually read the book and then begin the pre-writing stage before the Skype session with the author.

Objectives:

- ⌚ Students will individually read a grade appropriate book and participate in group discussions to reinforce comprehension and understanding.
- ⌚ Students will write a story of their own using the author's style as a guide.
- ⌚ Students will have a chance to collaborate with the author of the story they read in order to enhance their own writing skills.

Standards (California State Content Standards):

CA- California K-12 Academic Content Standards
Subject : English Language Arts
Grade : Grade Three
Area : Writing
Sub-Strand 1.0: Writing Strategies Students write clear and coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).
Concept : Organization and Focus
Standard 1.1: Create a single paragraph: a. Develop a topic sentence. b. Include simple supporting facts and details.
Concept : Evaluation and Revision
Standard 1.4: Revise drafts to improve the coherence and logical progression of ideas by using an established rubric.
Sub-Strand 2.0: Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.
Concept : Using the writing strategies of grade three outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:
Standard 2.1: Write narratives: a. Provide a context within which an action takes place. b. Include well-chosen details to develop the plot. c. Provide insight into why the selected incident is memorable.
Standard 2.2: Write descriptions that use concrete sensory details to present and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.
Grade : Grade Four
Area : Writing
Sub-Strand 1.0: Writing Strategies Students write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).
Concept : Organization and Focus
Standard 1.1: Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements.
Standard 1.2: Create multiple-paragraph compositions: a. Provide an introductory paragraph. b. Establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph. c. Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations. d. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points. e. Use correct indentation.
Standard 1.3: Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
Concept : Evaluation and Revision
Standard 1.10: Edit and revise selected drafts to improve coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, and rearranging text.
Sub-Strand 2.0: Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.
Concept : Using the writing strategies of grade four outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:
Standard 2.1: Write narratives: a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience. b. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience. c. Use concrete sensory details. d. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.
Grade : Grade Five

Area : Writing
Sub-Strand 1.0: Writing Strategies Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits the students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.
Concept : Organization and Focus
Standard 1.1: Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions: a. Establish and develop a situation or plot. b. Describe the setting. c. Present an ending.
Standard 1.2: Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions: a. Establish a topic, important ideas, or events in sequence or chronological order. b. Provide details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a clear line of thought. c. Offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details.
Concept : Evaluation and Revision
Standard 1.6: Edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.
Sub-Strand 2.0: Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics) Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.
Concept : Using the writing strategies of grade five outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:
Standard 2.1: Write narratives: a. Establish a plot, point of view, setting, and conflict. b. Show, rather than tell, the events of the story.

Sample Lesson:

Individual Instruction: Students will read the novel *The Glass Puzzle* by Christine Brodien-Jones (grade levels 4-7) over a 6 week period of time. The teacher will assign chapters for homework and allow time for students to read during class time. Also, because being read aloud to is beneficial for students of any age to improve fluency and listening skills, the teacher may also wish to read aloud to students at points where there is a few minutes of extra class time. The book is made up of 32 chapters, so after about every four chapters, have students form small groups and respond to pre-determined discussion questions. On [Christine Brodien-Jones' website](#), she provides a discussion guide with questions from various points in the text that can be adapted to fit the needs of your students. In the computer lab, after the students complete the book, students should conduct some research on the author

to learn more about her background and develop a couple of questions that they may want to ask during the [Skype](#) session. Students should also begin their outline and rough draft of their own narrative stories so they have samples for discussion with the author.

Whole Group Instruction: Once students have completed the book, discussed the chapters in small groups, developed questions for the author, and begun their own narrative stories, the teachers should set up the free [Skype](#) session with the author, Christine Brodien-Jones. The teacher should explain to the author that she would like her to discuss the elements of narrative text and the components of good writing with the students. Then, have students have a free question and answer discussion with the author. The teacher can also pre-select students to ask questions that the teacher has pre-reviewed for a more structured discussion. Have the students ask questions that they believe will help them in their own writing like “How did you get the idea for *The Glass Puzzle?*” and “What do I need to include in my story to make the reader interested in reading it?”. After this [Skype](#) session, students should be motivated to work on their own writing. Have students self-edit, peer-edit, and write a final copy. If the resources are available, sending writing in to be printed in a “book” containing all of their stories can be done fairly cheaply and will instill a sense of profound pride amongst the students.

Assessing the Tool:

1. Was the tool simple to use as a teacher? For the students?

2. Did the use of this tool increase student global awareness?

3. What could be done differently to maximize the effectiveness of the tool?

Assessing the Lesson:

1. Did this lesson enhance student multicultural understanding?

2. Did this lesson develop collaborative skills amongst the students?

3. Did this lesson allow students to reach an understanding of the overlying concepts and objectives?