

How to Steal From Famous Authors for Fun and Profit

Kristen Bain

Introduction

The first day of school is simultaneously exciting and daunting for the incoming freshman class. Many of them feel a sense of dread that they might not make friends, that they may be bullied by upperclassman, or that heaven-forbid, they get lost and walk into the wrong classroom by accident. These are the legitimate anxieties that grip a large majority of my students in the beginning of the year. I do my best to quell these fears and I also make a great effort to provide students with time to acclimate to their new academic surroundings. My experience has taught me that telling a group of 30 teenagers what high school is “really like” is a waste of breath; you just have to let them define it for themselves. By the end of the first week, they’ve come to understand that Middletown High School is a very welcoming school, the teachers are warm and inviting, they haven’t gotten lost more than twice, and they’ve (to their surprise) made friends already.

As students become more comfortable in the starting days we begin the important task of getting to know each other. Like many of my colleagues, I embark on the journey to learn their personal backgrounds. But I place a larger emphasis on having students identify their English Language Arts weaknesses and ask that they use this list to produce a set of “attainable and measurable” goals and expectations for the course. This not only provides me with meaningful defense of my classroom procedures and expectations, but ideally, gives students a purpose in my class.

These “personal storyboards” as I call them, inevitably make me aware of their insecurities about their writing skills. Topping the list is almost always, “I want to learn how to organize my writing” “How to make my writing more interesting” “How to write long essays easily” etc. I estimate that students feel that the act of writing has frequently been a negative experience for them. From where does their lack of confidence derive? Is this a result of not engaging in the act of writing frequently enough, or is this a product of seeing red pen sprawled across the pieces of writing that they’ve slaved over? Will they always feel inadequate as writers or is this something that I can address?

I've used my students' goals and expectations as the direction of my writing instruction because my personal goal is to make them not only capable and talented writers, but confident and publish-worthy authors.

While each of our three units in 9th grade includes specific writing tasks, the study of narrative elements in unit one proved to be the most challenging for me as a teacher. In unit one, we read and analyze a handful of short stories and the novella *Of Mice and Men*. The majority of the concepts that we cover are review concepts such as plot, characterization, point of view, setting, and theme that students have had exposure to in elementary and middle school. One of our standards for the course requires that students demonstrate their knowledge of these elements by constructing their own fictional narrative.

While our other writing projects, such as the literary essay, are formulaic and offer comforting scaffolded tasks, the narrative is a behemoth both for the student and the teacher. My goal for this unit is to make the daunting task of story writing more manageable, engaging, and rewarding for my students. In the past, I've struggled with not only the assignment requirements, but its scoring. How could I be sure that I was scoring Jamie's ghost story as fairly as Xavier's superhero adventure? Additionally, I hope to use the assignment to foster creativity and confidence. By utilizing technology in the writing process and giving students the power of publishing their stories authentically, I plan to create a community of student authors.¹ Needless to say, the narrative unit poses a few obstacles for me as a teacher. But I am optimistic that the activities included in this unit will address the learning objectives in an engaging format in a scaffolded approach² that enables the task of narrative writing feel less like an assignment and more like a creative and rewarding process.

Background

Appoquinimink school district is situated in Odessa Delaware and has 16 schools that serves students from grades K-12. I work at Middletown High School, one of the two secondary schools in the district. The 9th-12th grade student population is nearly 1500 and enrollment is growing each year.

This year, I will be teaching 5 sections of 9th grade ELA with college-prep level classes and honors sections. My class size fluctuates between 25-35 students from a variety of backgrounds and socio-economic statuses. However, I do not have special

education certification, nor do I work with an inclusion teacher. So this year I will not be teaching students with IEPs; I have a few that have 504s that address ADD and ADHD.

I have recently been informed that I will be provided with a class set of 35 Chromebooks that will stay in my class for the full year. Having access to these devices enables me to conduct the story production stage of this unit but the activities included will also lend themselves to teachers without technology with slight modification.

Rationale

I have had only satisfactory success with the narrative writing assignment in the past. With this unit, I plan to approach the task of writing in small, isolated sections over the course of the 30-day unit. These shorter creative writing assignments have proved more valuable than similar extended assignments. Primarily, I will encourage my students to use model texts as their inspiration for writing.³ Not so much in terms of content as the text's writing style and features. It may take some reassuring to convince my students that they aren't plagiarizing; but in the end, they may realize that these exercises will provide them with new insight to the ways that sentences and stories can be constructed.⁴

My first experience with this was a complete accident. I felt as though my students didn't fully "appreciate" the beauty of Steinbeck's language and description in the first two paragraphs of *Of Mice and Men*. On a whim, I asked my students to borrow the sentence structure in these first two paragraphs but change the setting to one that they are familiar; Middletown high school. This wasn't a quick task. We first had to note the parts of speech as well as sentence types. Then we could borrow the "blue print" and change the material. What we ended up with was simply poetic.

On one side of Middletown the roads reach down to the crowded and congested highway, but on the residential side the houses are lined with treesThere is a path through the campus and among the baseball fields, a path of rubble crushed by students walking jadedly from gym class in the afternoon to huddle up near the dugout. (see Appendix A)

Once students got the hang of it, they found the exercise to be fun and creative. They embodied Steinbeck's attention to detail and produced beautiful paragraphs about our high school setting.

This method of using mentor texts for writing is what I believe will permeate the unit and will provide the necessary scaffolding for the narrative assignment. After students have mastered these story elements in isolation, the final project will be to create their own children's story that illustrates all that they have learned throughout the process.

Technology infused storytelling

When assigning a lengthy project, students can often shut-down as soon as a large assignment is introduced. When I have previously assigned narrative projects, the most common concern that my students bring to my attention is "Ms. Bain, what should I write a story about?" or other times it is simply, "I don't know how or where to start". To address this initial writer's block, I want to give students a storytelling medium that would provide them with motivation and inspiration. A colleague had introduced me to a website called Storybird that provides student authors with a platform to write short or long-fiction texts that are supplemented with artistic illustrations. The accounts are free for students and educators and the website is very user-friendly. To create a story, students select from thousands of art galleries that include between 30-150 illustrations. The genres and styles of these galleries are endless. Some galleries include simple, two-dimensional character drawings while others exhibit multi-layered water colors or three-dimensional graphic designs.

After the gallery has been selected, authors are brought to a platform that presents them with the images in the margins and the storytelling space in the center of the page. Students select the image they would like to use and they may toggle between a variety of placements for their texts. (at the top, bottom, or sides of the pages)

Each gallery contains pictures that fit a similar theme that encompasses a range of characters or objects and action. This allows students to select from pictures contain a multitude of story elements. Each gallery appears to have at least a few pictures that represent each plot stage as well as a few images that present one or more characters.

Students therefore, do not have to create a story from thin air; the images provide the context, characters, and setting. Students are primarily responsible for constructing the narrative that weaves those illustrations together.

Authentic Authorship

What better way to motivate students to pen their own story than to give them the means to actually publish their writing? Storybird's platform enables students (or parents of students) to purchase their own projects in soft or hard-cover book bindings or electronic or pdf files. This final product gives students the feeling that their stories are authentic because they can exist beyond the classroom as an assignment and transform into a tangible creative project that they may share with their peers or family members.

Not only can students take ownership of their own work, but Storybird provides users with the opportunity to combine the efforts and proceeds from book purchases as fundraiser. Fundraisers on the site return 30% of proceeds directly back to the school.

Optional fundraising academic connection

To motivate students and parents to participate in our fundraiser, I encouraged students to use their argumentative skills to propose their ideas for the best way the funds should be spent. This not only invited increased participation, but the added competition between my three classes created a cooperative culture within my classroom. The proposal that received the most votes this semester was to use the funds towards a future field trip.

This additional fundraising effort gave students a sense of purpose and urgency when writing their narratives because they could not raise funds for incomplete stories. I delighted in the opportunity to hasten the project's completion while not diminishing student motivation in the act of writing.

Unit Objectives

Throughout this unit, students will be able to

1. Deconstruct narrative texts for writing skills/tools
2. Mimic the writing style of model texts

3. Demonstrate revision and editing skills that will prepare student writing for publishing

How do mentor texts help student writers?

T.S. Eliot is credited with saying, “Good writers borrow, great writers steal”.⁵ This aphorism reflects the inspiration for my unit. Who better to teach writing than famous and successful authors? I myself have no experience writing fiction, so I believe it’s best to let Steinbeck, Shakespeare, and Hillenbrand take the lead in this unit. But since we cannot easily bring authors to the classroom, we will instead have to rely on their stories to teach us how to write. The pieces of literature that illuminate the lessons of authorship are referred to as mentor texts.⁶

Mentor texts are student or teacher selected excerpts of that are used to demonstrate a particular stylistic element that student writers want to embody through the act of mimicry. These model texts provide students with the opportunity to analyze an author’s writing tool-box. After a close-reading of one of these texts, students become consciously aware of a variety of these skills; how authors construct appealing sentence structure, implement vivid detail, or develop complex characters.⁷ Mimicking this sentence structure allows students to practice these tools with their own content, thus, providing intrigue and engagement in the writing process. When they are able to successfully re-create a new tool, there is often a boost in their confidence in their own pieces of writing.

Ruth Culham’s “The Writing Thief” outlines a variety of uses for mentor texts. She describes that the study of mentor texts allows students to discover how writing exhibits critical thinking skills. Often, we view writing as a result of our thoughts; but she concludes that the process of dissecting mentor texts allows writers to become aware of the way that they process their thoughts as well as how they can most effectively communicate their thoughts in narrative form. Highlighting the decision-making process in reading and writing is essential to how the act of using mentor texts can be a valuable lesson that remains with students long-term.⁸

Selecting powerful model texts is critical. Not each text will provide the students with an apparent text feature. I, personally, select texts that “break the mold” so-to-speak. Texts that demonstrate that a writer has taken a risk. B.J. Novak’s thrilling “The Book With No Pictures” is a fantastic example of an author that identified a major

narrative convention (supplementing children's stories with illustrations), and turned it on its head. Novak's story is successful because it plays on the role of the story-teller and exhibits a humorous back and forth between the teller and the audience.

What I hope my students can learn from a book like that is that the voice of the narrator can come in many forms. Breaking from the traditional third person narrator can be successful if they follow Novak's lead.

Story Creation

After students have familiarized themselves with a variety of new styles and strategies for writing effectively, it is then the process of constructing a narrative that must be tackled. How should we, as a community of writers, approach the task of constructing a narrative? What comes first? My experience has shown me that one of the first and most helpful ways to scaffold a writing assignment is to establish the scope of the piece. I, for one, would be able to brainstorm a lot easier knowing that I am writing a 10 page children's book, or a 5 chapter novella, rather than approaching the story with no understanding of its length or breadth. One of the reasons for this is that I can sit down with a children's book or a novella and get a feel for how much exposition my story will need in order for my reader to understand the characters and plot line while also giving me an idea of how MUCH exposition I will need to write. Consequently, I will let my students know before they begin their assignment what page length or word count we are aiming for. To some extent, the mentor texts will likely have an influence on the length, genre, or purpose of the story as well.

At any point in time, the more my students plan out their story, they should also continually return to their mentor texts to help them mimic the plot stage length or depth of character development. Otherwise, students sometimes run themselves into a corner by spending too much time constructing their exposition and neglect to later develop their characters because they have run out of creative energy or accidentally forgot to progress their storyline.

Classroom Activities:

To kickstart the unit, I like to surprise students with a creative writing activity that instills in them a sense that they are already talented writers. My hope is that with this motivation and confidence, the description of the large assignment won't seem too overwhelming for them; in fact, I want them to be excited about it.

The Sky is Blue: A vivid language exercise

I tell students that we will play a creative writing game. As soon as I say the word “game”, I have to allow the class to have a momentary buzz of excitement and anxiety before I explain the directions. When the class is finally calm, I describe that they will be writing one sentence about any subject that I give them (easy, right?). However, they will only have a specific amount of time to write their sentence. When I say “pencils down”, their writing instruments must be down immediately, regardless of whether or not they have finished.

Cue anxiety.

Before students have time to lose their minds, I review the directions again, but this time I tell them that their time is only 8 seconds. Before they have time to object, I yell “your subject is THE SKY”

When I call “go”, pencils race across their page furiously and by the time I call “time”, most students have written *The sky is blue*. This is intentional; I want to force students to write boring, simple sentences.

I direct students to share their sentence with their shoulder partner and come to a consensus about any trends among their peers. They let me know that almost everyone in the class has the same sentence. I ask them “why is that?” to which they respond that they didn’t have enough time to write anything else.

Okay, so this time, I’ll give you more time. I’ll give you 15 seconds. Your subject again is the sky. GO!

This second round provides us with some more interesting sentences, most notably with a few more adjectives, but the subject and verbs are still simplistic. *The sky is blue with clouds. The sky has big white clouds. The sky is massive.*

Before round three, we make a new rule. We are going to make an “off limits” list. All of the most popular words are off-limits. Depending on the class and the responses from round 1 and 2, we select words like “Sky, blue, clouds, above, and white, I, and see”.

Instantly, the game has become increasingly more challenging. By the time we've reached round 4 or 5, I have students writing more complex and detailed sentences since I have incrementally removed the generic adjectives and required that students implement a third person point of view.

"As we stared at the beautiful infinity, we shared a special bond that the two of us knew would last as long as there are still those tiny little white dots gleaming merrily."

"A melody could be heard all over the world; robins were chirping; their simple song echoed through the crystal clear void"

"I looked up into the vast empire of what looked like giant floating puffy cotton balls, filling the open atmosphere"

Ten minutes ago students produced, "The sky is blue". As students complete various drafts of their narrative, I routinely ask them "Is this a sky is blue sentence?" which reminds student where there they have areas that can benefit from descriptive detail, a change in sentence structure, or a shift in point of view.

Model text exercise (Teacher-lead)

After students have read the first chapter of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, we return to his first two paragraphs in order to dissect them for sentence structure.

I begin the class discussion by asking students how they think authors are inspired to write literature. Inevitably, students make the point that authors probably look to each other for motivation or ideas. This is when I tell students that we will try to use Steinbeck's novella as our own inspiration to write our own paragraph. Before we begin, it is important that we know what inspiration we need and what we plan to do with it.

Since our study of *Of Mice and Men* falls early in the marking period, I ask students to imagine reading Steinbeck's description of setting the way they were introduced to the setting of Middletown high school. "When you first walked into this building, I'm sure that you were looking all around for where your classes were, where the library could be found, etc." The beginning pages of OMAM take the reader from the "Strong

and rocky Gabilan mountains” all the way to the “green pool” at the feet of George and Lennie.

The purpose of this exercise is to have students analyze how Steinbeck describes the setting by using prepositional phrases and makes uses compound, complex sentences to transition smoothly between ideas.

Part of this exercise, therefore, requires that we diagram or annotate the sentences for parts of speech, and sentence type. After students have made what we call a “blueprint” then we move to the stage of mimicry. The “monkey do” part of “monkey see, monkey do”. This is the fun part!

Students have to make a plan about how they can describe our school’s setting through prepositional phrases. I give a few model sentences and then it becomes clear how students can pick up the rest.

It is not only the resulting paragraphs that are important here, but that this activity generates discussion regarding author’s choices (a major focus of common core standards).

After completing this activity, students have experience with identifying an author’s use of grammatical strategy as well as the purpose, effect, or meaning. Why does Steinbeck use prepositional phrases in his writing? Students ultimately make inferences regarding how this can add interest for the reader. “Steinbeck’s use of prepositional phrases help the reader understand not only the objects in the setting, but how they relate to one another in terms of their relationship to one another. For example, Steinbeck tells the reader that there is a river, mountains, trees, and leaves. But he makes it more interesting by zooming in and out of the setting by telling the reader which objects are in the background and which are in the foreground.

Setting Activity (1-2 paragraphs of setting)

John Steinbeck employs a unique writing style throughout *Of Mice and Men* that captivates the hearts and minds of his audience. One of the many stylistic elements of his novel is his description of each chapter's setting. Look closely at his style of narration, quantity of description, and length of vivid detail in his opening paragraphs. Afterwards, recreate a setting in his same style. Feel free to borrow his sentence structure (or even phrases) to depict your OWN setting. This is just an exercise in writing style, so don't feel as though taking Steinbeck's words is plagiarism. See what scenery you can create by imitating Steinbeck's imaginative sentence structure.

Things to consider:

Point of view: 3rd person Omniscient [The narrator is outside of the scene/action. But is aware of everything]

Imagery: Sensory details that appeal to the reader's sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste, touch

Plot: There is NO PLOT or significant action at this stage. As well as NO MAJOR CHARACTERS.

Sentence Structure!

Prepositional Phrase(s) (relationship of subject to its surroundings) **Subject, verb, adverb, [indirect object] adjective(s).**

Steinbeck:

Prepositional phrase
"A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green."
Subject indirect object adjectives

Recreation:

Prep phrase
"A few blocks south of Main Street, Middletown High School sits among surrounding fields and stands tall and proud"
Subject indirect object adjectives

You do **not** have to reimagine your setting line-by-line with Steinbeck's piece. But I would like to use as much inspiration from Steinbeck's writing style as you CAN! Let's see what you can do!

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees—willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spreadpads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Student Example Paragraph

A few blocks south of Main Street, Middletown High School sits among surrounding fields and stands tall and proud. The blue doors seem to scream their wisdom, for they know by heart the hundreds of students that come through them daily. On one side of the hallway, a straggling group of friends laugh together one last time before one will ascend the strong staircase and the others will take the path littered with crumpled papers. The white walls with a single blue stripe stand waiting for the next pair of students rushing to class and the white tile floors wear proudly the dirt of the teenagers' new shoes. In the dark of the night when the building is deserted and quiet, the doors and the floors and the walls stay in solitude, waiting until the sun comes up the next morning.

There is a path to the soft turf field, beaten hard by the hopes and dreams of those wanting to do great things and the equipment being rolled to it. On the side of the school there is a sign, stating that one has arrived to the home of the Cavaliers, and the sign smiles because it knows it has the great honor of announcing this for all who drive by to see.

Storybird Activity

After students have familiarity with how to use mentor texts, I ask them to select model texts of their own. (Preferably, these excerpts do not exceed 2 pages.) Their rationale in selecting a text means that they must identify one or more narrative strategies the author uses that they wish to analyze and mimic in their own story.


Students should share their mentor texts with peers and justify their reasoning. Not only does this help students practice coherent communication of their ideas, but it provides meaningful exposure to deliberate stylistic choices made by authors in their writing. Essentially, students will begin seeing texts beyond plot and will expose them to meaningful discussion about the kinds of choices authors make in constructing narratives.

After students have justified two mentor texts that they wish to inform their own stories, they will begin writing within the Storybird platform. Over the course of two to three weeks, students should have frequent opportunities to share their work at various stages of completion. This will provide them with meaningful feedback from peers as well as the teacher.

I experimented with the length of this project because I wanted to ensure that the end product was a successful exercise in teaching writing and I worried that a narrative assignment that was too long would be more laborious for students than it would be valuable. Ultimately, I concluded that a 700-1000 word story using Storybird gave students the required length to produce stories with a coherent plot and character development as well as one or more opportunities for in-depth description or imagery. More students went over the word count than under, so I was satisfied with our results.

Below are screenshots of a student example from Storybird.

When The Night Called Dayxxreesexxa day ago



Dear Mother,
Zachariah says that we are starving. Every night he looks at me with his sunken eyes and says, "Zaire Bear, one day we'll make it out of here. When I get old... When I can get a job..." And then he would trail off as if the words themselves were as weak and frail as me and him, and I would say nothing for he is sick and would be lucky to see next week. It is now seven months ago that you left , when I was only ten and he fifteen, and we have since been fine living on our own. But the nature of the world and time is that it forever moves forward, and forward still until winter. When winter comes, it feels like time itself gets too cold to trek on, and so it slows, gets frostbite, and stops.

Story Text:

When The Night Called Day
xxreesexx
a day ago

When The Night Called Day

By Reese Gray

Status: **Published**

Content: 18 pages · 1496 words

[View on site](#)

Started: Nov 9, 2016
Updated: Nov 22, 2016
Published: Nov 14, 2016

[Unpublish story](#)

Grading:

Letter Or numeric (1-100)

[Submit](#)

Grades are displayed privately.
Students are notified when graded.

Your notes:

Additional mentor texts

Beyond the Steinbeck excerpt in the activities in this unit, I have experimented with mentor texts that reflect a diverse collection of styles and genres. One of the most unusual mentor texts is the first three pages of John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*. My rationale for this selection is that this excerpt provides students with a humorously illustrative piece of literature.

A green hunting cap squeezed the top of the fleshy balloon of a head. The green earflaps, full of large ears and uncut hair and the fine bristles that grew in the ears themselves, stuck out on either side like turn signals indicating two directions at once. Full, pursed lips protruded beneath the bushy black moustache and, at their corners, sank into little folds filled with disapproval and potato chip crumbs. In the shadow under the green visor of the cap Ignatius J. Reilly's supercilious blue and yellow eyes looked down upon the other people waiting under the clock at the D. H. Holmes department store, studying the crowd of people for signs of bad taste in dress. Several of the outfits, Ignatius noticed, were new enough and expensive enough to be properly considered offenses against taste and decency.

Poole is descriptive, precise, and unusual in his construction of the caricature of Ignatius J. Riley. Students who find this level of detail amusing often find that

modeling their writing this way is an exhilarating challenge. Others may find that Poole's narrative structure is too unconventional and would prefer more traditional texts as inspiration.

Similarly useful are Edgar Allan Poe's short horror stories that utilize in-depth grotesque settings, mood, and most notably, the unreliable narrator. Each student will gravitate towards different model texts, so the best way to use this instructional strategy is to provide students with many different types of narrative.

My enthusiasm for using mentor texts is generally well-received by students and involving them in the process of selecting mentor texts is a fun and rewarding exercise. Allowing students to become familiar and comfortable to mimic the writing tools of successful authors has enabled me to create a classroom community that inspires individuals to take risks in writing. The activities in this unit have empowered my students to embrace narrative writing as a creative process that they not only enjoyed, but left them with a tangible piece of writing that gave them the confidence to see themselves no longer as consumers of literature but as authentic authors.

Curriculum Unit Title

How to Steal from Famous Authors for Fun and Profit

Author

Kristen Bain

KEY LEARNING, ENDURING UNDERSTANDING, ETC.

Students will demonstrate their knowledge of narrative structure and author's choices.

ESSENTIAL QUESTION(S) for the UNIT

How do authors make choices regarding how to structure and develop narrative texts?

CONCEPT A

Constructing Setting

CONCEPT B

Developing Characters

CONCEPT C

Author's Choices

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS A

How do authors use descriptive language and sentence structure to establish setting?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS B

How do authors use vivid language and imagery to create complex characters?

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS C

How do authors make decisions about how to organize the events of a story in order to create meaning?

VOCABULARY A

Imagery

Diction

Connotation/Denotation

VOCABULARY A

Indirect/Direct Characterization

Narration

Dialogue

VOCABULARY A

Plot

Sequence of events

Foreshadowing/Flashback

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/MATERIAL/TEXT/FILM/RESOURCES

Teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of genres and styles of narrative texts as models. Model texts should be rich in stylistic choices to ensure that students clearly know which narrative element they should emulate.

Text Suggestions: John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*, and John Kennedy Toole's *A Confederacy of Dunces*

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Appendix A: Common Core Standards Addressed

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.A

Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.B

Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.C

Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.D

Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3.E

Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

Notes

¹ Ruth Culham, *The Writing Thief: Using mentor texts to teach the craft of writing* (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2014)

² Ruth Culham, *6+1 Traits of Writing: The complete guide grades 3 and up* (New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 2003)

³ Ruth Culham, *The Writing Thief: Using mentor texts to teach the craft of writing* (Newark, DE: International Reading Association, 2014)

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Ibid

⁸ Ibid

⁹ Roy Clark. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies for Every Writer* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008)