

Writing Curricular Calendar, Second Grade, 2009-2010

Unit Ten – Revision and Assessment

After beginning the year with small moment writing and embarking on a year-long writing journey, you will likely want to bring your students back to narrative writing with an emphasis on revision. You can rally your students around the idea of preparing for third grade and showing all they learned as second grade writers. By now they will know how to write meaningful personal stories, with greater detail and some focus, they know how to write bits of dialogue and thinking and how to stretch out the important part of their stories.

The unit begins with students revising their previous small moments and on-demand writing from the fall. Imagine handing back your students' writing and telling them to read what they wrote and then re-see it in different ways, using all they now know about the qualities of good writing. You will hear students say, "I can't believe I used to write like that!" They will likely comment on how much more and how much better they can write at this point in the year.

You will want to reread these narratives yourself and plan a series of minilessons that focuses on the kinds of revision strategies your students need. For example, you may need to reteach the concept of focusing in on a small moment if many of your students struggled with this in the fall. You can introduce mentor texts that are new to the students such as *I Love My Hair* by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley, *Bippity Bop Barbershop* by Natasha Anastasia Tarpley, *At Night* by Jonathan Bean, *Rollercoaster* by Marla Frazee to re-teach this concept.

Many students also benefit from trying to break up summary statements into smaller and more precise actions. For example, if a student wrote, "I fell off my bike," you can teach them to envision what they actually did step-by-step. That student may revise by writing, "My front tire hit a rock in the road. The wheel stopped and my hands flew off the bars. The bike flew forward and I hit the ground." You can teach students to elaborate with smaller more precise actions by using drama to act out the scene, to envision exactly what happened, and to sketch exactly what happened. You'll want to encourage students to show these actions in their sketch as a plan for their writing.

There are a variety of other revision strategies that you can teach students to use on their older pieces of writing. One rich resource for finding strategies that fit the needs of your children is the narrative continuum that the TCRWP publishes. You will probably want to mine this document for revision strategy possibilities prior to deciding the specific strategies you will teach. For instance, you can teach or revisit the strategy of adding dialogue or internal thinking. Or, if this is already present in their writing, you can teach them to braid the two together. Children can also learn how to revise for word choice, specifically targeting tag words used for dialogue and internal thinking, such as "exclaimed, mumbled, said, or thought." Along the same lines, children can revise for transition words or phrases, such as "In other words," "Also," or "First." You can teach different ways to vary punctuation, the reasons writers do this, and the effect punctuation has on the way the reader reads the piece. It is always helpful to revisit the strategy of

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‘show not tell,’ ensuring that children write in a way that lifts the level of their writing. Lastly, you can teach children to experiment with different ways to begin their piece—starting in the moment with action or dialogue.

After students practice revising previous writing you’ll want to get them using these strategies in new pieces of writing. Imagine gathering the class in the meeting area and explaining, “Now that you know how to focus on a small moment, elaborate by writing with step-by-step actions, and including the character’s thinking, don’t wait until revision to do this. Start each new piece using these strategies from the get-go.” Your teaching will support students’ ability to tell a good story from the start, to plan their writing with these qualities in mind, and to use the strategies they once saved for revision in their draft.

Because this unit is also about rallying students around the idea of getting ready for third grade, you will want to put out new paper choices in the writing center that look like third grade paper. This paper can have smaller line spaces and more lines on each page.

The final part of this unit brings all of their writing and thinking work together. Encourage students to look back on their narratives and find connections. For example, one student might notice he wrote one piece about baking cookies with his grandpa and another piece about visiting his grandpa in the hospital when he was sick. The student might choose to put these two stories together and use what he knows from the idea-based writing unit to add a reflection about his grandpa. This is almost like “baby-memoir” where students strap a few small moments together and write in a way that looks closely at the connection.

In order to support students’ ability to link some small moments together, you might introduce the idea that writers each have a “territory” they write in. They write about the same topics in different genres, from different perspectives, and for different reasons. For example, a young writer, Claire, wrote several pieces all year long about her new twin sisters. She wrote small moments about when she first saw them in the hospital and about how helped her mom feed them and play with them. She wrote a piece called “How To Change Twins’ Diapers.” She even wrote poems about how much she loved her twin sisters. Claire found her writing territory in her sisters.

This is a unit that provides writers the natural opportunity for reflection. Children are able to reflect on their writerly lives, obtain a sense of growth and movement in their writing, and revisit strategies in order to lift the level of their writing. As you know, it is critical to carve out space for students to revisit, revise and reimagine their writing; this unit makes this possible for your young writers.

Suggestion For Compiling a Book List For This Unit

Teachers, we imagine that you will revisit your favorite mentor texts you used from across this school year depending on the genres your students will revise their writing

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into. For example, if a writer chooses to revise her small moment into a poem, you may want to refer to your Poetry mentor texts as a way to refresh the skills and strategies that were taught inside the unit.