

TCRWP Unit 1-- 7th: Writing Realistic Fiction

Big Ideas/Overview:

- In this unit, students compose engaging short fiction. They lift the sophistication of their writing through attention to individual scenes, symbols, and writing techniques they've discovered from close readings of powerful short fiction.
- It's an invitation to return to narrative writing with the lens of realistic fiction that will prompt them to explore meaningful issues that affect kids their age. The beginning-of-the-year goals of building stamina, increasing volume, and developing the habit of revising writing right from the start will all be supported across this unit. Unlike in most writing units, where students create and revise several different pieces across the unit, in this study of crafting fiction, you'll give writers the opportunity to linger on a single story across the bends. They will need this time to figure out who the characters are, how they interconnect, and to plan a realistic plot that will come to some kind of resolution.

Skills/Standards

Narrative Writing Checklist

Grade 7	
Structure	
Overall	I created a narrative that has realistic characters, tension, and change, and that not only conveys, but also develops an idea, lesson, or theme.
Lead	I wrote a beginning that not only sets the story in motion, it also grounds it in a place or situation. It included details that will later be important to the story. These details might point to the central issue or conflict, show how story elements connect, or hint at key character traits.
Transitions	I used transitional phrases and clauses to connect what happened to why it happened (<i>If he hadn't . . . he might not have, because of, although, little did she know that</i>).
Ending	I gave the reader a sense of closure by showing clearly how the character or place has changed or the problem has been resolved. If there wasn't resolution, I gave details to leave the reader thinking about a central idea or theme.
Organization	I used a traditional—or slightly modified—story structure (rising action, conflict, falling action) to best bring out the meaning of my story and reach my audience.
Development	
Elaboration	I developed the action, dialogue, details, and inner thinking to convey an issue, idea, or lesson. I showed what is specific about the central character. I developed the setting and the character's relationship to the setting.
Craft	I developed contradictions and change in characters and situations.
	I used specific details and figurative language to help the reader understand the place and the mood (such as making an object or place symbolic, using the weather, using repetition).
	I varied my tone to match the variety of emotions experienced by the characters across the story.

Conventions	
Spelling	I used the Internet and other sources at hand to check spelling of literary and high-frequency words.
Punctuation and Sentence Structure	I varied my sentence structure, sometimes using simple and sometimes using complex sentence structure.
	I punctuated dialogue sections accurately.

BEND I Creating and Developing Meaningful Stories and Characters

Bend I, you will teach students how to see the world as fiction writers, how to examine their lives for moments that could be turned into compelling fictional stories. Through a one-day writing intensive "boot camp," you will show them how to develop scenes, the bedrock of fiction writing. You'll also teach them some techniques for creating believable characters—such as exploring characters' motivations and obstacles, quirks and passions, and internal and external lives. You will then guide students in ways to shape their stories by using story arcs and by tracing the journey on which they take the reader.

1. Imagining Stories from Everyday Moments

2. Imagining Stories You Wish Existed in the World

3. Developing Believable Characters through Scene Boot Camp

4. Giving Characters Struggles and Motivations that Mirror Real Life

5. Plotting with Tools (Story Arcs, Timelines, Story Boards, Mentor Texts)

BEND II Drafting and Revising with an Eye toward Meaning

Students move into drafting and revising, drawing on everything they already know about narrative writing. You will call on students to consider what they know from reading and studying fiction and to bring it into their own repertoire of moves as writers. You will teach students ways to craft compelling leads to their stories and ways to ground their scenes in dialogue, action, and setting. Finally, you will show students ways writers write solid endings that give their works of fiction satisfying conclusions.

6. From 2-D to 3-D: Planning and Writing Scenes by Including Evidence

7. Stepping into the Drama of the Story to Draft

8. Studying Published Texts to Write Leads

9. Grounding Dialogue in Scenes

10. Writing Endings that Make Readers Swoon

BEND III Meticulous Revision and Precise Edits with Audience in Mind

You will guide students in getting their works of fiction ready for audiences through deep revision work and editing. In this bend, you will focus students on ways writers revise the meaning and messages behind their stories. You will teach students ways writers develop imagery and use symbols and other literary devices, such as foreshadowing, in their writing work. You will also teach students to rethink the evolution of their stories and to create endings that are worthy of their beginnings—and of their aspirations. At the end of the unit, fiction writers celebrate by publishing their work in a class short story anthology and share reviews of their work.

11. Reading Drafts like Editors

12. Revision: Weaving in Symbolism and Imagery to Bring Out Meaning

13. Conducting the Rhythm of Language: Creating Cadence and Meaning

through Syntax

14. Using Mentor Texts to Help Match Authorial Intent with the Page

15. Economizing on the Sentence and Word Level

16. Editing with Lenses and Independence

17. Publishing Anthologies: A Celebration

TCRWP Unit 2-- 7th: Writing About Reading

Big Ideas/Overview:

- This unit teaches students to analyze the craft and structure of the authors they admire and to write for real audiences about why that craft matters.
- This workshop unit for seventh grade will give your writers a chance to expand their skills as literary analysts and information writers while enjoying every second of it! In this unit, your writers will first spend time getting stronger at writing about reading in their notebooks, crafting pages of entries that are more thoughtful and more interesting than what they might typically produce. After that, they'll produce companion books to go alongside a novel they love. The companion book genre is a new one to many teachers (as it was to us when we started) but it is definitely a growing genre that is fascinating to kids and adults, as well as one that offers the chance to refine information writing skills and write for an authentic audience.

Skills/Standards

Grade 7	
Structure	
Overall	I brought together ideas and information about a subject in a text that develops a subtopic and/or an idea. I incorporated a variety of text structures as needed, including argument, explanation, narrative, and procedural passages.
Lead	I interested the reader in the topic by explaining its significance, or providing a compelling fact, statistic, or anecdote. I made it clear what parts of the topic this text would tackle, and how the ideas and information in the text would unfold.
Transitions	I used transitions to link concepts with related information. The transitions help the reader follow from part to part and make it clear when information is an example of a bigger idea, follows from an earlier point, introduces a new idea, or suggests a contrast. I used such transitions as <i>specifically, for instance, related to, just as, turning to, on the other hand, and however.</i>
Ending	In my conclusion, I reinforced and built on the main point(s) in a way that made the entire piece a cohesive whole. The conclusion may have restated the main points, responded to them, or highlighted their significance.
Organization	I focused my writing on a subtopic or a particular point or two. I organized my piece into parts and used structures (claims and supports, problem/solution, sequence, etc.) to organize those parts (and perhaps the whole). I used introductions, topic sentences, transitions, formatting and graphics, where appropriate, to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight main points.

Development				
Elaboration	I included varied kinds of information such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions. I analyzed or explained the information, showing how the information fit with my key points or subtopics, including graphics where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I consistently incorporated and cited sources.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I worked to make my topic compelling as well as understandable. I brought out why it mattered and why the audience should care about it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Craft	I used words purposefully to affect meaning and tone.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I chose precise words and used metaphors, anecdotes, images, or comparisons to explain what I mean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I included domain-specific, technical vocabulary, and defined these terms when appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I used a formal tone, but varied it appropriately to engage the reader.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Conventions	
Spelling	I checked spelling of technical, domain-specific words and was careful with the spelling of citations.
Punctuation and Sentence Structure	I varied my sentence structure, sometimes using simple and sometimes using complex sentence structure.
	I used internal punctuation appropriately within sentences and when citing sources, including commas, dashes, parentheses, colons and semicolons.

BEND I Planning and Drafting Companion Books

In Bend I, students will learn that one way readers can better understand what they are reading is to write about it. Students will collect, develop, and justify their ideas about the texts they read as they generate extended and varied entries in their writer's notebooks. You'll want kids trying and producing a lot, putting thoughts on the page in different structures and formats, even when they're not confident. You will teach students that writers can analyze texts not only by extended writing, but also by creating visuals—charts, pictures, and diagrams.

Midway through this first bend, you will introduce students to companion books. You'll teach them that writers set up to write their own companion books by devising a writing plan that will showcase their most insightful, important thoughts about the stories. You will show them also ways writers of companion books explain and elaborate on important points and details, cite evidence from the story, and incorporate direct quotations from the text. At the end of this bend, students will participate in a museum walk as they share with their classmates their completed drafts of their companion books.

1. Writing about Reading with Voice and Investment
2. Using Graphics to Think and Rethink about Literature
3. Thinking Big, Thinking Small
4. Explaining Thinking
5. Close Reading and Analytic Writing
6. Letting the Book Teach You How to Respond
7. Working Toward a Companion Book
8. Incorporating Evidence from the Text as a Means to Elaborate
9. Reflection and Goal-Setting Using the Information Writing Checklist— and a Mini-Celebration

BEND II Writing to Deepen Literary Analysis

In this bend your writers are revising and ultimately publishing their companion books, with the goal of deepening their analysis and turning even more toward writing for an audience rather than simply writing for themselves and their classmates.

You'll continue to teach ways to read, analyze, and present information about texts, but now students will learn to write too about the crafting techniques that the authors they are studying use. You will teach students ways that fan fiction writers write extensions of a story, improvising new scenes that fit the original or that make the original flow in a different direction. You will also teach students ways writers develop and include perspectives of different characters in a story. At the end of this bend, you will teach students ways writers craft introductions that hook readers and preview important sections, and ways they craft memorable conclusions. Finally, students celebrate their learning by inviting other writers, friends, and family to read and enjoy their completed companion books.

10. Reading Like Writers—and Writing about It
11. Writing about Symbolism in Texts
12. Analyzing Structure in a Text
13. Writing Inside the Story: Improvisations and Fan Fiction
14. Writing Inside Perspectives
15. Writing Introductions and Conclusions
16. Final Edits and a Celebration

TCRWP Unit 3-- 7th: The Art of Argument Research-Based Essays

Big Ideas/Overview:

- This unit instructs students in writing essays that build convincing, nuanced arguments, balancing evidence and analysis to persuade readers to shift their beliefs or take action.
- The Art of Argument relies on students reading to research topics they write about, and takes more careful thinking about reading-writing connections. Argument is challenging work, and students need to practice the reading, talking, thinking, and writing of this genre across multiple experiences to really grow their skills.

Argument Writing Checklist

Grade 7	
Structure	
Overall	I laid out a well-supported argument and made it clear that this argument is part of a bigger conversation about a topic/text. I acknowledged positions on the topic or text that might disagree with my own position, but I still showed why my position makes sense.
Lead	I interested the reader in my argument and helped them to understand the backstory behind it. I gave the backstory in a way that got the reader ready to see my point. I made it clear to readers what my piece will argue and forecasted the parts of my argument.
Transitions	I used transitions to link the parts of my argument. The transitions help the reader follow from part to part and make it clear when I am stating a claim or counterclaim, giving a reason, or offering or analyzing evidence. These transitions include terms such as <i>the text states, this means, another reason, some people may say, but, nevertheless, and on the other hand.</i>
Ending	In my conclusion, I reinforced and built on the main point(s) in a way that makes the entire text a cohesive whole. The conclusion may reiterate how the support for my claim outweighed the counterclaim(s), restate the main points, respond to them, or highlight their significance.
Organization	The parts of my piece are arranged purposefully to suit my purpose and to lead readers from one claim or counterclaim, reason, or piece of evidence to another. I used topic sentences, transitions, and formatting (where appropriate) to clarify the structure of the piece and to highlight my main points.

Development	
Elaboration	I included varied kinds of evidence such as facts, quotations, examples, and definitions. I analyzed or explained the reasons and evidence, showing how they fit with my claim(s) and built my argument. I consistently incorporated and cited trustworthy sources. I wrote about another possible position or positions—a different claim or claims about this subject—and explained why the evidence for my position outweighed the counterclaim(s). I worked to make my argument compelling as well as understandable. I brought out why it mattered and why the audience should care about it.
Craft	I used words purposefully to affect meaning and tone. I chose precise words and used metaphors, images, or comparisons to explain what I meant. I included domain-specific, technical vocabulary relevant to my argument and audience and defined these terms when appropriate. I used a formal tone, but varied it appropriately to engage the reader.

Conventions	
Spelling	I matched the spelling of technical vocabulary to that found in resources and text evidence. I spelled material in citations correctly.
Punctuation and Sentence Structure	I varied my sentence structure, sometimes using simple and sometimes using complex sentence structure. I used internal punctuation appropriately within sentences and when citing sources, including commas, dashes, parentheses, colons, and semicolons.

BEND I Establishing and Supporting Argument Positions

In Bend I, students each read a few short texts to learn about different perspectives on the issue of whether competitive sports is helpful or harmful to young athletes. After two brief introductory experiences—one of read aloud/note-taking, and one of one-on-one debate—students flash draft argument essays.

You'll teach students that when taking a side on an issue, it's important to state a claim, give reasons to back up that claim, and give evidence to support each and every reason. You'll teach students ways to sort and rank their evidence, deciding which evidence matches each point and which evidence is most compelling. Then, you will teach students that writers use analysis of the evidence to help readers follow the path of the argument.

1. Weighing Evidence to Form Considered Positions
2. Take Your Argument into a Scrimmage: Debating to Test and Strengthen a Position
3. Bam! Bolstering Positions by Adding Relevant Evidence
4. Stay with Me Now: Balancing Evidence with Analysis
5. Taking Stock

BEND II Composing More Focused and Nuanced Arguments

In this bend, students will choose an aspect of competitive sports that they found compelling and branch off to do another round of research and writing, with more focus.

Students will learn how to read with a critical eye, looking for contradictions among sources, and paying careful attention to the author's perspective. You will give students an opportunity to present their arguments orally, in order for them to determine what new evidence they must gather in preparation for writing. You'll teach students how to craft an introduction that will set up their argument well and how to introduce and refute counterarguments. With your instruction, students will learn ways that writers match the tone of their writing to its purpose and audience. This bend concludes with a symposium, a formal opportunity for students to present their arguments and learn from the responses and ideas they get from others.

6. Forming Coalition Groups
7. Bringing a Critical Perspective to Your Research
8. Debating to Prepare to Draft
9. Introducing and Writing Your Argument
10. Self-Assessment with an Eye Toward Counterargument
11. Studying Author's Craft, Including Rhetorical Devices
12. When Company Comes: Knowing When and How to Maintain a Formal Tone
13. Celebration: Symposium

BEND III Taking Arguments to a Global Audience

The final bend in this unit is another full cycle, only this time students identify issues that are important to them and form cause groups around those issues. Students go through the process of researching, qualifying, and contextualizing their claims and analyzing the logic of their own arguments. To share their work, students reach out to a global audience through cyberactivism using social media.

14. Taking Opportunities to Stand and Be Counted
15. Revising by Qualifying Your Claim
16. Revising with Logical Fallacies in Mind: Evaluating Evidence
17. Cyberactivism

