

Narrative Genre Mini-Unit by Aubrey Vance

Day 1

Grade: 6

Objective: Students will be able to brainstorm a list of memories to create memoirs for.

Specific Standards from 6th grade Language Arts Core:

Standard 8: Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (pre-writing).

Indicator a.: Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing, researching, and reflecting on personal experiences.

Preparation:

Before class create a map which your memoirs will be brainstormed about. This map can be one from your childhood neighborhood, favorite resort, or the school. On the map, label places such as houses, streets, or landmarks. Also label where favorite memories happened. These can be short phrases.

Mini-Lesson:

- Say, “Memoir is a French word describing a genre of writing about memories. These are like a quick snapshot of your autobiography. We will be working on writing memoirs for the next few weeks. To start out, I want you to think of a place where you have spent a lot of time. This could be your neighborhood, a favorite vacation spot or the school. I created a map of my neighborhood where I grew up.
- Explain what was drawn on the map. Elaborate on 2-3 memories.
- Say “In your writer’s notebooks, I want you draw a map of your own. The drawing doesn’t need to be perfect, but I do need to be able to tell what you are drawing. Label 7-10 places with short phrases describing the memories of that location. After you have labeled 7-10 places, choose one and tell me what happened there.”

Independent Writing with Conferencing

- While students create their maps, circulate around the room helping students come up with ideas. Ask them questions such as:
 - “What map are you drawing?”
 - “What memories do you have there?”
 - “Who was with you during that time?”
- Choose 2-3 students and talk with them about their map and writing. Have them share their ideas with you and give them feedback

Assessment

- By the end of the writing time, each student should have a map drawn with 7-10 memories recorded on that map.

Day 2

Grade: 6

Objective: Students will be able to complete a graphic organizer about a person from their memory and give details about that person.

Specific Standards from 6th grade Language Arts Core:

Standard 8: Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (pre-writing).

Indicator a.: Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing, researching, and reflecting on personal experiences.

Indicator d.: Use a variety of graphic organizers to organize information from multiple sources.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

Indicator a.: Produce personal writing

Preparation: Create the graphic organizer web described in the mini-lesson about an individual from your childhood. Include as many details as possible.

Mini-Lesson:

- Say “We have many individuals from our past. Sometimes these people can be best friends, cousins, family members, dogs, neighbors or classmates. Today we are going to revolve our memoir writing around one of them. I want you to think about someone who you are close to and have interacted a lot with throughout your childhood. In your writer’s notebook, I want you to write their name in the center of a fresh page and circle it. That will be the center of your web.”
- Show your example created during the preparation. (You may replace the following instruction to describe your web created)
- Say “This is my web that I created about my sister Autumn. I said that she was a dancer while we were growing up. Off of that bubble I said that was how she sprained her ankle. I also said that she was so mad when she became too tall to do pointe anymore and how mad I was at her for being tall!”
- Choose 1-2 more bubbles to describe.
- Say “You are going to create a graphic organizer web to describe the details about the person that you have chosen. This is another way to brainstorm ideas for writing memoirs. Once you have created at least 15 bubbles, you may choose details to write about in a memoir form.”

Independent Writing with Conferencing

- Circulate among the writers viewing their writing. Help them develop ideas and format their brainstorm to the graphic organizer structure.

- Meet with 2-3 students to discuss their writing. Make sure they are giving enough details to support their writing.

Assessment

- When completed, each student will be graded on their graphic organizer and the 15 bubbles that they have relating to the person they chose.

Day 3

Grade: 6

Objective: Students will be able to rewrite a previously written memoir from the perspective of another person in the story

Specific Standards from 6th grade Language Arts Core:

Standard 8: Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

Indicator a.: Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words, sentences and multiple paragraphs.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

Indicator a.: Produce personal writing

Preparation: The week before this lesson, choose 2-4 chapters to read from the book *Flipped* by Wendelin Van Draanen. Read chapters describing a situation from Bryce and Juli's perspective. If not enough time, read *The True Story of the Three Little Pigs* by Jon Scieszka. Have an example of a previously written memoir rewritten from a new perspective.

Mini-Lesson:

- Say "Remember when we read the chapters from *Flipped*? How did the story differ when it was told by Bryce and then by Juli?" (Discuss differences) "Sometimes when we tell a story, another person who experienced the same memory, remembers it totally differently. Today we are going to revisit a memoir that we have already written. I want you to reread it and think about what the other people in your memory thought or what you think their perspective of the situation might be."
- Share your original memoir and the altered memoir. Discuss the differences with the class.

Independent Writing with Conferencing

- Meet with 2-3 students and discuss their writing. If students are struggling with this concept, have them create a graphic organizer comparing the different perspectives.

Assessment

- During the conferencing with students, check to see that students are sharing the experience from a different perspective other than their own.

Day 4

Grade: 6

Objective: Students will be able to describe an experience using descriptive words and their senses.

Specific Standards from 6th grade Language Arts Core:

Standard 8: Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (pre-writing).

Indicator a.: Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing, researching, and reflecting on personal experiences.

Indicator d.: Use a variety of graphic organizers to organize information from multiple sources.

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

Indicator a.: Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words, sentences and multiple paragraphs.

Indicator c.: Use strong verbs and precise and vivid language to convey meaning.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

Indicator a.: Produce personal writing

Preparation: Select a few memorable or humorous experiences that they class has had together.

Mini-Lesson:

- Say “Good writers write in such a way that the reader can picture the situation clearly in their mind. Today we are going to use our senses to write about an experience that we have had together.”
- Share the selected memory with the students.
- Say “I want you to think about that experience. What did you see during that experience?”
- List what students saw in a graphic organizer. Continue listing what students smelled, tasted, heard, and/or touched. Not all senses may be used realistically.
- Do a shared writing using the information gathered about the senses to explain the memory.
- Say “Now I want you to look at your brainstorming list of memoir ideas. I want you to choose a memoir idea and complete a graphic organizer about what your senses experienced during the experience. After you have completed the organizer, I want you to write including as many vivid and descriptive details as you can. Help me feel as though I am there.”

Independent Writing with Conferencing

- Meet with 2-3 students and discuss with them their sensory writing. Make sure they are describing events accurately and with enough detail so the reader can understand.

Assessment:

- Randomly choose 5-7 students' graphic organizers to view as well as their writing pieces. Check them for vivid verbs and descriptive words that accurately show the situation.

Day 5-6**Grade: 6**

Objective: Students will be able to describe what is happening in a picture using descriptive and vivid language.

Specific Standards from 6th grade Language Arts Core:

Standard 8: Students write daily to communicate effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (pre-writing).

Indicator a.: Generate ideas for writing by reading, discussing, researching, and reflecting on personal experiences.

Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

Indicator a.: Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words, sentences and multiple paragraphs.

Indicator c.: Use strong verbs and precise and vivid language to convey meaning.

Objective 6: Write in different forms and genres.

Indicator a.: Produce personal writing

Preparation: Locate the book *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* and the associated portfolio pictures, if possible. Hang the pictures around the room.

Mini-Lesson:

- Discuss with the students the following saying, "A picture is worth a thousand words."
- Share with the class the introduction from *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. Say "In this situation, a picture has to be worth a thousand words as the words never materialized. However, you can create the thousand words yourself."
- Share with the class some of the previously created stories from the website: <http://www.houghtonmifflinbooks.com/features/harrisburdick/introduction.html>
- Have the students choose a picture from the book to write about. Remind them to use their senses to use phrases and words that will vividly record the story.
- Have the students bring in a favorite family picture. It can be a picture from a vacation, family portrait or time at home. The next day, have the students write a memoir based on their photograph. Help them remember to describe the memory using their senses.

Independent Writing with Conferencing

- Conference with 2-3 students each day and discuss with them their writing and how they are describing the photograph. Encourage them to use items from the background that may seem insignificant.

Assessment

- Have the students share their writing with a partner. Have the student listening write one positive and one suggestion on their paper.