

Genre Mini Unit--Writing Non-Fiction

Grade Level – 2

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

Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas (prewriting).

A: Generate ideas for writing by **reading**, discussing literature and informational text, and reflecting on personal ideas.

Using Non-Fiction to Learn About Things Around Us.

Day 1 – Mini Lesson – What is non-fiction? Immersion phase.

Time – 30 minutes

Personal Note -Our school is fortunate to be involved with Cross-Age Tutoring. A fourth grade class tutors my 2nd graders in reading for 25 minutes 4 times/week for 6 weeks. The vast majority of the books that are read are non-fiction. At the end of cross-age tutoring, my 2nd graders will have been thoroughly immersed in this genre. These lesson plans are designed to be used after cross-age tutoring.

Objective: Each student will read and evaluate several non-fiction books and be able to recognize the elements of this genre.

Adaptations: Teachers may need to make slight adaptations for students who have difficulty reading on-level non-fiction books.

Guided Practice: Tell the students that non-fiction books usually include photography and informational text. Read-aloud a short, non-fiction book. Discuss with the students all the non-fiction books they read with their tutor during Cross-Age Tutoring.

Independent Practice: “Take out your writing notebooks. Write at least 3 things that your tutoring books were about. For example, did you read about the weather or maybe you read about the ocean?” After the students have had time to write their response, ask who would like to share one thing their book was about. After the sharing of topics, discuss how they know a book is non-fiction. As you write these elements on the white board have the students write the same list in their writing notebooks.

Brainstorming: Tell the students that as a class you will write a non-fiction book. First they will brainstorm some ideas or topics they are familiar with. Write these ideas on the board. Assign one student to write the same ideas in their notebook as well for tomorrow’s lesson.

Assessment: Monitor and conference with the students as they are writing in their notebooks. As you walk around the classroom, check for understanding of the elements of non-fiction writing. Complement the children on how they know a book is non-fiction.

Day # 2 Modeling brainstorming for idea generation

Standard 8 - Objective 2: Compose a written draft.

- a. Draft ideas on paper in an organized manner utilizing words and sentences (e.g., beginning, middle, end; main idea; details).

Mini-Lesson – Using brainstorming ideas to produce a written piece.

Time: 30-45 minutes

Procedure: Ask students to open their writing notebooks to yesterday's page. Review with the students how they can recognize non-fiction. Read through the brainstorming list of topics recorded by the assigned student. Choose one idea that would be easy to use for modeling. (For this assignment I will use butterflies because our class raised larvae and watched as they changed into butterflies). "I am going to choose butterflies because they have been our class "pets" for the last month. So to start our class book, let's think of everything we know about butterflies that would be fun to put in our book." Give the students a moment to think and then record their responses on chart paper.

Do a think-aloud with the students. Say, "We know so much about butterflies! Listening to other students say what they know about them sparked my own memory about what I know. I see a lot of great things on our list. I've noticed that some of the items would sound better if we combined them. For example, instead of saying "butterflies have beautiful wings and then "butterflies are colorful", I think our book would sound better if we combined those two sentences to read "butterflies have beautiful, colorful wings." What other sentences would sound better to our audience if we combined them?" Continue this way until the text is complete. Continue the think-aloud by saying, "Our book needs to have a beginning, middle and end. As I look at our list, I think this sentence about butterflies starting out as little, black larvae would be a great beginning sentence." Continue choosing appropriate sentences for the middle and end of the non-fiction piece. Write the sentences in order on another piece of chart paper to use for the next day's lesson.

Independent Writing: Tell the students it's now their turn to brainstorm about topics they are familiar with. Have students write these ideas in their writing notebooks. Conference with the students as you observe their brainstorming. Refer to your modeling mini-lesson as you instruct the students to write down what they know about their chosen topic. Remind them about using appropriate sentences for the beginning, middle, and end of their book.

Assessment: Check for understanding of today's mini-lesson as you conference with students and observe their ability to list, combine, and use beginning, middle and end appropriately.

Day #3—Interactive writing of class book

Standard 8 – Objective 3: Revise by elaborating and clarifying a written draft.

- a. – Revise draft to add details, strengthen word choice, and reorder content.

Time: 30 minutes

Objective: Students will write their class book through interactive writing.

Modeling: Display the chart paper with the sentences written in order from yesterday's lesson. Tell the students that adding word choice to sentences can make them more interesting to our audience. Have the students think of different words that are associated with butterflies, i.e., flying. Say to the class, "What different word can we use instead of flying?" Continue in this manner until you are comfortable with the word choices made by the students, crossing out those words and adding the better word choice

Procedure: Tell the students they are now ready write their class book. Give everyone several sheets of lined paper and remind the students to use their best handwriting. The students will then copy the story from the chart paper onto their sheets of paper. Encourage them to add illustrations as well.

Assessment: Referring to Standard 8 – Objective 5: Use fluent and legible handwriting to communicate. Check to ensure students can communicate effectively through legible handwriting and appropriate use of conventions.

Day #4—Collaborative writing of ABC book

Standard 8 – Objective 6: Write in different modes and genres.

c. Produce informational text (e.g., ABC books, how-to-books, observations).

Time: 30 minutes

Objective: Students will work together to publish an ABC book of butterflies.

Procedures: Assign students a different letter of the alphabet. Instruct each student to use that letter to describe or tell about butterflies. Do a think-aloud for the students and say "If I were doing an ABC Book about fishing and my teacher assigned me the letter P, I could write something that goes like this: P is for a pole; because without my pole, it would be even harder to catch a fish." Encourage them to use their imaginations, to use proper conventions, and to illustrate their page. Their assigned letter should be large, colorful, and in the top left corner of their paper. The words by and the student's name should be written in the top right-hand corner.

Assessment and conferencing: Monitor and conference with students as they begin their page for the ABC book. Commend them on their creative use of their letter and correct use of conventions.

Publication: Assign a student to design the front cover of the book. Assign another student to collect each paper and arrange in ABC order. Bind, laminate cover, and display in the classroom.

Day #5—Independent Writing

Standard 8 – Objective 1: Prepare to write by gathering and organizing information and ideas.

Time 45 minutes

Learning Activity: Tell the students that they are writing their own non-fiction book today.

Procedure: Instruct students to open their writing notebooks to the page that contains the list of topics they are familiar with. Have them choose one of those topics. Refresh their memories about the mini-lesson taught on day #2. Remind them about word choice, conventions, and arranging their thoughts with a beginning, middle and end. Have each child refer to the butterfly book that was written as a class. Each child should have their own copy of the butterfly book at their desk.

Assessment and conferencing: Monitor students' books for conventions, word choice, etc. Check for students' ability to arrange sentences in logical order, and if possible, for beginning, middle and end.

Publication: Students will design their own book covers. Laminate covers and bind.