

# Personal Narrative

## Unit Introduction

### NOTE

Common Core State Standards are listed in Table of Contents after each lesson title as well as on actual lesson pages. Sometimes, in the process of revising, original lessons were deleted or moved and new lessons added. Lesson numbers were not changed, but the pages were renumbered to be sequential in each unit.

This unit has been revised to meet the Common Core State Standards. In this revision the model text was changed in order to include text that used appropriately punctuated compound sentences and appropriately punctuated dialogue, reflecting the Common Core State Standards.

To incorporate the Common Core State Standards W.4.6, W.4.8, which describes the use of technology you may choose to:

- Take digital photographs of shared experiences.
- Create a PowerPoint of writing with voice recordings.
- Use story-making applications from iPads or other tablets.
- Type final projects.
- Share writing over school announcement system.
- Have students project the written pieces using a document camera.

### Student Goals:

1. Students will apply classroom systems, routines and procedures of the writing workshop by:
  - Establishing habits of independent writers throughout the writing process
  - Creating and learning to use resources, and applying them to independent writing
  - Writing daily
2. Students will come together as a community of writers by:
  - Developing writing stamina in a productive, quiet writing space
  - Collaborating and responding respectfully and thoughtfully
  - Understanding where writers get their ideas (i.e. notebooks, conversations, personal experiences, mentor texts, etc.)
  - Exploring exemplary writing (mentor texts and student models)
3. Students understand that as writers they will:
  - Explore topics and ideas they find meaningful (prewriting)
  - Compose a first draft (drafting)
  - Extend and rework selected writing (revising)
  - Edit and proofread their work (editing)

## Unit Overview:

This unit is designed to follow on the heels of the launching unit. The routines and writing habits you worked hard to establish and practice in the launch are relied on here to get students writing often and writing well.

This unit is somewhat unique in that it has students start a variety of narrative pieces but finish only one or two. The reason for this is to have writers doing *short writes* as a way of applying new skills and strategies taught. Starting a variety of pieces also offers students choice in which piece(s) they choose to commit the time and energy needed for real revision and editing.

The first two lessons are about understanding the genre and listing lots of possible narrative ideas. In the launch we suggested that you have students write their drafts on the right side of their notebooks and reserve the left for revisions, edits and feedback. If you used another routine to organize notebooks for writing and revising, stick to the one that works for you and your students.

Many of the lessons invite students to do a lot of pair sharing. You can plan for different partnerships if you want more variety than talking to a neighbor. Just remember that the point is to do a quick check in, so don't spend too much planning or class time on these quick "turn-and talks."

The group revision lesson near the end is a great way to offer students meaningful feedback. It can take more than one day to establish routines for behavior in this type of response group. **Take a couple of days and focus on group norms.** It will be a revision routine you can come back to again and again if you set the stage for it here.

Each lesson includes a suggested mentor text. Please refer to the Introduction for additional information about using mentor texts. The Characteristics of Genre Chart, also found in the Introduction, is useful for identifying additional narrative lesson ideas.

Many lessons rely on the teacher having a model of his or her own narrative to use in demonstrating thinking, writing, revising and editing skills. Models are provided for you but you might find it easier to just create your own. You will be able to move more fluidly through the lesson if the story is truly yours. Don't worry about making mistakes in front of your students when you demonstrate your own writing. It offers you a chance to model how real writers solve problems. Be a risk taker and have fun sharing the stories of your life with your students.

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN1)

### Characteristics of Personal Narrative Writing

<p><b>Writing Teaching Point(s):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will brainstorm a new list of possible writing topics to develop as personal narratives.</li><li>• Students will determine some characteristics of personal narrative writing by analyzing a model.</li></ul>
<p><b>Standard(s):</b></p> <p>W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.</p> <p>W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p>
<p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Copies of graphic organizer for brainstorming personal narrative topics: copies and one for overhead or data projector</li><li>• Copies of student model: “Watch Out For Your Little Sister” (or another short model of personal narrative), copies for each student and one to use on overhead</li><li>• Chart: Personal Narrative Elements</li></ul>
<p><b>Connection:</b></p> <p><i>“Now that we understand the procedures and routines of Writing Workshop, we are ready to start writing personal narrative pieces. I want you to understand what makes a personal narrative unique from other kinds of writing, so we will spend our Writing Workshop time today thinking about what personal narratives are about, and how writers develop personal narrative pieces.”</i></p>
<p><b>Teach (modeling):</b></p> <p><i>“One of the first things you should know about personal narrative writing is that these are true stories that really happened to the writer. Personal narratives are always stories from your life. To help you think of some possible personal narrative stories, I’ve made a brainstorming chart for you to use.</i></p> <p><i>This list invites you to think of some personal narrative ideas that other fourth grade writers have enjoyed writing about in the past.”</i></p> <p>Distribute copies of the personal narrative brainstorming chart. Display one on overhead or data projector</p> <p><i>“I want to think of as many possible personal narrative topics as I can. So, I am going to read each category on this chart, then start adding my ideas.”</i></p> <p>Read through the categories with students.</p> <p><i>“I have an idea for a personal narrative about a mistake I made when I dressed up my poor old dog Lucy in a swimsuit. She looked great, but she was not happy. I’ll add a brief note about that idea here in the mistakes category. I don’t want to write the whole story, just enough so I remember what my idea was when I go to write. Does anyone else have an idea for the mistakes category they could share?”</i></p>

Invite one or two students to share ideas.

*“I also have some ideas for family rituals. In my family we walk the dog after school rain or shine. We also always have a big family dinner on Sundays. I’ll add those ideas. Does anyone else have an idea for the family rituals category?”*

Invite one or two students to share.

Repeat thinking aloud a few more ideas.

Note: Use the model of a completed chart to demonstrate to students how to think of ideas or, better yet, add your own personal narrative ideas to a blank chart.

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

*“Now it is time for you to brainstorm ideas for your chart. Don’t worry about putting an idea in every box. Get as many ideas down as you can in whatever categories you can.”*

Students start a new list of writing possibilities.

Monitor the class to know when to stop.

Have students Pair Share one or two ideas on their new lists.

**Teach (modeling):**

*“Now that we have a list of possible topics for a personal narrative, I want to share with you how writers develop personal narrative pieces. If I want to write my personal narrative about learning to make quesadillas with Molly, I don’t want to write a “how-to” recipe for quesadillas, I want to write a personal narrative story. If I decide to write about Sunday dinner at Granny’s, I don’t want to write a map to my Granny’s house, I want to write a personal narrative story.*

*Writers develop personal narratives using certain writing elements.”*

Show the chart with Personal Narrative Elements (See attached example)

Go through each element and briefly review what it means.

*“Now Let’s take a look at how another fourth grade writer used these personal narrative elements to develop her piece.”*

Pass out copies of “Watch Out for Your Little Sister” and/or display on the overhead or data projector.

Read through the entire piece aloud.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Did anyone hear some character description in Ashleigh’s piece?”*

Have students share the character description they heard. Star, underline or highlight this in the margin. Jot down character description next to the example.

Have students do the same. (See attached example)

*“What about setting description?”*

Have students share what they read for setting. Star, underline or highlight this in the margin. Jot down setting description next to the example. Have students do the same.

Repeat with other personal narrative elements.

**Closure:**

*“I want you to save this example in the toolbox section of your writing notebook. When you start writing your personal narrative tomorrow, you’ll need to remember these important elements of personal narrative writing.”*

Note: You will refer to the chart of personal narrative elements throughout the unit. If you are using a resources of toolbox section for the writing notebook, have students record the narrative elements discussed so far.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

Example of personal narrative element chart to make and refer to throughout the unit

<h1>Personal Narrative Writing</h1>	
<p>... true stories based on events from the writer's life. Writers write personal narrative about topics that matter to them.</p>	
<h2>Elements of Personal Narrative</h2>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Character Description</b></li> <li>• <b>Setting Description</b></li> <li>• <b>Dialogue</b></li> <li>• <b>Interesting details</b></li></ul>	



### Personal Narrative Idea List

Use this list to brainstorm ideas you might write a personal narrative about

Times you learned to do something: Ride a bike, make cookies, blow a bubble ...	Places you have visited	Scar Stories/Times You Got Hurt
Family Rituals	Making a New Friend	Starting Over: New School, New Team, New House ...
Best Day or Worst Day	Mistakes	Other Ideas

### Personal Narrative Idea List

Use this list to brainstorm ideas you might write a personal narrative about

<p>Times you learned to do something: Ride a bike, make cookies, blow a bubble ...</p> <p><b>Tie shoes from my cousin</b></p> <p><b>Make quesadillas with Molly</b></p>	<p>Places you have visited</p> <p><b>Mt. Hood</b></p> <p><b>The beach</b></p> <p><b>Uncle Howard's</b></p>	<p>Scar Stories/Times You Got Hurt</p> <p><b>Crashing my bike into my sister</b></p>
<p>Family Rituals</p> <p><b>Walk the dog after school</b></p> <p><b>Sunday dinner at Granny's</b></p>	<p>Making a New Friend</p>	<p>Starting Over: New School, New Team, New House ...</p> <p><b>First day of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade with mean Mrs. Browder</b></p>
<p>Best Day or Worst Day</p> <p><b>Mom made my sister's favorite cake for <u>my</u> birthday</b></p>	<p>Mistakes</p> <p><b>Dressing up the dog in a swimsuit</b></p>	<p>Other Ideas</p>

## Watch Out for Your Little Sister

“Move, Keyona!” I said to my short curly-haired little sister. She was eating a popsicle, her chubby legs in pink tights. She stood there, right smack in the middle of the sidewalk, still slurping the juice down from the cherry flavored popsicle. She sucked on that popsicle like a cat lapping milk.

I was at my grandma’s house on Fremont Street with my sister, Keyona, and my best friend, Leaha. Leaha is the exact opposite of Keyona.

I looked around the backstreet where my grandma and grandpa live. They live in a baby blue house with white trim. All around me there were rainbow colored leaves, luscious green trees and a rocky sidewalk.

CRASH! I almost ran into Keyona but she jumped out of the way just in time. My bike’s back wheel washed out as my front wheel flipped forward. I went flying in the air like an eagle soaring in the sky. Being the unsafe child that I am, I wasn’t wearing pads or even a helmet. So, when my entire body went skidding over the hard gravel ground, it hurt!

I lay on the ground for about two minutes. I heard wailing. I opened my eyes and saw ...Keyona.

“You’re not dead,” my sister said rubbing here eyes and smiling her biggest smile. She stood up, dusted off her pants and finished eating her cherry popsicle.

I looked at Leaha. Leaha looked at me. Then we both laughed and laughed until our stomachs started growling. So we decided to go get our own popsicles--lemon-lime.

Ashleigh

Example of Teacher modeling

<p>Dialogue</p> <p>Setting Description</p> <p>Dialogue</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">“Watch Out for Your Little Sister”</p> <p>“Move, Keyona!” I said to my short curly-haired little sister. She was eating a popsicle, her chubby legs in pink tights. She stood there, right smack in the middle of the sidewalk, still slurping the juice down from the cherry flavored popsicle. She sucked on that popsicle like a cat lapping milk.</p> <p>I was at my grandma’s house on Fremont Street with my sister, Keyona, and my best friend, Leaha. Leaha is the exact opposite of Keyona.</p> <p>I looked around the backstreet where my grandma and grandpa live. They live in a baby blue house with white trim. All around me there were rainbow colored leaves, luscious green trees and a rocky sidewalk.</p> <p>CRASH! I almost ran into Keyona but she jumped out of the way just in time. My bike’s back wheel washed out as my front wheel flipped forward. I went flying in the air like an eagle soaring in the sky. Being the unsafe child that I am, I wasn’t wearing pads or even a helmet. So, when my entire body went skidding over the hard gravel ground, it hurt!</p> <p>I lay on the ground for about two minutes. I heard wailing. I opened my eyes and saw ...Keyona.</p> <p>“You’re not dead,” my sister said rubbing here eyes and smiling her biggest smile. She stood up, dusted off her pants and finished eating her cherry popsicle.</p> <p>I looked at Leaha. Leaha looked at me. Then we both laughed and laughed until our stomachs started growling. So we decided to go get our own popsicles--lemon-lime.</p>	<p>Character Description</p> <p>Interesting Details</p> <p>Interesting Details</p> <p>Interesting Details</p>
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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN2)

### Applying Personal Narrative Elements

#### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Writers use certain writing elements when crafting narrative pieces.
- Students will study a model of narrative writing looking for how the elements are used.
- Students will write a short write on a narrative topic.

#### Standard(s):

- W.4.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.4.8 Recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

#### Materials:

- Writing notebooks
- Chart of Personal Narrative Elements from lesson 1
- Copies of “Absolute Innocence” by Lois Lowry or another short narrative model written on a topic compelling to 4<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Highlighters or colored pencils

#### Connection:

*“Writers, yesterday we learned some of the elements of narrative writing. Let’s look at the list we started.”* Review the list of personal narrative elements from chart.

*“Today we will read another short example of a personal narrative looking for those important narrative elements.”*

#### Teach (modeling):

Pass out copies of “Absolute Innocence” and display one on the overhead.

Have students read in partners or read aloud for the first reading.

Note: The humor here is subtle so you may need to help students “get it.”

*“Yesterday we paid attention to what narratives are about and how they are written. So first, what was this narrative about?”*

Students share ideas. Try to funnel the ideas towards something like “A time you got in trouble for doing something foolish.”

#### Active Engagement (guided practice):

*“Who else has ever done something foolish and been caught like Lois did in this story? Tell your neighbor your story about doing something foolish.”* If time allows, invite three or four students to also share whole group.

*“Let’s jot those stories down on the brainstorm of narrative ideas you all started in the ideas section of your notebooks yesterday. It could go in mistakes category or other ideas.”*

Give students a couple of minutes to add ideas about times they got in trouble.

**Teach (modeling):**

*“Personal Narratives are true stories-sometimes embarrassingly true. But remember that they are also written with certain elements. I’d like you to read “Absolute Innocence” one more time. This time highlight any examples you find of the narrative elements we listed yesterday.”*

Review Personal Narrative Elements Chart list if needed.

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

Students read and highlight alone or in partners.

Have students share the personal narrative elements they found in Lowry’s personal narrative.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers, today you will choose one of the ideas you listed to begin writing a personal narrative. Make sure you choose an idea that matters to you. Choose the story you feel like writing today. All the other ideas will get a chance another day.*

*Write your piece using as many of the narrative elements as you can.”*

Refer to Personal Narrative Elements chart.

*“Look over your list of ideas and star the one you will start today.”*

Give students some time to select their narrative idea and pair share their ideas.

*“Write as much as you can on the narrative you chose to write today. Use that great writing stamina you developed when we did our Launch. You probably won’t finish writing through to the end. Just get as far as you can.”*

**Closure:**

*“Writers, I’d like you to share your writing with a partner. Partners have an important job to do. Listen for what personal narrative elements you hear when your partner reads.”*

If time allows have volunteers read short sections of their personal narratives that demonstrate one of the elements.

**Notes:****Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

## Chapter 13

### Absolute Innocence

One chilly day when I was in first grade, walking home alone from school, taking a shortcut through an alley behind my house, I found what I thought was a very cold mouse, asleep.

I felt sorry for him and thought that if only I could get him warm, he would wake up, do cute little mousy things, and perhaps I would be allowed to keep him as a pet. I had never had a pet. My baby brother had just been born and was something of a disappointment as a playmate, so I yearned for a lovable creature who would scamper about at my heels and learn tricks.

Very carefully, I picked him up. At the time, I had not yet read *Stuart Little*; so I was not expert at mouseology. I did realize that he was rather large for a mouse; but *The Rats of Nimh* had not yet been written, so I hadn't read that either, and didn't know that there were other, larger rodents in the same general family as mice.

I carried him home cradled in one arm, and his tail, long and bare and very stiff, stuck out. He looked vulnerable and homely, with two visible front teeth – my own were missing at the time – and as I walked, I began to think of names for him and to picture how he would come when I called.

Warming him against my heavy jacket didn't waken him. Clearly my jacket sleeve wasn't warm enough. So when I entered the house through the back door, into the kitchen, and heard my mother busy upstairs with the baby, I carefully turned on the oven. I knew enough to set it to a low temperature so that it would warm and waken my mouse gradually. Then I laid him gently inside the oven.

I guess I got busy with my paper dolls and forgot to check on him for a while. I don't remember, exactly. But that would explain why it was my mother who first noticed that there was something baking.

I always felt that if I had only had a chance to explain, and to prepare her a bit, it wouldn't have been such a surprise to her when she opened the oven that day. I felt that if she had just looked at my very innocent face, my wide-open, completely uncriminal eyes –instead of *screaming* at me, for no reason whatsoever – the whole incident would have been handled better.

I have always felt that she overreacted.

**By Lois Lowry**

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN3)

### Narrowing the Topic

#### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will choose a seed idea from their idea bank and will narrow their topic.

#### Standard(s):

- W.4.3.a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.4.3.b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.)

#### Materials:

- Writing notebooks
- Teacher’s own idea bank
- Copies of Hourglass Graphic Organizer
- Teacher’s ideas for narrowing topic (or use the one described in this lesson)
- Personal Narrative Elements Chart

#### Connection:

*“We have been exploring the elements of personal narrative writing. Let’s review. What makes a story a personal narrative?”*

Check the Personal Narrative Elements chart or whatever method you have used to record the elements of narrative.

*“Today you will continue to write using the elements of personal narrative. I want to share something else with you that writers do when they write narratives. Writers narrow their topics so they can write an interesting narrative.*

*When you try to write a narrative about a HUGE topic, it ends up being pretty boring. Good narratives have a narrow focus.”*

#### Teach (modeling)

*“Writers, today you will choose a new idea from your list of narrative ideas. The narrative you started yesterday will stay in the drafts section of your notebook.*

*Remember what we know about narratives and decide which one of those ideas you want to write a narrative for today. I am going to look at my ideas and choose the one that is best for me.”*

Teacher models choosing an idea from the teacher’s brainstorm chart. (Example, My Trip to the Beach)

*“I need to make sure this idea matches the definition of personal narrative. Let’s see. Is it true? Yes. Is it important to me? Yes. Great. Then it is an idea I can choose.”*

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

*“Look over your brainstorm chart. Choose a new idea you want to write about today.”*  
Give a few minutes.

*“Tell your neighbor what idea you choose.”*

**Teach (modeling):**

*“Today I need to ask myself another question. I know I need to write a narrative about a narrow topic. Is the topic of my trip to the beach a narrow topic or a pretty big story? I think it is pretty big. SO much happened on that trip. I need to narrow my topic. I want to use one of the strategies for narrowing my topic that we practiced with our launch.”*

Show the hourglass graphic organizer.

*“Who remembers using this in the launch? I think it could really help me find a narrower focus. I am going to write ‘My trip to the beach’ at the top here. Now I am going to list some of the things that happened in the top part of my hourglass.”*

Model narrowing topic using hourglass (see Launching lesson on narrowing topic.)  
Narrow topic to Oregon coast, then to Seaside, then to walking on beach, then to sneaker wave knocked me down.

*“Now I have some smaller events. I need to decide which narrowed focus topic I will write about. I think I’ll write about the sneaker wave knocking me down.”*

Model writing ‘Sneaker wave’ in the mid-section of the hourglass.

**Trip to beach**

**Oregon Coast  
Seaside  
Walk on beach**

**NARROWED FOCUS -> Wave knocked me down**

*“Narrowing my focus is important but that is not all there is to a narrative. I want to use the bottom of my hourglass for details about my new narrower focus.”*

Model writing details about the wave:

Seagulls distracted me, felt cold, upside down, heart pounding ...

Note: Use this story or choose an idea of your own that you can follow through the next few writing lessons.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers, today before you start your short write I want everyone to use this hourglass to narrow your topic and brainstorm interesting details for your writing. When you have completed your hourglass, start writing. Get as far as you can in the time we have today.”*

Note: Students can simply sketch an hourglass right in their writer’s notebooks or you can make copies of the hourglass found in the launch.

**Closure:**

*“Take another look at your hourglass and notice the details you brainstormed. Now read your writing back to yourself. Did those details make it into your narrative? If not, you can try including them tomorrow.”*

**Add “Have a narrow focus” to the chart of personal narrative elements.**

If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writing notebook, have students add narrow topic to their list of strategies.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Hourglass Graphic Organizer** **Digging Deeper for Focus**

The graphic organizer consists of two triangles meeting at a central point. The top triangle is inverted and contains three horizontal lines for writing. The bottom triangle is upright and also contains three horizontal lines for writing. The narrow neck of the hourglass is replaced by a jagged, starburst shape.

## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN4) Leads

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will write strong leads for a narrative piece.

### Standard(s):

- W.4.3.a. Orient the reader by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.4.3.b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.

### Materials:

- Writing notebooks
- Short Write Sample – Sneaker Wave
- Copies of types of leads
- Personal Narrative Elements Chart

### Connection:

*“Writers, yesterday you all did a great job of narrowing the focus of your narrative topics. The short writes you did yesterday got me really interested in the rest of your stories.*

*Getting the reader interested in a story right away is one of the elements of good narrative writing. Today, we will focus on writing an interesting lead or beginning.”*

### Teach (modeling):

Distribute copies of types of leads and display one copy on the overhead or data projector.

*Beginnings for narratives are called leads and there are lots of ways to write good leads. I made a list of a few ways writers write interesting leads for you to use today as you work on your own.”*

*“Let’s look at some of the ways other writers start their narratives.”*

You can read each lead aloud or have volunteers take turns reading.

### Foreshadowing (A hint of something to come):

It was the time of year Farmer Bailey liked best, when summer turned to fall. He whistled as he drove along. A cool breeze blew across his face through the truck’s open window. Then it happened. There was a loud thump.

-The Stranger by Chris Van Allsburg p 274

### Action:

A storm was approaching, but Peter crawled through the strange little hole in the fence anyway.

- Time Traveler in Scott Foresman p189

**Dialogue:**

Bet you can't jump over that rille, Runt," Vern challenged. Gary Kandel hated it when his brother called him Runt.  
"Watch me, Runt," Vern taunted. "I'll show you how to do it.

-Moonwalk by Ben Bova p614

**Character Description:**

Reba Jo loved to twang her guitar and sing while the prairie wind whistled through the thirsty sagebrush.

-The Horned Prince by Jackie Mims Hopkins p94

**Setting Description:**

As they entered the camp, the longest shadows Marven had ever seen stretched across the snow, and he realized with a start that the shadows were the lumberjacks walking in the moonlight. He could smell hay and manure and saw silhouettes of horses stomping in a snowy corral.

-Marven of the Great North Woods by Kathryn Lasky p218

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

*"Look back over the list of leads. Put a star or check mark next to the one you think you will try today."*

**Teach (modeling):**

*"Some of you already had a good lead in your short write yesterday. I like the lead I used for my short write about the beach. The dialogue sets a mood and I think my readers will know where I am in the story from the lead. I know I might be able to write an even better one. Before you start experimenting with your leads, let me show you how I thought about mine."*

Display the sneaker wave short write or the one you wrote yourself.

*"My lead here is a dialogue lead. I wonder how an action lead might sound? I will try to remember some specific actions that I was doing that day. I was at the beach, walking in the sand. I could write 'I shuffled my feet through damp sand and tucked a hair behind my ear so the wild wind would stop blowing it.' That's OK, too. Maybe a character description would be cool. I could describe my son or some of the other people at the beach."*

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*"Today when you start writing, I want everyone to write a lead. Writers write strong leads. Even if you wrote one you like yesterday, I want you to do what I did and try a new one."*

*You can write a lead for the same narrative you wrote yesterday or start a new narrative with a new lead. When you are satisfied with your lead, keep writing the rest of the narrative."*

**Closure:**

*“Read your lead back to yourself. Now that you have written more do you still like the lead you started with? Some of you might decide to try a different lead another day.*

*Read your lead to your neighbor.”*

**Add “Strong Leads” to the Personal Narrative elements chart.**

Note: If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writer’s notebook, have students add types of leads to their resources.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

## Sneaker Wave Short Write

“Hey Mom,” Josh yelled. “Want to play Frisbee?”

“No thanks, Hon. I am happy just walking down the beach looking at the waves,” I answered.

It was the first day of our summer vacation at the Oregon Coast. I had been waiting for this walk on the beach for weeks. All I wanted to do was listen to seagulls, watch waves roll-in and hang-out with my son.



## **Personal Narratives start with a strong lead.**

Use these examples from the SF anthology to help you plan the lead that best matches your personal narrative.

### **Foreshadowing (A hint of something to come):**

It was the time of year Farmer Bailey liked best, when summer turned to fall. He whistled as he drove along. A cool breeze blew across his face through the truck's open window. Then it happened. There was a loud thump.

-The Stranger by Chris Van Allsburg, SF p. 274

### **Action:**

A storm was approaching, but Peter crawled through the strange little hole in the fence anyway.

- Time Traveler, SF p189

### **Dialogue:**

"Bet you can't jump over that rille, Runt," Vern challenged.

Gary Kandel hated it when his brother called him Runt.

"Watch me, Runt," Vern taunted. "I'll show you how to do it."

-Moonwalk by Ben Bova, SF p. 614

### **Character Description:**

Reba Jo loved to twang her guitar and sing while the prairie wind whistled through the thirsty sagebrush.

-The Horned Prince by Jackie Mims Hopkins p94

### **Setting Description:**

As they entered the camp, the longest shadows Marven had ever seen stretched across the snow, and he realized with a start that the shadows were the lumberjacks walking in the moonlight. He could smell hay and manure and saw silhouettes of horses stomping in a snowy corral.

-Marven of the Great North Woods by Kathryn Lasky p218

Try a lead for your narrative. If you like it, use it. If not, try another lead.

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN5) Character Descriptions

<b>Writing Teaching Point(s):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will describe character as one of the elements of narrative writing by using details that create a picture in the reader’s mind.</li></ul>
<b>Standard(s):</b> <p>W.4.3.b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</p> <p>W.4.3.d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.</p>
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing notebooks</li><li>• Copy of student model, “Kitchen Story”, for the overhead</li><li>• Copies of the student model or trade book excerpt for students or any trade book you enjoy using that has a short excerpt with character development.</li><li>• Personal Narrative Elements Chart</li><li>• Highlighters or colored pencils for marking text</li><li>• For additional lessons see TQW I-22, I-23, I-25</li></ul>
<b>Connection:</b> <p><i>“Writers, yesterday you wrote strong leads for one of your seed ideas. You had already narrowed down your seed idea using the hourglass. Today you can keep working on that same narrative or you can choose to start a new one. We will spend our writing time today working with one of the important elements of narrative; the characters.”</i></p>
<b>Teach (modeling):</b> <p><i>“Writers have many ways of developing characters. I want to show some of those ways to you today.”</i></p> <p>Pass out copies of student model or excerpt from a trade book. If you are using a trade book, students need to have already read it. Begin with a review of what students know about the character(s) before analyzing the passage.</p> <p><i>“Let’s read this example.”</i> Read the passage aloud or have partners read it.</p> <p><i>“What do we learn about the character from the way the author wrote this?”</i></p> <p>Have students share what we know. As they share, ask them to find a sentence that shows that. When a student shares a sentence that reveals the character, highlight it. Have students highlight their copies as well. Repeat two or three times. (See attached example)</p> <b>Active Engagement (guided practice):</b> <p>If using a longer excerpt from a trade book, students may need time to finish finding examples of character development.</p> <p>Read over the techniques for developing character that students uncovered.</p> <p><i>“Can anyone think of another way to develop characters that the writer did not use here, but you might want to use?”</i></p> <p><i>Today when you write, you will use these character development techniques to describe one or more of the characters in your narrative.”</i></p>

**Teach (modeling)**

*“Now let’s practice together.”*

Teacher chooses a character the entire class knows (from the school, or a tv character). Student partners come up with ideas about the character’s appearance, actions and dialogue.

Teacher records student ideas at the overhead or data projector.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers create characters that become real to the reader. Today before you write take a few minutes to brainstorm details about one of the people in your narrative. As you write, make sure you use at least one of these techniques to develop your characters.”*

Remember that you can keep working on the narrative you already started or switch to a different one.”

**Closure:**

*“Writers, reread what you wrote today and find the places you developed your characters. With a partner, share one or two sentences where you developed one of your characters. Partners, close your eyes and see if you can picture this character. If not, ask your partner some questions you have about the characters.”*

Give students time to pair share.

*“Who will volunteer to share their character development example?”*

A few volunteers share with whole group. After each writer shares, identify the technique they used to develop their character.

**Add the ways writers develop characters to the character description element of the Personal Narrative Element Chart.**

If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writer’s notebook, have students record the ways writers develop characters.

**Notes:****Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

“Kitchen Story” by Arainnia

Read the beginning of Arainnia’s story about learning to cook from her great-grandmother, Granny. Notice how Arainnia lets the reader know about her granny.

*Granny came walking in the kitchen with an excited face. Her black and gray curly hair bounced up and down while she walked. She went directly to the cabinet still wearing her happy expression. She grabbed her biggest pot and put it on the stove.”*

*“Granny, are you feeling okay?” I asked.*

*“I am feeling great baby. I am cooking my famous greens that will make your soul sing,” she answered.*

*I walked out of the kitchen still watching Granny. She started humming This Little Light of Mine.”*

*I decided to go back. I walked in the kitchen and asked, “Can I help you Granny?”*

*“Of course you can, Baby Girl. As long as you don’t give away my secret recipe. Do we have a deal?”*

*“Deal,” I said.*

What do you notice Arainnia did to let the reader know about the character of her granny?

Think of one of the people in one of your personal narratives. Brainstorm details about the character the same way Arainnia did.

**Character:**

<b>Appearance:</b> How the character looks	
<b>Actions:</b> What the character does	
<b>Dialogue:</b> How the character sounds	

### Kitchen Story by Arainnia

Read the beginning of Arainnia’s story about learning to cook from her great-grandmother, Granny. Notice how Arainnia lets the reader know about her granny.

*Granny came walking in the kitchen with an excited face. Her black and gray curly hair bounced up and down while she walked. She went directly to the cabinet still wearing her happy expression. She grabbed her biggest pot and put it on the stove.”*

*“Granny, are you feeling okay?” I asked.*

*“I am feeling great baby. I am cooking my famous greens that will make your soul sing,” she answered.*

*I walked out of the kitchen still watching Granny. She started humming This Little Light of Mine.”*

*I decided to go back. I walked in the kitchen and asked, “Can I help you Granny?”*

*“Of course you can, Baby Girl. As long as you don’t give away my secret recipe. Do we have a deal?”*

*“Deal,” I said.*

What do you notice Arainnia did to let the reader know about the character of her granny?

Think of one of the people in one of your narratives. Brainstorm details about the character the same way Arainnia did.

Character:

Appearance: How the character looks	Black and gray curly hair Happy expression
Actions: What the character does	Grabbed her biggest pot
Dialogue: How the character sounds	I am feeling great baby As long as you don’t give away my secret recipe

## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN6) Using Details to Describe the Setting

<p><b>Writing Teaching Point(s):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Students will describe setting by using details that create a picture in the reader’s mind.</li></ul>
<p><b>Standard(s):</b></p> <p>W.4.3.b. Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.</p> <p>W.4.3.d. Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.</p>
<p><b>Materials:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Class set SF Anthology</li><li>• Mentor texts:</li><li>• <u>Marven of the Great North Woods</u> SF Anthology (excerpt p218) or a short model of strong setting description from a familiar trade book.</li></ul> <p>Note: It is best if the whole text is familiar to writers before they study one small piece of the text for a craft lesson.</p>
<p><b>Connection:</b></p> <p><i>“Writers, we study the work of other writers to make our own writing better. We have studied other writers to see what makes narrative writing unique and we have studied narratives to understand character development. Today we’ll look at the ways Kathryn Lasky describes setting in her story, <u>Marven of the Great North Woods</u>, to help us develop the settings of our own narratives.”</i></p> <p><i>“When writers write narratives they describe the setting-where and when the story takes place.”</i></p>
<p><b>Teach (modeling)</b></p> <p><i>“Let’s read how author Kathryn creates a picture in our minds of a new, cold place Marven has come to live. Listen as I read through once. When I finish, help me list the ways she described the setting.”</i></p> <p>Teacher reads first page of <u>Marven of the Great North Woods</u>, pg 218.</p> <p><b>Active Engagement (guided practice):</b></p> <p>Students pair share setting details and description they heard. After pair sharing, have students share setting details whole group as teacher records them.</p> <p><u>Suggestions:</u></p> <p>He could smell hay and manure= smell details Marven stared=how the narrator feels in the place Like a pack of frantic grizzly bears=comparison/simile</p> <p>Note: To make students more active participants, have them share a detail verbally and then record it on a large piece of paper or sentence strip with marker. Students hang the examples they shared and copied on the wall for others to see.</p>

**Teach (modeling):**

*“Now, let’s look again at my Seaside trip. I have my drafts. I am thinking of the setting details. I am going to brainstorm some details and list them on the left hand side of my notebook where I put my changes. For details, I close my eyes and visualize an imaginary movie of that day on the beach. I see grey sky that melts into a grey ocean. I hear angry waves crashing onto the shore. I smell the fishy smell of rotting seaweed.”*

Teacher lists:

\*grey sky melts into grey ocean

\*angry waves crashing

\*fishy smell of rotting seaweed

*“I am going to try including these details as I write today. I might add a sentence that describes setting to a section I already wrote or I might include setting description in the new sections I write today.”*

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers describe setting when they write personal narratives. Today you can start a new personal narrative or continue writing one you already started. Just make sure to describe the setting. Before you write today-whether you are returning to a draft you already started or starting a new one. Close your eyes and visualize an imaginary movie. Jot down some setting details on the left hand side of your writing notebook before you write. When you have your setting details brainstormed, write your personal narrative.”*

**Closure:**

*“Read your narrative back to yourself. Find where you described setting. If you don’t see any setting details, mark a spot to add setting tomorrow.”*

Have a few students share their examples of setting description.

**Add the ways writers develop setting to the element of setting description on the Personal Narrative Element Chart.**

If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writer’s notebook, have students add setting description to their tools.

**Notes:****Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**



Writers describe setting so that readers get a picture in their minds about where and when a story takes place. Read how Kathryn Lasky describes the setting of a lumber camp in Marven and the Great North Woods.

Students highlight examples of descriptive vocabulary for a setting.

P.218

“As they entered the camp, the longest shadows Marven had ever seen stretched across the snow, and he realized with a start that the shadows were the lumberjacks walking in the moonlight. He could smell hay and manure and saw silhouettes of horses stomping in a snowy corral. From a nearby log building he heard the lively squeaks of a fiddle. It seemed for a moment as if the horses were keeping time to the music. Mr. Murray must have thought the same.

‘You want to watch the horses dance, or the jacks?’ He laughed. “Come along, we’ll take a look.’

When they entered the building, the long shadows from the yard suddenly sprung to life. Marven stared. Immense men with long beards and wild hair were jumping around to the fiddler’s tune like a pack of frantic grizzly bears. They were the biggest and wildest men Marven had ever seen.”

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN7) Transitions

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Student will use appropriate transitions in their personal narrative.

### Standard(s):

W.4.3.c. Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.

### Materials:

- Transition Words List, copies for each student
- Personal Narrative draft
- Personal Narrative Model for overhead or data projector

### Connection:

*“Now that you have written two paragraphs, let’s add transitions. We’ve all used a VCR or DVD to fast forward through sections of a movie. Transition words do the same thing for writers – they move us along to the important part of our story.”*

### Teach (modeling)

Teacher writes the word transition on chart paper.

*“Let’s explore this word: trans means across or change. Transition words help connect events in a personal narrative so the writing smoothly connects from event to event. Here are some examples of transition words”*

Pass out Transition Word List

*“Let’s look over these words. Which ones have you used before as a writer? Are there any you don’t understand?”*

*“I’m looking at my personal narrative short write. I have added some character development and also more about the setting, just like you did. Now I want to make sure the different parts of my writing are connected with transitions. Remember that writers use transitions to move the reader along through the story piece.”*

Teacher puts Personal Narrative sample draft on document camera or overhead.

*“I need some transitions to help the reader move forward in time from one paragraph and event to the next paragraph and event. Let’s look at the Transition Words List for something that fits and makes sense.”*

*“I like the words ‘After that’, and I also like the word ‘Later’. Both would work when I write different actions. I think I’ll add ‘After that’ to my paragraph about deciding to head down the beach.”*

Model adding the transition word where it belongs.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers today as you write add some transition words to your personal narrative. Transitions will help your reader move through your piece. You can add some transition words to the personal narrative you are almost done with or you can concentrate on adding transition words to the sections you write today.”*

**Closure:**

*Have students reread their drafts and find the transition words they used. Zip around the room and have every student read one transition word they used.*

**Add good writers use transitions to move the reader forward in the writing to the “What Do Good Writers Do? Chart..**

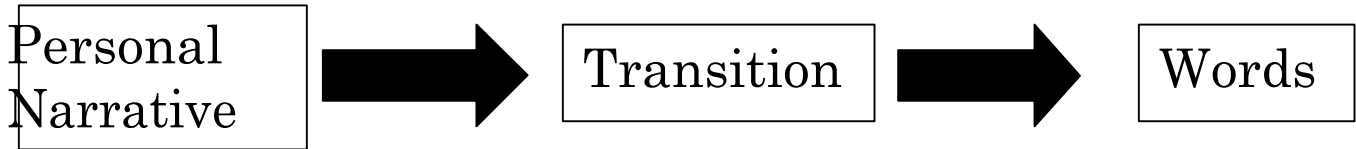
If you have a resources or toolbox section of your writing notebook, have students add transitions to their tools.

**Notes:**

Attached is a transition word list, but use whatever list is appropriate for your class, or add words to this one.

Other lists are in Writers Express page 85, Four Square Writing Methods by Judith S. and Evan Jay Gould, page 65.

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**



After all

Finally

Next

After that

First

Again

Gradually

Another time

In the first place

Once

Also

Instead

One reason

As soon as

Just After

Since

Another

Just Before

Suddenly

Before

Later

This

Because

Last(ly)

The next day

Besides that

Most of all

Yesterday

But

More than

## Personal Narrative model for transition lesson

“Hey Mom,” Josh yelled. “Want to play Frisbee?”

“No thanks, Hon. I am happy just walking down the beach looking at the waves,” I answered.

I watched Josh toss the Frisbee back and forth with his friend Ian. I couldn’t believe how tall he had gotten. He was growing into a strong young man. His orange shorts that seemed so big at the start of summer now barely fit him.

It was the first day of our summer vacation at the Oregon Coast. I had been waiting for this walk on the beach for weeks. All I wanted to do was listen to seagulls, watch waves roll-in and hang-out with my son.

I walked for a while noticing the scream of the seagulls. What are they always chattering about, I wondered.

I decided to head further down the beach to check out some cool rocks.

I found myself unable to walk. I was surrounded by water. A giant, cold wave had washed over me.

## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN8) Writing Day

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Writers make decisions about what pieces to finish and revise.
- Students will choose one of their short writes or drafts to finish writing.

### Standard(s):

W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.)

### Materials:

- Writing notebooks
- Chart or list of narrative elements from lesson 1

### Connection:

*“Writers, you have done some great personal narrative writing over the past two weeks. Today you will have some time to finish one of the personal narratives you started.”*

### Teach (modeling):

*“In order to know which personal narrative you want to finish you will need to reread your short writes and drafts.*

*You are trying to find the one that you want to finish writing today. This will be a piece that you work on revising and editing, so make sure you choose a story you feel ready to commit the time and effort required for revising and editing. Don’t just choose the one you wrote the most for already. That might be your most important piece, but a short one might be the one you care about the most.”*

### Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students reread all their drafts and short writes. This will take different amounts of time for different students. When most students have reread and chosen, get the attention of the class again and lead the next step of the lesson.

### Teach (modeling):

*“Now that you have decided which narrative you want to finish you need to think about the rest of the story.*

*I want everyone to spend one silent minute thinking about the next parts of their narrative through to the end.”*

### Active Engagement (guided practice):

Students pair share ideas for the rest of the events of their personal narratives.

### Teach (modeling):

Review the list of narrative elements.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers, I want you to get as far as you can with your personal narrative today. Don’t rush to the end since that isn’t good writing. Just stay focused on your personal narrative and get as far as you can.*

*If you get stuck look at our list of personal narrative elements or use one of the what can you do when you get stuck strategies.” (See Launch Lesson 7)*

**Closure:**

Students read drafts to a partner.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**



## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN9) An Insightful Ending

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will write an ending that provides insight into why the event is memorable, creating a sense of closure.

### Standard(s):

W.4.3.e. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

### Materials:

Note: It is best if students use familiar text for this lesson. If you have other narrative or realistic fiction texts that students know, use this lesson to look at the endings of those pieces. While the pieces listed here all offer strong endings, if students have not read these anthology selections, it will be hard to get a sense of how the endings work.

- SF Anthology Grandfather's Journey, p81
- SF Anthology Adelina's Whales, p307
- SF Anthology The Great Kapok Tree p375
- SF Anthology The Houdini Box, p 409
- 3-column anchor chart with types of endings, examples from books and space for student examples.

### Connection:

*"Today is a big day because we all write the ending to our personal narratives. As we have all along, we will read examples of authors' work. This time we will notice the endings, notice what the authors do, and then do it ourselves."*

### Teach (modeling):

Read through different types of endings (see attached)

Teacher models creating an ending for the Seaside story.

*"First I reread my entire story. Then I think, what can I do to leave readers with a lasting impression and give them a sense of closure? I brainstorm several ideas.*

*How about strong action? Let me think of what I did last."*

***I wasn't about to let the water and sand in my shoes and clothes keep me from enjoying my day. I stormed off to our car, to find some dry clothes.***

***On the way I told my son he better be ready to play Frisbee with me when I got back.***

*"Now I am thinking, does that work with the story? Maybe, but let's try something else. Let's try strong feelings."*

***The wave had pushed me over with an energy force I was not used to. As I sat in the wet sand, and worked hard to get my bearings, I realized I may be strong, but I was no match for mother nature.***

*"Now I will choose one I like. I think I like the last one I wrote, the strong feelings one because it says just what I was thinking at the moment and it leaves me something to think about."*

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Today as you write, pay attention to your ending. Even if you already wrote an ending for your narrative yesterday, do what I did and try another. As you write, I will walk around and look for endings you are trying and invite you to add them to our anchor chart.”*

**Closure:**

Review the student examples that were added to the anchor chart and/or Popcorn share endings. Students notice type of ending and why it works.

**Add “write strong endings” to the Personal Narrative elements chart.**

If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writer’s notebook, have students add ideas about endings.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

## Personal Narrative Endings

### Strong Feelings

“I think I know my grandfather now. I miss him very much.”

-Grandfather’s Journey

### Strong Images.

“Every afternoon Adelina continues to gaze across the water. Sometimes now, when she closes her eyes, she can still see the whales swimming by. And if she listens *really* closely, she can hear their breathing.”

- Adelina’s Whales

### Strong Action

“The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child. He hesitated. Then he dropped the ax and walked out of the forest.”

-The Great Kapok Tree

### Strong Image

“And that night, while his wife and son slept downstairs and the attic shadows vanished in the pale, blue fall of moonlight, Victor locked himself inside his grandmother’s trunk and escaped in under twenty seconds.”

-The Houdini Box

## Personal Narrative Endings Examples

Type	Example from a book	Student examples from our class
<b>Strong Feelings</b>	<p>“I think I know my grandfather now. I miss him very much.”  <u>-Grandfather’s Journey</u></p>	
<b>Strong Images</b>	<p>“Every afternoon Adelina continues to gaze across the water. Sometimes now, when she closes her eyes, she can still see the whales swimming by. And if she listens <i>really</i> closely, she can hear their breathing.”  <u>Adelina’s Whales</u></p>	
<b>Strong Action</b>	<p>“The man stood and picked up his ax. He swung back his arm as though to strike the tree. Suddenly he stopped. He turned and looked at the animals and the child. He hesitated. Then he dropped the ax and walked out of the forest.”  <u>-The Great Kapok Tree</u></p>	
<b>Strong Image</b>	<p>“And that night, while his wife and son slept downstairs and the attic shadows vanished in the pale, blue fall of moonlight, Victor locked himself inside his grandfather’s trunk and escaped in under twenty seconds.”  <u>-The Houdini Box</u></p>	

## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN10)

### Revise Draft for Strong Verbs

#### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will revise their draft for strong verbs.

Note: Your students might need a couple of writing days to simply write their pieces through to the end. If so, just review the personal narrative elements charts as the writing lesson and have students share in various groupings as closure.

#### Standard(s):

L.4.3.a Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

#### Materials:

- The Batboy and his Violin, Gavin Curtis, Scott Foresman Trade Books or another familiar trade book that uses strong verbs.
- Model of teacher's narrative to revise

#### Connection:

*"Students, you have worked hard at creating wonderful personal narrative stories, but you aren't finished yet. We jump into revision today.*

*Today we take our drafts and look for ways to make them stronger. One key to help writing become stronger is with word choice. Today we will look at action words or verbs. The more specific the verb, the more energy the sentence will have and the clearer your reader's images will be.*

#### Teach (modeling)

*"Writers, verbs are words that describe an action in a sentence. But some verbs are stronger than others. For example, compare a verb like walk to the verb trundle or the verb laugh to giggle. Being specific with verbs makes your writing clearer."*

Use these excerpts from -

*"The Batboy and his Violin is a narrative about a boy who likes to play violin, but his father wants him to play baseball."*

**"I sashay my bow across the violin strings the way a mosquito skims a summer pond. . . When the backdoor slams and metal cleats stomp onto the kitchen floor, I know Papa is home. . . I try to play louder than Papa's voice by sawing the music hard."**

*"Did anyone hear a cool verb as I read to you?"*

Have students share.

*"Let's all pretend we are playing the violin, sashay your bow."*

Have students slowly and delicately slide a bow across their imaginary violins.

*"After his dad comes home, he writes that he saws the music. What does sawing our imaginary violins look like?"*

Have students saw their imaginary violins.

*"Verbs really let you know how someone does something."*

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

Working in partners, ask students to brainstorm some possible verbs that could fit into this blank sentence:

The rain \_\_\_\_\_ on the window.

Share lists in large group. Ask students to visualize and discuss the changes that each verb makes to the picture created.

Teacher shows draft of Seaside story. As a class, identify the verbs. Students help the teacher decide on a few weak verbs. Students brainstorm more powerful and specific verbs as replacements. Teacher models crossing out weak verbs and inserting strong verbs with a caret pointing to the new verb. (see attached example)

**Link to Independent Practice:**

Students return to their own draft and highlight most of their verbs and change 3-5 to a more specific verb. They brainstorm/or use a thesaurus or word list to look for synonyms. Students revise their writing, choosing the verbs that make the picture clear in the reader’s mind.

Note: This writer’s workshop need not be silent. It is helpful to writers to ask each other for help revising for word choice.

Also, be cautious with the thesaurus. Make sure students understand the words they find.

**Closure:**

Whole group popcorn share, sharing strong new verbs.

**Add Use strong verbs to Personal Narrative elements chart**

If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writing notebook, have students add powerful verbs ideas.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

## Personal Narrative Model for Strong Verbs Lesson

“Hey Mom,” Josh yelled. “Want to play Frisbee?”

“No thanks, Hon. I am happy just walking down the beach looking at the waves,” I answered.

I watched Josh toss the Frisbee back and forth with his friend Ian. I couldn’t believe how tall he had gotten. He was growing into a strong young man. His orange shorts that seemed so big at the start of summer now barely fit him.

It was the first day of our summer vacation at the Oregon Coast. I had been waiting for this walk on the beach for weeks. All I wanted to do was listen to seagulls, watch waves roll-in and hang-out with my son.

I walked for a while, noticing the scream of the seagulls. What are they always chattering about, I wondered.

After that I decided to head further down the beach to check out some cool rocks.

All of a sudden I found myself unable to walk. I was surrounded by water. A giant, cold wave had washed over me.

The wave had pushed me over with an energy force I was not used to. As I sat in the wet sand, and worked hard to get my bearings, I realized I may be strong, but I was no match for mother nature.

---

“Hey Mom,” Josh **yelled**. “Want to **play** Frisbee?” staring

“No thanks, Hon. I am happy just **walking** down the beach ~~looking~~ at the waves,” I answered.

I **watched** Josh **toss** the Frisbee back and forth with his friend Ian. I couldn’t **believe** how tall he had **gotten**. He was **growing** into a strong young man. His orange shorts that seemed so big at the start of summer now barely **fit** him.

It **was** the first day of our summer vacation at the Oregon Coast. I had **been waiting** for this walk on the beach for weeks. All I **wanted** to do **was listen** to seagulls, **watch** waves roll-in and **hang-out** with my son.

I **walked** for a while, **noticing** the scream of the seagulls. What are they always **chattering** about, I **wondered**.

explore

After that I **decided** to ~~head~~ further down the beach to **check out** some cool rocks.

All of a sudden I found myself unable to **walk**. I **was surrounded** by water. A giant, cold wave **had washed** over me.

forced

The wave ~~had pushed~~ me over with an energy force I was not **used** to. As I **sat** in the wet

struggled

sand, and ~~worked hard~~ to get my bearings, I **realized** I may be strong, but I was no match for mother nature.

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN11) Group Revision

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will continue revision in groups, gathering suggestions from each other.

### Standard(s):

W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.)

### Materials:

- Student Drafts
- Peer Revision Guidelines and suggestions for starters
- Slips of paper-the remainder of 8 1/2 X 14 copy paper works well
- Clipboards
- Ideas for groups of three or four

### Connection:

*“We have been working hard to make our writing better. Today you will share your writing with a group and they will give you feedback. Writers need to get feedback from other writers in order to know what is working and what could be better.”*

### Teach (modeling)

Ask four students to be models for a revision group (fishbowl style). Those students should be good writers open to suggestion, but their writing has room for improvement. Those four students sit on the floor with their stories, slips of paper on a clip board, peer revision guidelines and suggestion starters. The rest of the class is sitting or standing around this group.

Teacher asks for one of the four to go first. The students follow the procedure that revision groups will follow, except only have one student share during the modeling.

One student reads their story. Group members begin by identifying what is working in the piece or what they liked about it. Once compliments have been shared, group members offer advice for any places that might be revised.

Give time for members to complete their suggestion before going onto the next writer. Explain or even demonstrate how to record a compliment on the front of the slip and a suggestion on the back. Group members sign their suggestion papers and give them to the writer to use while revising.

It's the writer's choice to follow the suggestions or not.

Teacher monitors and interjects as needed.

### Active Engagement (guided practice):

Teacher assembles heterogeneous groups of four. Each group follows the procedure and makes sure each student has a chance to go through the whole process of reading their story getting feedback from the members of their group.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

Students read suggestions and decide which would make their writing better.

**Closure:**

Ask class, “*Who used a suggestion from their group to strengthen their narrative? What did you do?*”

*If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the writer’s notebook, have students add ideas about the group revision process.*

**Notes:****Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

## Peer Revision Guidelines and Response Suggestions

1. Get into groups of about 4.
2. Everyone needs slips of paper to use in offering feedback and something to write with.
3. Everyone needs the draft they want feedback on
4. Find a spot to work where everyone can see and hear the members of the group.
5. One person reads at a time.
6. The rest of the group listens closely trying to find the parts that are working and the parts that are not.
7. After the writer shares, each member of the group writes down one specific part of the writing they thought was working well.
8. After noticing what is working well, every member of the group offers one suggestion for making the piece even better.
9. It is **very** important to start by noticing what is working in the piece, so listen closely!
10. Listen respectfully. Writing is a group effort and today is an important part of your work.

### **Suggestions for what to compliment:**

- Lead
- Character Development
- **Setting Description**
- Powerful Verbs
- Sentence Variety
- Strong Ending
- Parts that are sad or scary or funny

### **Suggestions for what to offer advice about:**

- Any part you didn't get a picture in your head as a reader.
- Any part that confused you.
- Any part you wondered why the writer included something.
- Any part you wanted to know more about.

Remember to write your compliment on one side of the paper and your suggestion on the other.

Don't forget to sign you feedback slip.

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN12)

### Sentence Fluency and Conventions

**Writing Teaching Point(s):**

- Students will revise their draft for sentence fluency (flow of the writing and variety in sentence beginnings, length, and structure).
- Students will write compound sentences using correct punctuation. For example, using a comma before a coordinating conjunction.
- Students will use commas and quotation marks to denote direct speech in a text.

**Standard(s):**

W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.)

**Materials:**

- Mentor text:
- SF Anthology Because of Winn Dixie, pgs. 32-33
- Student copies of excerpt to analyze for sentence fluency and construction
- Copy of excerpt for document camera or overhead

**Connection:**

*“Yesterday we began revising our personal narrative drafts using strong verbs. We will continue revision today by examining our sentences. We will check the flow of the sentences and make sure we have variety in sentence beginnings, length, and structures.”*

**Teach (modeling)**

*“Earlier this year we read Because of Winn-Dixie. This is an example of a personal narrative and also an example of how writers use sentence variety. Let’s look at the beginning of Because of Winn Dixie. Kate uses interesting sentence fluency and variety in this passage.”*

Teacher puts excerpt on document camera or overhead. Students follow along with their own copies.

*“Let’s start by noticing the sentence lengths in this passage. How many words are in the first sentence?”*

Model counting and writing the number in the column or margin.

*“Is there variety in the way the author began each sentence?”*

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

*“Now you finish counting the number of words in each of the other sentences. Jot down the number.”*

Students count.

*“What did you notice?”*

Students pair share what they noticed and then a few share whole group.

**Teach (modeling):**

*“Let’s take a look at how Kate’s sentences start. We know good writers use variety in their writing, sentence beginnings should be varied too.”*

Model underlining the first four words in each sentence.

Write the first words in the column to the right. Students keep up with you.

*“What did you notice about how these sentences start?”*

Students pair share and a few whole group share.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Today when you write, Focus on your sentence variety so your writing sounds interesting.*

*First, count the words in each sentence. I need you to jot down the number in the margin so I can see it. If you have a lot of sentences of the same length, change some. If you have some sentences that are super-duper long, add more punctuation. After you are happy with your sentence lengths, underline the first four words of each sentence. Make sure they start in different ways. If they all start the same way, change some.”*

**Closure:**

*“What changes did you make? What did you notice about yourself as a writer?”*

**Add write a variety of sentence lengths and types to the Personal Narrative elements chart.**

If you are using a resources or toolbox section of the notebook, have students record ideas about sentence variety.

**Notes:**

**Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

### Model for Noticing Sentence Length and Structure

Number of words in the sentence	Passage from <u>Because of Winn-Dixie</u> by Kate DiCamillo	'Beginnings'  First four words of each sentence
	<p style="text-indent: 40px;">And right at that minute, right when the three of us had decided to be friends, who should come marching into the Herman W. Block Memorial Library but old pinch-faced Amanda Wilkinson. She walked right up to Miss Franny's desk and said, " I finished <i>Johnny Tremain</i> and I enjoyed it very much. I would like something even more difficult to read now, because I am an advanced reader."</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">"Yes dear, I know," said Miss Franny. She got up out of her chair.</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">Amanda pretended like I wasn't there. She stared right past me. "Are dogs allowed in the library?" she asked Miss Franny as they walked away.</p> <p style="text-indent: 40px;">"Certain ones," said Miss Franny, "a select few." And then she turned around and winked at me. I smiled back. I had just made my first friend in Naomi, and nobody was going to mess that up for me, not even old pinch-faced</p>	

What did you notice about the way Kate DiCamillo varied and punctuated her sentences in this passage?

Why do you think she chose to write some very long sentences and some short ones?

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN13) Revision

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Students will use a revision checklist to make final changes to drafts before editing.

### Standard(s):

- W.4.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- W.4.5 With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.)

### Materials:

- Revision checklists for every student
- Revision checklist for overhead or data projector
- Colored pencils and/or highlighters
- Model of teacher’s story for demonstration

### Connection:

*“Writers, we are coming to the end of our unit on personal narrative writing. I am really impressed with the detailed narratives you have been writing. Today we will revise our drafts one last time to make sure they are the best they can be.”*

### Teach (modeling):

Note: You will need to alternate displaying the checklist and the model. Keep both handy.

Display a copy of the **revision checklist** on the data projector or document camera.  
*“Writers, this is a checklist with the important elements of personal narrative writing we have been working on. Some of the elements on this list will already be in your personal narrative, others will need to be added or made better.”*

*Let’s use this checklist to do some revisions to my narrative before you start on your own. That way each of you will know how to use this checklist to help you as a writer. There are a lot of ideas on this checklist. You won’t revise for every one of these elements. You will choose revisions to make your writing the best it can be.”*

Display teacher model of personal narrative.

*“First, Writers always start revision by simply rereading. You notice a lot by rereading. When you reread, you might notice something you want to change. You can do that before you start with the checklist.”*

Read back through the teacher’s model.

*“I am pretty happy with this so I will start using the checklist now. The first thing on the checklist is the lead. I’ll look just at my lead/first paragraph. I am going to highlight my lead with one color.”*

Highlight or underline with colored pencil as you reread the lead.

*“I am happy with the lead. I like the dialogue because it lets the reader know that Josh and I get along well and are both having a good time. But let’s see how your lead sounds to you.”*

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

*“Writers, take out your personal narrative drafts and highlight your lead with one color. Read your lead and decide if you want to change it or leave it.”*

Give students a few minutes to reread leads.

*“How many people want to revise their leads? How many are ready to say the lead is as good as it can be?”*

Have a few students share the revisions they want to make to their leads and why.

**Teach (modeling):**

*“Let’s look at the next element on the checklist. HMMM, character description. I am going to get a new color and look for character description.”*

Model highlighting any character development.

*“I have some but I think I could add more details. My readers might want to know more about Josh. I haven’t written anything about all the other people at the beach that day. Let’s see where I might add more.”*

Model choosing spots to add more about the characters. (See attached example)

*“Now I am satisfied with my character development.”*

**Active Engagement (guided practice):**

*“Take a look at your draft. Look for character development and highlight it with a new color. Mark spots you could add more. Try to think of what your reader will want to know more about just like we did with my beach story.”*

Give students a few minutes to reread for character.

*“Show me with your fingers how many spots you found to add more character development.”*

Note: Some students might not need or want to add character. Every student does not need to add every element. That would just make their pieces clunky. As long as everyone adds or deletes something, they are revising.

Repeat this process with as many items on the checklist as you determine are helpful to your writers to have demonstrated.

**Link to Independent Practice:**

*“Writers you will have all of writing workshop today for revision. Use your checklist and your highlighters to make your drafts the best they can be. I have set aside so much time because the work of revision is really important.”*

**Closure:**

Ask for a show of hands for students who worked on leads, then characters, then setting ...

Have a few volunteers share their sections they revised.

**Notes:****Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)**

Lesson adapted from Linda Christensen and the Oregon Writing Project

## Teacher Model for Revision

<p>I am satisfied with my lead.</p>	<p><i>“Hey Mom,” Josh yelled. “Want to play Frisbee?”</i>  <i>“No thanks, Hon. I am happy just walking down the beach staring at the waves,” I answered.</i></p> <p><i>I watched Josh toss the Frisbee back and forth with his friend Ian. I couldn’t believe how tall he had gotten. He was growing into a strong young man. His orange shorts that seemed so big at the start of summer now barely fit him.</i></p> <p>It was the first day of our summer vacation at the Oregon Coast. I had been waiting for this walk on the beach for weeks. All I wanted to do was listen to seagulls, watch waves roll-in and hang-out with my son.</p> <p>I walked for a while, noticing the scream of the seagulls. What are they always chattering about, I wondered.</p> <p>After that I decided to explore further down the beach to check out some cool rocks.</p> <p>All of a sudden I found myself unable to walk. I was surrounded by water. A giant, cold wave had washed over me.</p> <p>The wave had forced me over with an energy force I was not used to. As I sat in the wet sand, and struggled to get my bearings, I realized I may be strong, but I was no match for mother nature.</p>
<p>1. Add more about the other people at the beach—the old man with his tiny dog, the couple with the new baby, the teenagers with all their sports gear.</p> <p>2. Tell about Josh coming to see if I was OK. He is such a nice boy!</p>	<p><i>“Hey Mom,” Josh yelled. “Want to play Frisbee?”</i>  <i>“No thanks, Hon. I am happy just walking down the beach staring at the waves,” I answered.</i></p> <p><i>I watched Josh toss the Frisbee back and forth with his friend Ian. I couldn’t believe how tall he had gotten. He was growing into a strong young man. His orange shorts that seemed so big at the start of summer now barely fit him.</i></p> <p>It was the first day of our summer vacation at the Oregon Coast. I had been waiting for this walk on the beach for weeks. All I wanted to do was listen to seagulls, watch waves roll-in and hang-out with my son.</p> <p>I walked for a while, noticing the scream of the seagulls. What are they always chattering about, I wondered. <b>1</b></p> <p>After that I decided to explore further down the beach to check out some cool rocks.</p> <p>All of a sudden I found myself unable to walk. I was surrounded by water. A giant, cold wave had washed over me. <b>2</b></p> <p>The wave had forced me over with an energy force I was not used to. As I sat in the wet sand, and struggled to get my bearings, I realized I may be strong, but I was no match for mother nature.</p>

## Personal Narrative Revision Checklist

We have learned so many ways to develop really strong pieces. Use this revision checklist to help make sure your piece is the best it can be. Remember that writers make lots and lots of changes to their drafts.

- **Lead**  
What type of lead to use?  
Do you think this is the best lead for your personal narrative?
- **Character Development**  
Find places you described your characters. You can develop characters by telling what they look like, how they act and what they say.
- **Setting Description**  
Writers describe setting with sensory details. Find places in your narrative that you describe your setting.
- **Satisfying Ending**  
Writers pay attention to how their personal narratives end. Reread your ending. Are you okay with it? If not, take some time to change it now.
- **Word Choice**  
Writers use the best words they can think of when they are writing. Take another look at your writing and check these types of words.

Verbs	Transitions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writers use powerful verbs.</li><li>• Highlight all your verbs again and change a few to more powerful ones.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make sure you used transition words, 3-4 transitions, to connect the ideas and events in your personal narrative.</li><li>• If you can't find enough transitions, add some now.</li><li>• If you have a lot of transitions, get rid of any you don't need.</li></ul>

When you have made all the revision changes you need, you are ready to edit.

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN 14) Editing

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Writers want an audience to easily read their writing.
- Students will edit their personal narrative drafts once revision is completed.

### Standard(s):

- L.4.2 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
- L.4.2.a. Use correct capitalization.
- L.4.2.b. Use commas and quotation marks to mark direct speech and quotations from a text.
- L.4.2.c. Use a comma before a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence.
- L.4.2.d. Spell grade-appropriate words correctly, consulting references as needed.

### Materials:

- Editing checklists for each student
- Model of an edited piece
- Highlighters or colored pencils

### Connection:

*“Writers, you made so many smart revisions to how your personal narratives sound. Now you are ready to make sure your writing looks as good as it can before you recopy it as final draft.”*

### Teach (modeling):

Pass out copies of the editing checklist. Have students read over the checklist.

*“This checklist is a tool for you to use in making the final changes to your personal narrative. I want you to work carefully to complete one point on the Editing Checklist at a time. If you really don’t have any mistakes in your narrative that tells me you didn’t take any chances as a writer. All writers make errors that they correct during the editing process.”*

Display the model of an edited narrative (see attached)

*“When you are done editing your piece, I should be able to see lots of changes and corrections just like in this piece.”*

### Active Engagement (guided practice):

*“What are some edits you can see this writer made?”*

Have students share what they see.

### Link to Independent Practice:

*“Writers, as you edit your writing today use the Editing Checklist to guide your work. Take your time. Carefully, check one point at a time. Editing is an important last step to make sure that our writing is ready for the audience.”*

**Closure:** Writers share one edit they made.

### Notes:

### Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

## Personal Narrative Editing Checklist

Use this list of ways to make your writing look as good as it can while you make editing changes today. Check for one point at a time. Use colored pencil to make changes to how your writing looks.

### Good writers use a **variety of sentences**.

- Count the number of words in each sentence. Make sure you have some short and some long.
- Look at your sentence beginnings. Make sure sentences start in different ways.

### Good writers use **dialogue and description**.

- Highlight quotation marks to make sure they surround the words the people say.
- Highlight your descriptive verbs and adjectives.

### Good writers use appropriate **capital letters/punctuation**.

- Highlight all your capital letters.
- Make sure you have all the capitals you need.
- Get rid of any extra capitals.
- Circle punctuation including commas, and end punctuation.

### Good writers use correct **spelling**.

- Read your writing backwards.
- Circle any words that look a little funky.
- Check the spelling for those words.

### Good writers break their writing into **paragraphs**.

- Break for a paragraph when you introduce a new person or place.
- Break for a new paragraph when someone talks.
- Break for a paragraph when you change an action.



## Personal Narrative Editing Sample

When I was younger I really liked playing with my Cat. The only prablum was she didn't like playing with me. I used to want her to sleep in my room. I took her upstairs to my room every Night and pushed her down on my pillow. she howled and treid to scratch me. She eneded up trying to open the dorr by throwing her body against it. "Let that dang cat out!" my mom yelled. "No, she is about to go to sleep," I called back.

Once I tried to carry her to the store in my backpack. At first she was realy quiet. I thought she liked it. When we got to the end of the block, she started going crazy. She pawed at the backpack and spun around inside of it. My Mom made me go back to the house and put her inside.

I stopped trying to play with my cat a few years ago. The suprsing this is that once I stopped trying to play with her, she started playing with me. Now she comes up to me when I do my homework and sits on lap. She even sleeps in my room sometimes. I guess cats need to decide for themselves when they want to play. Maybe she just dosn't like backpacks.

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN15): Publishing

<b>Writing Teaching Point(s):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writers publish their work</li></ul>
<b>Standard(s):</b>
<b>Materials:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing notebooks</li><li>• Extra copies of revision and editing checklists</li><li>• Paper for final draft copies or computers for word processing. (Without typing skills, word processing takes a lot of time. Decide if this makes sense for what your writers need.)</li></ul>
<b>Connection:</b> <p><i>“We are ready to publish your writing today. You have done the important work of drafting, revising and editing. When you have made your piece the best it can be, you are ready to do a final draft.”</i></p>
<b>Teach (modeling):</b> <p><i>“The first thing I want you to do is reread your writing one last time. Make sure you have made all the changes you need to make.</i> <i>Ask yourself: Does my writing sound good? Does my writing look good?”</i></p>
<b>Active Engagement (guided practice):</b> <p>Students reread.</p>
<b>Teach (modeling):</b> <p><i>“This is the final draft paper you can use today. Go slowly as you recopy. Use your best handwriting.”</i></p>
<b>Link to Independent Practice:</b> <p><i>“Be careful as you recopy. You want to make sure you get all the new ideas from the left hand side of your paper into your final draft. Let the colors help you make sure you are including all your smart changes.”</i></p>
<b>Closure:</b> Find a place in your room to display finished writing. Even if it is only up for a day or two, kids need to see their work displayed.
<b>Notes:</b>
<b>Resources &amp; References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)</b>

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## Narrative Writing: Personal Narrative (PN16) Unit Reflection

### Writing Teaching Point(s):

- Writers reflect on what they have learned about a genre of writing and about themselves as writers.
- Students will spend one to three days reviewing what they have learned and writing a reflection piece to close the unit.

### Standard(s):

ELA.4.WRT.1.2 Discuss ideas for writing with classmates, teachers, and other writers.

### Materials:

- Any anchor charts you used in teaching this unit
- Writing notebooks
- Resources or Toolbox section of the writer's notebooks if you are using them

### Connection:

*“Writers we are wrapping our writing unit. You have done some great work over the past few weeks. One of the things good writers do is reflect on what they have learned. Today we will reflect on the great writing you have done and the new ideas you have developed.”*

### Notes:

Keep track of the unit reflection strategies you use so you can offer a variety throughout the year.

### Resources & References: (adapted from, acknowledgements)

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# End of Unit Checklist: Personal Narrative

Marking Key:  X = Consistently Demonstrates / = Occasionally Demonstrates – = Does Not Yet Demonstrate		Narrows the writing topic	Writes a strong lead	Includes character description	Describes setting	Uses appropriate transition words	Writes a satisfying ending	Uses some strong verbs	Uses sentence variety	Evidence of revision changes	Evidence of editing changes	At least one final draft of a personal narrative
STUDENTS												
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2.												
3.												
4.												
5.												
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