

Facing Challenges On Our Own: Literature and Portfolio Writing

Beth Hope

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Overview

As a seventh grade Communications teacher at a comprehensive middle school, I utilize a Curriculum that integrates a literature based series, a writer's handbook that focuses primarily on conventions and general writing outlines, and a set list of writing portfolio requirements. I have developed a unit that utilizes the information I received through the, "Understanding Genre" seminar in conjunction with the seventh grade Communications Curriculum for the Pittsburgh Public Schools. My plan is to teach children how to create a Narrative Account, as directed by the Communications Portfolio requirements, with well-developed characters, and a powerful beginning, middle, and end. In addition, I will focus on teaching children how to write an effective Response to Literature, also a PPS portfolio requirement. My unit, "Facing Challenges On Our Own: Literature and Portfolio Writing" will enhance and develop students' writing skills, as well as comprehension skills, by reading, discussing, and analyzing three pieces of published literature. This unit incorporates the Communications Standards as well as fulfills the Pittsburgh Public Schools Portfolio requirements for creating a Narrative Account and a Response to Literature while utilizing criteria sheets and grading rubrics.

Rationale

Many of the students that I teach face enormous challenges. Approximately ninety percent of the student population is eligible for free or reduced lunch. Over seventy percent of the students are from single parent homes. In order for my students to succeed to the best of their abilities, modifications to the curriculum that are sensitive to their circumstances must be made. "Facing

Challenges On Our Own” may serve as a valuable teaching tool, particularly in environments with a high “at-risk” population, for increasing student achievement.

I have developed this unit to address the needs of middle school children who require a highly structured learning environment in order to perform to the best of their abilities. For this reason, I will utilize whole group, teacher-directed instruction while providing a great deal of opportunity for the students to engage in accountable talk, as well as share their ideas and experiences with myself and their peers. My unit involves the teacher directed reading of three pieces of literature, “Rikki Tikki Tavi” by Rudyard Kipling, “Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan, and “A Day’s Wait” by Ernest Hemmingway, all of which focus on characters and the obstacles they must overcome in order to succeed in life. Recently the Pittsburgh Public Schools Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Department has introduced a Directed Reading Model, created by Isabel Beck and Rebecca Hamilton in conjunction with the PPS Literacy Plus initiative, as the preferred method of teaching middle school Communications in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. However, at this time, a set curriculum has not been initiated. It is for this reason that I have developed a Directed Reading Model for each selected piece of literature that provides the students with rich vocabulary experiences and opportunities to learn through the reading of text. Utilizing the model as a guide, I have adapted and made the modifications necessary in order to meet the needs of my students. I have segmented the text for each selected literature piece to ensure thorough comprehension and to provide the students with opportunities to share ideas and experiences that are related to, but go beyond the text. At selected points during the reading of the various pieces of literature, I focus on the writing aspect, which provides the students with the techniques, strategies, and activities that include the criteria sheets and grading rubrics needed to create effective portfolio entries. By utilizing my unit, students will be able to create a Narrative Account that will develop a reader’s interest with a dynamic beginning and powerful ending while establishing well developed characters and an interesting plot with conflicts and resolutions. In addition, students will be able to create an effective Response to Literature that will display the student’s ability to summarize, analyze, and make personal connections to a piece of literature. This unit focuses on the main components of effective writing while providing students the opportunity to connect their own experiences to the literary reading.

Objectives

The primary objective of my unit is to focus on the reading and writing objectives established for middle school children by the Board of Education’s Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Department. This unit will provide the students the opportunity to demonstrate oral fluency and understanding through

oral reading and group discussions. Students will also acquire and engage in a rich and expansive vocabulary study using words derived from a range of texts, as well as use strategies like context clues to expand vocabulary. Throughout the unit, students will engage in sustained independent reading using strategies such as rereading difficult portions and connecting important ideas relating new information to prior knowledge. By creating a Directed Reading Model for each reading selection, students will be able to make inferences about information, respond to open-ended questions during reading to construct meaning by building and connecting text ideas, and evaluate text organization and content to determine the author's purpose. Students will also be able to describe and compare story elements such as character, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone, and style. After reading and discussing the selected literature pieces students will create various genres of writing including a fictional narrative account and a literature review in preparation for creating an effective portfolio. Students will be expected to write with a sharp and clear focus, using precise, illustrative words and appropriate sentence structure. Students will also be expected to utilize different writing techniques including dialogue, emotional images, and specific detail, as well as correctly use the conventions of language appropriate for this grade level.

In addition to the objectives, my unit addresses the Communication Standards adopted by the Pittsburgh Public Schools, specifically Standards 2, 3, and 4. Standard 2 states that students will read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex text. Standard 3 states that students will respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems, and Standard 4 states that students will write for a variety of purposes.

Strategies

I have incorporated the writing techniques and strategies discussed throughout the "Understanding Genres" seminar into my teaching of writing. The seminar techniques, along with teacher-made rubrics and criteria sheets will guide students and enable them to create successful portfolio entries that meet the Pittsburgh Public School Standards and Curriculum Objectives. While utilizing a modified Directed Reading Model, I have developed various classroom activities with criteria sheets and grading rubrics that are enhanced by the "Color Coded" scheme developed by Dr. Kaufer, referred to as REPRESENTATIONAL COMPOSITION. Representational Composition is the idea that effective writing needs to sample widely from the variations available in language. These variations can be taught as color codings. For example, if a student is assigned a composition that involves describing a time and place, then that student should utilize words that provide scenic information,

as well as “ed” verbs; therefore, creating a composition with the colors blue and purple represented. In addition, if a child is given an assignment in which feelings should be included, then that composition should reflect the color red. Viewing writing as a portrait will aid my students in creating effective compositions. I hope my unit, “Facing Challenges On Our Own: Literature and Portfolio Writing,” will prove successful.

Representational Composition

Red: Words that represent inner thoughts(I, my, me)

Orange: Words that help us time travel in thought

Gold: Words that help us reason (informative)

Green: Words that give textual clues (notification)

Blue: Words that give scenic information(description)

Purple: Words that help use transport across time and place(narrative-ed verbs)

Classroom Activities

Week 1

Materials: Elements of Literature (Grade 7) “Rikki Tikki Tavi” by Rudyard Kipling

Before Reading Discussion (Stress to students that authors write for a READER)

Prior to reading the selected literature piece, it is important to provide the students with information about the author’s background. This will aid the students in realizing why the author is writing the particular selection. In addition, this provides the students with a brief story synopsis to ensure full comprehension of the selection. In order for the students to become motivated and interested, the discussion must be appealing to them. Be sure to focus on the theme “Facing Challenges.” At any point in the lessons, allow the students to discuss their challenges in life.

About the Author (Introduce the author to the students)

Kipling was born in India; however, at the age of 6 he was sent to boarding school in England. Feeling alone in England, he discovered his love of books. At 17, he

became the editor of an English language newspaper. He began writing poems which then led to writing books. In 1907 Kipling was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Having lived in various parts of the world, Kipling always regarded India as his first love.

About the Story (fictional narrative - 3rd person) (Briefly introduce the story)

After being orphaned, a young mongoose, Rikki Tikki Tavi, is taken in by a British family in India. Being in a new environment, Rikki Tikki must face a great many challenges when he realizes his enemies, the snakes, live in the family's garden.

Pre-reading Questions/Predictions

1. What types of challenges do you face in life?
2. What type of challenge do you think Rikki Tikki might face?
3. What do you know about India?
4. Why do you suppose Rudyard Kipling chose India as the story setting?

Introducing Rich Vocabulary

Set the dictionaries and glossaries aside! Select 3 or 4 significant vocabulary words from the text, that when discussed, will aid the students in a better understanding of the story. Provide a meaningful and/or true to life story that will enable the student to visualize the meaning of the word thus enabling the student to retain the definition. Teachers may modify and adapt the word choices, as well as the meaningful story. I have provided a sample vocabulary story for each word choice; however, modifying the stories for your own personal use may prove more effective. This vocabulary practice is also a part of the Directed Reading Model preferred by the Teaching, Learning, and Assessment Department of Pittsburgh.

Vocabulary suggestions: conflict, bungalow, valiant, cower

conflict: I have three children at home, and when I get home from a long hard day at work, I'm tired, hungry, and usually very tired. My kids want dinner ASAP. They are also tired and hungry. As soon as I walk in the door, they bombard me with, "What time is dinner?" "I'm hungry!" "Can I have a snack?" Now, remember, I'm really tired. What conflicts may arise?

bungalow: My friend went to India to visit her relatives. She didn't have the luxury of staying in the Hilton or the Sheraton. She had to stay in a bungalow. She said it was rather crowded, but she liked not having to go up and down the

steps. What is a bungalow?

valiant: We have all watched cartoons. Name a few cartoon characters? (Responses will include Superman, Hercules, etc...) These characters are all valiant. What is valiant?

cower: Remember my conflict with my kids? What happened? O.K., now when I'm screaming and flailing my arms at all of their demands, they may cower when they think what I might do what to them? (response-hit) What does cower mean?

Segment the Text (focus questions on character, setting, plot, conflict, resolution)

When reading the selection with the students, teachers may vary the method of reading (round-robin, silently, page by page teacher directed etc.). Regardless of the method selected for reading, the teacher must be sure to stop at the selected points in order to ensure full comprehension of the story, as well as understand how the author is writing the selection and with what writing techniques.

After reading p.3-4:

1. Picture Rikki Tikki, what does he look like?
2. How do you know this?
3. What is the genre of the story?
4. What do you notice about the characters' names?
5. How did the author get us interested?
6. Who is telling the story?

After reading p. 5-6

1. "It is the hardest thing in the world to frighten a mongoose, because he is eaten up from nose to tail with curiosity." What is the author trying to say? How else could he have said this?
2. Why can we visualize what is going on in the garden?

After reading p. 7-9

1. Why does the author use the word cower rather than back away in fear?
2. Explain the conflicts that are occurring.
3. How do you feel about Nag and Nagaina?

4. How does Rikki Tikki feel?
5. Have you ever been bullied? Explain.

After reading p. 10-11

1. Why does the author describe Rikki Tikki as valiant rather than brave?
2. How does Rikki Tikki feel at this point of the story?
3. How do you know how Rikki Tikki feels?

After reading p. 12-13

1. Note the vivid verbs that add to the descriptions of the characters' feeling and the visualization of the setting.

After reading p. 14-15

1. Why can we visualize the fight?
2. How does Darzee feel at this point?
3. What is the significance of Darzee's chant?
4. Describe the ending. As a reader, are you satisfied with this ending? Why or why not?

Portfolio Pre-Writing Activities

Activity 1

Discuss the pre-written summary of "Rikki Tikki Tavi." (Appendix A) Note the verbs and the lifelessness of the summary. Discuss the importance of including verbs into a writing that would stir a reader's senses. Utilize the Representational Composition idea that all writing is like a painting. In this particular case, stress the color blue and purple for adding description. Refer to the Blue and Purple Word Banks (this is only a sample of descriptive words, the possibilities are endless). Provide the following sample word bank to the students as a guide for discussing the importance of including descriptive and time travel in thought language into a writing. In addition to the sample word bank, have the students brainstorm and add to the existing word bank. This may be done as a teacher-directed activity or in student pairs. Students may keep individual personal word banks in a notebook. Assign the students to create an effective summary that appeals to a reader's senses. Share student responses.

Sample Work Bank (Description-BLUE)

slithered, slimy, slender, valiant, brave, cowardly, windy, cold, jumped,

shuddered, fury, cuddly,

Sample Word Bank (Time Travel in Thought -Purple)

some, today, after, then, next, everyday, after, came, left, slithering, running, creeping

Activity 2

Write a paragraph explaining your thoughts about Rikki Tikki Tavi. How do you feel about him? Give me your inner thoughts. Refer to the Red Word Bank as a guide for discussion and again brainstorm with students to create personal word banks.

Sample Work Bank (Inner Thoughts-RED)

I, my, me, seems, appears, believe, think, wonder, imagine, wonderful, fabulous

Portfolio Writing Assignment

Begin with a brief summary of “Rikki Tikki Tavi,” including why you think the author wrote this story, then continue on with an explanation of how you and your life’s challenges compare with Rikki Tikki’s life and the challenges he must endure. Use story examples as well as your own personal experiences to support your thoughts. Writing should include words that represent blue, purple, and red. Refer to the criteria and grading rubric provided. (Appendix B)

WEEK 2 (Day 1-2)

Materials: Elements of Literature (Grade 7) “Fish Cheeks” by Amy Tan

Before Reading Discussion (Once again, stress that authors write for a READER)

About the Author (Introduce the author to the students)

Amy Tan is a Chinese girl who grew up in California. She was the only Chinese girl in class from 3rd grade on. Tan was very ashamed of her heritage and the Chinese traditions her parents celebrated. As an escape, Amy Tan read novel after novel, which eventually led to her love of writing. As the years went on, Amy Tan grew to value her Chinese heritage and devoted much of her writing to her Chinese experiences.

About the Story (non-fiction narrative - 1st person)

Amy Tan reflects on a memorable childhood experience that caused her great embarrassment as a child; however, it made her realize and value the importance of her Chinese heritage. Through vivid descriptions, Tan creates an experience that will appeal to all senses.

Pre-reading Questions/Predictions:

1. Do you have special family traditions for holidays?
2. Do any of the traditions embarrass you?
3. Why do you think Amy Tan chooses to write about a Chinese tradition?
4. What do you know about the Chinese culture?

Introducing Rich Vocabulary:

Once again, set the dictionaries aside. Create a meaningful, memorable experience that will enable the student to retain the word meaning.

Vocabulary suggestions: clamor, rumples, muster, wedge

wedge: Draw a pie/circle on the board; divide it into pie pieces; ask the student for words that describe one pie piece. Guide them to the term wedge.

muster: When I was in 7th grade, I had to do an informative report on Panda Bears. After completing the report, I had to prepare an oral report. I was a nervous wreck. The first day, I backed out completely. On the 2nd, I backed out again. Finally, on the 3rd day, I mustered up enough courage to get up in front of the class and give my speech. What did I do?

rumples: Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to roll it into a ball. Then have them open up the paper and look at it. What does it look like?

clamor: Ask the students to rumple the paper into a ball again. Place a trash can in the middle of the room. Have each student throw their rumples paper into the can. Reminder: this is middle school, the students will become loud and anxious. Ask the students to describe the noise level in the room?

Segment the Text (focus on description, character, setting, plot, conflict, resolution)

After reading p. 136

1. Who is the narrator?
2. What is the author's conflict? How does she let her reader's know her conflict?
3. How does Amy Tan touch the reader's sense of sight? Pick out the words.
4. How does Amy Tan touch the reader's sense of sound? Pick out the words.
5. Why use clamor rather than noise?

After reading p. 137

1. How does Amy Tan get the reader to understand how she feels?
2. How does Amy Tan use dialogue?
3. Is the author trying to teach the reader a lesson? If so, what?
4. What is the resolution to the conflict? Are you satisfied with this?
5. What do you think about the title? What might you have entitled this selection?
6. Describe Amy Tan's personality?

Portfolio Pre-Writing Activity

Activity 1

Stress to your students that creating a narrative, whether fictional or non-fictional, can be accomplished by utilizing a six question outline:

1. Who? The characters
2. What? The conflict
3. When? The setting and time
4. Where? The place
5. Why? Why the characters do what they do
6. How? How the main character resolves the conflict

After reading Amy Tan's "Fish Cheeks," have students create a writing discussing the 6 question outline. Students should discuss the story elements of Amy Tan's narrative and how they relate to the 6 question outline. Share student responses.

Activity 2

Reflect back on "Rikki Tikki Tavi," discuss the six question outline as it relates to Kipling's story. Discuss the concept that, fiction or non-fiction, a story may still follow the six question outline.

Day 3-4

Materials: Elements of Literature (Grade 7) “A Day’s Wait” by Ernest Hemingway

Before Reading Discussion

About the Author (Introduce the author to the students)

Ernest Hemingway was born in 1899 in Oak Park Illinois. As a young man Hemmingway loved hunting, fishing, boxing, playing football, and writing. After high school, Hemmingway entered World War I as a volunteer American Red Cross ambulance driver. At 19, after suffering a war injury, Hemmingway pursued his love of writing. He traveled all over the world with his family and in 1954 won the Nobel Prize for Literature. Ernest Hemmingway died in 1961. He is regarded as one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century.

About the Story (non-fiction narrative - 1st person)

In “A Day’s Wait” Hemmingway narrates the story of Shatz, a European boy who is living in the U.S., who thinks he is dying. The story is based on a true incident involving Ernest Hemmingway and his son Jack.

Pre-reading Questions/Discussion/Predictions

In order to fully understand the story, you must be certain to discuss with the students the concept of Celcius and Fahrenheit. Have you students describe and share what happens to them when they are feeling ill.

1. What is a fever?
2. What is a thermometer for? What is a normal temperature reading?

Inform the students that 98.6 degrees is a normal temperature for us, but for someone from Europe, a normal temperature would be 37 degrees. Discuss Celcius and Fahrenheit.

3. What conflicts could this cause?

Introducing Rich Vocabulary

Once again, use the same method to introduce the selected vocabulary as with the

other two selections. You may use my sample vocabulary stories or adapt to make more personal.

Vocabulary suggestions: detached, poise, epidemic

detached: Every year when I begin school in September, it never fails, I always have at least one new student. Ask the students if any of them have ever been the new kid in town? Ask them to share their feelings? Guide students to provide a description of how a new student acts on the first day of school. Responses will include: quiet, sits alone, shy. Explain that feeling of loneliness can lead to a detached or withdrawn feeling.

poise: Have a student place a book on his or her head and have them walk across the classroom. Ask the students what is needed to successfully complete this task. Discuss when balance is needed.

epidemic: Discuss the various childhood diseases that we get shots for? Discuss what would happen if we did not get immunized.

Segment the Text

After reading p. 81

1. Who is the narrator?
2. Who is the narrator referring to as he?
3. How is the dialogue used throughout the story?

After reading p. 82

1. Have you ever felt like Shatz?
2. What challenge is Shatz facing?
3. How can you sense what Shatz may be feeling? Why is he feeling detached?
4. Have you ever felt like Shatz?
5. "We flushed a covey of quail under a high clay bank," what does this phrase mean?
6. Why use the term poised rather than balanced?

After reading p. 83

1. What is the conflict?
2. How does the author resolve the conflict?
3. How do you think Shatz is feeling?

4. Have you ever experienced a strong sense of relief? Allow students to share experiences.

Portfolio Pre-Writing/Discussion Activity

Activity 1

Using suggestions for good writing from Ralph Fletcher's Live Writing, discuss the elements of a good story and how they relate to "A Day's Wait," "Rikki Tikki Tavi," and "Fish Cheeks." The elements, which I have adapted and modified to meet the needs of my students include: characters, voice, beginning, conflict, setting, and end. Let the students know that they will be creating a narrative of their own and that this discussion will enable them to create interesting and effective stories.

Characters

Discuss with the students that characters are the most important part of a story. Characters can be built from people or animals they are familiar with. Discuss Rikki Tikki, Amy Tan, and Shatz. Ask the students how they think the authors came up with the main characters. Discuss the importance of describing a character and appealing to the reader's senses. Reflect on how Kipling, Tan, and Hemmingway woke up our senses as readers. Inform the students that when they create characters for a narrative, their personal word banks of descriptive words (purple and blue), will be useful. Reflect back on the descriptions of Rikki Tikki, Amy Tan, and Shatz. Inform the students that characters must talk at some point (dialogue). Reflect back to the literature pieces and discuss the use of dialogue and how it helped us as a reader. At this point, you may also need to review the use of correctly using dialogue. Stress the importance of naming characters. Remind the students that the characters will help grab the reader's attention from the beginning. You may want to provide your students with a suggested list of personality character traits that may be utilized when creating characters.

Suggested Traits:

ambitious, boastful, brave, conceited, cruel, curious, dishonest, greedy, honest, loyal, kind, proud, shy, selfish, suspicious, loving, wasteful, secretive

Voice - Connecting with the Reader

This is the hardest concept for middle school children to understand. Explain to the students that when they hear the phrase "voice in writing," it simply means the

feeling the reader gets about the author's personality. Inform the students that a narrator is a key component and very important to a story. A narrator must be exciting and interesting. Reflect on the narrators of the 3 literature pieces. Discuss the sense of feeling the students had about the authors. Discuss the importance of writing for a reader. Have the students decide: "Who do I want to read my story?" Personal word banks of red will aid the students in enhancing voice in writing.

Conflict

Discuss conflict (challenges) related to the students' lives. Reflect on the conflicts in the selected literature pieces. Remind the students that the narratives they create must include some sort of conflict. Middle school children usually have no problem creating conflicts.

Setting

Stress to your students the importance of describing the setting for a reader. The setting means not only the place such as a camp, park, or Kennywood, but also possibly a small hole in the ground, between the houses, or behind the big rock. It is important for the writer to know the setting he or she is describing. The writer needs to be able to describe the setting in a manner that enables the reader to actually visualize the scene. The description of the setting will help with the plot. Reflect on the descriptions of the settings in "Rikki Tikki," "Fish Cheeks," and "A Day's Wait." Inform students that when creating their narratives, personal word banks of blue and purple will aid them in their descriptions of settings throughout their stories.

Beginning

The most common question asked by middle school children when given a writing assignment is, "How do I start?" Inform the students that a beginning should grab the reader's attention. Have students brainstorm and discuss how they might go about beginning a story. Once again, reflect on the selected literature. Provide the students with suggestions on how to begin a story. Students may begin by introducing a character or describing a dramatic scene or place. An intriguing question such as, "Do you know where raindrops come from?" may begin a story. Students may also choose to begin by introducing the narrator. Options for beginning a writing are endless. Encourage the students to be creative.

Plot

This will require little discussion. Middle school children have no problem coming up with interesting story ideas. Have students brainstorm ideas for plots that revolve around life's challenges (fiction or non-fiction). Allow students to share ideas and experiences.

End

Inform the students that endings matter in a writing. An ending gives the reader a satisfied feeling. Discuss the endings to the literature pieces. Ask the students if they felt satisfied at the end of each selection. Discuss possible alternative endings. Provide the students with suggestions for story endings. A humorous ending will leave the reader with laughter. A circular ending will tie the beginning and end together. A surprise ending will create amazement. And finally, an emotional ending that leaves the reader in tears may be used. Encourage the students to create an ending that the reader will always remember.

Portfolio Writing Assignment

Using the suggestions and story elements discussed, assign students to create a narrative (fiction or non-fiction) that has well-developed characters, descriptive settings, an effective beginning, an interesting middle, and a memorable ending. Be sure to stress that the narrative should revolve around some sort of life's challenges and include conflicts with resolutions. You may need to reflect back, once again, to the challenges faced by Rikki Tikki, Amy Tan, and Shatz. Introduce and fully explain the criteria and grading rubric provided.(Appendix C)

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Classroom Resources

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Appendix A

Rikki Tikki Tavi

Rikki Tikki Tavi is an animal that lives with a boy in India. He is afraid of snakes. Snakes live in the yard. Rikki Tikki fights the snakes to protect the boy. Rikki Tikki kills the snakes. He has helpers. Rikki Tikki Tavi is a hero.

Directions: Using your personal word bank as a guide, re-write this brief summary. Write for a READER, make the summary come alive!

Appendix B

Rikki Tikki Tavi Response to Literature

Criteria:

Write a brief summary of “Rikki Tikki Tavi” including why you think the author wrote this story, then continue with an in depth explanation of how you and your life’s challenges compare with Rikki Tikki’s life and the challenges he must face. Use story examples as well as your own personal experiences to support your thoughts.

- summary should include main idea, conflicts, and theme
- author’s purpose should include a brief discussion of why and how the author wrote the story (maybe discuss a particularly favorite part)
- compare/contrast life’s challenges
- use good writing skills (capitalization, punctuation, spelling)

Refer to RED, BLUE, and PURPLE personal word banks for ideas!

Grading Rubric:

4 Excellent-Advanced Excellent sentence structure, well organized; you expressed yourself clearly and remained focused, ideas are fully explained with details, story examples, and personal experiences. Few or no mistakes in writing skills.

3 Good-Proficient Good sentence structure; however, ideas are not fully explained. Paper is clear, but lacks story examples and personal experiences. A few too many mistakes in writing skills.

2 Average-Basic Paragraphs are brief, ideas are not fully explained. Limited organization and focus. Lacks story examples and personal experiences. Mistakes in writing skills.

1 Poor-Below Basic Unacceptable, try again.

Appendix C

Narrative Account (fiction or non-fiction)

Criteria

Create a fictional or non-fictional narrative account. Utilize your personal word banks to develop descriptive settings and well- rounded characters. Your narrative should include a dynamic beginning that catches the reader’s interest, and a powerful and memorable ending. Dialogue must be included. Be creative! Remember to use correct spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure. Neatness counts!

Grading Rubric

4 Excellent-Advanced Excellent organization; you expressed yourself clearly and remained focused, detailed description is used for setting and characters. Writing has a dynamic beginning and powerful ending. Excellent plot. Few or no mistakes in writing skills.

3 Good-Proficient Good organization; however, characters and settings are not fully described. Writing has a good beginning and ending. Good plot. A few too many mistakes in writing skills.

2 Average-Basic Writing is brief, settings and characters have limited or no description. Limited organization and focus. Story line is very basic. Mistakes in writing skills.

1 Poor-Below Basic Unacceptable, try again.

Standards

C2: read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex text

C3: respond orally and in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems

C4: write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and persuade