

## **The Road For Young Writers is Paved in Gold (And Red, And Blue!)**

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### **Overview**

**The Road for Young Writers is Paved in Gold (And Red, And Blue!)** is a writing curriculum designed by this researcher. The writing curriculum is geared toward the youngest of writers – kindergarten children. The curriculum is designed to guide student learning in a systematic way that supports their development. Students will be exposed to several genres of writing: personal narrative, response to literature, response to informational text, and report writing. Students will have opportunities to participate in writer’s workshop experiences that support different styles of genre writing. Children’s reading workshops will also incorporate genre themes to reinforce the relationship between the reading and writing processes. Themes will be introduced and studied in great depth to give students a thorough understanding of the genre study.

### **Rationale**

#### **A. Developmental Assumptions**

Teaching genres at the Kindergarten level is important and necessary, yet it takes expertise and skill to teach it in an interesting and understandable way. Young readers and writers are just beginning their journey into a world filled with letters, sounds and pictures. Five and six year olds are given the daunting task of decoding this mysterious language and making it their own. Then, they must actually use these words to decipher meaning, make generalizations, and tell an audience what they know.

The young writer does crave this ability. He yearns for the skill to tell an audience what he knows. However, he needs the right tools in order to do that. The six-year-old writer is constantly researching topics. Each day the child is presented with new learning. He is activating prior knowledge while formulating new thoughts and ideas. It is the teacher's responsibility to guide this learning in an organized way.

Development plays an important role in the writing process. All students learn to write in a pre-determined way. Just as children learn to walk and then crawl, they also learn to write in a systematic and sequenced development. This unit will encourage students to proceed through the writing stages at an accelerated speed that suits the individual child's developmental needs. The writing stages (that I'm discussing) include children from ages 2-9.

The School District of Philadelphia's Balanced Early Literacy Assessment provides the following writing continuum:

- I. Scribbling/Uncontrolled Scribbling**
- II. Pictorial**
  - Imitates writing
  - Draws a somewhat recognizable picture
  - Tells about drawing
- III. Precommunicative**
  - Letter-like forms, letters and/or random letter strings to convey a message;
  - May be randomly placed on page
  - Attempts to read message
  - Writes own name or occasional known word
- IV Semi-phonetic**
  - Writes one or more letters to represent every word
  - Writes left to right and top to bottom (may reverse letters)
  - Correctly uses some letters to match sounds
  - Spells some high frequency words correctly
  - Writes at least one sentence
- V. Phonetic**
  - Uses upper and lower case letters
  - Writes left to right and top to bottom
  - Uses logical phonetic spelling; most sounds in words represented
  - Includes some vowels (often not correct ones)
  - Spells some high frequency words correctly
  - Separates words with dots, dashes, or spaces

Writes 2 or more sentences on a related topic or theme

**VI Transitional**

Correctly spells many high frequency words used in sentence  
Uses logical phonetic spelling including most vowels in most syllables  
(may not be correct ones)  
Capitalizes beginning word in sentence and the pronoun I; lower case used  
appropriately  
Correctly uses periods and question marks  
Uses appropriate subject/verb agreement  
Uses regular verb endings  
3 or more sentences on a related topic or theme

**VII Conventional**

Correctly uses logical phonetic spelling  
Uses logical choices of vowels in most syllables  
Accurately capitalizes first word, pronoun I and proper nouns  
Accurately uses period, question mark, exclamation point and commas in series  
Accurately uses plurals  
Writes a paragraph on a related topic or theme  
Uses varied sentence structure

Students generally do not begin conventional writing until late first grade or early into second grade. Most kindergarten writers have only emergent skills, knowing some letters, understanding that words are made up of letters, but letter to sound correspondence is lacking or incomplete. Kindergarten children typically use words of only 1-3 letters. They may only write the initial consonant to symbolize the entire word. Five and six year olds generally omit vowels or use very few of them and show only some sense of left to right progression when writing (Gentry, 1987). However, when this unit is implemented into a kindergarten classroom, and writing takes place on a daily basis, students can and will defy the typical expectations of a kindergarten child.

**B. Workshop**

Teachers first must have a writer's workshop implemented into the classroom routine. Daily rituals must be occurring. Each school day is a promise to the writer that he or she may become an author that day. Every writer's workshop convenes with what is called a mini-lesson. This is a 10 minute block of time that is teacher directed and focuses on a specific writing skill. The teacher presents the skill during whole group instruction and encourages conversations among the students. The mini-lesson is a key component to the writer's workshop because it is the teachable moment. It is the magic pixie dust that is sprinkled over writers. It challenges authors to think about how they wrote yesterday and shapes how they will write today and tomorrow. The next block of time in the writer's

workshop is for independent practice (although at the kindergarten level this can also be modeled writing, shared writing, interactive writing or guided writing). Students are engaged in the writing process for 40 minutes. Students may choose to use skills presented during the day's mini-lesson or perhaps they'll conquer another challenge they are encountering during writing. When students are writing independently, the teacher's role becomes that of facilitator as she conferences with students in a non-invasive way. She may just stroll around the room and plop down with a student to observe the writing process. Peers may also conference with each other during this time. Students are actively thinking, talking, writing and behaving like authors. Lastly, the final 10 minutes of the writer's workshop is devoted to the author's chair. This is the time when hard work is celebrated. Students gather on the carpet. Some have masterpieces in their hands, some are not finished with their work and join the group just to listen. Published authors read their work as the audience digests, comprehends and questions the product. The wall space becomes a canvas as the students are able to walk among each others' work. A "museum" of text is created over time and students proudly discuss their work because they own it. It is their creation for the world to see. This daily phenomenon is what we call writer's workshop. It truly is the building and creation of authors.

Some may wonder when skills or conventions are taught. Skills are introduced and reinforced through minilessons. Skills are practiced through authentic opportunities. The teacher can casually remind students of what can make a good piece of writing great during conferences. Students will use the skill because of a developed love of writing and the desire to achieve and succeed as good writers do. The teacher has to be the student motivator, or a "cheerleader" for students. Teachers can create a writing "fever", creating a classroom in which students will want to learn skills because that's what good writers do. Students hopefully "catch" this writing fever and have enthusiasm for publishing well-written work. Later in the year, students are taking the ball and running with it. The teacher is able to sit back and observe as students become cheerleaders for one another. Traditional teaching (authoritarian instruction) does teach skills, but not in an authentic way, not developing tools to create fantastic writers. Teachers may not get the writing product they desire because they skimped on process! Worksheets teach skills in isolation. How can students be expected to transfer that knowledge to real-life writing when it wasn't practiced and reinforced in real-life situations to begin with?!

As Fu & Townshend point out, "If a kid understands the rules of [a] particular worksheet game, he or she will have no trouble answering by rote the prescribed questions. What a tremendous waste of precious time such exercises seem when one thinks of children's great capacities to wonder, to conjecture, to imagine alternative realities and take on others' perspectives. Learning to be successful in school is important. Nevertheless, fill-in-the-blank exercises give children's cognitive abilities little opportunity to develop in broad and deep ways (408).

Edelsky agrees by saying, “Teachers may be confused about what children are capable of because so many kids have a hard time with worksheet tasks that may seem simple to an adult. However, for children, language stripped of meaningful context is *most* difficult to understand. Even those who can figure out how to respond get little benefit from fill-in-the-blank exercises (32).

### **C. Genre**

By participating in the seminar, Understanding Nonfiction Genres, I plan to gain experience with visualization technology that can be used as a teaching tool for writers. Young writers rely on clear expectations and rubrics to guide their craft. I hope to create a visual aid using a color-coded system to teach students what their writing includes and what it is lacking. The system would be evident in the classroom and mini-lessons would be taught so that children have an understanding of what each color means, and how it needs to be evident or left out of a particular piece of writing. The color-coded rubric would be designed so that students could easily read and interpret its’ expectation. Prior to student engagement with the tool, the teacher will deliver direct and specific instruction so that students are fully knowledgeable about what the tool means to them. Through mini-lessons, the educator will provide whole-group instruction with guided and independent practice. The students will participate through peer and student/teacher conferencing. Students will be given opportunities to familiarize themselves with the rubric’s language and meaning. These activities lend themselves to the writer’s workshop framework that is already in place.

As time progresses and students’ recall, familiarity and comfort level set in, the color-coded system will take on the role of an evaluative tool that allows both students and teachers to assess writing in a non-subjective way. Students will learn that language shapes genre writing. The educator (Dr. David Kaufer, CMU) has designed the tool so it looks like this: Red describes thinking, it is typically used in narratives. Blue demonstrates descriptive writing and is also used in narratives or informational writing. Orange is used when a writer is thinking about the past or the future. This can be used to describe self-reflection. Purple describes the past but in terms of historical events. Green is informational or report writing. The tool will be posted in the room and serve as a visual aid for students to refer to. The system will include a definition of the color (genre type) and keywords you may find in that particular genre.

Because of the wide variety of genres that students need exposure to, this tool encourages young children to understand at an early grade that there are certain words or phrases that define a specific style of writing. We can teach students to carefully select their language so that the audience walks away understanding the writer’s intention.

Pittsburgh Public Schools requires that students embrace different genres. Across grade levels the expectation that students have exposure to a variety of text is mandated. They must read and write narratives, responses to literature, informational texts and reports. They must submit quality pieces into a portfolio. It only makes sense that the student understands the differences and significance of each piece. The student needs to be accountable for understanding why a particular piece of writing meets the criteria of a specific genre.

This tool reaches out to the writer and guides them. It does not write for them. The power still lies within the author allowing him to pick his own language. For example, many times students intend on creating an informational piece of writing, however when the product is finished, it is lavished with personal opinions and commentaries (red). With a color coded system in place, the child and teacher can confer about the issues facing the paper in a very concise way. If green represents informational writing and red represents narrative writing, the teacher can redirect the student by explaining that their work included red which is too much in relation to green. The student will have the ability to check his language and fix it so that it meets the criteria of an informational piece of writing.

Teachers' misconceptions about student limitations *is* the limitation. It does not hurt to challenge students – what can be damaging is confining their expression and robbing them of a written voice. I do not expect all students to demonstrate proficiency on all levels, but you have to give young children a chance. If the educator believes five year olds can't write, they are determining their fate for them. Fu & Townshend remind us, "Language is an act of creative construction, and when we remove personal purpose and meaning from its expression, we lose the language itself. Writing is creative when it has real purpose to the writer and when it draws on a child's inner resources and imagination (409).

The College Board also notes, "Writing extends far beyond mastering grammar and punctuation. The ability to diagram a sentence does not make a good writer. There are many students capable of identifying every part of speech who are barely able to produce a piece of prose. While exercises in descriptive, creative, and narrative writing help develop students' skills, writing is best understood as a complex intellectual activity that requires students to stretch their minds, sharpen their analytical capabilities, and make valid and accurate distinctions. Writing competence builds confidence, which readily turns into creativity and fun, precisely what is most frequently absent from the policy discussions about today's schools. Facility with writing opens students up to the pleasures of exercising their minds in ways that drilling on facts, details, and information never will. More than a way of knowing, writing is an act of discovery (14).

I plan to create a workshop and color theory based curriculum so that it coincides with standards-based education. I will implement this module into my writer's workshop. By raising expectations in Kindergarten and laying the groundwork to support a literate classroom, I plan to provide students with a life-long learning tool that will enhance their way of reading and writing.

## **Objectives**

For students to “learn” how to become writers, they must practice the habits and processes of successful writers (New Standards 32). Students need to begin these routines in the primary grades so that a foundation is in place.

As New Standards states, “While the literary tradition of genres allows writers to see the world (and write about it) through a particular set of lenses, such lenses can be both powerful and limiting. A particular genre will suggest an order and help students get their thoughts down on paper...students who learn about genres enjoy a tremendous advantage over students who do not. As long as students understand that genres are not rigid structures, genre knowledge enables them as writers” (32). Genres also provide teachers with a meta-language they can use to teach and evaluate writing. Genres are made up of distinctive characteristics, which teachers can make explicit to students. Genre-specific writing guides feedback during students conferences and becomes the basis for evaluating student work. Students learn and become accustomed to genre characteristics, and if the expectation remains constant and consistent, students can establish proficiency in many styles of writing.

In order for students to achieve as writers, the appropriate tools must be in place. The classroom needs to be a place that is set-up for success. Standards must be in place to promote rigorous work and expectations must be raised. Rituals and routines lay the groundwork for writer's workshop, and the expectation is that students will write daily. Students will generate content and topics for writing. Students must write without resistance when given the time, place and materials. Students will use whatever means are at hand to communicate and make meaning: drawings, letter strings, scribbles, letter approximations and other graphic representations. Students will make an effort to reread their own writing and listen to that of others, showing attentiveness to meaning (New Standards 68).

Students will be expected to write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform and respond. The expectation is that kindergarten students will produce narratives that: contain a “story” that may be only a single event or several events loosely linked, which the author may react to, comment on, evaluate, sum up or tie together; tell events as they move through time; include gestures, drawing and /or intonations that support meaning; and incorporate storybook language (New Standards, 70). We want students to have exposure to and even imitate the reporting style of informational text and books they have “read” in the classroom. Students will be able to: gather, collect and share information about a topic; maintain a focus; and exclude irrelevant information (New Standards, 74). Students also need an understanding of how to respond to literature. Students can tell us that they understand what they read by: retelling or re-enacting stories; creating their own stories, poems, plays and songs; and using literary forms and language (New Standards 82). By participating in this curriculum students will be able to respond in writing to information and ideas gained by reading narrative and informational texts and use the information and ideas to make decisions and solve problems.

### **Strategies:**

Before students can even begin understanding genres and their characteristics, the writer’s workshop must be in place. Rituals and routines are the basis on which the writer’s workshop was created, and students have a clear and definite understanding of how to efficiently make use of this block of time. Each writer’s workshop begins, carries on, and ends the same way. The writer’s workshop is made up of three major components: the minilesson, work time, and share time. Consistent and constant management of this schedule limits student confusion and frustration and encourages stability, security and confidence in the classroom. When students know and understand what lies ahead of them, they establish confidence and ease with the writing process.

Minilessons are the instruction piece. They resemble what some may call traditional teaching. It is the opening of the writer’s workshop block where the teacher gathers the students together and teaches them something. However, it is not long and drawn-out, it is focused, direct and brief. The minilesson lasts only 5-10 minutes. The minilesson can differ depending on the needs of the students, but as Fletcher notes, it typically falls into one of the following categories:

1. Procedural (important information about how the workshop runs- how to get or use materials, where to confer with a friend, etc.)
2. Writer’s process (strategies writers use to help them choose, explore, or organize a topic, cut-and paste techniques for revising a piece, etc.)

3. Qualities of good writing (information to deepen students' understandings of literary techniques; use of the scene, point of view, strong language, leads and endings, etc.)
4. Editing skills (information to develop their understanding of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical skills) (10-11).

Although the minilesson has introduced a new skill, or revisited a previously taught skill, the expectation is not that every student uses the skill and demonstrate proficiency that same day. Teachers may encourage students to explore the usage of a particular skill, but it is really up to the student to decide whether or not to do so. Students are in no way to spend their block of writing time practicing the skill in a drill-like manner. Once students are turned over to their writing, it is up to them to choose what their writing needs to look like. However, the minilesson is not done in vain. It provides writers with valuable tips and tools that "broadens their visions as a writer" (Fletcher 12).

The writing time is the meat and potatoes of the writer's workshop. This is the 35-45 minutes that is spent just writing. Students choose projects, topics and word choice and create their own needs for writing. Kids are moving through the writer's process at their own pace: rough drafting, planning, rereading, proofreading, or conferring. The teacher acts as a facilitator and moves around the room as she confers with students. At the kindergarten level, students may need an extra push or purpose for writing. Students may be given topics or themes to write about, however there is no prescribed writing. The words still flow from the tips of their pencils.

The last 10-20 minutes of the writer's workshop is share time. This is a whole-class experience, but that doesn't mean that the whole class has to share. Some students may not have completed a piece of writing, some may be suffering from "writer's block" and simply, some students may just not feel like sharing on a particular day. The author should never feel forced to share work that he considers below the standard. Also, some authors may feel that their work is private and something that is not appropriate to share with the whole class. No one is ostracized or criticized for choosing not to share. Share time is intended to be a comfortable forum.

Students may sit in a special chair, known to some as the "Author's Chair", or a class may sit in a circle to share work. The attentive audience is encouraged to provide feedback to the author. As Fletcher notes: "Students are coached over time in how to give and receive response to each other's writing" (13). In the kindergarten writer's workshop students are often eager to share their work and at times the whole class can have a finished piece ready to recite. No one is ever denied their right to share.

As we know, students don't just magically learn to write. It is a process with many components, steps, systems and supports. The teacher not only needs to engage the child in daily writing experiences, but needs to present writing in a variety of ways. The teacher is the model. It is through her that students learn what successful writers do. Tompkins says that "the writing process approach to writing instruction is based on how real writers write" (9). The teacher's responsibility is to take-part in these process, making it real to students. If the teacher lives what she teaches, the students may see some value in writing. For example, a kindergarten class is studying marketplaces and grocery stores. Students have discussed the similarities and differences between the two and the teacher wants the students to take a trip to the grocery store. The teacher tells the students that at the store they will pick up items to make tacos. She presents the possibility of making a list. She asks them to think about what ingredients go into making tacos so that they can generate a list. In the meantime, the teacher begins making other lists and verbalizing to the students what she is doing: "I have 3 students who did not turn their homework in, I'm going to make a list for myself so I don't forget." "I have many places to go after-school today, I better jot them all down so I remember where I need to go." By using real-life situations in a casual way during the days or weeks, students internalize the need for list-making. So finally when they are asked to do it, they understand the need for it. When the teacher meets with the class to create a grocery list, she will question it's importance. Hopefully the students can re-iterate what they saw their teacher doing, which is writing things down so she didn't forget.

Read Alouds are also imperative to the development of writing. Read Alouds are stories, picture books, chapter books, poems, plays and songs that the teacher reads to her students. Read Alouds beautifully deliver the language of skilled writers. A teacher (no matter what age group she teaches) has to read to her students aloud at least once each and every day. It is recommended that kindergarten students are read to at least three times a day. Published authors are perceived as good writers, naturally, because they are published – they wrote real books! Students can be hypnotized by the spell that authors cast, and then try to follow their lead.

The teacher also will model the 5 stages in the writing process. Although as an adult the stages may be done unconsciously, they need to be modeled in an exaggerated and deliberate way so that students can internalize their importance. The stages are: pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and publishing. Pre-writing is the getting-ready- to- write stage. This is when individuals choose a topic, gather and organize ideas, identify the audience to whom they will write, and identify the purpose of the writing activity. Drafting is writing a rough draft while focusing on content and word choice. Revising is the time spent sharing writing in groups, participating constructively in discussions about others' writing, and making changes in compositions to reflect the reactions and comments of both the teacher and classmates. Editing is when individuals proofread their own compositions, help

proofread others' compositions and identify and correct their mechanical errors. Publishing is when the author can share their finished writing with an appropriate audience (Tompkins 11).

Teachers need to provide many opportunities to explore the stages of the writing process as they support and scaffold children's learning. As students learn to write, they are given more and more responsibility. Tompkins notes: "Teachers need to model how experienced writers write, or they write along with students. At times they carefully guide children as they develop ideas for their writing, record ideas on paper, and proofread to correct errors. Teachers also provide plenty of time for children to write independently, to experiment with writing and to practice skills they have learned" (26).

Tompkin's continuum of teacher support for student writers is provided below:

**Modeled writing** – the teacher writes in front of students creating the text, doing the writing, and thinking aloud about writing strategies and skills. The teacher is doing all of the writing in front of the whole class or a small group.

**Shared writing** - the teacher and students create the text together; then the teacher does the actual writing. Students may assist by spelling words. This is done with the whole class, small group, buddies or individuals.

**Interactive writing** – the teacher and students create the text and share the pen to do the writing. The teacher and students talk about writing conventions. Both the teacher and the students are participating in the writing. This is done with the whole class, small group, buddies or individuals.

**Guided writing** - the teacher presents a structured lesson and supervises as students write. The teacher also teaches a writing procedure, strategy or skill. Students are doing the writing in small group, with buddies or individually.

**Independent writing** - the students use the writing process to write stories, informational books, and other compositions. The teacher monitors students' progress. This is done with a buddy or individually (27).

This curriculum is going to incorporate the writer's workshop, the writing process and the use of criterion charts, visual aids and rubrics. Criterion charts are visual guideline, created for the students by the students, that act as reminders for "what do good writers do?" Students can refer to these charts at anytime during the writer's workshop to check on

themselves. It is a self-checking and monitoring tool that promotes independence during the writing process. An example of a kindergarten criterion chart is provided below:

### **What do good writers do?**

- I put my name on my paper
- I put spaces between my words
- I start sentences with a capital letter
- I end sentences with a period, question mark or exclamation point
- I sound unknown words by stretching the word C-A-T
- I locate high frequency words on the word wall
- I think before I write – “what am I going to write about?”  
“who is going to read this?”
- I reread my writing
- I draw a picture to match my words

The criterion chart is a work in progress and as writers become more proficient the chart may change. Visual aids also help students organize their work. The teacher will model and post examples of methods to organize thoughts. Students will be expected to use graphic organizers (venn diagrams, webs, etc.) and the color-coded system to guide their writing. The color-coded tool will be explained through the unit. Genre studies will occur and students will have a clear understanding of what the different genres mean. The color-coded tool used for genre language is provided below:

### **Kindergarten Color-coded Tool**

#### **RED – Narrative**

**Keywords:** I am  
I like  
I love  
I believe

#### **GREEN – Informational**

**Keywords:** let me tell you...  
the facts are...  
it is known that...

#### **BLUE – Descriptive**

**Keywords:** old/young  
tall/short  
fat/thin  
dark/light

#### **PURPLE – History**

**Keywords:** remember...  
yesterday...

a week/month/year ago...  
-ed verbs

**ORANGE – Past/Present**

**Keywords:** Tomorrow...  
Today...

Rubrics are the evaluative tool that both students and teachers use. It is commonly generated by the teacher, but teachers have found that it can be more meaningful if students help create the scoring rubric. When students take ownership of the rubric they tend to understand it more clearly and can write a piece that meets its expectations. Rubrics can be fashioned in many different ways. They can have points, percentages, stickers or stars assigned to them, but the rationale of a rubric is to provide a very clear, precise list of criteria that a certain piece of writing should include. A rubric will look different for different styles of writing. Below is an example of a rubric used for an informational piece of writing. It is on a kindergarten level, and has a 4, 3, 2, 1 scoring guide, with 4 being the best score one can receive.

Animal Report Rubric

- 4 – My report has 10 facts about an animal.  
My report has 5 describing words.  
My report has a matching picture.  
I use capital letters at the beginning of a sentence.  
I use punctuation at the end of the sentence.
- 3 – My report has 6-9 facts about an animal.  
My report has 4 describing words.  
My report has a matching picture.  
I use punctuation at the end of the sentence.
- 2 – My report has 4-5 facts about an animal.  
My report has 2-3 describing words.  
My picture does not match my report.  
I forgot to capitalize and punctuate my sentence.
- 1 – My report has 3 or less facts about an animal.  
My report has only 1 or no describing words.  
I did not draw a picture.  
I did not do my best work.

When teachers and students use rubrics, there is no guesswork. Writing goes from being subjective to becoming objective with a rubric. A student doesn't have to ask if his

composition is a good piece of writing, if it meets the criterion, the student knows that he has a quality piece of work. In fact, many times a student will go above and beyond a rubric because they know that it can improve a piece of work. Rubrics also reinforce knowledge of different genres. Rubrics can guide students to write in a particular style to a particular audience. A rubric can demand that a student's piece of writing be genre specific. Language takes shape, style is manufactured, and text becomes genre when a rubric is guiding the composition.

This unit will incorporate 4 themes that revolve around 4 styles of genre writing: response to literature, personal narrative, response to informational text and report writing. Each theme will incorporate the above mentioned strategies: writer's workshop, the writer's process, criterion charts, visual aids and scoring rubrics.

The themes that will be taught are: folk tales, insects, biographies and animals. Each theme will be described in great detail in the unit section titled, Daily Activities. Students will gain knowledge of different styles of writing by studying these themes. Each theme will be explored and students will have many experiences with reading and writing to reinforce genre specific studies. Below is a brief narrative of the student's reading and writing opportunities during specific theme explorations.

Students will first study Folk Tales. The student's main objective of this theme is to respond to literature. Folk Tales are excellent in this way because they lend themselves to many literature response activities. Folk Tales have predictable story lines and many present themselves in very similar ways. Folk Tales always have a definite beginning, middle and ending with some sort of conflict and resolution. Folk Tales have interesting characters, settings and points of view. Folk Tales can be humorous and fascinating to students because they have unrealistic and even absurd plots. The teacher will discuss the difference between fiction and non-fiction stories. Students will be expected to determine whether Folk Tales are real or not and why. The teacher will expose students to the storybook language that is contained in Folk Tales. Also, the patterns that unfold in Folk Tales will be talked about and imitated. The teacher will introduce students to characters, settings and plots. Students will recreate Folk Tales and characters using powerful and engaging language. The focus will be on descriptive language and using "BLUE" words to convey a message or story to an audience.

Students will have opportunities to learn about important people through a study of biographies. Students will read and be read to by the teacher, stories of interesting people. The teacher will detail what biographies include and what makes them fascinating to the

reader. The teacher will introduce the idea of non-fiction writing and what makes a text “real”. Students will have the opportunity to write their own autobiography focusing on “RED” language, keeping the narrative personal so an audience can get to know them. A rubric will be designed by the students and the teacher to guide the student’s writing. Students will also be exposed to fictitious narratives. They will have the opportunity to create stories about their lives that are interesting to a reader.

Students will participate in an Insect theme. Students will be exposed to both fiction and non-fiction materials pertaining to bugs. The teacher will provide many books, pictures and magazines revolving around the Insect theme. The expectation is that the students will be able to write informational text based on non-fiction materials. The teacher will present information to students and teach them how to organize data by using webs. Students will be introduced to characteristics of insects and facts about bugs. Spiders (I am aware that spiders are NOT insects) will be researched more thoroughly and students will generate webs independently and use pertinent information to create an informational composition. A rubric will be created and students will write with a clear understanding of what the text is to contain. Students will then learn about the butterfly life cycle. Students will learn to create text that is procedural and explains a factual sequence of events. The focus will be on “PURPLE” and “GREEN” language and using data and historical events to create text.

Students will also be expected to draft a report. Again, the students will have exposure to many informational materials all relating to the theme of animals. Students will choose an animal that is both interesting and unfamiliar to them. The teacher will introduce a K-W-L chart and challenge students to become “researchers”. The teacher will model report writing with the students and the focus will be on “GREEN” language again. Students will use keywords to instruct an audience and teach them something.

The teacher is responsible for being organized and prepared to create this stimulating working environment. Nothing can be accomplished if the teacher is ill-prepared. The Daily Activities will narrate and provide a much more specific understanding of how the above mentioned themes are to be incorporated into the classroom routine (i.e. including materials and space).

## **Classroom Activities:**

Students will explore four themes in this unit. Themes will revolve around a particular genre and students will engage in minilessons, discussions, writing activities, and author's chair pertaining to the specific genre study. Students will be assessed using rubrics and a color-coded tool to determine if they understand genre writing and its' components. Each genre study will be about 4 weeks long. Folk tales is the first genre study and will be introduced in January. At this point in the year, a full-day kindergarten student has full comprehension of rituals and routines, knows all letters and sounds, understands left to right and top to bottom progression, puts spaces between words, knows some high-frequency words and has some knowledge of CVC spelling patterns. By this time students have had exposure to plurals and verb endings, although they use them inconsistently. When a piece of paper is put in front of a student, the journey begins. They *know* what to do.

### **Folk Tales**

The main focus of the folk tale theme is to write for a variety of purposes. Students will respond to literature and describe the components of a folk tale through writing activities. Students will learn about folk tale story language, the difference between fiction and non-fiction text, predictable text, surprise endings, characters, settings and beginnings, middles, and endings of books.

#### Week 1

##### Day 1

The teacher will tell the children that they are beginning a Folk Tale study. Ask the students if they can tell the class what a folk tale is. Show the cover of *The Gingerbread Man* by James Aylesworth. Ask students if they can tell whether *The Gingerbread Man* is a "real" story/non-fiction or a "not real" story /fiction. Encourage students to tell you why they think what they do. Because this is a prediction, any answer is acceptable. The teacher will read *The Gingerbread Man* aloud. During a minilesson the students and children will discuss the story language. The teacher will re-ask the question after the story is read: Do you think this story is fictional or non-fictional? Again, ask students to tell why they believe their thinking to be true (ex: Gingerbread men don't run, gingerbread men can't talk, there is no such thing as talking animals). It needs to be clear to children that Folk Tales are not true. The teacher will encourage students to discuss the problem and solution in the story. The students will independently write in their journals about a time they had a problem and how they solved it. The students will share their journal entries.

##### Day 2

The teacher will activate prior knowledge by reminding students that folk tales are fictitious and that they usually present a problem and a solution. Present the book titled *The*

*Gingerbread Man* and invite students to retell what they learned was the problem and solution in the story. The students may wish to share some of their journal entries (if not everyone was able to share the previous day). Re-read *The Gingerbread Man*. After reading, the students will discuss the beginning, middle and ending of the story. The students will “share the pen: and write the beginning, middle and ending of the story on chart paper as a whole group. As sentences are being completed, the students reread their work.

#### Day 3

The teacher will re-read *The Gingerbread Man*. The students will discuss the beginning, middle and ending of the story. Students will talk about why they enjoyed the story (elements that make a good story). Students will independently write what their favorite part was and why. Students may share their writing.

#### Day 4

The teacher will read *The Gingerbread Baby* by Jan Brett. The teacher and students will discuss the similarities and differences between the two tales (reinforcing story language and patterns within folk tales). A venn diagram will be generated through shared writing. Students will begin to recognize patterns in folk tale story telling.

#### Day 5

The teacher and students will discuss *The Gingerbread Man*. By reading, what did we learn about the kind of character he is? Talk about character traits and how we can make inferences by reading into a character’s actions. The teacher will introduce the color-coded system and discuss “BLUE” language. The teacher will use chart paper to visually cue students about the kind of words you might see in a descriptive piece of writing. The students will draw a gingerbread man and label him with three traits that describe his character (ex: fast, doesn’t listen, sneaky).

#### Week 2

##### Day 1

The students will be introduced to the big book *The Farm Concert* by Joy Cowley. The students make a list of animals they heard in the story to create a class chart. Other animals will be added to the chart as responses are given. The students will independently write what their favorite animal is and why in their journal.

##### Day 2

The students will listen and respond to *The Three Little Pigs* by Paul Galdone. The students will discuss the problem and solution of the folk tale. The students will write the problem and solution through interactive writing. Authors will share the pen to create text. Students will depict the problem and solution on a divided piece of paper by drawing a picture. Pictures must match words.

### Day 3

The students will listen to a different version of *The Three Little Pigs* by James Marshall. Using a venn diagram, the students will compare and contrast the versions during shared writing.

### Day 4

The teacher will re-read *The Three Little Pigs* (same or different version). Ask the students to recall familiar facts and retell the story. The teacher will model writing by writing down the students dictation. A beginning, middle and ending chart will be created through shared writing.

### Day 5

The students re-read the chart that was generated the previous day. The students will now independently re-tell the story including a beginning, a middle and an ending. The students will also be expected to tell what part that they liked the best and why. The teacher is trying to develop making text to self connection. For this assignment the teacher will present a rubric to help guide their writing:

*The Three Little Pigs* story re-telling rubric:

- My work includes the beginning of *The Three Little Pigs*.
- My work includes the middle.
- My work includes the ending.
- I tell what my favorite part is and why I liked it.
- My picture matches my words.

The rubric is color coded so that the child can check on themselves and the teacher can assess the work in a way that is clear and meaningful to the students.

### Week 3

#### Day 1

The students will be introduced to the big book *Mrs. Wishy-Washy* by Joy Cowley. The students will participate in a shared reading of the book. The students will discuss Mrs. Wishy-Washy's character traits. The teacher will have a picture of Mrs. Wishy-Washy drawn (or glued) to chart paper. The students will generate adjectives to describe Mrs. Wishy-Washy and the teacher will label the poster-sized chart to describe her character. The teacher will encourage students to make inferences and students will be expected to explain their thinking.

#### Day 2

The teacher will read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by Paul Galdone. The students will create a character web of Goldilocks independently. The students will be expected to draw and then label Goldilocks with 3 traits that describe her character. The students may wish to share their work. Discuss similarities and differences among the group.

### Day 3

The students will listen and respond to two different versions of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. One version is written by Jan Brett and the other version is written by James Marshall. Discuss how authors and illustrators can change versions of the same book slightly with pictures and words, but how the story language remains the same. Talk about likenesses and differences among the 3 versions the students have been exposed to. Give students a chance to explore the books and discuss the language.

### Day 4

The teacher will re-read another version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* by Valerie Gorbachev. The students will review the different versions. Students will engage in small group writing. Each group of 3-4 students will get a version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and large butcher paper. Students will work together to illustrate their version and describe the characters. The students will share their work and discuss the similarities and differences among the groups.

### Day 5

The teacher will model letter writing. The teacher will choose a character from *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* and draft a letter to him/her.

Example:

Dear Goldilocks,

You should not go into people's houses when they are not home.

It is not safe.

You could have gotten hurt.

From,

Mrs. Lehman

A rubric will be designed so that students have clear expectations.

*Goldilocks and the Three Bears* Letter Writing Rubric

- My letter has a heading
- My letter has a body
- My letter has a closing
- My letter shows that I understand the story

### Week 4

#### Day 1

The students will be introduced to the big book *Meanies* by Joy Cowley. The students will participate in a shared reading. The students will generate traits to describe this fictitious character and the teacher will label a pre-drawn Meanie with describing words. The teacher will revisit "BLUE" language so that students comprehend what that represents.

#### Day 2

The teacher will read *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Paul Galdone. The students will retell the story, including the beginning, middle and end, through interactive writing.

#### Day 3

The students will continue writing the beginning, middle and end through interactive writing.

#### Day 4

The teacher will cut apart the story retelling sentence by sentence. Students will pair up and select a piece of the story that they would like to illustrate. Using large oak tag, students will glue down their sentence and illustrate a picture to match the words. The students will share their section and the pieces will be assembled in order to create a big book for the classroom collection.

#### Day 5

The students will listen and respond to *The 3 Billy Goats Gruff* by Public Domain. The teacher will explain that folk tales have settings. Children will learn that the setting is where the folk tale takes place. The students will use craft sticks to recreate the bridge from the story. The students will illustrate their picture and write their favorite part of the story and why they liked it.

A rubric will be created to ensure that students have a clear understanding of what is expected.

#### *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* Rubric:

- I wrote my favorite part of the story using “BLUE” language
- I told why I liked this part the best
- My picture shows the setting of the story
- My picture matches my words

#### Extension:

The folk tale them can be lengthened. The following are some additional activities that lend themselves to the folk tale theme:

1. Students can draw a picture of a made-up fictitious character and write 3 traits about them.
2. The students can use large oak tag and sentence strips to draw and label the setting and characters from their favorite folk tale.
3. The students can listen to a folk tale without being shown the pictures and they must rely on their listening skills and imagination to create the setting through drawing.
4. The students can write about what their favorite folk tale was and why.

## **Biographies/ Personal Narratives**

The main focus of the biography theme is to engage students in narrative writing. Students will have exposure to both fiction and non-fiction narrative writing through read alouds. Students will be expected to write stories about themselves in an organized way using “RED” language.

Week 1

Day 1

The students will be introduced to the big book *What Do Scientists Do?* By Marcie Bovetz. The students will create a non-fiction web of all the things that scientists do. The teacher will record their answers through shared writing.

Day 2

The students will re-read *What Do Scientists Do?* The teacher will explain how the book tells facts about scientists to an audience. The teacher will tell the children that she want to know facts about students. The students will respond by telling the teacher examples of things that students do. The teacher will write these on a web. The teacher is encouraging students to tell about themselves.

Day 3

The teacher will read *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles. The students and teacher will discuss the book. The teacher will ask students to determine the genre of the story. The students should be able to identify this book as a non-fiction book. The teacher will tell the students that non-fiction books about people are called biographies. The teacher will ask the students to tell any information they learned about Ruby by hearing the story. The teacher will list the responses on chart paper, under the title, “What did we learn about Ruby Bridges?”

Day 4

Students will be asked to remember what a biography is. Students will review what they learned by hearing a biography about Ruby Bridges. The teacher will read the biography *A Picture Book of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.* by David Adler. The students will write 3-4 facts that they learned about Martin Luther King Jr. on paper that is titled, “What did we learn about Martin Luther King Jr.?” Students will share their writing as the teacher writes the responses on chart paper.

Day 5

Students will gather in a large group and discuss what a biography is. The teacher will encourage students to generate answers to the question: What can we learn about you? (Some responses might include: my age, my birthday, where I was born, what I look like, what I like to do, etc.) The teacher will write the responses in a repetitive manner on chart paper (ex: I can tell my age, I can tell my birthday, I can tell where I was born, etc.) The teacher will explain to students that this is an example of a biographical writing or informing someone about yourself. Students will interview a partner and find out 5 facts about them.

Students will use clipboards, paper and pencils to record the information. Students will share what they discovered.

## Week 2

### Day 1

Students will review what a biography is. Students are going to participate in autobiographical writing. The teacher will tell the students that an autobiography contains facts written about yourself. The teacher will introduce the concept of “RED” language and what it means to an audience. The teacher will present a rubric for this writing assignment.

#### Autobiography Rubric:

- My autobiography tells my name
- My autobiography tells my birthday
- My autobiography tells my place of birth
- My autobiography tells 3 or more interesting facts about me
- I used “RED” language to tell about myself
- My art matches my work

### Day 2-3

Students will continue their autobiographies while conferencing with peers and the teacher.

### Day 4

Students will be given art materials to create “their face” to go along with their autobiographies. Students will have access to paper plates, different shades of multicultural paint, buttons, yarn, markers and crayons. Students will use the materials to create a reproduction of their face.

### Day 5

Students will finish their artwork and share their work.

## Week 3

### Day 1

The teacher will review the topic of biographies and autobiographies. The teacher will explain to students that you can also tell stories about yourself or something important that happened to you by writing them. The teacher will tell students that these kinds of stories are called narratives. The teacher will read aloud *Arthur’s Tooth* by Marc Brown. The students will discuss the story and what the event was that occurred in the story.

### Day 2

The teacher will reread *Arthur’s Tooth*. The students will identify the beginning, middle and ending of Arthur’s story. The teacher will write the students narrative and include the words first, then, next and last to show transition in the story. The teacher will use different colors

for each of these transition words to highlight them within the text. The teacher is modeling writing for students through shared writing.

### Day 3

The teacher will model writing by telling about the first time she lost a tooth. The teacher will use different colors to highlight and reinforce transition words. The teacher will re-read her story in front of the class to make sure that it makes sense, has a beginning, middle and end, and uses transitional words. The teacher will draw a picture to match her work. The students will be given a piece of paper to write about a time they lost a tooth. A rubric will be developed to guide writing.

#### Lost Tooth Narrative Rubric:

- My story tells about a time I lost a tooth
- My story has a beginning
- My story has a middle
- My story has an end
- My story uses special words that helps the reader stay involved
- My picture matches my words

### Day 4-5

Students will continue their narratives. Students will share work as it is completed.

### Week 4

#### Day 1

The students will listen and respond to *The Empty Pot* by Demi. The students will re-tell the story and use transitional words to reinforce storytelling language. The teacher will write down what the students say, highlighting the transitional words. The students will reread their writing.

#### Day 2

Students will be given the assignment of writing a story about themselves. The teacher will encourage writers to come up with topics for writing. The students will list topics under the title: "What can we write about?" The teacher and students will reread the list to gather ideas. The teacher will model a piece of writing, reinforcing "RED" language. Students will begin peer/teacher conferencing and discussing what their topic will be. Students will share their topics in a large group.

#### Day 3

The teacher will talk to the students about rough drafting. Students will begin working on their personal narratives. As students finish their rough drafts, they will conference with the teacher, make revisions and begin a final copy (which is book making). The teacher will have pre-made books with page numbers on them. Students will create books from their rough drafts. As students finish their books they will share and then begin another narrative.

Day 4-5

Students continue to create narratives and share their work. The teacher will conference with students and create minilessons as need arises.

### **Bugs**

The priority in the bug theme is to reinforce the difference between fictional and non-fictional writing. Students will be exposed to a variety of readings and be expected to determine the differences in genre. Student writing will focus on informational writing. Students will gather information from books, magazines, environment and make generalizations using research and data. Students will be informed of “GREEN” language and what that means to a piece of writing.

Week 1

Day 1

The students will be introduced to the big book *Bug Watching* by Rebel Williams. The students will determine if the story is fiction or non-fiction. Students will tell how they arrived at their answers. Students will be given a blank web. They will brainstorm and write as many bugs as they can think of on their web. Students will gather on the carpet and share what they wrote. The teacher will write down their responses on a chart-sized web.

Day 2

The students will listen to non-fiction text about bugs. The teacher will describe “GREEN” language and what it looks and sounds like. The teacher will use chart paper to model some “GREEN” language. Students will understand that their work is not to tell us their opinion, but rather information about bugs. The students will independently write 3 facts that they learned about bugs. Students will share their work.

Day 3

The teacher will pick a specific type of insect (ex: ants). The students will generate a class web detailing facts about ants. The teacher will write their responses. The teacher will then model how to take facts from a web and create a brief report. This will be done through shared writing.

Day 4

The students will pick a bug of their choice and independently create a web using non-fiction reference materials. Students who have picked the same bug can work in small groups, sharing reference materials.

Day 5

The students will gather with their webs for a group meeting. The teacher will ask students what they found out yesterday during their research. The teacher will review how to take

information from a web and create an informational report. The teacher will review “GREEN” language and praise those students who followed that directive and persuade those who did not. The students will be given writing paper and their job is to take the information from their web and create a 5 sentence report. A rubric will be designed to help students.

#### Bug Rubric

- I wrote 5 sentences about my bug
- My sentences are true/non-fictional
- I used “GREEN” language in my sentences
- My picture matches my words

#### Week 2

##### Day 1

The teacher will read the big book *The Bee* by Joy Cowley. The students will write independently all the facts they already know about bees and then share in a whole group. The teacher will chart their information on a poster-sized web.

##### Day 2

The teacher will read excerpts from a non-fiction book about bees. Students will respond by adding new facts to the “bee” web that they learned through listening.

##### Day 3

The students will listen to statements about bees and determine whether they are fiction or non-fiction. The students will fold a piece of paper in half and on one side write one fictitious statement about bees and on the other side one true fact about bees will be written. Students will share their work.

##### Day 4-5

The teacher will talk with students about how to retrieve information from books. Students will work in small groups and practice note-taking. The teacher will supply books on bees (both fiction and non-fiction). Students will use composition books and post-it notes to take notes on what they see in books. Students may share their work.

#### Week 3

##### Day 1

The students will be introduced to the non-fiction big book *Microscope* by Joy Cowley. Students will discuss how facts are learned by reading non-fiction selections. The students will be exposed to non-fiction materials about spiders. Students will be sent to their seats to gather information about spiders. After 15-20 minutes, students will gather in a large group and discuss what facts they learned about spiders. The teacher will write their responses on a class web.

## Day 2

Students will observe a real spider in small groups. Students will use clipboards, paper and pencils to jot down observations that they witness. The students will gather in a large group and be given the assignment of creating a brief report about spiders. The teacher will inform the students of the expectation. A rubric will be available to guide student writing:

### Information Writing on Spiders Rubric:

- My report is about spiders
- My report has 5 facts
- My report uses “GREEN” language
- My picture matches my words

Students will share their work.

## Day 3

The students will listen and respond to *The Very Busy Spider* by Eric Carle. Students will discuss what makes this book different from the non-fiction materials they used for research. In pairs, students will be given a graphic organizer (venn diagram) and student copies of *The Very Busy Spider*. Students will reflect on the similarities and differences between a the fictional spider character and real spider. Students will share their work as the teacher records their responses on chart-sized paper.

## Day 4

Students will listen and respond to both fictional and non-fictional statements about spiders. Students must indicate which statements are real and which are not. Students will be encouraged to explain their thinking. The teacher will provide students with a large piece of paper. Students are to fold their paper in half and write a true statement about spiders and a “silly” or untrue statement about spiders. Students will share their work.

## Day 5

Students will listen and respond to *Anansi the Spider* by Gerald McDermott. The teacher will ask the students to retell the characters in the story and the role they played. The teacher will record the responses on chart paper. The students will be expected to write about which character was their favorite and why. Remind the students that this piece of writing will be descriptive and not informative. Ask them to explain the difference. Students will share their work.

## Week 4

### Day 1

The students will be introduced to *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by Eric Carle. The students will recount the beginning, middle and end by putting scrambled sentence strips (with the story written on them) in sequential order. The students will re-read the story to check and see if it makes sense. The students will be given three pre-cut construction paper circles

with writing paper (also cut in the shape of a circle to fit inside the construction paper circle) attached. The students will use one circle to retell the beginning of the story, one circle for the middle, one circle for the end. The students will use the last circle to create the head of the caterpillar. Students will each be given a copy of the book to refer to.

#### Day 2

Students will continue writing the beginning, middle and end of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. When the work is complete it will be displayed so that children may read and enjoy each other's work. The students will gather in a large group, discuss the genre of the book, and explain their thinking.

#### Day 3

Students will independently create a subject web for caterpillars/butterflies. The students will share their knowledge and the teacher will record their responses.

#### Day 4

The students will look at photos of the life cycle of a butterfly. The students will pair-up, choose a stage in the cycle, and write factually about what they see. The photos and the student work will be sequenced correctly and displayed so that students may observe and read other students' work.

#### Day 5

The students will use a paper plate divided into four equal parts and macaroni to represent the 4 stages of the butterfly life cycle. The first stage is the egg (a small bean). The second stage is a caterpillar (rotini). The third stage is the cocoon (pasta shell). The fourth stage is a butterfly (bow tie pasta). The students will assemble the materials and illustrate the stages to create the butterfly cycle. Upon completion, the students will write about what is happening in each stage. Students are expected to write the stages in the correct sequential order. Student work will be displayed so that others may read and admire the work.

### **Animal Reports**

The priority for students during the animal report theme is to use their researching capabilities and their ability to describe what they know or see through descriptive writing. Students will combine "GREEN" and "BLUE" language to produce reports. Students will demonstrate proficiency in researching topics, writing to an audience in an organized way and using a rubric to guide the writing process.

#### Week 1

##### Day 1

Students will be introduced to the big book *Animals Hide and Seek* by Lee Martin. The students will review what differentiates genre. The students will tell what genre this particular book is and why they believe what they do. The teacher will tell students that they are going to be doing some writing about animals. First, the students are going to

create a class report. Students will brainstorm a list of animals that a report can be written about. The teacher will write down all animal names that are given. The teacher will ask the students to think about what animal they would like to learn about most.

#### Day 2

The students will gather in front of the list of animal names that was generated the previous day. The teacher will inform the students that they will take a class vote to determine what animal they most want to write about. The students will raise their hand for what animal they would like to know more about and the animal with the most tally marks (votes) wins. Once it determined what animal will be the topic for the report the teacher will set up a K, W, L chart. “K” stands for: What I already know. “W” stands for: What do I want to know? “L” stands for: What did I learn by doing research? Today the students will tell the class everything they know about the particular animal that was chosen. The teacher will write down all the facts that the students already know in the “K” column of the chart.

#### Day 3

Students will review what they said they already knew about the chosen animal. Today the teacher will encourage the students to come up with questions they may have about this particular animal. The questioning technique encourages students to think about what they want to get out of the research they are going to do. The teacher will record all the questions that students may have and list them in the “W” column of the chart. (Ex: If students are doing a report on jaguars they may ask: Are all jaguars spotted? How fast can a jaguar run?)

#### Day 4

Students will gather on the carpet to review the questions they generated the previous day. Students will be invited to work in small groups, to look through reference materials on their topic, and to find the answers to their questions. Students may use clipboards, paper and pencils to write down any important or relevant facts. After students have had some exploratory time, they will gather together to discuss what they found. The teacher will record their data in the “L” column of the chart. The teacher and students will determine if any or all of their questions were answered.

#### Day 5

The students will gather in a large group. The teacher will use the K,W,L chart to create a report. First, the teacher explains to the students that the report has to flow and have some organization. She reads all the facts to the students and asks them to come up with some categories for the report. (Ex: Put together all statements that describe what jaguars look like. Put together all statements that tell about their habitat). The teacher will physically cut the facts and reorganize them by pasting them in together by category. The students will read the report as a group.

### Week 2

#### Day 1

The students will pick an animal to write a report about. The teacher will review the K,W,L chart. Students will be given a piece of paper with a “K” at the top. Students will write all the facts that they already know about the animal they’ve picked as their report topic.

#### Day 2

The teacher will review the K,W,L chart. The students will be given a piece of paper with a “W” at the top. The students will be responsible for writing all the facts that they want to know.

#### Day 3

The teacher will review the K,W,L chart and discuss the process that the students have already started. The students will use reference materials to find the answers to their questions. The students will record the data on a paper labeled “L”.

#### Day 4

The students will continue their research as the teacher facilitates.

#### Day 5

The students will have their K,W,L papers stapled together to form a packet. The students will meet with their papers in a large group meeting. The teacher will explain to the students that they are responsible for pulling the 10 most interesting facts they found and creating a report. The students must use “GREEN” language because it is an informational piece of writing, however the teacher also expects “BLUE” language because the author is responsible for being descriptive. A rubric will be assigned to students to help guide their writing (see animal report rubric above).

#### Week 3

##### Days 1-5

Students will work on their report writing. The teacher will conference independently with students and facilitate during the writing process. Minilessons will be conducted as needs arise in the classroom.

#### Week 4

##### Days 1-5

Students will share their work in the Author’s Chair. Constructive and quality feedback will be provided to authors via classmates. Work will be displayed in the classroom for others to read and enjoy. Minilessons will be conducted as student need arises.

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## **Appendix**

### **Content Standards for the Pittsburgh Public Schools**

#### Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening

C2 All students read and use a variety of methods to make sense of various kinds of complex texts.

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

C4 All students write for a variety of purposes, including to narrate, inform, persuade, in all subject areas.

C5 All students analyze and make critical judgments about all forms of communication, separating fact from opinion, recognizing propaganda, stereotypes and statements of bias, recognizing inconsistencies and judging the validity of evidence.

C6 All students exchange information orally, including understanding and giving spoken instructions, asking and answering questions appropriately, and promoting effective group communications.

C7 All students listen to and understand complex oral messages and identify their purpose, structure and use.

C8 All students compose and make oral presentations for each academic area of study that are designed to persuade, inform or describe.