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| **Grade 4**  **Unit Overview**  ***Historical Fiction*** | |
| **Focus Teaching Points** | * Becoming researchers about a time period and generating story ideas that may arise from that period * Rehearsing in the notebook * Planning for stories that include a clear problem and resolution * Trying out leads and short focused scenes introducing setting and problem in the notebook * Developing a few believable characters; trying out writing from different perspectives * Applying craft strategies learned in earlier narrative units (dialogue, action, internal thoughts, feelings, show not tell etc.) * Writing a second piece, repeating the writing process with greater independence * Using specific details and clues to indicate where a story takes place * Collecting and using details about daily life to bring out historical accuracy * Revising to make stories more meaningful, believable, and historically accurate * Revising to build tension * Considering including a lesson the character learns * Unfolding the story as a storyteller, rather than writing a summary of events * Trying out narrative craft strategies from mentor texts * Writing satisfying endings * Using narrative checklists and editing checklists to set goals, revise and edit * Choosing one of the two stories to publish * Editing * Publishing and celebrating |
| **Key CCSS Standards** | ***Writing Standards******(W)***   * *1, 1a-d, 3, 3a-d, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 9a-b, 10*   ***Language Standards (L)***   * *1, 1a-e, 2, 2a-e, 3, 3a-b* |
| **Bends in the Road** | * Collecting, selecting, and developing story ideas * Choosing a first seed idea and taking it through the writing process * Taking a second seed idea through the writing process with greater attention to bringing out historical accuracy and meaning * Editing and publishing: preparing the historical fiction story for readers |
| **Recommended Professional Resource(s) to Guide Instruction** | “Historical Fiction: Tackling Complex Texts” from the *If. . . Then. . .Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction* in the *Units of Study for Opinion, Narrative and Information Writing, Grade 4* by Lucy Calkins |
| **Recommended Anchor/Mentor Texts** | You will find recommendations and descriptions of [Mentor Texts](http://ppsgrade4.weebly.com/mentor-texts.html) on our literacy coach web site for your reading unit on Historical Fiction Book Clubs. Select among these mentor texts to highlight historical fiction *writing.* |
| **Tips for the Unit** | * Historical fiction writing gives your children opportunities to improve upon the craft of narrative writing while they write from different perspectives and about characters from different time periods, in different settings and from different walks of life. * This unit is streamlined and provides a summary of ideas to engage your children in historical fiction writing. “A Summary of the Bends in the Road” can be found on page 70; however, you will likely find it necessary to read the entire unit (pages 69-82) to best understand the goals of the unit, the suggestions for getting ready and the trajectory of teaching across the unit. This unit’s success will depend in large part on the degree to which your students have sufficient background knowledge about the historical period in which their stories are set. Channel your students to write their historic fiction pieces in relation to the time and place about which they are reading in Historical Fiction Book Clubs ***or*** channel them to write stories about the people and in the time period you are studying in Social Studies. * Begin with a quick on-demand [historical fiction writing assessment](http://ppsgrade4.weebly.com/assessment4.html) or review the fiction pieces they have recently written perhaps as part of MCAS preparation (i.e. text-based narrative writing) to inform your instruction about narrative writing in general.   + Pay close attention to your students’ abilities to apply a narrative organizational structure to their writing (such as a timeline and/or story arc). You will also want to note how effective your students are in applying craft strategies to their stories (e.g. show not tell; dialogue, action, thoughts and feelings) and how comfortable your students are with building tension and creating a satisfying resolution as they unfold their stories bit-by-bit. Use this information to plan for instruction and modify your teaching points. * Since your students are simultaneously engaged in Historical Fiction Book Clubs, help your students read with an awareness of the craft moves of their authors and then encourage your students to try some of these craft moves in their own writing. * This unit strongly encourages writers to write two complete stories so that they go through the entire writing process more than once (which means more practice with both revision and editing). As an alternative, you may decide to have your students write and revise separate scenes—rather than complete stories—so that they can still have repeated opportunities for revision and editing. * **Bend I (Week 1):** This first bend should last just about week, with three days for generating ideas and another two for rehearsing in the notebook. Below are two especially important points to convey during this bend:   + Historical fiction draws on the same skills and strategies for strong narrative writing that students have learned in previous narrative writing units. Your students should draw on these previously-developed skills and strategies.   + What makes historical fiction unique, however, is that the author has to describe the time and place more carefully for his/her readers. Your writers will write not only about characters and events, but also the **place and time period** (p. 72). * See pages 73-74 for strategies for generating historical fiction story ideas. The unit does *not* suggest you provide your writers with all of these strategies, but instead, choose one-two strategies that you think will be most appropriate for your group of students. Then, as the unit reminds teachers, “whichever idea-generating strategy you select, be sure children don’t linger, belaboring the process.” * Once students have generated story ideas, they can test these ideas, drawing on all they know of the time period and genre to make their stories fit the time period in which they are writing. They can also think of the details that will help make their stories feel real (e.g. time appropriate names, dress, speech, and interests). Writers can use their notebooks to try out these ideas, leads, and short focused scenes that introduce the setting and problem. This rehearsal should last a few days. * **Bend II (Week 2):** During this bend, students draft their first story, perhaps across just one week. Children will benefit from minilessons that reinforce narrative structure and craft. Many teachers who have taught this unit successfully have found it helpful to begin by focusing on plot *before* character development, in particular ensuring that stories have a clear problem and story arc (page 75).   + During drafting, students will need a clear tool to use for planning their stories, such as stapled booklets of paper (page 75). You may also wish to have children jot a timeline or story arc in their notebooks.   + Insert lessons as needed on unfolding the story and building tension toward the problem. * Once students have developed a plan for their stories, teach minilessons that help students develop believable, interesting characters (page 76). The unit suggests that students stick with just a few key characters so that the “students’ casts of characters don’t spiral out of control.” You can also draw on Session 3 (“Developing Believable Characters”) from *The Arc of Story: Writing Realistic Fiction* for these strategies.   + You may also wish to insert a lesson here or in Bend III on point of view and perspective. Students may try out writing from different characters’ point of view in their notebooks before deciding if/how they may want to use this technique. This practice also doubles as preparation for MCAS\*. * As students draft their stories, reinforce the importance of storytelling vs. summarizing (page 77) and narrative craft strategies (top of page 78). * Students should revise and edit this first story, considering if the heart of the story is as powerful as it can be. * **Bend III (Week 3):** Children write a second story during this bend, going through the exact same process (generating, rehearsing, drafting, revising and editing) as they did with their first story. This time, however, you will challenge your students to give even greater attention to narrative craft and writing a story that brings out a particular meaning. You may also wish to encourage your writers to show how their main character learns a lesson. * Your writers can also learn to conduct quick research on the time period with the goal to collect facts about the details of life (fashion, modes of transportation, schools, gender roles, and events) and the time and place to include in their writing.This attention to detail will help to support greater historical accuracy and meaning (page 78). * As your writers revise during this bend, encourage them to return to a scene in which the main character faces a crisis, a problem, or a choice. They can consider whether the character feels believable and revise by considering people in real-life (page 79). Other key considerations for revision include writing with historical accuracy and satisfying endings. * **Bend IV** (Week 4): Children may choose one of their two stories to revise and edit for publication. In addition to use of the narrative writing checklists throughout the unit, you may also create editing checklists that emphasize the areas of mechanics you have taught (pages 81-82).   ***MCAS Connection\****  This unit in many ways also prepares students for the demands of narrative writing on MCAS. *As part of this unit*, you may decide to give children opportunities to write directly in response to texts in a narrative format. For example, you might ask students to write a journal entry from the point of view of a character, write an alternate ending for the text they’ve read, or write an additional scene in the style of the author. |
| **Materials and Resources** | Each child:   * Writer’s Notebook (preferably hard bound composition book that students personalize) divided into sections, such as: *Writing Ideas* (for lists, blob ideas, theme ideas), *Try It* (for minilesson exercises), *Writing* (this section could be labeled by genre or unit to house all the entries students write in a particular unit and from which students can select ideas to draft longer outside the notebook * Writing folder for drafts and any reference materials (e.g. various memoir structures, author craft techniques, etc.)   Teacher:   * Writer’s Notebook for modeling * Teacher-generated writing for modeling * Anchor charts, co-constructed with students, that support brainstorming, generating ideas, drafting, revision, and editing strategies |
| **Assessment** | * See the [Historical Fiction On-Demand Assessment](http://ppsgrade4.weebly.com/assessment4.html). |
| **Celebrations** | * As part of publishing, students might pair their narratives with historical artifacts such as graphics or photographs from the time period. To share their stories, students could dress up in character from their stories and then meet in groups to share what they’ve written. |