

Oakland Schools Curriculum Unit Plan

8th Grade ELA: Writing

Unit 4: Mystery

Big Picture Graphic

Overarching Question: <p style="text-align: center;">How do writers create well-crafted mysteries?</p>					
Previous Unit: <p style="text-align: center;">The Persuasive Essay</p>	This Unit: <p style="text-align: center;">Mystery</p>	Next Unit: <p style="text-align: center;">Research</p>			
Questions to Focus Assessment and Instruction: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do writers generate ideas for mysteries? 2. How do we develop our characters? 3. How do we use mentors to structure our narratives? 4. How do we create tension and leave clues for the reader? 5. How do we write conclusions that satisfy the reader? 		Intellectual Processes: <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Narrative structure</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Conflict/resolution</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Character traits</td> </tr> </table>	Narrative structure	Conflict/resolution	Character traits
Narrative structure					
Conflict/resolution					
Character traits					

Unit Abstract

In this unit, students use the writing process (collecting, drafting, revising, editing and publishing), as they learn to craft mysteries. Students learn how to generate ideas for their mysteries. They develop characters and their relationships, their history. Teach them to determine a reasonable mystery for their characters to solve and to plan a draft using a story-mountain.

Mentor texts are used to teach narrative structure: how narratives have a beginning, middle and end; how the narrative is structured as a connected series of scenes; how tension around the mystery builds up resulting in a climax and resolution; how writers use dialogue that pushes the story forward; how the setting plays an important role; how writers begin and end their pieces.

Students revise their pieces to foreshadow events and leave clues for the reader, to create red-herrings, to make sure their pieces make sense, and to make sure the mystery is solved in a way that takes the audience into account.

In their published work students show increasing control and knowledge of conventions.

Content Expectations

Students will:

- W.GN.08.01** write a cohesive narrative piece such as a personal narrative, adventure, tall tale, folktale, fantasy, or poetry that includes appropriate conventions to the genre, employing elements of characterization for major and minor characters; internal and/or external conflict; and issues of plot, theme, and imagery.
- W.PR.08.01** set a purpose, consider audience, and replicate authors' styles and patterns when writing a narrative or informational piece.
- W.PR.08.02** apply a variety of pre-writing strategies for both narrative (e.g., graphic organizers designed to develop a plot that includes major and minor characters, builds climax, and uses dialogue to enhance a theme) and informational writing (e.g., problem/solution or sequence).
- W.PR.08.03** revise drafts for clarity, coherence, and consistency in content, voice, and genre characteristics with audience and purpose in mind.
- W.PR.08.04** draft focused ideas for a specific purpose using multiple paragraphs, sentence variety, and voice to meet the needs of an audience (e.g., word choice, level of formality, and use of example) when writing compositions.
- W.PR.08.05** proofread and edit writing using grade-level checklists and other appropriate resources both individually and in groups.
- W.PS.08.01** exhibit personal style and voice to enhance the written message in both narrative (e.g., personification, humor, element of surprise) and informational writing (e.g., emotional appeal, strong opinion, credible support).
- W.GR.08.01** in the context of writing, correctly use style conventions (e.g., Modern Language

Association Handbook) and a variety of grammatical structures in writing including indefinite and predicate pronouns; transitive and intransitive verbs; adjective and adverbial phrases; adjective and adverbial subordinate clauses; comparative adverbs and adjectives; superlatives, conjunctions; compound sentences; appositives; independent and dependent clauses; introductory phrases; periods; commas; quotation marks; and use of underlining and italics for specific purposes.

W.SP.08.01 in the context of writing, correctly spell frequently encountered and frequently misspelled words.

W.HW.08.01 write neat and legible compositions.

W.AT.08.01 be enthusiastic about writing and learning to write.

Key Concepts

Character
Character traits and motivations
Clues
Conclusions
Conflict
Dialogue
Foreshadowing
Inner-thinking or “Thought-shots”
Leads
Mystery
Plot
Red-herrings
Resolution
Revision
Rising action
Setting
Story Mountain
Tension

Duration: