

In this unit, students will spend some time examining the genre of personal narratives.

What's the story?

Students will read different **personal narratives** and will work to **identify the elements** of this particular genre.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn elements like vivid **descriptive language**, **dialogue** that shows character, **defining traits**, and **figurative language**. They will learn to make meaning from these texts by reading them **critically** and **closely** to improve their **comprehension skills**.

Students will **write every day** in this unit. In examining the different elements found in personal narratives, they will build their knowledge of **descriptive writing**. They will also have opportunities to use these elements in their writing by **creating their own personal narratives**.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What is a personal narrative?
Follow up: What are three things that make an essay a personal narrative?
2. How would you define character traits?
Follow up: What is your favorite book or movie? Who is your favorite character in it? Describe the traits of that character. What evidence from the book or story supports your thinking? What do you think people would say are your character traits? What evidence would they have to support their thinking?
3. In this unit, you have been talking about sensory details. Look around us right now. Describe sensory details you are noticing in our home.
Follow up: What do you see around you? What do you hear? Smell? Taste? Feel?
4. What is dialogue?
Follow up: What are some of the rules for punctuating dialogue?
5. What is one of the memories you chose to write about in this unit?
Follow up: Why did you choose this memory? Share with me what you wrote about and how you incorporated some of the elements of personal narratives into your writing.

Welcome!

Grade 4, Unit 2

Empires in the Middle Ages,

Part 1

In the first part of this unit, students will learn about the Middle Ages in Europe and the Islamic Medieval Empires.

What's the story?

Students will explore these **two separate regions** and their medieval history and will **analyze** the **impact** they have had on the **modern world**.

What will my student learn?

Students will continue to build their **background knowledge** to help them **comprehend** the variety of complex texts they will be reading. They will also engage in **deep conversations** with their peers to further develop their understanding of the world around them.

Students will have numerous **writing** opportunities throughout this unit. They will **review the stages of the writing process** by taking notes on the information presented in their Reader. They will use this information to **form an opinion** and **draft a persuasive paragraph** in response to what they have read.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What is the Middle Ages?
Follow up: Why is it called that?
2. What do you think were some of the positive things about living in towns during the Middle Ages?
Follow up: What were some negative things?
3. You learned about the word *rival* (i.e., competing). Can you tell me what *rival* means by using it in a sentence?
Follow up: What is an antonym (opposite meaning) of *rival*? And a synonym (same meaning)?
4. How did an aspiring knight prepare for knighthood?
Follow up: What do you think would have been the hardest thing about the preparation?
5. What type of craftsmen existed in the Middle Ages?
Follow up: What type of craftsman would you have wanted to be?

Welcome!

Grade 4, Unit 2

Empires in the Middle Ages, Part 2

In the second part of this unit, students will continue to explore the Middle Ages in Europe and the Islamic medieval empires.

What's the story?

Students will learn more about these two separate regions and their **medieval history**. They will also study how they are related by a common past—the **decline of the Roman Empire**—and what is their **impact on the present**.

What will my student learn?

Students will expand their knowledge about the Middle Ages in Europe and the Islamic empires to better **understand the modern world**.

They will practice **taking notes** about the informational texts they read throughout the lessons. Students will also write an **informative**, an **explanatory**, and a **persuasive paragraph**. Finally, these lessons provide multiple opportunities for peer collaboration.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What is an empire?
Follow up: What are some of the names for rulers of an empire? Why did some people believe that the Roman Empire would last forever? What other empires are you learning about?
2. What was the Battle of Yarmouk?
Follow up: What was the tradition for the first day of battle? Was the outcome of the battle surprising? Why?
3. What are some of the elements of Islamic architecture that you studied?
Follow up: What is the significance of a dome in the architecture? What is calligraphy and how was it used in the architecture? What is one of the architectural masterpieces that you read about?
4. What events led to the First Crusade?
Follow up: Why did it take the Muslims by surprise? What sparked the Second Crusade?

In this unit, students will be given tools and strategies to approach poetry.

What's the story?

Students will explore the **methods** and **devices** used by **poets**, which will prepare them to **read** and **interpret** both **formal and free verse poems**. The poems they will read represent a wide variety of periods and can be enjoyed by younger and older readers alike.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn to read texts **closely** and **carefully**. Because poems are often multidimensional, students will have opportunities to let their imagination flourish, **explore figurative language**, and **expand** their **creativity**.

Students will use a **Poet's Journal**, which has been created to reinforce the unit's **integration of reading and writing poetry**. The poems and activity pages in this journal will allow students to **review** material, **answer** questions, and **complete activities** designed to increase their comprehension. Students will also use these pages to **compose original texts** and apply what they have learned throughout the unit.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What is alliteration?
Follow up: Can you give me an example of what it sounds like? What is the difference between repetition and alliteration?
2. What have you learned about the poet Harryette Mullen?
Follow up: Tell me about her poem "Ask Aden."
3. What is the difference between first person and third person?
Follow up: Can you give me an example of each?
4. What have you learned about Langston Hughes?
Follow up: What was the main theme of his poetry? What do you think was the meaning of the poem "Harlem"?
5. What is a metaphor?
Follow up: Can you share a metaphor you talked about in one of the poems you have read? Can you give me an example of a metaphor?
6. What are some strategies you have learned for reading poetry aloud successfully?
Follow up: What have you learned about poetry that has made it enjoyable to read and to write?

This unit offers a unique learning experience for students as they read a range of informational texts about inventors, inventions, and the process of creation.

What's the story?

Students will have the chance to ultimately become inventors themselves while they **analyze the world** around them, **identify problems**, and **create solutions** for those problems.

What will my student learn?

Students will become contestants of an exciting reality TV game show. As part of the show, they will **practice observation, communication, and persuasion** in fun and interactive ways.

Students will engage in **collaborative discussions** and will **share ideas** with their classmates. They will work in teams to **participate in activities** and **challenges** that will be guided by both the teacher and inventor-judges, such as Thomas Edison and George Washington Carver.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. Describe what an invention is.
Follow up: What are some examples of different kinds of inventions?
2. Tell me about Thomas Edison.
Follow up: What were some of his inventions? I know he patented over a thousand inventions in the United States. What does it mean to patent something?
3. Tell me about George Washington Carver.
Follow up: What challenges did he face as an inventor? What is one fact you learned about him that you find interesting?
4. Why did Ruth Wakefield feel like she needed to “clear up some untruths” about her invention?
Follow up: What is the real story? Why do you think there have been so many false versions of her story on the Internet?
5. What do you think was the most important invention you learned about?
Follow up: Why? How did the invention change things? How would our world be different if that invention never existed?

In this unit, students will learn about Earth's layers and geological features.

What's the story?

Students will learn that the earth is composed of **layers** that, through heat and pressure, cause movements that result in **geological features** above and below the earth's surface. They will also explore the relationships between those different **geological processes** and how they affect the **landscape** and related **environments** of the earth.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn about the theory of **plate tectonics** and how it explains the presence of **volcanoes, mountains, underwater trenches, ridges**, and other geological features. They will also study geological processes like **rock formation, weathering**, and **erosion** to understand how the earth changes over time and why it looks the way it does.

Students will review the stages of the writing process and engage in several **short writing projects**. They will have many opportunities to write, some of which include **drafting an informational pamphlet** about tsunamis, writing a **wiki entry** about a specific volcano, and creating a **descriptive paragraph** about a type of rock or item in the rock cycle.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. What similarities did geologists observe as they examined fossils on different continents?
Follow up: What similarities did geologists observe as they examined rock formations on different continents?
2. What are seismic waves?
Follow up: What did scientists learn from studying them? Where can seismic waves travel?
3. What are tectonic plates?
Follow up: What are some different ways tectonic plates can move?
4. What is the difference between an earthquake and an aftershock?
Follow up: What does a seismograph do?
5. What happens below the earth's surface to form a volcano?
Follow up: What happens above the earth's surface to form a volcano?

Contemporary Fiction with excerpts from *The House on Mango Street*

This unit is centered around excerpts from the novel *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros.

What's the story?

The lessons build on each other throughout the unit to help students explore the text with **multiple readings, uncovering the rich and lyrical language** used throughout the story.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn to be slow, **careful readers** who can peel back many **layers of meaning** in a text. They will dig deeper and discover new meaning as they **read excerpts** from the novel.

Students will move flexibly between **reading** and **writing**. They will engage in lessons that teach them to take what they have learned in their reading and **apply that understanding to their writing**.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. At this point in your reading, what do you know about the main character? What haven't you learned about the main character yet?
2. Why do you think the author waited to reveal the name of the narrator of the story?
Follow up: Once her name was revealed, how do you think she feels about her name? Why? What would she rather be called?
3. You have been learning about themes in your reading. What is a theme? What is a theme that you have explored in *The House on Mango Street*?
4. You have been discussing character aspirations in this unit. What are some of Esperanza's aspirations? What are some of her mother's aspirations?
Follow up: Why do you think Esperanza had these aspirations? Did her mother achieve her aspirations? Why not? What are some of your aspirations? What are some things you will need to do to achieve those?
5. What are some of the types of figurative language you have learned about?
Follow up: Can you give me some examples of those types of figurative language you have seen in your reading?

In this unit, students will focus on what caused the thirteen North American colonies to break away and become an independent nation.

What's the story?

Students will learn that **disagreements** about **principles of government** led colonists in North America to seek **independence from Great Britain**.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn about the **important events** and **people** that led to the colonists' decision to **declare independence** from the **British government**. They will also read two literary selections from that time period.

Students will **review** the stages of the **writing process** and will engage in a variety of **writing activities**, such as recording key information from what they are reading about the American Revolution. These activities will prepare them to **write** a five-paragraph **cause-and-effect essay** focused on what they have learned.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. Why did the British government tax the colonists?
Follow up: Why did that make the colonists angry?
2. Who were the Sons of Liberty?
Follow up: What form of protest did they lead in Boston Harbor? How was this act of protest named?
3. In what ways was Samuel Adams different from other political leaders of the time?
4. What does the Declaration of Independence outline?
Follow up: Who wrote it and who reviewed it? What do you think was meant by "the pursuit of happiness"?
5. At the beginning of the war between the British and the colonists, who seemed more likely to win the war? Why?
Follow up: What was the morale of the army when George Washington wrote to the Continental Congress? What did you read that makes you think that?
6. What event happened that signified that the Continental Army had won the Revolutionary War?
Follow up: What was signed declaring that the colonists had won their independence?

In this unit, students will explore the genre of fiction through a classic novel, *Treasure Island*.

What's the story?

Students will read an **abridged version** of *Treasure Island*. This novel chronicles the adventures of the young narrator, Jim Hawkins, who discovers a treasure map when an old pirate stays at his family's inn.

What will my student learn?

Students will focus on **character development**, **setting**, and **plot** as well as **literary devices**. They will also discover other **relevant aspects** of the text, such as **geography**, **pirates**, and **sailing**.

In this unit, students will continue to practice the various stages of the **writing process**. They will **write and publish** an original **adventure story**, incorporating **character development and dialogue**.

Conversation starters

Ask your student questions about the unit to promote discussion and continued learning:

1. Who are some of the important characters you have been introduced to in *Treasure Island* so far?

Follow up: Can you describe some of the key details you have learned about them?

2. Describe the setting of the story.

Follow up: What kind of setting are you thinking of for the adventure story you are going to write? How is it similar to or different from the setting in the story you are reading?

3. What significant events have happened in the story so far?

4. You have learned about the word *stun* in this unit. What does it mean?

Follow up: How is it used in the story? Can you use it in a sentence? What is a synonym for that word? And an antonym?

5. What is a simile?

Follow up: Can you give me an example of a simile from your Student Reader?

6. You have been learning about conflict as a literary device used by authors. Can you give me an example of conflict in *Treasure Island*?

Follow up: Why do you think the author chose to use it in that part of the story? How might you incorporate this literary device in your story?