

In this unit, students will have the opportunity to explore the genre of personal narratives.

What's the story?

Students will read a variety of **personal narratives** and they will focus on identifying the **unique elements** of this genre.

What will my student learn?

Students will build their knowledge of **descriptive writing** and will put that knowledge to use in their own writing. They will examine and use those features of personal narrative writing to **compose** works about their **own lives and experiences**.

This unit will help students discover that they are **capable of personal writing** and that it can be a **fun and creative** way to share what they have to say about themselves. This unit provides a **supportive** environment for them to begin to **identify themselves as writers**.

Conversation starters

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

1. What has been your favorite personal narrative from this unit?
Follow up: Why? Could you relate to the person in the story? Why?
2. What is a personal narrative?
Follow up: How is it different from other genres of writing that you have learned about? What are some of the elements of personal narratives that stand out to you?
3. How can the use of strong verbs and adjectives impact your writing?
Follow up: What are some strong verbs you could use instead of the word *said* to really make an impact?
4. What is personification?
Follow up: Consider this example: "The ice cream in the freezer was calling my name." What is the nonhuman thing? What human action does it have? Can you personify a vacuum? A car? Your pet? Give me an example.
5. In this unit, you read a personal narrative by Rosa Parks. What did you know about her before you read it?
Follow up: What new things did you learn about her? How was her school different from yours? How was it similar? Can you talk about her experience based on her point of view? And from her teachers' point of view?

6. What is tone?

Follow up: Can you tell me about our weather today using a scientific tone? Now try doing it in a sarcastic, a passionate, and an optimistic tone.

In this unit, students will learn how large civilizations, such as the Maya, Aztec, and Inca, developed in the Americas before the arrival of Europeans.

What's the story?

Students will explore the **geography, climate, innovations, discoveries**, and overall **history** of each of these civilizations.

What will my student learn?

Students will be exposed to a variety of **complex texts**. They will learn about the way of life of the **Maya, Aztec, and Inca**, and will read **myths** from these ancient civilizations.

Students will integrate what they have learned about the civilizations as they review the **stages in the writing process** and engage in an **informative writing piece**. They will also **collaborate** with their classmates and **share** their **ideas** as they develop and deepen their understanding of these literacy skills.

Conversation starters

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

1. Why did so many civilizations start around rivers?
2. How did the Maya use the plants and animals in the rain forest?
3. Can you tell me about the different types of education that boys of different social classes in the Aztec Empire received?

Follow up: What did each type of education prepare them to do?

4. Can you compare and contrast the Maya and the Aztec civilizations?

Follow up: What was the same about them? What was different?

5. What were some of the things the Inca did to create a network of roads?

Follow up: Why was it so important for them to have this network?

In this unit, students will learn the tools and strategies needed 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**. Students will also have many opportunities to practice what they have learned by **creating their own poems**.

What will my student learn?

Students will use a **Poet's Journal** that contains activity pages tied to each instructional lesson. The poems for each lesson are printed in the journal, and the activity pages allow students to **review material, answer questions, complete comprehension activities**, and **compose poems** themselves.

In their writing lessons, students will work either independently or collaboratively to **create original poems** that model the structure and style of the poems they studied in each lesson.

Conversation starters

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

1. What is an apostrophe poem?
Follow up: Tell me about the apostrophe poem you wrote or heard a classmate share.
2. You have been learning about tone. What is tone?
Follow up: What are some different kinds of tone? Can you give me an example?
3. What have you learned about the poet Walt Whitman?
Follow up: Tell me about his poem "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer."
4. What is anaphora?
Follow up: Why do poets use anaphora?
5. Who was your favorite poet, or what was your favorite poem from this unit?
Follow up: Why? What new things did you learn about poetry?

In this unit, students will explore the fiction genre through a classic novel, *Don Quixote*.

What's the story?

This unit exposes students to the **timeless aspects** of this classic work, such as the relationship between **Don Quixote** and his sidekick, **Sancho Panza**.

What will my student learn?

Students will trace the **development** of **plot**, **characters**, and **literary elements** over the course of the novel. They will also read excerpts from an adapted version of *Adventures of Don Quixote*, which will enable them to **compare and contrast** the two texts used in the unit.

The **writing lessons** provide multiple opportunities for **peer collaboration**. Students will regularly engage in **written responses** to the texts they are reading and will work on **writing a persuasive essay**.

Conversation starters

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

1. What are the differences between knights and soldiers?
Follow up: Why might someone want to become a knight? Why might someone want to become a soldier? Which would you rather be?
2. What are some of Don Quixote's character traits?
Follow up: Can you give me some examples of when he displayed those traits?
3. Tell me some facts you have gathered through your reading about Don Quixote.
Follow up: What are some opinions that you have about Don Quixote?
4. How are Don Quixote and Sancho Panza similar to one another?
Follow up: How are they different from one another? What are some of Sancho Panza's character traits?
5. You learned about the word *ironic* (or *irony*). What does it mean?
Follow up: What did you learn about verbal irony? What did you learn about situational irony? Can you give me some examples?
6. What were some of the adventures that Don Quixote and Sancho Panza experienced together?

In this unit, students will learn about the Renaissance and how it was a cultural movement that began in Italy and swept through Europe.

What's the story?

Students will explore the **art** and **literature** of this time period through the works of people such as **Leonardo da Vinci**, **Michelangelo**, and **Shakespeare**.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn about the **rise of the middle class** that resulted from increased trade with other countries. They will be exposed to **works of art** and **pieces of writing** from renowned artists and authors. Students will use **maps** and a **portrait gallery** as a resource throughout the unit.

Students will also participate in a **writing project**. They will **research** a famous Renaissance artist and **compose a biography** of that figure.

Conversation starters

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

1. Describe for me what life was like in a town in the Middle Ages.
2. How did trade positively affect life in the Middle Ages?
Follow up: How did it negatively affect it?
3. What were some of the new techniques used by Renaissance artists?
Follow up: Why is perspective an important concept for painters?
4. You learned about the word *reluctantly*. What does it mean? (unwillingly or unenthusiastically) When have you been reluctant to do something?
Follow up: What part of speech is the word *reluctantly*? (adverb) What is an antonym (or a word that means the opposite) of *reluctantly*?
5. Who was your favorite artist or author that you learned about?
Follow up: What are they most famous for? Why are they your favorite?

In this unit, students will expand their background knowledge of the time of the Reformation.

What's the story?

Students will gain a better understanding of the **religious and political upheaval** that shifted the power in Europe from the Church to the state.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn about great **scientific advances** that were made during this period. They will read about how the **invention** of an efficient **printing press** helped fuel the **Reformation movement**.

Students will have many opportunities to **write** in this unit. They will **craft a friendly letter** as well as plan and create a **slide presentation** using a similar writing process to an informative essay.

Conversation starters

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

1. Why was the Church such an important part of people's lives in the Middle Ages?
2. Why did only privileged families have books in their homes?
Follow up: How were books made in the Middle Ages? Why were most books printed in Latin?
3. Why was the invention of the printing press so important?
Follow up: What do Gutenberg's printing press and the Internet have in common?
4. What is the relationship between religious reform and political reform in Europe during the Reformation?
5. You learned about the word *self-disciplined*. What does it mean?
Follow up: Can you use it in a sentence? I will use it in a sentence too! What is something you wish you were more self-disciplined with? What part of speech is that word?
6. What did Galileo's invention of the telescope do?
Follow up: What did he discover? Who did his findings contradict?

William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

In this unit, students will explore Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as both literature and a living text for interpretation and performance.

What's the story?

Students will have a unique learning experience as this unit has been written as a **Quest**. Over the course of this Quest, students will **read, write, act, direct, design, and watch** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

What will my student learn?

Students will be asked to think about scenes from this play through the frames of **character action and character traits**, all while exploring Shakespeare's **brilliant language**. By the end of this unit, students will know the **story and major characters** of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. They will also be able to explain how Shakespeare was and is performed, and will have a strong set of tools to **understand Shakespeare's plays**.

Students will **write from the perspective of the characters or artists** working on a production of the play. These writing assignments encourage them to **support their thoughts** with evidence from the text and to **express their creative ideas** clearly. Throughout this unit, students will also have several **performance opportunities**, bringing the entire learning experience to life.

Conversation starters

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

1. Who are some of the characters you have been introduced to in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*?
Follow up: Which ones stand out to you the most? Why? How would you describe them?
2. What have you learned about Shakespeare's language?
Follow up: What is the hardest part about it in your opinion? What are you starting to understand about Shakespeare's language? Why do you think he sometimes leaves out words?
3. What is onomatopoeia?
Follow up: Can you give me some examples?

4. How did some of the characters change over the course of the play?

Follow up: Why do you think they did? Who changed the most?

5. Tell me what you have learned about a monologue.

Follow up: What about dialogue? How is a soliloquy related to a monologue?

In this unit, students will learn how Native Americans were intricately and intimately connected to their landscape and how the policies of the government and the contact with others affected Native American cultures.

What's the story?

Students will be introduced to different **Native American tribes** and will explore the **similarities among tribes** and the pride each of them had of their own **unique identity and culture**. They will also read **myths** and **tales** from specific tribes.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn about the **policies** of the U.S. government in the 1800s and that the **contact with settlers, missionaries, traders, and explorers** affected Native American cultures and their relationships with the land.

Through **writing** lessons, students will continue to **practice** the **various stages** of the **writing process**. They will focus on taking notes, incorporating evidence, and crafting an argument as they write a **persuasive essay**.

Conversation starters

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

1. What was life like for Native Americans before the Europeans arrived?
Follow up: How did European exploration and settlement change the way Native Americans lived?
2. How were some tribes of the Plains and surrounding regions similar to one another?
Follow up: How were they different?
3. What were some important parts of the culture and lifestyle of Native American tribes in California?
Follow up: Tell me more about the canoes they built and used.
4. What was available to the Pacific Northwest tribes that allowed them to thrive in that area?
Follow up: How did they supplement their diet when salmon was not available?
5. How did things change for Native Americans during the westward expansion of the United States?

In this unit, students will be introduced to the concepts of matter, physical and chemical changes, and elements and compounds.

What's the story?

Students will explore how **matter** can be **transformed by physical and chemical changes**, resulting in the extraordinary diversity of our physical world. The unit is written as a **detective story** rather than as a standard informational text, combining literary and informational characteristics into a single text.

What will my student learn?

Students will learn concepts about **matter and its different states**. They will also learn about **physical and chemical reactions and changes, elements, and compounds**. These concepts are introduced gradually through the context of the protagonist's experiences, teaching students **practical examples** of these ideas.

Students will look beyond their Reader to **additional sources** to better understand the concepts introduced. They will also have the opportunity to integrate skills learned, such as how to **read and analyze** informational and literary texts, how to use information to **explain concepts and ideas**, and how to **write for different audiences and purposes**.

Conversation starters

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

1. What are the three states of water? What can cause water to change in state?
Follow up: What does all matter have in common?
2. Why are all compounds molecules, but all molecules are not compounds?
Follow up: Can you give me some examples of compounds? What about molecules?
3. You have learned that matter can move between different states. How does that help you understand fossil creation?
Follow up: What are the different physical properties of a fossil?
4. What is a mixture? What is a solution? And a compound?
Follow up: Can you give me an example of each? What do they have in common? What is different about them?
5. What is the difference between a physical and a chemical reaction?
Follow up: How do they impact chemical composition? How do they impact the physical properties of matter? What about heat or light? Are physical and chemical changes reversible?