

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

Immersion Unit—Grades 3-6	
<p>Timeframe: 2-3 weeks to set up routines. While setting up routines, choose from the menu on the following pages in order to lay the foundation for the Narrative Writing Unit.</p>	
<p>Concept: Writers need to develop their identities. Writers need to have fun with the idea of writing. Writers need to pay attention to the things around them in the world.</p>	
<p>Student Action: Writers learn the rules of writing workshop through establishing daily routines. Writers experiment with writing in order to get excited about it.</p>	
<p>Opening Routines/Behaviors to Establish a Strong Foundation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Signal for students to meet for Writing Workshop (lights flickering, clapping, counting down, etc.) ○ What students need to have for Writing Workshop (notebook, writing utensil, etc.) ○ Active Listening—What does it look like? Explicitly model ○ Explaining structure—I do, we do, you do ○ Conferencing individually or in small groups (What does it look like? What does it sound like?) Explain the teacher’s job and the student’s job explicitly ○ How to get a teacher’s attention for a conference ○ Keeping track of materials ○ Stamina—building it and why it is important (How are we going to work up to 30 minutes?) Set a timer and trying to beat your time ○ What to do when you are done? (Once you are done, you have only just begun—know how to manage starting a new piece of writing, if necessary) ○ What to do if you need help—example: three before me (students ask three students before asking the teacher) ○ Partner Routines (see below) ○ Conversations in writing workshop: Productive talk (partners), voice level, silent writing time (suggested to start with silent writing time) ○ How to get started independently (reread your work from previous day) ○ How to use a word wall and other resources (if this applies to your style and what you have in your classroom)
<p>Partnership Routines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model how to give positive feedback by teacher explicitly modeling with the whole group over and over (share samples on projector) ○ Using an editing checklist (how-to look at a product through one revise/edit bullet on the list at a time) ○ Appropriate times to meet with your partner ○ Where and why to meet with your partner

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

Conventions to revisit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ What is a complete sentence?○ Subjects/Predicates○ Adjectives○ Adverbs○ Expanding Sentences to include adjectives and adverbs○ Review necessary punctuation appropriate for your grade level
Focus Mini Lessons which will build necessary background knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Sensory Detail○ Snapshots○ Thoughtshots○ Dialogue○ Leads○ Similes/Metaphors (as appropriate to grade level)

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

Digging for Details

1. After discussing with students how writers make things come alive with their descriptions, pull out an interesting article of clothing. Tell the students that the more they describe it, the more it will come alive. As you pass it around, write their descriptions on the board.
2. Read through their details, which are usually fairly general like “black” and “smells weird.” Next, ask them to close their eyes. As you reread their list from the board, they should try to picture the article of clothing. Tell them to open their eyes and compare the list to what they pictured. Most will agree the two did not exactly match up.
3. Give them another chance to turn the knob on their binoculars and get specific. Fill the board with their fresher ideas and if they get stuck, go back to the first list and ask, What is weird about it? OR It smells musty like what?
4. Tell the students someone has walked into their story wearing this article of clothing. Using the new details on the board, write a description of this person.

Sensory Detail

Learning to use all our senses can be a great way to dig for the kind of details that makes writing come alive. Put a place you want to write about at the top of the page and use your five senses to describe this place. For example:

Come to the cafeteria

See the children eating at the long tables

Hear the explosion of voices

Touch the cold, wiggly jello

Smell the delicious aroma of pizza fresh out of the oven

Taste the cold chocolate milk as it slides down your throat

Field Trip to the Lunchroom

Take the students down to the lunch room with a clipboard. Ask them to observe and gather as many sensory details as they can. Come back to the classroom and write a short description of what they observed. Encourage them to engage as many senses as possible.

Show, Don't Tell

Writing gets better the more we can zoom in on specific concrete details to make powerful feelings come alive. Don't write about how bad your day was at school. Describe the inky pen stain on your pants, the scab forming on your grass stained knee, the smashed peanut butter sandwich which was supposed to be your lunch and the crumpled math test in your back pocket. Share examples of this in literature. After

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

looking at examples, ask students to rewrite one of the “telling” sentences below and turn it into a “showing” paragraph in their writer’s notebook.

1. Brian was scared to go on the roller coaster.
2. Amber couldn’t believe all of the gifts she found under her tree!
3. Jack was very upset when he lost the game.

The Magic Camera (Snapshots)

Begin by explaining to students that writers have a magic camera that they can point at the world and create snapshots that contain smells and sounds as well as a physical description. Share examples from literature and discuss why a writer like Laura Ingalls Wilder doesn’t just write, “Ma put the kids to bed and did some sewing till they fell asleep.” But instead writes, “Ma kissed them both, and tucked the covers in around them. They lay there awhile, looking at Ma’s smooth, parted hair and her hands busy with sewing in the lamplight. Her needle made little clicking sounds against her thimble and then the thread went softly, swish through the pretty calico that Pa had traded furs for. Ask students what details really made this writing come alive for them.

After sharing several samples from mentor texts, ask students to hunt through their own books looking for examples of snapshots. Favorite samples could be displayed on a classroom chart for students to reference when writing their own.

Mystery Person

Ask students to choose a student in the room and write a snapshot of that person. They should not reveal their name. When everyone is finished, the teacher will read the snapshots and let the students guess who is being described.

Thoughtshots

There is also a time in writing to go inside the thoughts of a character and tell how they feel, what they are thinking, dreaming and imagining. Writers use thoughtshots to make their characters more interesting and believable. Sometimes authors use italics to let the reader know the character is thinking.

Types of Thoughtshots:

Flashback: A character thinks back about something that has already happened.

Flash-Ahead: A character thinks about something that is going to happen or might happen in the future.

Internal Dialogue: A character thinks about what is happening at that moment in the story.

Share thoughtshot examples from literature and identify each thoughtshot as a flashback, flash-ahead or internal dialogue. Thundercake, by Patricia Polacco has an example of each.

Flashback Thoughtshot: *The sound used to scare me when I was little. I loved to go to Grandma’s house. Babushka, as I used to call my grandma, had come from Russia years before. I feared Michigan’s summer storms. I feared the sound of thunder more than anything. I always hid under the bed when the storm moved near the farmhouse.*

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

Flash-Ahead Thoughtshot: *Eggs from mean old Nellie Peck Hen. I was scared. I knew she would try to peck me.*

Internal Dialogue Thoughtshot: *I was scared as we walked down the path from the farmhouse through Tangleweed Woods to the dry shed. Suddenly, lightning split the sky.*

Once students are familiar with the concept, arrange students in pairs or small groups with a book from the suggested mentor text list. Students will read together and identify and record the type of thoughtshots from the story. Each group can then share one thoughtshot and the other groups can try to identify the type of thoughtshot that was presented.

Next, have students practice writing original thoughtshots. They will need to have a first draft of an original work that contains at least one human character. Students will revise to add a thoughtshot to their writing and identify it as internal dialogue, flashback or flash-ahead.

Mentor Text List

Sylvester and Magic Pebble by William Steig

Jumanji by Chris VanAllsburg

Miss Spider's Tea Party by David Kirk

A Chair for My Mother by Vera Williams

The Relatives Came by Cynthia Rylant

Thank You, Mr. Falker by Patricia Polacco

Verdi by Janell Cannon

The Old Woman Who Named Things by Cynthia Rylant

Appelmando's Dreams by Patricia Polacco

Dialogue

Students love to use dialogue in their stories but often do not follow the rules for writing dialogue. A good way to get them familiar with the rules is to simply have them take out a fiction book they are reading for enjoyment. Have them go on a hunt through the book to discover the rules writer's follow when writing dialogue. As they notice patterns, write them on a class chart. It is a good idea to include an example to follow each rule. Using students' names in the examples can help keep their attention. Students can also keep a list of the rules in their writer's notebook. Once they discover the basics of dialogue, they will need lots of practice writing their own.

The Famous Dinner Table

Each student in your class will be having a dinner party and may invite four guests for this writing activity. The guests must be famous and they may be from the past or present. Ideas include celebrities, professional athletes, politicians, authors, singers, etc. Students will write the dialogue that takes place between their characters being careful to follow the rules for writing dialogue.

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

Comic Dialogue

Ask students to clip comics from the newspaper and bring them to school. Blackout the dialogue between the characters and let the students write new dialogue to go with each cartoon frame on a separate piece of paper. Remind them to follow the rules for writing dialogue.

Lead Posters

The following posters are a great resource for teaching leads in narrative writing. Beth Newingham has made them available to inspire students to hook their reader. Discuss each type and example. Post them in the classroom and refer to them to identify types of leads in the literature read aloud in class. Encourage students to try different types of leads in their own writing.

Teaching Leads with Mentor Text

Gather enough quality novels with a variety of captivating leads at appropriate reading levels for your class. Pairs of students choose a book and read the beginning together. Ask students to discuss the following questions:

1. Does it grab your attention?
2. Does it make you want to keep reading?

Begin a class list of mentor text leads. Identify from the posters the type of lead along with the author and book title. **Note: Many leads fit more than one category or may require a new category altogether.** Once students have created a master list of examples...title, author and lead, make copies for the class to keep in their writer's notebook.

Similes and Metaphors

Choose your favorite book that has similes and metaphors. Read and discuss with students that a simile compares two unlike things using the words like or as, while metaphors compare without using like or as. Give students a piece of construction paper and fold so they have eight sections. In the first section, write the words similes and metaphors and decorate that box. In the remaining spaces, students can write a simile or metaphor and illustrate. Although the following books were written specifically for teaching similes, many 'regular' children's books use similes and also can be great resources.

My School's a Zoo! by Stu Smith

My Best Friend is as Sharp as a Pencil by Hanoch Piven

My Dog is as Smelly as Dirty Socks by Hanoch Piven

Crazy Like a Fox by Loreen Leedy

Muddy As a Duck Puddle and Other American Similes by Laurie Lawlor

Skin Like Milk, Hair of Silk What Are Similes and Metaphors? by Brian P. Cleary

ACTIVITIES MENU FOR IMMERSION UNIT GRADES 3-6

Teaching Similes with Geronimo Stilton

Point out the following sentences as examples of similes in the Geronimo Stilton book Lost Treasure of the Emerald Eye:

Page 67 “The sea flowed beneath us like an emerald-green carpet.”

Page 48 “The waves were throwing me up and down like a rag doll in a clothes dryer.”

Discuss how similes make the sentences descriptive and interesting to read. Have students find other examples of similes in Geronimo Stilton or other books of their choice. Record them on a class chart. Have students go back to their own writing and find a place to compare two unlike things using similes and revise.

Picture Similes

Cut out pictures from magazines that show objects or living things that might inspire students to write comparisons using similes or metaphors. Students can work in pairs or alone to write original similes or metaphors to go with the pictures.

Similes That Make Us Smile

Tape four pictures to the board or do a quick sketch. Ask students to name each item and think of words to describe each one.

Mouse-small, quiet...**like a**

Sun-hot, bright like...**like a**

Explain that similes use like or as to compare two things. Using the examples from the board, write similes about each item using the students' suggested describing words. After doing a couple examples together, have students write a sentence using a simile that describes themselves and draw a picture of that situation. This can be done using metaphors as well.

Simile Poem

My animal is a _____.

Its color is _____ like _____.

Its fur/skin is _____ like _____.

It moves like a _____.

Its tail is like _____.

Its eyes are _____ like _____.

Its body is like _____.

Its ears are _____ like _____.

Its legs are _____ like _____.

It sounds like _____.