

Lucy Calkins: Literary Essays

Texts:

Whole Group Classroom Short Texts for Modeling: (writing inside the story, close reading, characters, conversational prompts, provocative ideas, thesis, framing essay, stories as evidence, summaries, lists, craftsmanship, polishing)

Spaghetti by Cynthia Rylant (referenced in Units of Study Lessons)

Boar Out There by Cynthia Rylant (referenced in Units of Study Lessons)

The Marble Champ by Gary Soto (referenced in Units of Study Lessons)

Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting

Birthday Box by Jane Yolen

Additional Mentor Texts for mini lessons and student choices

Everything will be Okay by James Howe

Peter's Chair by Ezra Jack Keats

Slower than the Rest by Cynthia Rylant

All Ball by Mary Pope Osborne

Growing Up from Baseball in April by Gary Soto

Shells by Cynthia Rylant

The Bobsledder's Jacket from Chicken Soup for the Kid's Soul

Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

Fly Away Home by Eve Bunting

Charlotte's Web by E.B. White

Things by Eloise Greenfield

The Other Side *

"Slower Than The Rest" *

"My Side of the Story" *

Four Feet, Two Sandals

The Wednesday Surprise

A Chair for My Mother

Chrysanthemum

The Paper Bag Princess

"The Meanest Thing to Say"

La Mariposa

Uncle Peter's Amazing Chinese Wedding

“Spaghetti”

by Cynthia Rylant

It was evening and people sat outside, talking quietly among themselves. On the stoop of a tall building of crumbling bricks and rotting wood sat a boy. His name was Gabriel and he wished for some company.

Gabriel was thinking about things. He remembered being the only boy in class with the right answer that day, and he remembered the butter sandwich he had had for lunch. Gabriel was thinking that he would like to live outside all the time. He imagined himself carrying a pack of food and a few tools and a heavy cloth to erect a hasty tent. Gabriel saw himself sleeping among coyotes. But next he saw himself sleeping beneath the glittering lights of a movie theater, near the bus stop.

Gabriel was a boy who thought about things so seriously, so fully, that on this evening he nearly missed hearing the cry from the street. The cry was so weak and faraway in his mind that, for him, it could have been the slow lifting of a stubborn window. It could have been the creak of an old man’s legs. It could have been the wind.

But it was not the wind, and it came to Gabriel slowly that he did, indeed, hear something, and that it did, indeed, sound like a cry from the street.

Gabriel picked himself up from the stoop and began to walk carefully along the edge of the street, peering into the gloom and the dusk. The cry came again and Gabriel’s ears tingled and he walked faster. He stared into the street, up and down it, knowing something was there. The street was so gray that he could not see . . . But not only the street was gray.

There, sitting on skinny stick-legs, wobbling to and fro, was a tiny gray kitten. No cars had passed to frighten it, and so it just sat in the street and cried its windy, creaky cry and waited.

Gabriel was amazed. He had never imagined he would be lucky enough one day to find a kitten. He walked into the street and lifted the kitten into his hands.

Gabriel sat on the sidewalk with the kitten next to his cheek and thought. The kitten smelled of pasta noodles, and he wondered if it belonged to a friendly Italian man somewhere in the city. Gabriel called the kitten Spaghetti.

Gabriel and Spaghetti returned to the stoop. It occurred to Gabriel to walk the neighborhood and look for the Italian man, but the purring was so loud, so near his ear, that he could not think as seriously, as fully, as before.

Gabriel no longer wanted to live outside. He knew he had a room and a bed of his own in the tall building. So he stood up, with Spaghetti under his chin, and went inside to show his kitten where they would live together.

The Marble Champ

Lupe Medrano, a shy girl who spoke in whispers, was the school's spelling bee champion, winner of the reading contest at the public library three summers in a row, blue ribbon awardee in the science fair, the top student at her piano recital, and the playground grand champion in chess. She was a straight-A student and—not counting kindergarten, when she had been stung by a wasp—never missed one day of elementary school. She had received a small trophy for this honor and had been congratulated by the mayor.

But though Lupe had a razor-sharp mind, she could not make her body, no matter how much she tried, run as fast as the other girls'. She begged her body to move faster, but could never beat anyone in the fifty-yard dash.

The truth was that Lupe was no good in sports. She could not catch a pop-up or figure out in which direction to kick the soccer ball. One time she kicked the ball at her own goal and scored a point for the other team. She was no good at baseball or basketball either, and even had a hard time making a hula hoop stay on her hips.

It wasn't until last year, when she was eleven years old, that she learned how to ride a bike. And even then she had to use training wheels. She could walk in the swimming pool but couldn't swim, and chanced roller skating only when her father held her hand.

"I'll never be good at sports," she fumed one rainy day as she lay on her bed gazing at the shelf her father had made to hold her awards. "I wish I could win something, anything, even marbles."

At the word "marbles," she sat up. "That's it. Maybe I could be good at playing marbles." She hopped out of bed and rummaged through the closet until she found a can full of her brother's marbles. She poured the rich glass treasure on her bed and picked five of the most beautiful marbles.

She smoothed her bedspread and practiced shooting, softly at first so that her aim would be accurate. The marble rolled from her thumb and clicked against the targeted marble. But the target wouldn't budge. She tried again and again. Her aim became accurate, but the power from her thumb made the marble move only an inch or two. Then she realized that the bedspread was slowing the marbles. She also had to admit that her thumb was weaker than the neck of a newborn chick.

She looked out the window. The rain was letting up, but the ground was too muddy to play. She sat cross-legged on the bed, rolling her five marbles between her palms. Yes, she thought, I could play marbles, and marbles is a sport. At that moment she realized that she had only two weeks to practice. The playground championship, the same one her brother had entered the previous year, was coming up. She had a lot to do.

To strengthen her wrists, she decided to do twenty push-ups on her fingertips, five at a time. “One, two, three . . .” she groaned. By the end of the first set she was breathing hard, and her muscles burned from exhaustion. She did one more set and decided that was enough push-ups for the first day.

She squeezed a rubber eraser one hundred times, hoping it would strengthen her thumb. This seemed to work because the next day her thumb was sore. She could hardly hold a marble in her hand, let alone send it flying with power. So Lupe rested that day and listened to her brother, who gave her tips on how to shoot: get low, aim with one eye, and place one knuckle on the ground.

“Think ‘eye and thumb’—and let it rip!” he said.

After school the next day she left her homework in her backpack and practiced three hours straight, taking time only to eat a candy bar for energy. With a popsicle stick, she drew an odd-shaped circle and tossed in four marbles. She used her shooter, a milky agate with hypnotic swirls, to blast them. Her thumb *had* become stronger.

After practice, she squeezed the eraser for an hour. She ate dinner with her left hand to spare her shooting hand and said nothing to her parents about her dreams of athletic glory.

Practice, practice, practice. Squeeze, squeeze, squeeze. Lupe got better and beat her brother and Alfonso, a neighbor kid who was supposed to be a champ.

“Man, she’s bad!” Alfonso said. “She can beat the other girls for sure. I think.” The weeks passed quickly. Lupe worked so hard that one day, while she was drying dishes, her mother asked why her thumb was swollen.

“It’s muscle,” Lupe explained. “I’ve been practicing for the marbles championship.”

“You, honey?” Her mother knew Lupe was no good at sports.

“Yeah. I beat Alfonso, and he’s pretty good.”

That night, over dinner, Mrs. Medrano said, “Honey, you should see Lupe’s thumb.”

“Huh?” Mr. Medrano said, wiping his mouth and looking at his daughter.

“Show your father.”

“Do I have to?” an embarrassed Lupe asked.

“Go on, show your father.”

Reluctantly, Lupe raised her hand and flexed her thumb. You could see the muscle.

The father put down his fork and asked, "What happened?"

"Dad, I've been working out. I've been squeezing an eraser."

"Why?"

"I'm going to enter the marbles championship."

Her father looked at her mother and then back at his daughter. "When is it, honey?"

"This Saturday. Can you come?"

The father had been planning to play racquetball with a friend Saturday, but he said he would be there. He knew his daughter thought she was no good at sports and he wanted to encourage her. He even rigged some lights in the backyard so she could practice after dark. He squatted with one knee on the ground, entranced by the sight of his daughter easily beating her brother.

The day of the championship began with a cold blustery sky. The sun was a silvery light behind slate clouds.

"I hope it clears up," her father said, rubbing his hands together as he returned from getting the newspaper. They ate breakfast, paced nervously around the house waiting for 10:00 to arrive, and walked the two blocks to the playground (though Mr. Medrano wanted to drive so Lupe wouldn't get tired). She signed up and was assigned her first match on baseball diamond number three.

Lupe, walking between her brother and her father, shook from the cold, not nerves. She took off her mittens, and everyone stared at her thumb. Someone asked, "How can you play with a broken thumb?" Lupe smiled and said nothing.

She beat her first opponent easily, and felt sorry for the girl because she didn't have anyone to cheer for her. Except for her sack of marbles, she was all alone. Lupe invited the girl, whose name was Rachel, to stay with them. She smiled and said, "OK." The four of them walked to a card table in the middle of the outfield, where Lupe was assigned another opponent.

She also beat this girl, a fifth-grader named Yolanda, and asked her to join their group. They proceeded to more matches and more wins, and soon there was a crowd of people following Lupe to the finals to play a girl in a baseball cap. This girl seemed dead serious. She never even looked at Lupe.

“I don’t know, Dad, she looks tough.”

Rachel hugged Lupe and said, “Go get her.”

“You can do it,” her father encouraged. “Just think of the marbles, not the girl, and let your thumb do the work.”

The other girl broke first and earned one marble. She missed her next shot, and Lupe, one eye closed, her thumb quivering with energy, blasted two marbles out of the circle but missed her next shot. Her opponent earned two more before missing. She stamped her foot and said “Shoot!” The score was three to two in favor of Miss Baseball Cap.

The referee stopped the game. “Back up, please, give them room,” he shouted. Onlookers had gathered too tightly around the players.

Lupe then earned three marbles and was set to get her fourth when a gust of wind blew dust in her eyes and she missed badly. Her opponent quickly scored two marbles, tying the game, and moved ahead six to five on a lucky shot. Then she missed, and Lupe, whose eyes felt scratchy when she blinked, relied on instinct and thumb muscle to score the tying point. It was now six to six, with only three marbles left. Lupe blew her nose and studied the angles. She dropped to one knee, steadied her hand, and shot so hard she cracked two marbles from the circle. She was the winner!

“I did it!” Lupe said under her breath. She rose from her knees, which hurt from bending all day, and hugged her father. He hugged her back and smiled.

Everyone clapped, except Miss Baseball Cap, who made a face and stared at the ground. Lupe told her she was a great player, and they shook hands. A newspaper photographer took pictures of the two girls standing shoulder-to-shoulder, with Lupe holding the bigger trophy.

Lupe then played the winner of the boys’ division, and after a poor start beat him eleven to four. She blasted the marbles, shattering one into sparkling slivers of glass. Her opponent looked on glumly as Lupe did what she did best—win!

The head referee and the President of the Fresno Marble Association stood with Lupe as she displayed her trophies for the newspaper photographer. Lupe shook hands with everyone, including a dog who had come over to see what the commotion was all about.

That night, the family went out for pizza and set the two trophies on the table for everyone in the restaurant to see. People came up to congratulate Lupe, and she felt a little embarrassed, but her father said the trophies belonged there.

Back home, in the privacy of her bedroom, she placed the trophies on her shelf and was happy. She had always earned honors because of her brains, but winning in sports was a new

experience. She thanked her tired thumb. "You did it, thumb. You made me champion." As its reward, Lupe went to the bathroom, filled the bathroom sink with warm water, and let her thumb swim and splash as it pleased. Then she climbed into bed and drifted into a hard-won sleep.

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Fly Away Home

By Eve Bunting

My dad and I live in an airport. That's because we don't have a home and the airport is better than the streets. We are careful not to get caught.

Mr. Slocum and Mr. Vail were caught last night. "Ten green bottles, hanging on the wall," they sang. They were as loud as two moose bellowing.

Dad says they broke the first rule of living here. Don't get noticed.

Dad and I try not to get noticed. We stay among the crowds. We change airlines. "Delta, TWA, Northwest, we love them all," Dad says. He and I wear blue jeans and blue T-shirts and blue jackets. We each have a blue zippered bag with a change of blue clothes. Not to be noticed is to look like nobody at all. Once we saw a woman pushing a metal cart full of stuff. She wore a long, dirty coat and she lay down across a row of seating in front of Continental Gate 6. The cart, the dirty coat, the lying down were all noticeable. Security moved her out real fast.

Dad and I sleep sitting up. We use different airport areas. "Where are we tonight?" I ask. Dad checks his notebook. "Alaska Air," he says. "Over in the other terminal." That's OK. We like to walk. We know some of the airport regulars by name and by sight. There's Idaho Joe and Annie Frannie and Mars Man. But we don't sit together. "Sitting together will get you noticed faster than anything," Dad says.

Everything in the airport is on the move—passengers, pilots, flight attendants, cleaner with their brooms. Jets roar in, close to the windows. Other jets roar out. Luggage bounces down chutes, escalators glide up and down, disappearing floors. Everyone's going somewhere except Dad and me. We stay.

Once a little brown bird got into the main terminal and couldn't get out. It fluttered in the high, hollow spaces. It threw itself at the glass, fell panting on the floor, flew to a tall, metal girder, and perched there, exhausted.

"Don't stop trying," I told it silently. "Don't! You can get out!" For days the bird flew around, dragging one wing. And then it found the instant when a sliding door was open and slipped through. I watched it rise. Its wing seemed okay.

"Fly, bird," I whispered. "Fly away home!" Though I couldn't hear it, I knew it was singing. Nothing made me as happy as that bird. The airport's busy and noisy even at night. Dad and I sleep anyway. When it gets quiet, between two and four A.M., we wake up.

“Dead time,” Dad says. “Almost no flights coming in or going out.” At dead time there aren’t many people around, so we’re extra careful. In the mornings Dad and I wash up in one of the bathrooms, and he shaves. The bathrooms are crowded, no matter how early. And that’s the way we like it. Strangers talk to strangers.

“Where did you get in from?”

“Three hours our flight was delayed. Man! Am I bushed!” Dad and I, we don’t talk to anyone. We buy doughnuts and milk for breakfast at one of the cafeterias, standing in line with our red trays. Sometimes Dad gets me a carton of juice.

On weekends Dad take the bus to work. He’s a janitor in an office in the city. The bus fare’s a dollar each way. On those days Mrs. Medina looks out for me. The Medinas live in the airport, too—Grandma, Mrs. Medina, and Denny, who’s my friend.

He and I collect rented luggage carts that people have left outside and return them for fifty cents each. If the crowds are big and safe, we offer to carry bags. “Get this one for you, lady? It looks heavy.” Or, “Can I call you a cab?” Denny’s real good at calling cabs. That’s because he’s seven already. Sometimes passengers don’t tip. Then Denny whispers, “Stingy!” But he doesn’t whisper too loud. The Medinas understand that it’s dangerous to be noticed.

When Dad comes home from work, he buys hamburgers for us and the Medinas. That’s to pay them for watching out for me. If Denny and I have had a good day, we treat for pie. But I’ve stopped doing that. I save my money in my shoe. “Will we ever have our own apartment again?” I ask Dad. I’d like it to be the way it was, before Mom died. “Maybe we will,” he says. “If I can find more work. If we can save some money.” He rubs my head. “It’s nice right here, though, isn’t it, Andrew? It’s warm. It’s safe. And the price is right.”

But I know he’s trying all the time to find us a place. He takes newspapers from the trash baskets and makes pencil circles around letters and numbers. Then he goes to the phones. When he comes back he looks sad. Sad and angry. I know he’s been calling about an apartment. I know the rents are too high for us.

“I’m saving money, too,” I tell him, and I lift one foot and point to my shoe. Dad smiles. “Atta boy!” “If we get a place, you and your dad can come live with us,” Denny says. “And if we get a place, you and your mom and your grandma can come live with *us*,” I say. “Yeah!” We shake on it. That’s going to be so great!

After next summer, Dad says, I have to start school.

"How?" I ask.

"I don't know. But it's important. We'll work it out."

Denny's mom says he can wait for a while. But Dad says I can't wait.

Sometimes I watch people meeting people.

"We missed you."

"It's so good to be home."

Sometimes I get mad, and I want to run at them and push them and shout, "Why do *you* have homes when we don't? What makes *you* so special?" That would get us noticed, all right.

Sometimes I just want to cry. I think Dad and I will be here forever.

Then I remember the bird. It took a while, but a door opened. And when the bird left, when it flew free, I know it was singing.

Birthday Box

by Jane Yolen

I was ten years old when my mother died. Ten years old on that very day. Still she gave me a party of sorts. Sick as she was, Mama had seen to it, organizing it at the hospital. She made sure the doctors and nurses all brought me presents. We were good friends with them all by that time, because Mama had been in the hospital for so long. The head nurse, V. Louise Higgins (I never did know what that V stood for), gave me a little box, which was sort of funny because she was the biggest of all the nurses there. I mean she was tremendous. And she was the only one who insisted on wearing all white. Mama had called her the great white shark when she was first admitted, only not to V. Louise's face. "All those needles," Mama had said. "Like teeth." But V. Louise was sweet, not sharklike at all, and she'd been so gentle with Mama. I opened the little present first. It was a fountain pen, a real one, not a fake one like you get at Kmart. "Now you can write beautiful stories, Katie," V. Louise said to me. I didn't say that stories come out of your head, not out of a pen. That wouldn't have been polite, and Mama—even sick—was real big on politeness. "Thanks, V. Louise," I said. The Stardust Twins—which is what Mama called Patty and Tracey-Lynn because they reminded her of dancers in an old-fashioned ballroom—gave me a present together. It was a diary and had a picture of a little girl in pink, reading in a garden swing. A little young for me, a little too cute. I mean, I read Stephen King and want to write like him. But as Mama always reminded me whenever Daddy finally remembered to send me something, it was the thought that counted, not the actual gift.

"It's great," I told them. "I'll write in it with my new pen." And I wrote my name on the first page just to show them I meant it. They hugged me and winked at Mama. She tried to wink back but was just too tired and shut both her eyes instead. Lily, who is from Jamaica, had baked me some sweet bread. Mary Margaret gave me a gold cross blessed by the pope, which I put on even though Mama and I weren't churchgoers. That was Dad's thing.

Then Dr. Dann, the intern who was on days, and Dr. Pucci, the oncologist (which is the fancy name for a cancer doctor), gave me a big box filled to the top with little presents, each wrapped up individually. All things they knew I'd love—paperback books and writing paper and erasers with funny animal heads and colored paper clips and a rubber stamp that printed FROM KATIE'S DESK and other stuff. They must have raided a stationery store. There was one box, though, they held out till the end. It was about the size of a large top hat. The paper was deep blue and covered with stars; not fake stars but real stars, I mean, like a map of the night sky. The ribbon was two shades of blue with silver threads running through. There was no name on the card.

"Who's it from?" I asked.

None of the nurses answered, and the doctors both suddenly were studying the ceiling tiles with the kind of intensity they usually saved for x-rays. No one spoke. In fact the only sound for the longest time was Mama's breathing machine going in and out and in and out. It was a harsh, horrible, insistent sound, and usually I talked and talked to cover up the noise. But I was waiting for someone to tell me.

At last V. Louise said, "It's from your mama, Katie. She told us what she wanted. And where to get it." I turned and looked at Mama then, and her eyes were open again. Funny, but sickness had made her even more beautiful than good health had. Her skin was like that old paper, the kind they used to write on with quill pens, and stretched out over her bones so she looked like a model. Her eyes, which had been a deep, brilliant blue, were now like the fall sky, bleached and softened. She was like a faded photograph of herself. She smiled a very small smile at me. I knew it was an effort.

"It's you," she mouthed. I read her lips. I had gotten real good at that. I thought she meant it was a present for me. "Of course it is," I said cheerfully. I had gotten good at that, too, being cheerful when I didn't feel like it. "Of course it is."

I took the paper off the box carefully, not tearing it but folding it into a tidy packet. I twisted the ribbons around my hand and then put them on the pillow by her hand. It made the stark white hospital bed look almost festive. Under the wrapping, the box was beautiful itself. It was made of a heavy cardboard and covered with a linen material that had a pattern of cloud-filled skies.

"It's empty," I said. "Is this a joke?" I turned to ask Mama, but she was gone. I mean, her body was there, but she wasn't. It was as if she was as empty as the box. Dr. Pucci leaned over her and listened with a stethoscope, then almost absently patted Mama's head. Then, with infinite care, V. Louise closed Mama's eyes, ran her hand across Mama's cheek, and turned off the breathing machine.

"Mama!" I cried. And to the nurses and doctors, I screamed, "Do something!" And because the room had suddenly become so silent, my voice echoed back at me. "Mama, do something." I cried steadily for, I think, a week. Then I cried at night for a couple of months. And then for about a year I cried at anniversaries, like Mama's birthday or mine, at Thanksgiving, on Mother's Day. I stopped writing. I stopped reading except for school assignments. I was pretty mean to my half brothers and totally rotten to my stepmother and Dad. I felt empty and angry, and they all left me pretty much alone.

And then one night, right after my first birthday without Mama, I woke up remembering how she had said, "It's you." Now Mama had been a high school English teacher and a writer herself. She'd had poems published in little magazines. She didn't use words carelessly. In the end she could hardly use any words at all. So—I asked myself in that dark room—why had she said, "It's you"? Why were they the very last words she had ever said to me, forced out with her last breath?

I turned on the bedside light and got out of bed. The room was full of shadows, not all of them real. Pulling the desk chair over to my closet, I climbed up and felt along the top shelf, and against the back wall, there was the birthday box, just where I had thrown it the day I had moved in with my dad.

I pulled it down and opened it. It was as empty as the day I had put it away. "It's you," I whispered to the box. And then suddenly I knew. Mama had meant that I was the box, solid and sturdy, maybe even beautiful or at least interesting on the outside. But I had to fill up the box to make it all it could be. And I had to fill me up as well. She had guessed what might happen to me, had told me in a subtle way. In the two words she could manage.

I stopped crying and got some paper out of the desk drawer. I got out my fountain pen. I started writing, and I haven't stopped since. The first thing I wrote was about that birthday. I put it in the box, and pretty soon that box was overflowing with stories. And poems. And memories.

And so was I. And so was I

Session I: Writing Inside the Story to Help You Read Well

In this session, students learn that strong readers flesh out stories by envisioning them and living vicariously through the characters. They'll learn to try this in their notebooks in preparation for trying it mentally.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text, chart paper for writing an excerpt (towards the end of the story) and space to record writing, Anchor Chart: Write Inside the Story, Packet of Stories (at reading level)

Connection	Discuss “reading with intensity” or reading as deeply as possible. Readers experience the story.
Teaching Mentor Text	Model for students how you read with intensity Show difference between flipping through book quickly and reading closely Read aloud mentor text, stopping after a couple of paragraphs to visualize, share your thinking, infer, to really get into the character. Discuss: Read just a tiny bit, pause to get a picture in your mind. Talk about how you “act out the story in your mind.” We read, remember, feel.
Engage (this will be fast and some students will not get it yet, but that is okay!)	Read a bit more of the mentor text, inviting students to “be in the story”, to become the character, and be ready to envision when you stop. Partners: TT “I see...” (partners talk about what they/character sees) Repeat by reading a bit more. Partners: TT “I see.../I hear.../I notice...” As students talk, write the last phrase read aloud on chart paper. Ask students to copy the excerpt and write their envisioning in their notebooks. Write a few lines on the chart paper as students are writing (scaffolding) Discuss writing to share meaning instead of talking about it. Show Anchor chart and discuss various mental movies that stem from details
Link	Tell students that in this unit they will be writing literary essays and reading as readers who let stories leave their marks on us. Pass out story packets. Tell students they will spend the next few weeks reading, rereading, thinking, talking and writing about these stories. Writing Time: Students should choose a story in the packet that “catches their eye,” read it and write about it, trying to envision. Encourage students to use the anchor chart to help them.
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Survey the room. If you see students flying through the text and not really going deep, stop and model a few stories and examples for students from their packets.
Homework	Have students practice an entry at home-read, think, write

Anchor Chart

Write Inside the Story to Help You Read Well

- Read trying to experience the story.
- Choose a part that matters.
- Step into that story. As you envision, fill in the details.
- Write a bit to help you go into the story. Write a few lines that could belong in it. Resume reading.
- Pause to write again when it feels right or at the arrows—you could write “I see. . .” or “I hear ”

Session II: Gathering Writing by Close Reading

In this session, students are reminded that writers read with an attentiveness to detail that can spark larger ideas. "Conversational prompts," such as I notice . . . I think . . . This is giving me the idea that . . . I wonder . . . are used to extend thinking and writing about a text, as well as grow big ideas about those texts.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text, chart paper to record writing, Anchor Chart: Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading, Packet of Stories (at reading level)

Connection	Discuss/review what was learned yesterday. Today's focus is to generate ideas about the short stories being read. Big ideas can be written about, but close attention is needed to find the big ideas and important details
Teaching Mentor Text	Model for students how you read the text, paying attention to little details that are important. Read, stop, discuss importance of looking at the details. Role play, finding something important, visualizing it, and wondering/thinking I realize... I think... I wonder... To add on... (new ideas you get) Chart paper-record your thinking. Tell what you visualize, then what you think this means, what you wonder, and finally additional ideas. Continue to read. Find a stopping point that has a big idea about the character. Stop and sticky note the place and add another quick entry on the chart. Record your thinking, tell the big idea and explain your thinking. Debrief-review steps: read a bit, look back to notice details, sticky note the spot, write your thoughts and ideas about it.
Engage Pass out a copy of the mentor text for students to use	Remind students of the importance to slow down to read deeply and pay attention to the details and what they mean. Partners: P1 reads a bit more of the mentor text and pauses/P2 pays attention and points out the details that matter, writing in the air about what you see when you think about those details/P1 reminds partner to use prompts: The idea I have about this is... I realize... I think...
Link	Show anchor chart of strategies for writing in response to reading Have students reread stories they chose yesterday. They should read, jot their thinking, read some more and jot some more.
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Share a couple of student ideas. Talk to students about the way authors use language to help us figure out character's feelings. Look at how the author describes or tells about characters.
Homework	Have students practice an entry at home-read, think, write.

Anchor Chart

Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading

- Find an important moment from the story.
 - Copy the start of it into your notebook
 - Envision it
 - Write about the details-the sounds, actions, thoughts, feelings
- Be a wide-awake reader
 - Notice and underline/sticky note details that others may pass by.
 - Write a thought about what you notice. Explain your thinking

Session III: Gathering Writing by Studying Characters

In this session, students will learn that experts know that certain features of their subject—character, for example, for literary essayists—merit special attention. Therefore, essayists study characters to grow significant topics.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text from previous days, a second mentor text to model the strategy, chart paper to record writing, Anchor Chart: Thinking About Characters, Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading chart, Packet of Stories (at reading level)

<p>Connection</p>	<p>Discuss/review strategies for writing about reading already learned. Today you will teach students that skilled readers of fiction pay special attention to the characters in the story to unlock the secrets of the text.</p>
<p>Teaching A different Mentor Text than has been used for the past few lessons. You will use the studied Mentor Text from previous days with the students in Engage.</p>	<p>Share a story about noticing how when you know a task/subject well you are an expert and know which features are important to notice-example: dog judges know to check dog's coat, ears, shape, etc. designers know to check seams, colors, style of garment. Tell students that good readers do the same thing-they are experts at fiction so they know to pay attention to characters' traits, motivations, struggles, and changes. Authors don't list traits, motivations, struggles, readers have to the details to figure them out. Provide an example from the mentor text. Look back in the story, modeling thinking about the main character. " I notice the story says..., that detail wouldn't be there if it weren't important. I need to think about what this shows about the character-his/her traits, emotions, motivations, struggles, changes. I think it shows that he/she is..." Debrief: story gives details, readers need to fill in what the details show about the character. Then readers read on to confirm or revise the initial idea. <i>You might provide a real life example of using details to figure out a person who is kind or courageous.</i></p>
<p>Engage Mentor Text used for past few days.</p>	<p>Discuss the main character from the mentor text you have used for the past several days. Discuss the character at the first part of the story together-actions, details and what they show about the character-traits, emotions, struggles, etc. Read aloud another part of the story and ask students to notice what they learn about the character's traits and motivations at this point in the story. Partners: Turn and talk about what they notice.</p>
<p>Link</p>	<p>Discuss strategy and why it is important. Chart: Thinking About Characters Chart: Writing in Response to Reading Writing: Continue reading and rereading short texts and jotting entries of thoughts. Remind students to use the Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading Chart.</p>
<p>Mid-Workshop Teaching Point</p>	<p>Share a couple of student ideas. Talk to students about the way authors use language to help us figure out character's feelings. Look at how the author describes or tells about characters.</p>
<p>Homework</p>	<p>Pass out an excerpt of a character description. Have students list what they notice the author did to show what the character was like. Then they should describe the character in their story.</p>

Charts on next page.

Anchor Chart

Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading

- Find an important moment from the story.
 - Copy the start of it into your notebook
 - Envision it
 - Write about the details-the sounds, actions, thoughts, feelings
- Be a wide-awake reader
 - Notice and underline/sticky note details that others may pass by.
 - Write a thought about what you notice. Explain your thinking
- Think about an author's language choices.
- Pay special attention to parts of the story that show:
 - Character's actions
 - Character's motivations
 - Character's struggles
 - Character's changes

Anchor Chart

Thinking About Characters

- What kind of person is this character?
- What does this character long for? Fear?
- What is the character struggling against? What gets in the character's way?
- What relationships does the character have and how do these relationships play a significant role in the story?
- How does the character change over the course of the story?
- Does the character learn lessons or come to realizations?

Session IV: Elaborating on Written Ideas Using Conversational Prompts

In this session, students will learn one way writers elaborate on their ideas—in this case, ideas about a character. Students will be guided through a discussion that has the same features as a written analysis of a text, and be reminded (again) that conversational prompts are also useful as writing prompts.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text from previous days, a second mentor text to model the strategy, sample of student work, Anchor Chart: Prompts for Pushing Our Thinking, Student copies of Prompts for Pushing our Thinking, Teacher script to act out, Packet of Stories (at reading level)

Connection	Discuss/review strategies for writing about reading already learned. Teaching point: When we write about our reading, we can use the same prompts we use in conversations and in our writing to help us grow ideas.
Teaching Teacher script to act out Thought prompt page for every student	Share a story about discussing the mentor text with the other teachers and having a book talk using thought prompts. Show Anchor Chart: Prompts for Pushing our Thinking About Reading. Choose students help you with reading the script (next page). Ask rest of class to notice and underline the thought prompts they hear in the script. Also they should notice the number of times the teachers go back into the story, reading a bit of the story to show their point. Student Script Reading Debrief-did you notice prompts that pushed the thinking? Did you notice particular parts of the story were included? These help us to extend, revise and make our writing powerful!
Engage Mentor Text used for past few days.	Ask students to pretend they are in the script now. They should continue the conversation about the story with a partner (if you have used a different mentor text, just switch to that now) Partners: TT use prompt to discuss. Writing-have student write one idea in their notebook, extending it with the prompts.
Link	Discuss strategy and why it is important. Writing: Continue reading and rereading short texts and jotting entries of thoughts. Remind students to use the Prompts for their story of choice.
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Have students reread what they have written so far. Find a powerful thought and box around it. Use thought prompts to tell more.
Homework	Pass out the student sample of an entry. Have students read it overnight and use it to help them write their own idea about a story they are reading.

Prompts to Push Our Thinking About Reading

- For example...
- Another example is...
- To add on...
- This makes me realize...
- This is important because...
- This is giving me the idea that...
- The reason for this is...
- Another reason is...
- This connects with...
- On the other hand...
- I partly agree but... because...
- This is similar to...
- This is different from...
- I think this is important because...
- There's one thing that doesn't fit for me...
- I noticed that section, too...and I think this connects to the whole story because...
- I see (the item you are discussing), and then a similar thing happens (in this place), I think this is repeated because....
- There is one thing in the story that doesn't 'fit' for me and it's...
- This *might* be present because...
- In the beginning....then later.....finally.....
- In the beginning... in the middle... at the end...
- Many people think... but I think...
- I used to think... but now I'm realizing...

Script: Teachers discussing Spaghetti by Cynthia Rylant

Mr. Kamman: I think Gabriel chooses to be alone. For example, when Gabriel is outside on the stoop, there are many neighbors sitting around talking, but he chooses not to join their conversation.

Mrs. Kleist: I agree. Another example of Gabriel choosing to be alone is in the second paragraph: *Gabriel was thinking he would like to live outside all the time. He imagined himself carrying a pack of food and a few tools and a heavy cloth to erect a hasty tent. Gabriel saw himself sleeping among the coyotes.*

Mrs. Pena: I used to think Gabriel was lonely, but now I am realizing that maybe Gabriel chooses to not be with people. But maybe he does like being with animals. In the example from Mrs. Kleist, Gabriel imagines sleeping among the coyotes. I think this is important because later, when Gabriel finds Spaghetti, he starts to feel less lonely. He likes getting company from animals.

Mr. Kamman: So are you saying that Gabriel feels more comfortable with animals?

Mrs. Pena: Yes, some people are that way. They can communicate with animals better than with people. So in the beginning, Gabriel wants to sleep with coyotes and then at the end with a cat.

Mr. Kamman: There's one thing that doesn't fit for me: coyotes. If the author was saying Gabriel liked being with animals, why wouldn't she pick a more warm and fuzzy animal? I think of coyotes as being all far away, howling, and to me they are all about loneliness.

Stop-have students partner up and continue to talk about the character.

Student Entry

Thinking about “The Marble Champ”

I think a big part in the text is that Lupe wanted to prove to herself that she was as good as the other girls. Even though she wasn't good at sports, I think she was as good as the other girls. One example of this is that she is very smart. She wins awards.

Another example is when Lupe asked the girl who was all alone to join her in going to more marble games. Lupe is very caring. She isn't good at sports but she is just as kind and caring, even more. Just because she's a little different doesn't mean she isn't as kind, sweet, or caring. Because of the way she acted toward Rachel, (the girl she invited) I am suspicious of maybe she has gone through being lonely too. She knows how it feels, so she doesn't want other people to go through that too.

This part doesn't “fit” for me: I can't tell if Lupe has or doesn't have self-confidence. She does for going to play marbles and being so brave and courageous. She doesn't for having to prove to herself that she was as good as the other girls. I think she does and doesn't have self-confidence. No matter if she does or doesn't, she is caring and sweet and kind on the inside. That's what matters the most.

Session V: Developing Provocative Ideas—“What is this story *really* about?”

In this session, students learn that literary essayists ask, “What is this story really about?” and then analyze the ways the author deliberately crafts the story to convey this meaning.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text from previous days on Chart paper, Chart/List of questions: Interpretations: What is This Story Really About?, Anchor Chart: Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading-update with new bullets.

Connection	Discuss/review strategies for writing about reading already learned. Teaching point: Readers know that important ideas about stories often reside in the question, “What’s this story really about?” Important ideas in stories can be found when we reread and ask “What’s this story really about?” “What is the character learning in this story?”
Teaching Chart: Interpretation: What is This Story Really About Choose a few of the questions to use for your chart! Not all!	Remind students that when writing narratives they learned to ask “What is my story really about?” and then use their answer to craft their lead, details, elaborations, etc. When we read stories others have written, we can ask the same thing “What is the important thing this writer wants me to know?” Then we can notice the craft decisions-title, lead, elaborations, details. Show chart: Interpretations Discuss how readers don’t read a book, close, it and think what was this story really about, but instead study the text and develop their own idea for the story’s main meaning. The chart can help us figure that out.
Engage Mentor Text used for past few days on chart paper	Model rereading the questions from the chart and choosing one to get started. Then look back in the story with the question in mind. Think aloud what happens at the start of the story and how the character behaves, then what happens next, etc. Stop and talk about the steps you just took while the students list them across their fingers: Reread the questions from the chart Chose one question Looked over the story with the question in mind, thinking about what I needed to find the answer to my question Realized I needed to notice the beginning and ending. Partners: TT what steps did I go through?
Link	Discuss strategy and why it is important. Add on to Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading Chart Writing: Continue reading and rereading short texts and jotting entries of thoughts. Remind students to use the Prompts for their story of choice.
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Share a student sample in which the writer is very thoughtful and probing.
Homework	Have students reread their text and find a part where nothing has happened, they haven’t written about it yet. They should think deeply and write about it tonight.

What is This Story *Really* About?

- What does *the character* learn in this story? Is this a life lesson that readers are also meant to learn?
- What life lesson can I draw from this story? How does this story teach me a lesson that can help me live my life differently?
- What single section—or which two related sections—best capture(s) the story’s meaning?
- How do all the story elements-title, beginning, middle, ending-convey the story’s message?

Anchor Chart

Strategies for Writing in Response to Reading

- Find an important moment from the story.
 - Copy the start of it into your notebook
 - Envision it
 - Write about the details-the sounds, actions, thoughts, feelings
- Be a wide-awake reader
 - Notice and underline/sticky note details that others may pass by.
 - Write a thought about what you notice. Explain your thinking
- Think about an author's language choices.
- Pay special attention to parts of the story that show:
 - Character's actions
 - Character's motivations
 - Character's struggles
 - Character's changes
- Ask, "What is this story really about?" More specifically, we look at:
 - The sections that best capture the whole story's meaning
 - What the character learns in the story
 - How all the elements of the story contribute to the story's message

Session VI: Developing Provocative Ideas—“How Does This Story Intersect With My Life?”

In this session, students learn some ways literary essayists draw on their life experiences to understand and develop ideas about their texts.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text from previous days, example of an important issue from your life, idea for a shared life issue children can discuss in relation to a text.

Connection	Discuss a book that changed your life (or someone you know)-example reading a book that made you mad and want to change something; a book that helped you get along with mom Teaching Point: When readers write, we can make it more likely that stories will get through to us. One way to do that is to think: What are the issues in my life: Then read or reread a text, thinking how the story can help us with our issues.
Teaching Chart: blank for writing	Discuss thinking about the issues in our lives. What is a concern in my life? Share your big issue with the class-ex: child leaving for college; husband working overtime-think loneliness here !! Model going back into the book and asking how the story can help you deal with your issue. At the beginning, I think that ...(notice how the character feels) Reread the section and think aloud how the character deals with his feelings. Connect to your issue and compare with what the character does. Model writing on chart an entry about this. Expand your entry by adding details and telling more. Debrief: review the steps
Engage Mentor Text used for past few days on chart paper	Ask students to pretend they have a shared life issue and to look at the class mentor text with that issue in mind. Example: not fitting in Ask: How does this story help you deal with the issue of feeling pressured to fit in and be popular? Give thinking time. Provide samples of what students might be thinking. Partners: TT about how the issue fits with the story.
Link	Discuss strategy and why it is important. Writing: Choices 1-Continue to think about the big ideas in the stories-what is it really about? Write about it. Then skip a line and write: The thought I have about that is... 2-Read closely, noticing details others would miss and write about it. Then skip a line and write: The thought I have about that is... 3-Think of an issue in your life and go back to the story and ask: how can this story help me with an issue in my life? Then write about it.
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Remind students to include the text in their writing, not just their own experiences.
Homework	Have students think of a quality they admire in one of the characters. Then write about it.

Session VII: Finding and Testing a Thesis Statement

In this session, students learn that writers select seed ideas to craft into thesis statements. They will learn ways to question and revise their theses as writers do, making sure each is supportable by the whole text.

MATERIALS: Short mentor text from previous days, sample seed ideas from the mentor text to practice thesis statements (seed ideas), Anchor Chart: Questions Essayists Ask of a Thesis Statement, Manila folders, student work sample with boxes and bullets, sample thesis statement that shows how to use the template

<p>Connection</p>	<p>Celebrate the work students have done so far. Talk about choosing seed ideas in previous writing units.</p> <p>Teaching Point: When we write literary essays we find our seed ideas (thesis statements) by first rereading all our entries for a story and thinking “What is the main idea I really want to say?”</p> <p>We star lines in our notebooks and in our stories and write them on a special page titled “possible seed ideas”. Then we spend time at least half an hour) drafting and revising our seed idea (thesis statement) and supporting ideas (boxes and bullets) until we find something that feels right.</p>
<p>Teaching</p> <p>Teacher notebook with entries</p>	<p>Model looking back through your entries for one mentor text, circling/starring a few pieces parts. Show students the page and discuss what you did: reread entries, circled/starred sentences that expressed ideas that mattered to you.</p> <p>Discuss looking for ideas, not facts. Ideas are things the reader gets about the story as they read. Show a couple of possible seed ideas (sample below)</p> <p>Possible seed ideas for Spaghetti:</p> <p>Gabriel is a lonely boy who has decided to accept being lonely.</p> <p>Gabriel has a hole in his life.</p> <p>Model looking over your seed ideas, thinking about them and revising them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reread each idea and ask “How does this idea relate to the whole story? Both the beginning and ending?” • Revise the seed idea so it stretches over the whole story <p>Ex: Spaghetti is the story of a lonely boy who has decided to accept being lonely but then lets a cat into his life. (how is that? Kind of awkward-revise again)</p> <p>Spaghetti is the story of a lonely boy who lets a cat into his life isn’t lonely anymore.</p> <p>Discuss how this thesis (seed idea) fits the beginning and the end of the story.</p> <p>Model supporting the seed idea (thesis) by asking how can I support it from the beginning of the story, the end, for one character, for another character, for one reason, for another reason?</p> <p>Ex: Gabriel has a hole in his life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first half of the story... (topic sentence) • In the second half of the story... (topic sentence) <p>Discuss: do we have evidence from the story to show a “hole in his life in both parts?</p> <p>Revise the seed idea: Gabriel has a hole in his life. He has the hole because...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reason 1... (topic sentence) • Reason 2... (topic sentence) <p>Do we have evidence to support this from the story? Yes reasons...</p>
<p>Engage</p> <p>Mentor Text used for past few days on chart paper</p>	<p>Try another thesis statement (seed idea) for the mentor text.</p> <p>EX: Spaghetti is the story of a lonely boy who lets a cat into his life and isn’t lonely anymore.</p> <p>Partners: Use the chart to test the thesis (seed idea)</p>
<p>Link</p>	<p>Review the strategy and remind students to use the chart.</p> <p>Have them choose a seed idea for their story and write it on a new page, boxing it.</p> <p>Then they should put bullets and support their idea with story parts/character actions/reasons</p>

Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	<p>Introduce a Template for students who are struggling: Some people think this story is about (tell sequence of events), but I think this is a story about (tell internal sequence of events-what's going on in the character's head).</p> <p>Provide a list of common themes for students to think about and see if they fit with their stories.</p>
Homework- This also might be good for a second day activity of this lesson.	<p>Choose a fairy tale like Little Red Riding Hood and show students how to use a story mountain to create the external plot line.</p> <p>Then discuss the internal plot (what was the character really going through? What was it really about-Little Red Riding Hood trusted everyone and learns to be more suspicious of strangers.)</p>

Questions Essayists Ask of a Thesis Statement

- Does this relate to both the 1st and 2nd halves of the text?
- How would I support this?
 - at the start of story
 - at the end of story
- How would I support this?
 - With one character
 - With another character
- How would I support this?
 - One reason
 - Another reason
- Does the thesis address what the story is really about, the internal as well as the external story?

Thesis:

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**

Thesis:

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**

Thesis:

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**

Session VIII: Framing Essays

In this session, students will learn that writers plan their essays using “Box and Bullets” (thesis and three subordinate points), making sure they can deliver the evidence from the text that their thesis promises.

MATERIALS: student draft and revised thesis statements (seed ideas) that show the process of analysis and revision, mentor text used with class, Anchor Chart Questions Essayist ask from yesterday, Handout for students: Tips and Tools for Writing a Thesis and Topic Sentences for a Literary Essay

Connection	Review thesis statements from previous lessons. Teaching Point: Writers need to not only read with critical, cautious eyes, but also need to be ready to revise. Writer’s revise at the front of their writing too, not just at the end of their writing.
Teaching Student sample of thesis/support, revised thesis/bullets	Share a student sample (see sample for Boar Out There). Discuss how student reread writing and thought out support for thesis idea. Show list of support ideas. Then show how the student checked for text evidence for each bullet and revised the thesis. Also discuss how the student used the chart to plan the bullets.
Engage Mentor Text used for past few days on chart paper	Enlist the group’s help in rereading and looking for problems, making revisions if needed. Show thesis draft (boxed in) Example for Spaghetti <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 5px 0;"> <p>Some people think that Cynthia Rylant’s short story “Spaghetti” is a story about a homeless boy who adopts a stray cat, but I think this is really a story about a lonely boy who lets a stray cat into his life and learns to love again.</p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the start of the story, Gabriel is lonely • Then Gabriel lets a stray cat into his life and learns to love again <p>Partners read this over and search for potential problems. Remind students to go deep. Reconvene and discuss, coach if needed to identify issues: At the start of the story Gabriel is lonely-what story support do we have to show this? At the end of the story Gabriel learns to love again-can you really show that? What would work better (Gabriel isn’t lonely anymore)</p>
Link	Review the strategy and remind students to use the chart. They should review their plan from yesterday and revise it, add to it, make it better And plan the next step-story support. Then they should put bullets and support their idea with story parts/character actions/reasons
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Partners-check each other’s boxes and bullets.
Homework- This also might be good for a second day activity of this lesson.	Have students notice things in their life-that relate to their thesis. Look for loneliness if your thesis is loneliness. What do people say, do, look like? Just notice tonight.

Box= Thesis

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**
- **Bullets=Topic Sentences**

Boxes and Bullets Planning Sheet

Thesis:

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences:**

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences:**

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences (optional):**

Thesis:

Revised or a different seed idea

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences:**

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences:**

- **Bullets=Topic Sentences (optional):**

Questions Essayists Ask of a Thesis Statement

- Does this relate to both the 1st and 2nd halves of the text?
- How would I support this?
 - at the start of story (topic sentence)
 - at the end of story (topic sentence)
- How would I support this?
 - With one character (topic sentence)
 - With another character (topic sentence)
- How would I support this?
 - One reason (topic sentence)
 - Another reason (topic sentence)
- Does the thesis address what the story is really about, the internal as well as the external story?
- Can I deliver with my planned categories what I promise in my thesis? Can I write a paragraph about each point?

Student Sample

In “Boar Out There” by Cynthia Rylant, Jenny is a girl who believes that the wild boar in the woods is fearless and is hurt. She feels sorry for him and goes to look for him. When she finds him, she realizes that he has fears after all. The boar runs through the woods ignoring the sharp thorns and briars. The boar cries at the moon.

THESIS

- Jenny believed that the wild boar was fearless
- Jenny believed the boar was hurt.
- Jenny felt sorry for the boar.
- Jenny wants to find the boar.
- When she finds him she realizes he isn't fearless

Topic sentences

(Student realized that it would be hard to really show all of that in the story. There was no way she would be able to write a paragraph for each bullet and do it well. She looked at the bullets and changed her thesis to the one below.)

Jenny is a girl who believes that the wild boar in the woods is fearless, but after finding the boar she comes to realize that he is not.

THESIS

(Then she thought...what would my points be? She planned her bullets by looking at the chart from yesterday and picking the one that fit her thesis. She realized she could write a whole paragraph about each point (topic sentence)(below.)

- In the beginning Jenny believes the boar is fearless (he runs through the thorns and briars)
- In the end, Jenny comes to realize the boar has fears (blue jays and little girls)

Topic sentences

Tips and Tools

for Writing a Thesis and Topic Sentences

for a Literary Essay

- **First gather lots of ideas about the text you've read. Be sure you read closely, really noticing stuff, and then write, "The idea I have about this is..."**
 - **Use thought prompts to write long**
 - **Reread, looking for ideas that are true and interesting.**
 - **Box them and write more about them.**
 - **Then reread again, looking for ideas that are true and interesting.**
- **Pay attention to characters and their traits, wants, struggles, changes, and lessons. Think about the whole story as a story of a character who wants something, struggles, and then changes or learns a lesson.**
 - **Character:**
 - **Wants**
 - **But then**
 - **So then**
 - **Finally (change/lesson)**
- **Think about the issues in your life and ask, "How does this story go with my issue?" this can help you find something to say that really matters to you.**
- **Ask "what's this story really about?" Look how the author wrote it, and think, "Why did the author do this?" Expect the author to make craft decisions that highlight the meaning the author hopes to convey.**
- **Reread all your ideas and find things that seem interesting and true and important. Compile these.**
- **Draft a possible thesis statement, then test it out. Ask, "Does this go with the whole story?" and "Can I support this?"**
- **Maybe write, "Some people think this is a story about..., but I think it is really about..." Consider whether your thesis addresses the internal as well as the external story line of the text under study.**
- **Write your thesis and plan your paragraphs. Your paragraphs might be organized to show how your thesis is true at the beginning and the end of the story, or in one way and another way, for one reason or another reason.**
- **Reread your thesis with a lawyer's eyes. Look at what you have promised to prove and make sure you can do that. Check every word. Be sure your bullets match your thesis. Rewrite over and over.**

Session IX: Using Stories as Evidence

In this session, the teacher will demonstrate ways that essayists collect and angle mini-stories as evidence to support claims. Students will then write mini-stories and place them in folders.

MATERIALS: Mentor text (same one as used previously) on chart and copied for students, timeline of mentor text events, mini-story from mentor text that supports thesis (see example for Spaghetti)

Connection	Review previous lesson Teaching Point: Writers tell stories to support an idea, and when they do, they angle the story to highlight the thesis idea they want to convey.
Teaching Student sample of thesis/support, revised thesis/bullets	Model rereading the mentor text for small moments to illustrate the first point for your thesis statement. Enlarge the text and show students how you skim and star the margins for important “stories” in the story. I could tell a tiny story about the part... Model telling one portion of the text as a story: Reread the text to get the timeline of what happened. Think aloud that it is important to not just tell the facts in order, but also tell it to show the thesis idea. You might have to fill in some details that the author doesn’t say, but suggests. Draw the timeline with added ideas. Tell the mini-story, remembering to start at the beginning and remembering to say something about how the story shows the thesis idea. Debrief what you modeled.
Engage Mentor Text used for past few days on chart paper	Discuss how to organize the ideas to support the bullets for their thesis. Each bullet should have one or two tiny stories from the story for support. Review the steps: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Find a little bit of the story that could show your point (topic sentence)2. Reread it and think about the timeline.3. Retell the sequence of events across your fingers, remembering to add the big idea (thesis idea) throughout the retelling. Have students try the steps out with a second small story from the mentor text. Have the part already chosen to illustrate your second bullet point (topic sentence). Partner 1: extract the sequence of events, tell across fingers-start at beginning As students talk make a timeline of the events. Partner 2: use the timeline to story tell, remember after every couple of dots on the timeline to include why this shows the thesis idea. You might need to coach students on this more.
Link	Students should collect mini-stories to support their boxes and bullets. You might use an organizer to help students do this.
Mid-Workshop Teaching Point	Share a student’s mini-story. Remind students of the steps they should be doing.
Homework- This also might be good for a second day activity of this lesson.	Pass out a sample of an essay for students to study at home. They should: circle the thesis statement and topic sentences, star the parts where the writer angled parts to show her ideas. Look for mini-stories.

Teaching with Spaghetti as Mentor Text

Using Stories As Evidence

First, timeline a section of the story: “Spaghettie”

- First Gabriel was sitting on the stoop alone.
- Other people around him were chatting with each other, but he didn’t hear them.
- He remembered his sandwich and wished he still had it.
- He remembered being alone in school too when he was the only one who knew the answer and the kids were mad at him.
- Then he imagined that he’d like to sleep outside alone.
- Then he heard something.

Then decide how to angle—in this example, how this shows Gabriel is lonely:

- One evening Gabriel, a homeless boy sat alone on the stoop outside the shelter where he lived.
- Other people sat on far corners of the stoop, but they were all talking with each other. Gabriel sat alone.
- He remembered his lunch sandwich and wished he still had it. He felt extra lonely because he was hungry.
- He remembered being alone in school too when he was the only one who knew the answer and the kids were mad at him. It seems like he always felt alone, even in a group.
- Stop and discuss so far.

Engage students in trying it out

Using Stories As Evidence

First, timeline the section of the story when Gabriel is sitting on the stoop and there is a meow, but Gabriel almost misses hearing it because he is lost in his own thoughts. When he does hear the small cry, at first he wonders if someone is calling him, and goes looking, looking.

- Gabriel sat alone on the stoop, imagining sleeping outside alone.
- There was a meow
- Gabriel almost didn’t hear it because he was lost in his thoughts.
- Meow again.
- Is someone calling me? He wonders.
- He looks.
- He heard it again.
- He gets excited and looks around some more.

Then have students angle it—in this example, how this shows Gabriel is lonely and longing for a partner:

Coach as needed, but you should hear...

- One day Gabriel sat on the stoop outside his building, imagining sleeping outside. He sat all alone. He imagined sleeping alone with just coyotes, and on a grate outside a theater, all alone too.
- There was a meow. Gabriel didn’t hear it. He was lost in his day dreams. He wasn’t expecting anyone to call to him. He was just used to being alone.
- There was another meow. Gabriel thought someone was calling him and he was glad. He was so lonely though that he didn’t really believe it.

Another example with a different mentor text.

Using Stories As Evidence

First, timeline a section of the story: “Boar Out There” by Cynthia Rylant

- The people of Glen Morgan knew about the boar.
- Jenny whispered to the boar sometimes.
- Jenny imagined the boar as fierce.
- Jenny went looking for the boar.
- Jenny heard the boar.
- Jenny saw the boar.
- The boar left.
- Jenny felt a new understanding for the boar.

Then decide how to angle—in this example, how Jenny is curious about the boar:

- Jenny whispered to the boar sometimes. Leaning over the fence that separated its world from hers, she imagined that it could talk back and wondered what it would say.
- Jenny imagined the boar as fierce. She could see his large angry eyes as he charged through the woods, spearing everything in his path with the golden horn on his head.
- Jenny went looking for the boar. As she walked quietly through the woods, Jenny felt afraid. She thought of how the boar could come charging at any moment, and wondered if it would even spear a little girl.
- Jenny heard the boar. She heard loud, stomping feet that could have been the feet of a giant. Jenny was terrified as the sound grew louder and louder, and the branches on the trees starting swaying back and forth. She was scared but didn’t move. She wanted to see what the boar looked like.

But what if you wanted to show instead Jenny felt sympathetic towards the boar? You could, for example, simply retell the rest of the story to show this:

- Jenny saw the boar. He was large and ugly, but also sad looking. His ears were bloody and torn and he shivered, silent. Jenny felt sorry for him right away. He seemed so fragile even in his large frame that she started crying.
- The boar left. It went charging past Jenny as quickly as it had arrived. The boar looked scared. Its eyes were very large and gleaming. Jenny wished she could put her arms around the boar and convince it she didn’t mean it any harm.
- Jenny felt a new understanding for the boar. Now, whenever Jenny leaned on the fence, she felt both sad and happy when she thought about the boar. She was glad he wasn’t the mean beast she’d imagined, but felt sad that she could never be his friend. He was still wild and didn’t understand that she would never hurt him.

How to Angle a Story to Make a Point

- **Begin the story by clearly stating the point you want to make.**
- **Mention what the character *does not* do as a way to draw attention to what the character does do.**
- **Repeat the key words from the main idea/topic sentence often.**

A Sample Literary Essay for Eleven by Cynthia Cisneros

In my life, not everything ends up like a fairytale. I like to read books where characters are like me. They don't live fairytale lives. We have the same kinds of problems. Many people read Sandra Cisneros's story "Eleven" and think it's about a girl who has to wear a sweater she doesn't want to wear. But I think the story is about a girl who struggles to hold onto herself when she is challenged by people who have power over her.

When Rachel's teacher, Mrs. Price, challenges Rachel, Rachel loses herself. One day Mrs. Price puts a stretched-out, itchy, red sweater on Rachel's desk saying, "I know this is yours. I saw you wearing it once!!" Rachel knows that the sweater isn't hers and tries to tell Mrs. Price, but Mrs. Price doesn't believe her. Rachel reacts to Mrs. Price's actions by losing herself. "In my head, I'm thinking... how long till lunch time, how long till I can take the red sweater and throw it over the school yard fence, or leave it hanging on a parking meter, or bunch it up into a little ball and toss it over the alley?" This shows that Rachel loses herself because she's not listening to her teacher, she's dreaming about a whole other place. It is also important to see that Rachel has all this good thinking about the sweater but when she wants to say the sweater isn't hers, she squeaks and stammers, unable to speak. "But it's not," Rachel says. "Now," Mrs. Price replies. Rachel loses herself by not finding complete words to say when Mrs. Price challenges her.

When Rachel's classmates challenge Rachel, Rachel loses herself. Sylvia Saldivar puts Rachel on the spot when she says to Mrs. Price, "I think the sweater is Rachel's." Sylvia is challenging Rachel, she is being mean and she makes Rachel feel lost. Rachel cries to let her emotions out. Rachel feels sick from Sylvia. Rachel tries to cover herself up by putting her head in her sleeve. Tears stream down her face. She doesn't feel special like it's her birthday. Instead she feels lost in Sylvia's challenge.

In "Eleven" Rachel is overpowered by both Mrs. Price and Sylvia Saldivar and this causes her to lose herself. I used to think that when people turn eleven they feel strong and have confidence but I have learned that when you're eleven you're also 10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

Session X: Using Summaries as Evidence

In this session, students will learn (and teacher will demonstrate) summaries. Then, students will be taught how essayists use summaries of small bits of text can help support claims made in a literary essay. Steps will be outlined on how to create summaries for essays.

Session XI: Using Lists as Evidence

In this session, students will learn how to create “lists” to support their claims. They will be encouraged to write “tight lists” in which they write with parallelism.

Session XII: Using Descriptions of Author’s Craftsmanship

In this session, students will learn that writers study the choices authors make in their texts in order to find evidence to support their claims. A brief review of literary devices will be offered as a support in doing this work.

Session XIII: Putting It All Together—Constructing Literary Essays

In this session, students will learn ways that writers create drafts out of collections of evidence. They will also learn ways to study published literary essays in order to find structures for their own literary essays.

Session XIV: Packaging and Polishing Literary Essays

In this session, students will learn ways to write introductory and ending paragraphs (introductions and conclusions). They will learn some ways to make final revisions and edits of conventions to their essays, and import some specialized vocabulary. Also, handling citations with finesse will be taught.

Putting it All Together- Introductions

Introductions:

Goal: Prepare readers for your thesis statement and gain the reader's attention.

It must have: **A hook or attention-getter**

The author and story title of the piece that is the focus of your essay
Thesis statement (last sentence in the introduction)

Begin with a...Hook/Attention-getter that puts the essay into context:

Ask a question (*How many people would take in a stray dog?*)

A famous quotation (*"The older you get the more you know."*)

A universal statement (*Everyone feels alone at some point.*)

The idea is to start with a very large, general idea and funnel it down to the specific, focused idea in your thesis.

Then...

Explain your quote or statement. If you use a question, answer it.

Next...

Tie the quote or statement to your thesis statement.

Examples:

It's only human to want to be noticed by someone. In Eve Bunting's "Fly Away Home", the protagonist Andrew changes from a boy who wants to avoid being noticed to a boy who wants to get out of his situation. We learn right away how important it is "not to get caught" living as a homeless person in an airport. At the beginning, Andrew wants above all not to be noticed. Toward the middle, he wants to find a way out of his situation, like the bird he sees trapped in the terminal. By the end, Andrew wants to become known in the world, like the people in the airport with places to go, with people to greet, with homes. Over the course of "Fly Away Home", Andrew grows to hope for a place in the world where he is known and valued.

OR...

Change can be good or bad, depending on how you deal with it. Lots of people deal with change, like when parents get divorces, or when a kid has to move to a new school or grade. But not very many people deal with the same kind of change Katie did in Jane Yolen's story, "Birthday Box." When I first read "Birthday Box", I thought it was a story about a girl whose mom gets sick, then passes away. But it's really a story about a girl who is dealing with change, and who must learn to fill up her heart with the help of the birthday box.

My Introduction

FIRST SENTENCE: Hook/Attention-getter (what is the context of your essay)

SECOND SENTENCE: Explain how your first sentence relates to your essay.

THIRD SENTENCE: (optional)

FOURTH SENTENCE: (optional)

IMPORTANT PART-- THESIS STATEMENT:

Conclusions

Goal: Wrap up the essay by reconnecting to the broad idea you began with in the introduction.

It must have:

1. a transition that starts the paragraph
2. a personal connection between the story and your life OR the story and the world.
3. End with a final, great thought for the reader to ponder!

Begins with a...topic sentence:

The idea is to tie that last thing written in the preceding paragraph with the new thing in the current paragraph.

You could return to your thesis and emphasize why the claims and evidence you used support the thesis. (*In conclusion, "Boar Out There" is a story about . . .*)

Examples:

Literature can teach us many things. Based on Jenny's change of mind about the boar, I have learned something. I sometimes judge people before I get to know them, and, like her, I feel guilty after I really get to know them. But what matters is that you can change your mind about them. Always remember, it doesn't matter what your first opinion of someone is—as long as you are open to changing it.

"Fly Away Home" is a story about change, growth, and hope. Andrew's situation doesn't change externally; he and his dad remain homeless in the airport. Internally, though, Andrew starts to question his situation and to feel that he and his dad deserve and are ready for a change. This reminds me of how I feel I deserve and am ready for the change from middle school to high school. By the end of the story, Andrew hopes for that change to happen. He evolves from a survivor to a fighter. He believes he has something to say and somewhere to be. He is someone who deserves a home to call his own and who deserves a very really and visible place in the world. Andrew's change left me thinking that maybe, just maybe, it will happen for him.

Noticings About Literary Essays

My Name: _____ Today's Date: _____

DIRECTIONS: Read at least four literary essays written by my former students. After you read each essay, use this sheet to comment on each one.

1. The first literary essay I read was written by _____. It was about the book/short story entitled _____.

Things I noticed about this essay, which I think make it good:

Things I noticed about this essay that I do not think are good:

On a scale of 1 - 10, where 1 is the worst and 10 is the best, I'd rate this essay a _____ because...