



3RD **GRADE**

VOLUME 3.5

Realistic Fiction **Writing Unit for** ***Maniac Magee***

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Welcome to the 3.5 Realistic Fiction Writing Unit for *Maniac Magee*!

If this is your first time using this guide, you will want to read through this introduction carefully, as it provides information that you will find critical to your establishment of a successful language arts block!

This realistic fiction writing unit is meant to be taught in conjunction with the *Read Side by Side Reading Program*, Unit 3.5, *Maniac Magee*. The book *Maniac Magee* will be used as a mentor text to build students' background knowledge and expose students to the craft of writing.

This unit takes approximately 15 days to complete, from brainstorming and planning to sharing the published piece! Lessons in this unit give students explicit instruction in the steps of the writing process and the structure of narrative writing. Some craft and grammar lessons will be incorporated as students revise and edit their writing. You may want to supplement with additional craft, grammar, and spelling lessons between writing units.

Prior to starting the unit, you will want to consider how students will publish and share their writing. Here are a few suggestions:

- illustrated book,
- chapter book,
- handwritten book;
- audio book.

Students might read their story to their own classmates, visit another classroom, or make their writing available for others to read in the classroom, library or other public location.

After students have had the opportunity to publish their writing, assess their work using the checklist for grading a narrative story provided at the end of the unit.

Schedule

To complete this unit, you will need to set aside 30-minutes for writing, 2-4 times a week.

Instructional days begin with a whole-class lesson. Lessons will be 10-15 minutes in length, allowing a short time after the lesson for students to work on the assignment. While working, students will access the help of a writing partner as needed. It may be helpful to seat partners next to each other during the work time. The teacher then confers with partnerships as needed.

Working days allow students to get started right away on writing projects. During the work time, students will continue to access a partner or the teacher for help as needed. If it is challenging to find time every day for writing, teachers might assign these work-projects as homework.

Narrative schedule:

1. Brainstorm & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a list of story ideas.• Select a strong idea from the list.• Complete a <i>Narrative Writing Map</i>.• Write a blurb.• Design a cover.	Day 1-4
2. Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a draft using the 4-quadrant method.	Days 5-8
3. Revise & Edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use dialogue to show a character's thoughts and emotions.• Use the rules for punctuating dialogue.• Use dialogue tags to show who is speaking.• Use elaboration to embellish the story.• Use alliteration to embellish the story.	Days 9-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit and revise using a checklist.	Day 11
4. Publish & Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a final product that is handwritten, typed, or other.• Share with a real audience.	Days 12-15

Day 1: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm several ideas for writing and select one to write about. Begin to plan a piece of writing using the *Narrative Writing Map 1*.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 1

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* A realistic fiction story tells a fictional story with fictional characters. The story is believable; often times realistic fiction stories are inspired by real people or events. Realistic fiction is typically written in the first or third person.
2. The book *Maniac Magee* tells a fictional story using fictional characters. The story is told in the third person; from the perspective of an outsider looking in. The following pronouns are used: *he, she, it, and they*.
3. *Introduce the writing prompt:*

Write about a character who performs one or more amazing feat.

In the book *Maniac Magee*, Jeffrey (Maniac) performed several amazing feats:

- He caught a 60-yard pass with one hand.
 - He rescued Arnold Jones from Finsterwald's backyard.
 - He ran on the steel rail of the railroad track.
 - He hit home runs off John McNab's fast pitches.
 - He bunts the ball and scores a home run.
 - He unties Cobble's Knot.
 - He is a good Samaritan.
4. *Read (Optional):* Read chapters 19-20 of *Maniac Magee*, the Cobble's Knot story. This will give students an idea of how to build a story around one or more amazing feat.
 5. *Brainstorm:* Model brainstorming 2-3 ideas for your own piece of writing. Examples might include:
 - a sports feat,
 - an academic feat,
 - helping someone in need; and
 - a surprising accomplishment.
 6. *Select:* Model selecting one story idea from your list. Share tips for selecting a strong idea for a story:
 - The story should be believable.
 - The story should have a series of problems and important events.
 - The events should create a change in the main character or teach a lesson.
 - The story should be something that you would enjoy writing about.

7. *Plan*: Model filling out *Narrative Writing Map 1* for the story you will be writing, saving the last section (question/prediction) for Day 3. Demonstrate how to think about and jot notes about the:
 - main character,
 - secondary characters,
 - setting (time, place, and circumstance); and
 - problem/conflict.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time brainstorm ideas, select an idea, and fill-out *Narrative Writing Map 1*. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story idea?
- What might I do to improve my story idea?

(Title)

Main Character			
Secondary Character(s)			
Setting	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Circumstance</u>
Problem/ Conflict			
Question / Prediction			

Day 2: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Narrative Writing Map 2*.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 2

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be planning for the events of their story. They will write their story in four-quadrants.
2. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 1 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How does the problem start?
3. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 2 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How does the problem continue?
 - How does the main character feel?
4. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 3 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - What causes the main character to change? How does the main character change?
5. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 4 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How is the problem resolved?
 - What does the main character learn?

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill-out *Narrative Writing Map 2* for their own story. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

NARRATIVE WRITING MAP 2

Q1	How does the problem start? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q2	How does the problem continue? How does the main character feel? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q3	What causes the main character to change? How does the main character change? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q4	How is the problem resolved? What does the main character learn? <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Day 3: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by writing a blurb.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 1

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will be writing a blurb for their story. Remind them that the blurb does not give away how the story will end. The blurb usually ends with a question so that the person reading the blurb will want to read the story. For example, the blurb for *Maniac Magee* asks the question, “Why was Maniac special? This is his story.”
2. *Plan:* Model writing a question to use in the blurb of your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to finish filling-out *Narrative Writing Map 1* and then write the blurb for their own story about conflict. Then, give time for partners to share their blurb and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my blurb?
- What might I do to improve my blurb?

Day 4: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by making a cover.

Materials:

Blank paper and art materials for designing a cover or illustration software.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will be designing the cover of their book. Every book cover begins with a great title. Share tips for writing a good title:
 - It should provide a clue about the conflict in the story.
 - It should be relatively short.
 - It should get the reader interested.
 - It should put a picture in the reader's mind.
2. *Plan:* Model writing a title for your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to create a cover for their book. Then, give time for partners to share their covers and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my cover?
- What might I do to improve my cover?

Day 5: Draft, Quadrant 1

Lesson Goals: Begin drafting a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be drafting quadrant 1 of their story.
2. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 1 of your story. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Characters
 - Setting
 - Conflict

Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader picture the characters and the setting in their mind.

TIP: Share with students that an appropriate length for quadrant 1 is about one page, handwritten. (Each quadrant should be about the same length so that the full story is about 4 pages.) To help keep students organized, it may work best to have students use a new sheet of paper for each quadrant, even using different colors of lined paper if available.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to draft quadrant 1 of their book. Then, give time for partners to share writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

Day 6-8: Draft, Quadrants 2-4

Lesson Goals: Continue drafting a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be drafting quadrants 2-4 of their story.
2. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 2 of your story. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Conflict
 - The main character's actions, words and feelingsModel using descriptive language and details to help the reader feel how the main character is feeling.
3. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 3 of your story. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Conflict
 - Change in the main characterModel using descriptive language and details to help the reader understand that the main character is changing.
4. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 4 of your story. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Resolution
 - Author's messageModel using descriptive language and details to help the reader understand how the story ends and a lesson is learned.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to continue drafting their own stories. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

Day 9: Revise & Edit, Dialogue

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make revisions and edits.

Materials:

Dialogue Sheet 1

Dialogue Sheet 2

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.
2. *Revise:* Narrative stories use dialogue to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Dialogue is between two or more characters.

Read the example at the top of *Dialogue Sheet 1*.

“So you see,” said Amanda, “if you go up there and untie Cobble’s Knot—which I know you can—you’ll get your picture in the paper and you’ll be the biggest hero ever around here and nooo-body’ll mess with you then.”

Maniac listened and thought about it and finally gave a grin. “Maybe you’re just after the pizza, since you know I can’t eat it.”

Amanda screeched. “Jeff-freee! The pizza’s no the point.” She started to hit him. He laughed and grabbed her wrists.

“Okay, I’ll give it a try.”

Discuss: *How does this dialogue reveal each character’s thoughts and feelings?*

Model searching for a place in your writing where two or more characters are talking. Model revising the dialogue to reveal the feelings, thoughts and emotions of the characters.

3. *Edit:* When author’s use dialogue in their stories they follow rules for punctuation.

Discuss: the dialogue rules listed on *Dialogue Sheet 1*.

Model editing the dialogue in your story to match the dialogue rules.

4. *Revise:* Authors use dialogue tags to tell who in the story is talking.

The most common dialogue tags are:

- *said* – used when the character makes a statement.
- *asked* – used when the character asks a question.
- *exclaimed* – used when the character says something in surprise, anger, or pain.

When used repeatedly in our stories, these dialogue tags can make the story feel flat.

Discuss: Dialogue Sheet 2 which provides some other ideas for dialogue tags. Encourage students to add some of their own ideas to each list.

Model revising dialogue tags in your own writing, choosing alternatives to *says*, *asks*, and *exclaims*.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise and edit dialogue and dialogue tags in their own stories. If a student does not have dialogue, encourage them to add it. Then, give time for partners to share their dialogue and receive feedback.

- What do you like about the way I used dialogue in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

DIALOGUE SHEET 1

Narrative stories use dialogue to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Dialogue is between two or more characters.

Example from page 69 of *Maniac Magee*:

“So you see,” said Amanda, “if you go up there and untie Cobble’s Knot—which I *know* you can—you’ll get your picture in the paper and you’ll be the biggest hero ever around here and *nooo*-body’ll mess with you then.”

Maniac listened and thought about it and finally gave a grin. “Maybe you’re just after the pizza, since you know I can’t eat it.”

Amanda screeched. “Jeff-freee! The pizza’s no the point.” She started to hit him. He laughed and grabbed her wrists.

“Okay, I’ll give it a try.”

Dialogue rules:

1. Put quotation marks around words that are being spoken. **“Okay, I’ll give it a try.”**
2. Punctuation goes inside the quotation marks. **“Okay, I’ll give it a try.”**
3. Use dialogue tags to show who is speaking. **Amanda screeched. “Jeff-freee!”**
4. Typically, the dialogue tag comes *after* the dialogue. Put a comma inside the quotation marks and a period after the dialogue tag.
“Okay, I’ll give it a try,” said Maniac.
5. When the dialogue tag comes *before* the dialogue, use punctuation to separate the dialogue tag from what is spoken. **Amanda screeched. “Jeff-freee!”**
6. Capitalize the first word of what is being said.
“So you see,” said Amanda, “if you go up there and untie Cobble’s Knot...”
7. Use commas to separate spoken language from the rest of the sentence.
“So you see,” said Amanda, “if you go up there and untie Cobble’s Knot...”
8. Start a new paragraph each time a new person speaks.
——▶ **Amanda screeched. “Jeff-freee! The pizza’s no the point.” She started to hit him. He laughed and grabbed her wrists.**
——▶ **“Okay, I’ll give it a try.”**

DIALOGUE SHEET 2

STATEMENT	QUESTION	EXCLAMATION
said	asked	exclaimed

<p>uttered declared announced mentioned shared blabbered blurled proclaimed commented whispered murmured remarked answered replied responded</p>	<p>questioned quizzed begged demanded pressed</p>	<p>blurled uttered cried hollered shouted chirped bellowed thundered hailed shrieked announced</p>
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Day 10: Revise, Elaboration & Alliteration

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and add elaboration.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.
2. *Revise:* Today we are going to add elaboration to our stories. Elaboration is when an author gives a scene intricate and rich detail to embellish the story.

In the book *Maniac Magee*, Jerry Spinelli takes a simple description and elaborates to put a picture in the reader's mind.

Simple description of Cobble's Knot:

If you look at old pictures in the *Two Mills Times*, you see that the knot was the size and shape of a volleyball. It was made of string but had many contortions.

Elaborate description of Cobbles Knot:

If you look at old pictures in the *Two Mills Times*, you see that the knot was the size and shape of a lopsided volleyball. It was made of string, but it had more contortions, ins and outs, twists and turns, dips and doodles than the brain of Albert Einstein himself.

Elaboration provides several visuals for the reader. In this example, contortions are described as 1. Ins and outs, 2. Twists and turns, 3. Dips and doodles, 4. And compared to the brain of Albert Einstein.

Model adding elaboration to your own story.

3. *Revise:* To make the story even more interesting and fun, Jerry Spinelli uses alliteration. Alliteration is when an author uses an occurrence of the same letter or sound for closely connected words. The title of the book is an example of alliteration, *Maniac Magee*.

Here are a few more examples of alliteration taken from chapter 19:

- Cobbles Corner,
- *Two Mills Times*,
- penny candy,
- frosted foods,
- business would boom,
- sixty seconds,
- candy counter,
- practically priceless,
- twists and turns,
- dips and doodles,
- take a shot at the knot,

- gave a little grin; and
- the pizza's not the point.

Model adding alliteration to your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their writing to include elaboration and alliteration. Then, give time for partners to share their revisions and receive feedback.

- What do you like about the way I used elaboration and alliteration in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 11: Edit & Revise

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make revisions and edits.

Materials:

Editing and Revision Checklist

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.
2. *Edit:* Model editing your own writing using the editing checklist.
3. *Revise:* Model revising your own writing using the revision checklist:

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise and edit their own stories. Then, give time for partners to share their stories and receive feedback.

- How did I use proper punctuation, grammar, and spelling in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

Editing Checklist:

- _____ Sentences start with a capital letter.
- _____ I used capital letters for proper nouns.
- _____ I have punctuation at the end of each sentence.
- _____ I checked my words for spelling.
- _____ I indented paragraphs.

Revision Checklist:

- _____ I started with an introduction that is clear.
- _____ I ended with a conclusion that is clear.
- _____ I used transition words at the beginning of paragraphs.
- _____ I used language to show how one event may have caused another event.
- _____ Sentences make sense.
- _____ Sentences stay focused on the topic.
- _____ I added details and elaboration that are important to the topic.
- _____ I used key vocabulary.

Day 12-15: Publish & Share

Lesson Goals: Publish a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be preparing their piece of writing for others to read. This is called publishing.
2. *Discuss:* how stories will be published—handwritten, typed, or other. Let them know when and how their stories will be shared with the class.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to publish their writing and share their writing with an audience.

Ideas for publishing:

- illustrated book,
- chapter book,
- handwritten book; and
- audio book.

Ideas for sharing:

- read stories aloud to classmates,
- read stories aloud to another class,
- make stories available for others to read (in the classroom, library, or other); and
- take stories home to share with family.

An **author's chair** is a fun classroom tradition. It is a decorated chair in which an author sits to share his/her writing. Teachers can paint a wooden chair or have each new class decorate a pillowcase to go over the back of a chair. This quickly transform a standard classroom chair into something special for young authors.

Checklist for Assessing a Narrative Story

<p>Cover _____/6</p>	<p>____ Has a title that is short. ____ The title puts a picture in the reader's mind.</p> <p>____ Includes a blurb that talks briefly about the story. ____ The blurb entices the reader to read the book.</p> <p>____ The cover gives the reader a clue about the story. ____ The cover gets the reader interested.</p>
<p>Exposition ____/6</p>	<p>Characters ____ Introduces more than one character. ____ Gives important details about each character. ____ Is written in the first or third person.</p> <p>Setting ____ Establishes a setting: time and place. ____ Gives important details about the setting.</p> <p>Problem ____ Introduces a problem/conflict.</p>
<p>Rising Action ____/8</p>	<p>Text Structure ____ Presents a logical series of events that result from the conflict. ____ Events build toward a climax. ____ The events reveal the author's central message or theme.</p> <p>Craft ____ Includes the development of a main character. ____ Includes dialogue and/or interior monologue. ____ Uses language to show the passage of time. ____ Uses descriptive language. ____ Includes elaboration and/or alliteration.</p>
<p>Falling Action & Resolution ____/3</p>	<p>____ The problem is resolved. ____ The character has changed or learned something. ____ The ending is satisfying to the reader.</p>
<p>Revision and Editing ____/5</p>	<p>____ Writing is edited for spelling. ____ Writing is edited for grammar. ____ Writing is edited for punctuation. ____ Writing shows evidence of revision. ____ Published writing is polished.</p>
<p>Collaboration & Effort ____/4</p>	<p>____ Worked well with a partner. ____ Respectfully gave feedback to a partner. ____ Respectfully received feedback from a partner. ____ Showed good effort and persistence.</p>
<p>Total: ____/32</p>	<p>Comments:</p>

Lucas and the Not-So-Ordinary Bike Ride

Blurb: Lucas and his sister Mia ride their bikes to the park. There is a tall hill at the end of the street. Will Lucas be brave enough to ride down the hill with no hands?

Lucas lived on a quiet street where not much ever happened. One sunny Saturday, Lucas and his older sister Mia rode their bikes to the park. The sun was shining brightly in the sky. A soft summer breeze blew gently as they pedaled down the street.

“This is a perfect day to ride,” Mia said cheerfully.

“Yeah, I like days like this,” Lucas nodded.

Mia stopped her bike when they got to the big hill near the park.

“Want to race down the hill?” she challenged with a grin.

Lucas stared down the steep slope and swallowed. “It’s kind of steep,” he murmured quietly.

“You can do it,” Mia declared. “Just don’t go too fast.”

Lucas pushed off and started riding. His heart thumped like a drum and the wind rushed past his ears. Halfway down the hill, Lucas remembered something he had seen Mia do before. He took a deep breath.

Slowly, Lucas lifted his hands off the handlebars. For a moment, his arms flapped and floated in the air while his bike sped down the hill. The wind roared around him and made his shirt flap. For a few seconds, Lucas rode down the hill with no hands at all.

At the bottom he grabbed the handlebars again and skidded to a stop. Mia rode up to him with a big smile.

“Lucas! That was awesome!” she exclaimed.

Lucas laughed. “The truth is, I was really scared. I didn’t think I could do it.”

“Well, you did,” Mia replied proudly. “And it was pretty amazing!”

They sat down on a bench at the park and talked about the ride. Lucas smiled and looked back at the hill. His ordinary bike ride had turned into something special. Lucas believed he might have just performed the greatest bike trick in the whole history of the world. Maybe he should call the Guinness Book of World Records.