

Mount Laurel Language Arts Curriculum
Grade 7

Writing Unit: Essay (Informational)

Stage 1: Determine the Desired Results

Enduring Understanding(s):

Effective writers develop and refine their ideas for thinking, learning, communicating about reading by using graphics, such as maps, diagrams, color-coding their notebooks to think through their work in fresh, new ways.

Effective writers elaborate on important points from the text by including specific details in their writing about what they have read.

Essential Question(s):

How do writers truly understand and demonstrate what they have read?

How do effective writers incorporate evidence from the text as a means to elaborate on the text?

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Students will be able to:

Anchor Standards for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

NJSLSA. W2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

NJSLSA.W4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.W5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

NJSLSA.W6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

NJSLSA.W7 Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects, utilizing an inquiry-based research process, based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

NJSLSA.W8 Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

NJSLSA.W9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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Range of Writing

NJSLSA.W10 Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Note on range and content in student writing

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students need to learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. They develop the capacity to build knowledge on a subject through research projects and to respond analytically to literary and informational sources. To meet these goals,

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

Students must devote significant time and effort to writing, producing numerous pieces over short and extended time frames throughout the year.

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Progress Indicators for Writing

Text Types and Purposes

W.7.2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

1. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
2. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
3. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
4. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
5. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

Production and Distribution of Writing

W.7.4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, voice and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

W.7.5. With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.

W.7.6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and link to and cite sources as

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well as to interact and collaborate with others, including linking to and citing sources.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

W.7.7. Conduct short research projects to answer a question, drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions for further research and investigation.

W.7.8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, using search terms effectively; assess the credibility and accuracy of each source; and quote or paraphrase the data and conclusions of others while avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

W.7.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

W.7.10. Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, metacognition/self correction, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

New Jersey Student Learning Standards for English Language Arts

Key Ideas and Details

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Progress Indicators for Reading Literature

RL.7.1. Cite several pieces of textual evidence and make relevant connections to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.7.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.7.3. Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).

Craft and Structure

RL.7.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.

RL.7.5. Analyze how a drama's or poem's form or structure (e.g., soliloquy, sonnet) contributes to its meaning.

RL.7.6. Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a text.

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Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

RL.7.7. Compare and contrast a written story, drama, or poem to its audio, filmed, staged, or multimedia version, analyzing the effects of techniques unique to each medium (e.g., lighting, sound, color, or camera focus and angles in a film).

RL.7.8. (Not applicable to literature)

Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening Comprehension and Collaboration

NJSLSA.SL1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

NJSLSA.SL2. Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

NJSLSA.SL3. Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

NJSLSA.SL4. Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

NJSLSA.SL5. Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

NJSLSA.SL6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Note on range and content of student speaking and listening

To build a foundation for college and career readiness, students must have ample opportunities to take part in a variety of rich, structured conversations—as part of a whole class, in small groups, and with a partner. Being productive members of these conversations requires that students contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; make comparisons and contrasts; and analyze and synthesize a multitude of ideas in various domains.

New technologies have broadened and expanded the role that speaking and listening play in acquiring and sharing knowledge and have tightened their link to other forms of communication. Digital texts confront students with the potential for continually updated content and dynamically changing combinations of words, graphics, images, hyperlinks, and embedded video and audio.

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Progress Indicators for Speaking and Listening

Comprehension and Collaboration

SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with

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diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

1. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
2. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
3. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
4. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

SL.7.2. Analyze the main ideas and supporting details presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how the ideas clarify a topic, text, or issue under study.

SL.7.3. Delineate a speaker's argument and specific claims, evaluating the soundness of the reasoning and the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

SL.7.4. Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with pertinent descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

SL.7.5. Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.

SL.7.6. Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Anchor Standards for Language

Conventions of Standard English

NJSLSA.L1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

NJSLSA.L2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Knowledge of Language

NJSLSA L3. Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

NJSLSA L4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases by using context clues, analyzing meaningful word parts, and consulting general and specialized reference materials, as

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appropriate.

NJSLSA L5. Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

NJSLSA L6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrate independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when encountering an unknown term important to comprehension or expression.

Note on range and content of student language use

To build a foundation for college and career readiness in language, students must gain control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. They must also be able to determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening, reading, and media use; come to appreciate that words have nonliteral meanings, shadings of meaning, and relationships to other words; and expand their vocabulary in the course of studying content. The inclusion of Language standards in their own strand should not be taken as an indication that skills related to conventions, effective language use, and vocabulary are unimportant to reading, writing, speaking, and listening; indeed, they are inseparable from such contexts.

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Progress Indicators for Language

Conventions of Standard English

L.7.1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

- A. Explain the function of phrases and clauses in general and their function in specific sentences.
- B. Choose among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences to signal differing relationships among ideas.
- C. Place phrases and clauses within a sentence, recognizing and correcting misplaced and dangling modifiers.*

L.7.2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

A. Use a comma to separate coordinate adjectives (e.g., *It was a fascinating, enjoyable movie* but not *He wore an old [,] green shirt*).

B. Spell correctly.

Knowledge of Language

L.7.3. Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

A. Choose language that expresses ideas precisely and concisely, recognizing and eliminating wordiness and redundancy.*

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Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

L.7.4. Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grade 7 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

1. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
2. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *belligerent, bellicose, rebel*).
3. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
4. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

L.7.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

A. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.

B. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.

C. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., *refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending*).

L.7.6. Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

8.1 Educational Technology: Interdisciplinary Connection

All students will use digital tools to access, manage, evaluate, and synthesize information in order to solve problems individually and collaborate and to create and communicate knowledge.

Integration of 21st Century Themes and Skills:

- CRP6. Demonstrate creativity and innovation.
- CRP5. Consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of decisions.
- CRP7. Employ valid and reliable research strategies.
- CRP8. Utilize critical thinking to make sense of problems and persevere in solving them.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Required Performance Task:

Administer an open-ended prompt that includes the following language:

Think about a topic you have studied or know well. Write an informational or explanatory text that teaches others important and interesting information and ideas about this topic. If you want

Other Forms of Assessment:

Informational/Explanatory writing essay

Multiple drafts of the informational/explanatory writing essay (pre-writing, rough draft, revising, etc.)

Mini-lesson application and accountability: Student is able to effectively apply the mini-lesson concept to his/her writing

Prewriting/planning check-in: Student is able to narrow in on

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<p>to find and use information from a book or outside source, you may bring that resource with you.</p> <p>Please include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write an introduction• Elaborate with a variety of information• Organize your writing• Use transition words• Write a conclusion	<p>a particular topic, then brainstorm and develop that topic</p> <p>Productivity: Student writes independently without needing teacher support, is able to revise and edit his/her work for clarity of thought and logical progression of ideas</p> <p>Mechanics: Student can spell high frequency words accurately; can use his/her knowledge of our sound/symbol system (the alphabet) to spell unfamiliar words; is able to use punctuation successfully; and can look back over his/her final product to edit the final draft for clarity, cohesion, and logical expression of ideas</p> <p>Teacher's anecdotal records</p>
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Stage 3: Learning Plan

The Components of a Minilesson

A writing minilesson is a short lesson focused on a specific principle or procedure (Calkins 1986, 1994). A minilesson's components are: Connection, Teaching, Active Engagement, and Link. Each minilesson follows the same architecture:

Connection: Students learn why today's instruction is important and how it relates to the prior work. They hear the teaching point that crystallizes the lesson.

Teaching: The teacher shows students how writers go about doing whatever is being taught. Usually this involves a demonstration, which the teacher sets up and explains.

Active Engagement: Students are given a chance to practice (for a minute) what has just been taught. The teacher scaffolds their work so they can be successful.

Link: The teacher crystallizes what has been taught, adding it to students' growing repertoire. Students are reminded that today's lesson pertains not only to today, but to every day. The teacher often summarizes the conditions under which a student is able to reach for this new knowledge.

The Architecture of a Conference

Each conference is unique; however, they nevertheless do have a predictable structure.

Research: Observe and interview to understand what the child is trying to do as a writer. Probe to glean more about the student's intentions. Name what the student has already accomplished as a writer and remind the child to do this in future writing.

Decide: Weigh whether you want to accept or alter the student's current plans and processes. Decide what you will teach and how you will teach it. Although there may be several teaching decisions, think about the one teaching point that is apt to make the biggest difference in the child's writing. Plan the way in which you will provide the student with guided practice.

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Teach: Instruct the student on critical writing strategies, i.e., adding details, creating a more effective hook, removing information that does not support the topic, or selecting a topic that the student may not know.

Link: Name what the student has accomplished as a writer and remind the student to do this often in the future.

UNIT 2

Writing About Reading: From Reader's Notebooks to Companion Books

BEND I: Planning and Drafting Companion Books

Session 1 — Writing about Reading with Voice and Investment

[Mentor text: "The Stolen Party"](#)

[FIG. 1-1 Writing about reading "Stray"](#)

[FIG. 1-2 Pressure map of "The Goodness of Matt Kaiser"](#)

[FIG. 1-3 Ways to capture thinking about "Uprising"](#)

[FIG. 1-4 A.J. charts characters in *Miracle's Boys*](#)

[Additional piece for "Stray"](#)

[Additional piece for "The Goodness of Matt Kaiser"](#)

Session 2 — Using Graphics to Think and Rethink about Literature

[Mentor text: "The Stolen Party"](#)

Session 3 — Thinking Big, Thinking Small: Ideas and Specifics

[FIG. 1-1 Writing about reading "Stray"](#)

[FIG. 1-2 Pressure map of "The Goodness of Matt Kaiser"](#)

[FIG. 1-3 Ways to capture thinking about "Uprising"](#)

[FIG. 1-4 A.J. charts characters in *Miracle's Boys*](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

[FIG. 3-1 chart: "Ladder of Abstraction"](#)

Session 4 — Explaining Thinking

[FIG. 4-1 A.J.'s chart about *Radiance*](#)

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[FIG. 4-2 Maggie's web about *Matilda*](#)

[FIG. 4-3 Teacher's drawings and notes on *War Horse*](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

[Chart: How to Write a Theme-Based Literary Essay](#)

[Chart: Ways to Analyze Evidence](#)

Session 5 — Close Reading and Analytic Writing

[FIG. 5-1 chart: Ways of Visualizing Relationships Between Story Elements](#)

[Mentor text: "The Stolen Party"](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

Session 6 — Letting the Book Teach You How to Respond

[Mentor text: "The Stolen Party"](#)

[FIG. 6-1 chart: Character Emotions and Reader Reactions](#)

[FIG. 6-3 Brian's essay about *Divergent*](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

Session 7 — Working Toward a Companion Book

[Information Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

[Teacher demonstration text: Companion book to "The Stolen Party"](#)

Session 8 — Incorporating Evidence from the Text as a Means to Elaborate

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

[Chart: Appositives and Dependent Clauses in Sentences](#)

Session 9 — Reflection and Goal-Setting Using the Information Writing Checklist—and a Mini-Celebration

[Information Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

BEND II: Writing to Deepen Literary Analysis

Session 10 — Reading Like Writers — and Writing about It

[FIG. 10-1 chart: Writers Use Techniques Such As...](#)

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[FIG. 10-2 Chart: Writers Aim Toward Goals Such As...](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

Session 11 — Writing about Symbolism in Texts

[FIG. 10-2 chart: Writers Aim Toward Goals Such As...](#)

[FIG. 11-1 Marcus' writing on empathy in *The Maze Runner*](#)

[Anchor chart: Ways to Write Powerfully About Reading](#)

Session 12 — Analyzing Structure in a Text

[Mentor text: "The Stolen Party"](#)

[Chart: Thought Prompts that Help an Essayist Think and Write](#)

[FIG. 10-2 Chart: Writers Aim Toward Goals Such As...](#)

[Information Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

[FIG. 12-1 Claire's chapter on a theme in *Chasing Alaska*](#)

[FIG. 12-2 A.J.'s chapter on symbolism in *Miracle's Boys*](#)

Session 13 –Writing *Inside the Story*: Improvisations and Fan Fiction

Session 14 – Writing Inside Perspectives

Session 15 — Writing Introductions and Conclusions

[Information Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

Session 16 — Final Edits and a Celebration

[Information Writing Checklist, Grade 7](#)

[FIG. 16-1 A.J.'s companion book on *Miracle's Boys*](#)

[FIG. 16-2 Maggie's companion book on *Matilda*](#)

[FIG. 16-3 Jordan's companion book on *Miracle's Boys*](#)

[FIG. 16-4 Emma's companion book on *Uprising*](#)

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Modifications	
<p>Special Education:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Research, Decide, Teach, Link methodology during conferring with students ● Teacher models own writing ● Show additional number of samples/examples ● Provide additional opportunities to practice ● Use individual teacher/student conferences to address student's needs ● Use small group table conferences to address needs ● Chunk mini-lessons over a number of days ● Develop target vocabulary ● Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response ● Chunk reading material ● Use graphic organizers to develop key concepts/ideas ● Teach key aspects of a topic. Eliminate nonessential information ● Provide individual copies of the student's writing checklists ● Use sentence frames to promote student's thinking and writing (this is found in Lucy's Units) 	<p>English Language Learners (ELLs):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Model Thinking Aloud ● Encourage Partner Talk ● Repeat and Clarify ● Provide a Sequence ● Encourage self-selection of topics ● Target vocabulary ● Scaffold comprehension when reading is used to promote reader response ● Scaffold content-literacy reading ● Allow products to demonstrate student's learning ● Provide on-going feedback
<p>Students at Risk of School Failure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize TIME Mentor Program ● Build a relationship ● Allow flexible due dates ● Employ strategies from Classroom Instruction that Works ● Create the Opportunity to Learn strategies ● Build lessons around student interests 	<p>Gifted Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use Flexible grouping ● Give Independent projects ● Differentiate product assignments ● Offer student choice ● Use multiple intelligence options ● Provide opportunities to research (Individual/Group) ● Focus on Habits of Mind ● Focus on Webb's Depth of Knowledge - Emphasis on Level 4
<p>Core Instructional Materials:</p>	

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- *Calkins Units of Study in Writing* Program 2014 edition
 - Newsela.com for leveled texts
 - Technology/Equipment: ACTIV Board, LCD projector, sound system , CDs, DVDs, videos, internet, iPod
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