Unit 11.1: Memoir – My Point of View
English as a Second Language
6 weeks

Stage 1 - Desired Results

Unit Summary
In this unit, students will study the genre of memoir while examining author’s purpose, organizational patterns for connecting ideas, making connections to text, and expressing their own opinions in discussions and presentations. By reading many quality memoir mentor texts and examining the work of their peers, they will improve their own writing.

Transfer goal: Students will leave the class able to apply their knowledge to better understand the genre of memoir, make personal connections and relate to others and improve their skills in writing memoir to more deeply express themselves and their pasts. They will be able to use proper editing symbols and revision techniques to revise and improve their writing.

Content Standards and Learning Expectations

Listening/Speaking
L/S.11.3 Uses appropriate language structure to analyze and state opinions in discussions and presentations, to problem solve, and to explain a process integrating comparison and contrast statements.

Reading
R.11.3 Classifies parts of the plot, establishes cause and effect, makes connections, predictions, and inferences in a variety of texts; draws conclusions; analyzes and compares and contrasts conflicts and resolutions across texts.

Writing
W.11.1 Analyzes and selects appropriate words to convey meaning; incorporates transitions, correct grammar, syntax, and style.
W.11.2 Determines the purpose of writing; analyzes and constructs organizational patterns to connect ideas; writes narrative, expository, and persuasive essays.
W.11.5 Applies editing marks, self-correcting methods, and reference sources to revise and edit; analyzes, organizes, and verifies information to write and revise; completes a final draft using the writing process.

Big Ideas/Enduring Understandings:
- Experiences, relationships, history, and culture influence identity.
- A self-examined life is a life worth living.
- We all have our own unique points of view, formed by our unique personal and cultural experiences.
- The structure and organization of writing helps us better understand what we read.

Essential Questions:
- What is to identity and how is it shaped?
- How has a person, place, or event helped form the person I am today?
- How do our personal and cultural experiences define us?
- How do the structure and organizational style and grammar help us determine meaning?
- What can I learn about my own identity from reading about and studying the stories and experiences of others?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content (Students will know...)</th>
<th>Skills (Students will be able to...)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Transition words</td>
<td>• Analyze and state opinions in discussions and presentations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Organizational structure of a memoir</td>
<td>• Make connections in a variety of texts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Editing marks</td>
<td>• Incorporate transition words, syntax, and style.</td>
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<td>• Reference sources – uses and structures</td>
<td>• Analyze organizational patterns to connect ideas.</td>
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<td>• Purpose for writing</td>
<td>• Apply editing marks, self-correcting methods, and reference sources to revise and edit.</td>
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<td>• Language structure to analyze and state opinions</td>
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<td>• Characteristics of memoir texts</td>
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**Content Vocabulary**

- Memoir
- Text-to-text, text-to-self connections
- Self-correct
- Reference
- Source

**Stage 2 - Assessment Evidence**

**Performance Tasks**

**Oral Presentation on Independent Reading**

- Students will give an oral presentation about a memoir they have read independently during the unit.
- Students will analyze and express their opinions about the memoir during their presentations.
- Students should prepare a poster or hand-out that relates to their memoir and helps the audience understand the story.
- Audience members should ask the presenter “how” and “why” questions about the memoir and presentation, promoting higher order thinking skills.
- The students will be assessed using a rubric, such as the following example: [http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html](http://www.ncsu.edu/midlink/rub.pres.html).

**Memoir Choice**

- The students should have many drafts of memoirs in their journals. They should choose one and bring in to a final draft. They should first reread it and refine it into a draft. If desired, a new topic can be chosen.

**Other Evidence**

- Literacy Journal – which will include:
  - Double-Entry Journal – The students will make a 2 column chart in their notebooks with the titles “A sentence I like” and “This makes me think...” Students will write quotations from what they read and respond to them making text-to-text, text-to-self, and text-to-world connections.
  - Dialogue Journal – the student will write an entry, the teacher will write a response directly in the journal, the student will respond, and so on.
  - Reading Response Journal – Students will answer response questions on their silent or group reading as assigned by the teacher.
  - Reading Log – Students will record titles and pages read each day.
- Anecdotal evidence of comprehension and participation collected during discussions and group work
- Comparing Memoirs Chart (see attachment: 11.1 Learning Activity – Compare Memoirs).
### Stage 3 - Learning Plan

#### Learning Activities

**Memoir Read Alouds**
- The teacher will spend several days at the beginning of the unit reading short, high-interest memoirs aloud to the class. The main purpose of the read alouds is to expose students to the characteristics of memoirs through the use of literature. Students should keep a log in their journals of the stories they hear and should write a short summary and response to each. The students can refer back to the log for other activities and tasks. Text-to-text and text-to-self connections should be emphasized.
- In each lesson, the teacher should read the story to the students first for enjoyment and discussion. Then the teacher should reread it to the students, asking them to listen like a writer. In other words, they should pay attention to and discuss the choices the author made in terms of word choice, organizational pattern, transitions, syntax, and style and the effect it has/had on the message being communicated.
- Students should work in small groups to analyze the excerpts from multiple memoirs. Students should present their analyses to the whole class.

**Literature Circles**
- Students will read *The Color of Water* (or another high interest memoir) with a small group in a Literature Circle.
- The following link will be helpful for effectively using Literature Circles with reluctant readers: [http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/literature-circles-high-school-reluctant-readers](http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/literature-circles-high-school-reluctant-readers)
- The teacher will check in with the groups often to ensure comprehension, adherence to task, and group cooperation. Students should feel free to ask questions about the novel or about procedure.
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Compare Memoirs
- The students will compare other memoirs (from read-aloud and individual reading) to *The Color of Water* using attachment 11.1 Learning Activity – Compare Memoirs.
- Information from the chart could be used as a pre-writing activity for a comparison Response Journal entry or an essay.

Writing Memoirs
- Throughout the unit, the teacher will assign memoir topics for students to write in their reflection journals. These should be left in rough draft/journal entry form.
- Suggested topics:
  - Artifact: Students will write a memoir based on an artifact of importance. The first part should be a description of the artifact. In the second part, students will show the significance of the artifact and why the artifact is important. The student should include details about how he or she interacts with the artifact. Artifacts may include: a blanket, a stuffed animal, a special baseball card, gift, etc.
  - Place: Students will write a memoir about a special place in their life. The students should describe the significant place in detail and then write about themselves in the place and the action that takes place around them.
  - A Year in the Life: Students write about a significant year in their lives such as “the year I lost my mother or father,” “the year I went to middle school,” “the year my brother or sister was born,” “the year my parents divorced,” etc. The memoir should reflect the life lessons learned and how they were impacted by events of that year.
- In each task, the students will create a strong sense of significance of the place, object, or event. They should be sure that the characters, settings, and events work well together and include vivid language and sensory details.

Making Connections to Text
- After reading an excerpt from *When I Was Puerto Rican* by Esmeralda Santiago (http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/cavalcade/pdf/sept2003/p15-21_nonfiction_puertorico.pdf), students will write a response in their journals to the following quotation: “I had failed the audition and would never, ever get out of Brooklyn.” Why does Santiago feel this way? Can you relate to this sentiment? Have you ever been in a position like this?

Sample Lessons
- Teacher Center: Memoir – Mini-unit on understanding the genre and writing a memoir. Includes four printable memoirs. http://teacher.scholastic.com/writeit/memoir/teacher/easing.htm

Additional Resources
- Use as reference:
  - Unit 8.2 Examining Transformative Decisions Through Memoirs
  - Unit 9.2 Communicating my Ideas
  - Unit 10.4 My World
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- Unit 12.1 My Journey So far
  - [http://365readalouds.wordpress.com/tag/memoir](http://365readalouds.wordpress.com/tag/memoir)
  - Six Word Memoirs: [http://mrspal.wikispaces.com/6+word+memoirs](http://mrspal.wikispaces.com/6+word+memoirs)

**Literature Connections**

- *Memories of growing up Hispanic* by Edward Rivera
- *Memories of a Snowflake* by Joe Vasicek
- *Read Aloud Anthology: 35 Short, Riveting Read Alouds* by Janet Allen and Patrick Daley
- *The Color of Water* by James McBride
- *Over a Thousand Hills I Walk with You* by Hanna Jansen
- *Sky of Stone: A Memoir* by Homer Hickam
- *Dream House: A Memoir* by Charlotte Nekola’s
- *Feels Like Far: A Rancher’s Life on the Great Plains* by Linda Hasselstrom
- *When I was Young In the Mountains* by Cynthia Rylant

Focus on relationships between characters:

- *Uncle Jed’s Barbershop* by Margaree Mitchell
- *Rudi’s Pond* by Eve Bunting
- *Through Grandpa’s Eyes* by Patricia MacLachlan
- *My Rotten Redheaded Older Brother* by Patricia Polacco
- *Chicken Sunday* by Patricia Polacco
- *The Bracelet* by Yoshiko Uchida
- *Thuncercake* by Patricia Polacco
- *Memoir of the Sunday Brunch* by Julia Pand

**Literature Timeless Voices, Timeless Theme, Bronze**

- From the Iceman by Don Lessem page 223 (Story: Journal)
- Zoo by Edward D Hoch page 18 (Story: Characters Perspective)
- The Hippopotamus by Ogden Nash page 420 (Story: Evaluate Author’s Message)
- The caterpillar by Ogden Nash page 421 (Story: Evaluate Author’s Message)
- The Blind Men and the Elephant by John Godfrey Saxe page 422 (Story: Evaluate Author’s Message)
- How the Snake Got Poison by Zora Neale Hurston page 425 (Story: Character’s Perspective)
- How to Enjoy Poetry by James Dickey, page 557 (Expository Essay: Compare and Contrast)
- No Gumption by Russell Baker page 566 (Autobiography: Author’s Purpose)
- The Chase from American Childhood by Annie Dillard pages 576 (Autobiography: Understanding the Author’s Purpose)
- Winslow Homer: America’s Greatest Painter by H. N. Levitt page 586 (Biography: Interpret)
- Nolan Ryan, Texas Treasure by William W. Lace page 590 (Biography: Purpose for Reading)
- The Lion and the Statue by Aesop page 872 (Fable: Recognize Storyteller’s Purpose)
- The Fox and the Crow by Aesop page 873 (Fable: Recognize Storyteller’s Purpose)