



WOODRIDGE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

Common Core Writing Newsletter

Boxes and Bullets: Personal and Persuasive Essays

In this unit students will learn to introduce topics clearly to readers through a variety of sophisticated strategies, provide reasons to support their opinions, and provide facts and details to elaborate on these reasons.

About this Unit

The first set of lessons is called “Essay Boot Camp”. The goal is to help students develop a sense for writing an essay. The teacher and students will plan a simple essay together, aloud, and students will then draft that spoken essay on paper. Students will spend a few days gathering entries in their notebook, writing a great deal about people, objects, events, and so on. Towards the end of these lessons, students will use what they’ve written in their notebooks to develop a thesis statement and plan their essay.

In the next set of lessons, students will collect and write about evidence to support each of the reasons for the opinions expressed in their thesis statement. They will select the most powerful evidence and tell it in a way that supports their reasons. They will draft sections of their essay, using transition words and phrases to create cohesion. As they draft, they will also learn to use the introduction to engage the reader and the conclusion to offer final thoughts. Students will also edit to improve their clarity, finding and correcting run-on sentences and fragments.

In the final selection of lessons, students are going to focus on raising their quality of work. Students will develop a plan for a persuasive essay. Students will be coached to include a greater variety of evidence than before and to elaborate on how that evidence connects to their reasons and opinion. Finally, students will edit their essay using all they have learned about conventions, in particular ensuring that all grade-appropriate words are spelled correctly. They will publish their pieces in a final celebration.

Additional Information

Students will continue to participate in a writer’s workshop during a daily, dedicated writing time. The daily workshop is set up so that students will be presented with a mini-lesson and then be sent off to write as the teacher confers with students both individually and in small groups.

Attached to this newsletter are a grade level specific checklist and an example of proficient student writing for this unit’s genre of writing. Please contact your student’s teacher should you have any further questions.