



WOODRIDGE
SCHOOL DISTRICT 68

Common Core Writing Newsletter

The Literary Essay: From Character to Compare/Contrast

This unit begins with an “essay bootcamp” that will help both to assess to some degree what the students know and do not know about essay writing as well as to introduce some of the essay writing features the teacher will help to develop later on.

About this Unit

Students will be taught how writers craft a literary essay about character—first learning ways to analyze characters in stories, then ways to grow big ideas from small details in the text, and then ways to write supportable claims or theses. Students will learn how to develop a claim and articulate it. Students will be taught to explain how their evidence supports their thinking.

After drafting and revising a simple essay about character in the first set of lessons, students will repeat this cycle, this time with their essays focusing on the theme of the text they are analyzing. Students will be learning new essay-writing skills—from crafting powerful introductions and conclusions to incorporating quotes accurately. Students will be writing these second essays with greater independence when compared with their previous essays. Students will be utilizing both checklists and mentor essays to accomplish this.

In the final set of lessons, students will be taught how to compare two texts through the lens of a common theme, teaching them to consider the similarities and differences in the ways two texts deal with an issue or problem. While completing this unit, students will be strengthening their reading skills. Specifically, students will be closely reading texts and citing evidence to support their claims.

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.