

Learning Targets for The Art of Story

What We Learn & Practice in Independent Reading

Developing a Reading Habit

I can find a book that interests me enough to sustain my attention.

I can find books that I might read next.

I can read for 20 minutes (Reading Break) without giving up.

I can recognize when I am losing focus in my reading and reread to reenter the story.

I can recognize when I do not understand what I am reading and use a fix-it strategy to improve my comprehension.

I can read for 1-2 hours at home.

I can find a place to read that allows me to enter the story and escape the distractions of my life.

I can set goals for my growth in stamina as a reader and monitor my progress.

I can increase the volume of my reading by finding times to read throughout the week.

I can explain why reading stamina matters.

I can alter the pace of my reading to match what is easy for me or what is difficult for me.

I can name my favorite authors.

I can name the genres I enjoy reading most.

I can recognize when I am stuck in my reading and initiate a move to grow as a reader.

Expanding Vocabulary by Reading

I can understand unfamiliar vocabulary by the context I find the word in.

I can collect words that interest me and I want to learn to use well.

I can identify synonyms in my reading, expanding my personal thesaurus.

Reading Like a Writer

I can notice how writers craft sentences and structure scenes in my book.

I can make theories about the way the writer has crafted dialogue, sensory details, and the voice of the narrator in my book.

I can see how the volume of my reading impacts my knowledge of the wide variety of styles of writing.

I can experiment with moves I have seen other writers make.

What We Learn & Practice in Daily Notebook Writing

"I write by hand, when the fragility of the project—a poem, the start of a novel—demands that I sneak up on it with that humblest and quietest of weapons, a pencil."

~John Cheever

Learning to Trust the Free Writing Process

I can sustain fluency in writing for 4-5 minutes.

I can engage with words when I don't know what I want to say yet, trusting that writing words leads to new thinking.

I can find something of my own to say to a word or a phrase or a line from a poem.

I can identify the impact on my writing when I write next to beautifully crafted writing.

I can accept the messiness of first draft writing as a necessary part of the process of learning to craft words and ideas.

I can take risks in free writing, writing faster than the censor in my head.

I can trust the act of writing to activate the details of my memories and help me craft moments from my life.

I can practice writing even when I am in the wrong mood or the weather is wrong or I'm tired because I know I am developing a muscle that needs exercise.

I can get comfortable with writing unfinished thinking in my notebook. I capture it so I don't lose my ideas waiting for a way to write them better.

I can sketch in my notebook to practice paying attention to details.

I can explain how sketching helps my writing mind learn to focus.

I can create an ideal place to write at home, so that I can practice freely when I am not in class.

I can make my notebook truly mine: filled with photographs, sketches, lists, writing, song lyrics, ticket stubs, and anything else that will hold memories and spring writing.

I can write both by hand and on the computer, recognizing the value of both.

I see my ideas and experiences as rich places to write from, collecting them with variety, volume, and thoughtfulness.

I use writing as a tool to discover my thinking. As I write, new ideas appear.

I read my world like a writer and find topics everywhere.

Learning to Revise Free Writing

I can reread my quick notebook writing, listen to it, and work to make it better.

I can add information to improve the clarity of my writing.

I can delete phrases or whole sentences or other distractions in my quick writing to improve the focus of my work.

I can reorder the ideas in my writing to improve the clarity of my thinking.

I can replace words I think of first with clearer, stronger words that communicate my ideas better.

I can repeat images or phrases in my writing to create a rhythm like poetry.

I can imitate the sentence craft of other writers.

What We Learn & Practice in Closely Reading Mentor Texts

I can identify how sensory details work to create mental images for readers.
I can find places where dialogue reveals character.
I can identify a scene or a moment in a longer story.
I can identify a first person narrator.
I can identify a second person narrator.
I can identify a third person narrator.
I can explain how shifts in point of view contribute to dramatic tension and revelations of plot and character.
I can identify how the ending of a story pulls the parts and themes together for a reader.
I can name the techniques writers use to transition from one scene to the next in a smooth way for readers.
I can identify the writing craft in my favorite authors.
I can name the writing craft in my independent reading.
I can see writing craft in the writing of my classmates, in the newspaper, and in media.
I can find mentors for the writing I am doing, so that I can study the moves those writers are making and learn from them.

What We Learn & Practice in Sharing Our Writing with Others

I read my writing like a thoughtful, engaged reader would, listening to how it works.
I can read my story for pace and analyze where the story is moving too slowly to sustain the interest of my readers.
I can read my story and analyze where readers need additional details to see the setting, the characters and/or the action of the story.
I can respond with gentleness to the writing shared with me by other students in the class, knowing that writing is an act of vulnerability and requires kindness and care.
I can listen carefully to writing shared with me and help a writer see where it is working well.
I can explain to another writer how and where the writing confuses me or feels incomplete.
I can listen to how my writing group responds to my writing in order to understand what isn't clear yet and to determine needed revisions.
I can read my writing as a reader would, analyzing how effective it is as a whole.
I can create an ending for my story that pulls the parts I've written together into a satisfying and complete experience for readers.

What We Learn & Practice as We Use Feedback to Develop Our Writing

I can illuminate the setting of a story through carefully chosen details.
I can imagine an ideal reader of my story engaging in the world I create on the page.
I can zoom in, or slow down time, in a scene that matters in my story.
I can zoom past details of moments that are unimportant in the story I am telling.
I can establish different voices in my story for the narrator and the characters.
I can reorder scenes in my story to increase clarity of my central idea for readers. I can adjust transitions to accommodate the change in scenes.
I can add historical details to improve the credibility of my writing.
I can choose words that effectively show the time and place of my writing.
I craft the structure of my sentences to create a pleasing rhythm for readers.
I craft punctuation with intention. I can write how I want my writing to be read.
I craft my writing voice to match my subject, using a range of moves to control its intensity and/or playfulness.
I imagine my audience and engage them in my story.
I can try moves I've seen other writers make to organize or develop their thinking in writing. I can write under the influence of craft.
I can identify how and where writing blends elements of narrative, poetic language, information, and persuasion and use this thinking in blending my own writing effectively.
I can compose effectively across mediums, adjusting my word choice, structure, and voice according to my purpose.