THE COURAGE WRITING WORKSHOP

Guide for Facilitators

Developed by Dr. Jane Skelton and Molly McCafferty
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The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum, Inc.

MAXCourage is an integrated Social-Emotional Learning and English Language Arts program that invites young people to explore their own capacity to enact their values in the face of fear or adversity. The central experience of the program is the “Courage In My Life” essay contest, in which students from across the globe write short narratives about a personal experience of courage. Since 1991, The Max Warburg Courage Curriculum has provided curricular support to teachers in the Boston Public Schools and surrounding communities, and has grown from a small grassroots organization to an international model for public/private partnerships.

Mission
To empower students to discover the value of courage and develop English Language Arts (ELA) Proficiency. The program helps students recognize their capacity to address the troubling complexities of their world by exploring the concept of courage in literature, in their own lives, and in the broader community. At the same time, this social emotional learning (SEL) approach strengthens their literacy skills.

Goals
- Engage students and inspire them to make meaningful connections with literature
- Improve the reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills of students
- Inspire participants to celebrate acts of moral courage in their own lives and in the lives of others in their communities
- Provide support for teachers in their use of the curriculum and effective literacy practices, while meeting state mandated requirements
- Create opportunities for interactive and one-on-one dialogue between students and teachers, students and family members, and students and their peers
- Give children an opportunity to voice their stories and be heard in safe, empowering, affirming, and supportive environments

History
The Courage Curriculum honors the life of Max Warburg, a courageous eleven-year-old who lost his battle with leukemia in 1991. Max’s ability to continue to enjoy life and his steadfast determination and heartfelt hope in the face of a deadly disease were an inspiration to all who knew him.

Feeling that their son’s example could provide an enduring message of courage, Stephanie and Jonathan Warburg worked with the Boston Public Schools and with educators from across the country to develop and implement the Courage Curriculum.

Since the program’s inception in 1991, the Max Warburg Courage Curriculum has continued to grow and is now taught in Boston Public middle schools, as well as charter, private, pilot, and parochial schools in the city and its surrounding communities.

In recent years, with the launch of national and international elements of the program, Max’s legacy of courage has been able to spread across the United States and to schools as far away as Cambodia, Belize, and Yemen.
The Courage Writing Workshop

In 2022, MAXCourage developed its first curriculum for out-of-school time (OST) program providers, in hopes of providing more young people access to the social-emotional and academic benefits of the capstone writing project. The curriculum is structured in the writing workshop model, providing a series of skill-based, easy-to-follow narrative writing lessons that any OST service provider—whether they have an extensive background in teaching writing, or none at all—can use and adapt to their program’s needs.

Mini-Lessons and Mentor Texts
Most workshops follow the same basic structure: participants begin with a mini-lesson modeling a specific skill or step in the narrative writing process. Many of these mini-lessons use MAXCourage essays published in past years as “mentor texts,” allowing students to explore examples of a given technique.

Independent Writing
Next, students move into independent work time, where they have the opportunity to apply the skills they have learned to their evolving draft. This time should take up the bulk of each session: students move at their own pace, tinker and experiment, and receive from the facilitator, who should spend the time conferencing with students one-on-one about their writing and/or working with small groups to provide differentiated support.

Sharing and Writing Circles
Finally, it is important to save time at the end of the workshop for students to share their words and ideas in a community of writers. By both sharing and listening to their peers, students gain valuable practice communicating effectively and working collaboratively, seeking and providing support, and sharing their writing with an audience. This guide attempts to provide a variety of ways to structure this sharing time, in hopes that facilitators will find a few strategies that work well for their students that they can routinize and return to again and again. One strategy we particularly recommend is the writing circle, in which students self-select small groups to recurrently share their writing with, allowing them to build robust peer relationships and get feedback from people who have seen their writing evolve over time.

A Note On Writer’s Notebooks
MAXCourage recommends providing each participant in the writing workshop with a composition notebook in which they can write by hand in every session, connecting their freewrites, planning, drafting, and revision in a single document of their ideas and their growth as a writer. Moving students away from screens and word processors allows them to feel the kinetic links between brain and body inherent to the act of writing. Moreover, this strategy can help deconstruct the perfectionist mindset that has been drilled into many students around writing; as Felicia Rose Chavez writes in The Antiracist Writing Workshop, it encourages them to “submit to the physical forward motion” of handwriting “without stopping, thinking, and correcting... to respond, in words, as oneself, trusting that the initial impulse is good enough. Clumsy, messy, raw, misspelled, disjointed, yes. Perfectly imperfect.” If your program lacks the resources to provide writer’s notebooks to all participants, please feel free to request support by contacting our Program Director!

Additional Resources From MAXCourage:

- 2022 Essay Guidelines (pdf)
- List of Recommended Texts for Teaching About Courage (pdf)
- Digital copies of recent volumes of The Courage of Children (web)
- Classroom Visit Video (web)

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# UNIT OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heading</th>
<th>Subject: English Language Arts (with Social-Emotional Learning)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade(s): 5-7</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unit Title: The Courage Writing Workshop: Personal Narratives</td>
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## Essential Questions

1. What is the meaning of courage? How have I experienced courage in my life?
2. What is a personal narrative? How can we use storytelling to convey lived experiences?
3. What is my own personal writer’s voice?

### Key Standards (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY, Grade 6)

- **W.6.3.** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - **W.6.3.A.** Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
  - **W.6.3.B.** Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
  - **W.6.3.C.** Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
  - **W.6.3.D.** Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
  - **W.6.3.E.** Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- **W.6.5.** 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.
- **W.6.10:** 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- **SL.6.1.** Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

### SEL Competencies (CASEL Framework)

- **SELF-AWARENESS:** The abilities to understand one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts. This includes capacities to recognize one’s strengths and limitations with a well-grounded sense of confidence and purpose.
- **SELF-MANAGEMENT:** The abilities to manage one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations. This includes the capacities to delay gratification, manage stress, and feel motivation & agency to accomplish personal/collective goals.
- **SOCIAL AWARENESS:** The abilities to understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds, cultures, & contexts. This includes the capacities to feel compassion for others, understand broader historical and social norms for behavior in different settings, and recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
- **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS:** The abilities to establish and maintain healthy and supportive relationships and to effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals and groups. This includes the capacities to communicate clearly, listen actively, cooperate, work collaboratively to problem solve and negotiate conflict constructively, navigate settings with differing social and cultural demands and opportunities, provide leadership, and seek or offer help when needed.
- **RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING:** The abilities to make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations. This includes the capacities to consider ethical standards and safety concerns, and to evaluate the benefits and consequences of various actions for personal, social, and collective well-being.

### Texts

- **The Courage of Children: Boston & Beyond.** Educators can select any essay from the student essay publication to use as exemplars/mentor texts. Annotated and unannotated PDFs of recommended mentor text essays are included in each writing workshop lesson. Access digital copies of our past several essay books at [https://maxcourage.org/essay-publication](https://maxcourage.org/essay-publication).
- **Recommended Texts with Themes of Courage.** Historically, many educators have incorporated the MAXCourage essay into novel study units; others have used literature circles or paired the task with short, thematically related readings. If you’re interested in pairing the MAXCourage Writing Workshops with thematically relevant texts to foster
reading skills, feel free to consult our list of recommended texts as a resource to find a diverse array of stories which feature themes of courage, spanning multiple mediums and genres [link].

**Summative Assessment**

"Courage in My Life" Personal Narrative Essay: As the capstone experience of the Max Courage Curriculum, each student will write a personal narrative essay about courage in their own life. The process of brainstorming, writing, and revising with their teacher and classmates will tie together all of the ELA skills they have been practicing—reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking. It will also allow them to apply the social-emotional capacities they have been building over the course of the Max Courage program by reflecting on their thoughts, feelings, values, and actions related to courage. (For full essay guidelines, see Appendix B.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day 1 - Explore</th>
<th>Day 2 - Plan</th>
<th>Day 3 - Plan</th>
<th>Day 4 - Plan</th>
<th>Day 5 - Draft</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the MAXCourage Writing Workshop; Exploring the Concept of Everyday Courage</td>
<td>Partner Interviews: Who Are We? How Are We Courageous?</td>
<td>Brainstorming Essay Topics and Planning a Personal Narrative</td>
<td>Ordering Events and Pacing</td>
<td>Writing Strong Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<th>Day 6 - Draft</th>
<th>Day 7 - Draft</th>
<th>Day 8 - Draft</th>
<th>Day 9 - Revise</th>
<th>Day 10 - Revise</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Description: Using Sensory Imagery</td>
<td>Character, Dialogue, and Internal Thinking</td>
<td>Writing Strong Conclusions and Reflecting on Lessons Learned</td>
<td>Giving and Receiving Peer Feedback</td>
<td>“Exploding the Moment” Through Revision</td>
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<th>Day 11 - Celebrate!</th>
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<tr>
<td>Author Showcase</td>
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# LESSON PLANS

## WORKSHOP #1 - Introduction to the Courage Writing Workshop

**Objective:** Students will be able to understand the writing process that they will undertake in the MAXCourage workshop, and explore the essay’s central theme of courage by writing and engaging in group discussions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Standards:</th>
<th>SEL Competencies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>✓ W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</td>
<td>✓ SELF-AWARENESS: Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets; linking feelings, values, and thoughts; having a growth mindset</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</td>
<td>✓ SELF-MANAGEMENT: Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation, setting personal goals, demonstrating personal agency</td>
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<tr>
<td>✓ L.6.5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.</td>
<td>✓ RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving</td>
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### Agenda

**Entry Activity:** Writer Profile

- As students enter, provide each with a blank writer’s notebook. While they wait for the full group to arrive and transition in, direct them to respond in the notebooks to the following questions:
  1. What kind of a writer are you?
     - Optional sentence starters:
       - “I prefer to write about...”
       - “I prefer to write [describe when, where, or in what context you prefer to write].”
       - “My writing style is...”
       - “My writer’s voice sounds like...”
       - “Writing makes me feel...”
  2. Name one strength you already possess as a writer.
  3. Set one specific goal you have for growing as a writer.

**Video & Framing**

- Play the [MAXCourage Classroom Visit Video](#) for students.
- Once students have watched the video, provide framing about the writing task that students are going to be working towards, allowing time for questions/discussion.
  - Optional Script for Framing: “Over the next several [days/weeks/etc.], we will be spending our time together becoming authors, alongside thousands of other kids your age in Boston, across America, and all over the world. You’ll work on discovering your unique writer’s voice, and channeling it to share a story about a time in your life when you experienced courage. At the end,
you’ll submit your story to the MAXCourage essay competition. At least one person from our program will be selected to have their story featured in the MAXCourage book as a published author, and everyone will have their writing celebrated and highlighted in a special Authors’ Showcase celebration at the end of our workshop.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Small Group Discussions: Ways to be Courageous</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Optional Script for Framing:</strong> “Before we begin writing these stories about courage, we’re going to take some time to develop a better understanding of the meaning of courage, in our own lives and in the larger world.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Organize students into at least four small groups, and assign each group one of the four squares on the “Types of Courage” handout. Select one student to record notes on what the group discusses, and one student to be the group representative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Use the following questions to guide students to discuss their type of courage:</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ How does the quote relate to the definition of courage your group was assigned?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>○ Can you come up with an example of being courageous in the way that this quote describes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Share.</strong> Ask each group representative to share their group’s definition and example with the full class. Record responses on a piece of chart paper divided into the four quadrants, to be displayed as an anchor chart in the classroom as they plan and write their narratives. (If materials are unavailable, record on the board/projector.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ After each group has had a chance to share, invite any student from any group to share additional examples to add, and record them on the anchor chart.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Writing: Types of Courage in Your Life</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Follow up small group discussions with time for students to capture their learning in writing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Direct the group to choose one of the four types of courage explored in the discussions, and draw or write a representation of it in their writer’s notebook. Facilitators can provide the following optional prompts to get students started:</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. In your own life, can you think of a time when you showed this type of courage? Represent what happened.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can you think of a time when you saw someone else in your family, your school, or the larger community show this type of courage? Represent what you witnessed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Can you think of a story you read, heard, or watched that shows this type of courage? Explain the connection.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>For additional or alternate exercises to help introduce the MAXCourage curriculum and explore the meaning of courage, consult the “What Is Courage?” Teaching Guide.</strong></td>
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**WORKSHOP #2 - Plan: Who Are We? How Are We Courageous?**

**Objective:** Students will be able to examine their and their peers’ identities, beliefs, and experiences by engaging in partner discussions, in order to identify potential topics for their personal narratives.

**Related Standards:**
- W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - W.6.3.D. Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.
  - SL.6.1.D. Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

**SEL Competencies:**
- SELF-AWARENESS: Identifying one’s emotions; integrating personal and social identities; identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets; identifying one’s emotions; having a growth mindset; developing interests and a sense of purpose
- SOCIAL AWARENESS: Taking others’ perspectives, recognizing strengths in others, demonstrating empathy and compassion, understanding and expressing gratitude
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, seeking or offering support and help when needed
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING: Identifying solutions for personal and social problems; anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one’s actions; reflecting on one’s role to promote personal, family, and community well-being; evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

**Agenda**

| Entry Activity: Check In! | ➢ As students wait for the full group to arrive, direct them to respond to the following check-in prompt in their writer’s notebooks:
| |   - “What are you bringing into this writing workshop? What have you been most focused on up until this point today? Draw a picture of your head on a full page of your notebook, and fill it with words and pictures of what’s going on in there.” |
| Brainstorming: Partner Interviews | ➢ Pass out a copy of the interview note-catcher to each student. Partner students up and assign turns (e.g., “the person with the closest birthday is Partner 1; they will be the question asker first.”).
| | ➢ Set a five minute timer for Partner 1 five minutes to choose questions from the note-catcher and ask them to their partner. (Be sure to tell them that they will not have time to get to every question, and they can choose any questions in any order.) While Partner 2 talks, Partner 1 jots down notes in the note-catcher.
| | ➢ Switch roles and repeat steps 2 and 3, with Partner 2 interviewing Partner 1.
| | ➢ At the end of the activity, have the students trade papers, so that Partner 1 has the notes about themself which Partner 2 wrote down, and vice versa. Allow students to read over their partners’ notes.
| Reflective Writing | ➢ In the last few minutes of the session, ask students to journal in their notebooks:
| |   - Prompt 1: “Think about the things you told your partner in your interview. How did telling your partner about your goals, beliefs, emotions, and experiences
feel to you? Which of the things you shared with your partner could be valuable to share with others?
- Prompt 2: Write a one-sentence note to your partner identifying something they discussed in your interview that you would be interested to hear more about. (Sentence starter: “I would like to learn more about ..., because...”)

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**WORKSHOP #3 - Plan: Brainstorming Your Narrative Topic**

**Objective:** Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of personal narrative as a writing genre by reading examples and identifying moments in their lives that could form the basis of a personal narrative.

**Related Standards:**
- RL.6.2. Determine a theme or central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.
- W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.6.5. 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.
- W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**SEL Competencies:**
- SELF-AWARENESS: Identifying one’s emotions, integrating personal and social identities, identifying personal assets
- SELF-MANAGEMENT: Using planning and organizational skills
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, seeking or offering support

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<th>Agenda</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Entry Activity: Know, Want to Know</strong></td>
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| ➢ As students enter instruct them to take a moment to think and jot some notes in their writer’s notebook:  
  ○ “What do you know about personal narratives? What do you WANT to know about personal narratives?” |

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<tr>
<th>Mini-lesson: Selecting a Topic</th>
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| ➢ Invite students to share out what they wrote in the entry activity, recording their responses on the board or on chart paper.  
  ➢ *Optional Script for Framing:* “A personal narrative is a piece of writing that tells a story based on your own experiences, and can communicate an idea you have about the world; a belief or value that’s important to you; or a life lesson you’ve learned.”  
  ➢ *Think → Pair → Share.* Distribute copies of the [Selecting a Topic Mentor Texts](#) to students. Read the first mentor text (by Naheemah M.) aloud to the whole group. Before you read, ask students to think about the story’s topic while they listen—what experience the story is about, and why the experience is being shared with readers.  
  ➢ After reading, provide a few brief moments for students to discuss the following questions in partners, then take volunteers to debrief as a whole group:  
  1. Summarize the narrative’s topic in a few words. What is the main event or life experience that this writer is focused on? How do you know?  
  2. Why do you think the author chose to write about this experience? How does this experience connect to this author’s thoughts, emotions, and beliefs about courage?  
  ➢ Prompt students to repeat the process with the remaining two stories on their own (or in differentiated small groups, depending on your group’s reading needs), reading each piece, then identifying the topic of each story and its connection to the writer’s personal understanding of courage. |
- For additional or alternate exercises to help students reflect on their experiences and brainstorm potential essay topics, see activities 3-7 in the “What Is Courage?” Teaching Guide

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<tr>
<th>Independent Work Time: Brainstorming</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Encourage students to spend this independent work time brainstorming possible topics for their narratives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Optional Script for Framing: “In your writers’ notebook, After you have brainstormed multiple experiences of courage in your life, try to choose one that you would be excited to tell a compelling story about. As you think about which story to choose, try to answer: Why is this experience important to who you are? What did you learn from this experience?”</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Facilitators should use this independent work time to conference with individual students about their essays, and/or to offer differentiated instruction and support—individually or in small groups—based on students’ needs. Try to limit each 1-on-1 conference to 3-4 minutes in order to reach multiple students per workshop.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Share: Writing Circles</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ In the last several minutes of the workshop, allow students to choose 3 to 4 peers to be in their “writing circle,” specifying that they will return to this group a few times throughout the writing workshop process. Each group should find a comfortable space anywhere in the room and form a circle. (Facilitators can also choose to be more selective to shape positive partnerships, at their discretion.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Establish a sharing order. After one minute of silent think time, give each a minute to share a reflection on their brainstorming process. Optional Prompts:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What topic do you think you will write about? Why did you choose that topic?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. How did it feel thinking about challenges and courageous moments you have experienced in your life? What emotions came up for you?</td>
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WORKSHOP #4 - Plan: Ordering Events & Pacing

**Objective:** Students will be able to plan the events of their narrative so that they unfold in a clear, well-paced sequence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Standards:</th>
<th>SEL Competencies:</th>
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| ✤ RL.6.3. Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.  
  ✤ W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.  
    ➢ W.6.3.A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.  
    ➢ W.6.3.B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.  
  ✤ W.6.5. 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.  
  ✤ W.6.10. 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. | ✤ SELF MANAGEMENT: Using planning and organizational skills  
  ✤ SOCIAL AWARENESS: Taking others’ perspectives, recognizing strengths in others, understanding and expressing gratitude  
  ✤ RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, seeking or offering support and help when needed |

### Agenda

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini-lesson Part 1: Ordering Events</th>
<th>Provide each student with a plot diagram and a copy of the <a href="#">Ordering Events Mentor Text</a> by Jenseen J..</th>
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<td>Prompt students to read the mentor text with partners, with each partner reading one paragraph. When they have finished reading, they can work together to “map” the story through its beginning, middle, and end.</td>
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<td>• Depending on student needs, facilitators might choose to model how to use the diagram with a very simple, short narrative in a think-aloud.</td>
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<td>• Then, work together as a large group to fill out a plot map on chart paper.</td>
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<td>• Call attention to how the writer sets up the story and starts the action in the <em>introduction</em>, builds up to the key moment/problem at the <em>climax</em>, and then wraps up the story to arrive at their <em>conclusion</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Because students are looking at an example of how to order the events in their narrative writing in this lesson rather than focusing on reading skills, facilitators</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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might choose not to spend time on specific vocabulary like “rising action” or “falling action,” or on getting students to as precise a diagram of the story as possible, but instead focus on comfort with using a planning tool and seeing how the events are ordered in this specific type of personal narrative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Writing Time Part 1: Planning Out Your Story</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Students have time to plan their own narrative. They can use the plot diagram as a scaffold, or write or draw a plan for their story in another way that makes sense to them (ex: an outline or structured notes, a <strong>storyboard</strong>, a graphic organizer/another type of visual...). Encourage them, no matter their planning tool, to think about how events will be ordered in a way that's smooth and logical: What will you discuss in the beginning? What will happen in the middle? How will you wrap the story up in the end?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Facilitators can use this independent writing time to conference with individual students about their essays, and/or to offer differentiated instruction and support—individually or in small groups—based on students’ needs. Try to limit each 1-on-1 conference to 3-4 minutes in order to reach multiple students per workshop.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mini-Lesson Part 2: Pacing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Think ➔ Pair ➔ Share.</strong> Pause students’ independent work and redirect them to the plot diagram of the mentor text.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Instruct students to <strong>think</strong> silently for 30 seconds about the following questions. (Provide the option to either document their thoughts in their notebooks, or just take a moment to think quietly and re-read small parts of the story.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Which events in the story does the author spend the most time writing about? Why do you think they spend more time on those events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Which events in the story does the author seem to speed through quickly, without as much detail? Why do you think they spend less time discussing those events?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ After a few seconds of think time, students turn and talk in <strong>pairs</strong> about their responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Ask for volunteers to share responses with the full group. Circle key moments on the full group’s plot diagram where students identify the strategic use of pacing, and record notes about their rationale.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Script for Framing:</strong> “A well-crafted, exciting story doesn’t just go through every event in the action and spend the exact same amount of time discussing each one. Instead, sometimes a writer “zooms in” on an event - when an event in the action is important, they slow down and make the moment detailed and descriptive, to get the reader more engaged where it matters and draw their attention to the fact that this event is significant to the overall point of the story. At the same time, to keep the action moving along so that the writer doesn’t become bored, the writer “zooms past” less important events, and include dialogue and action, to make the story move along in a way that feels lively and arrives at the key moments faster.”</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Writing Time Part 2: Planning Your Story With Pacing</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Script for Framing:</strong> “For the last few minutes of our independent writing time, keep working on planning your narrative. Try to mark in your plans at least one place where you could slow down your pacing and ‘zoom in’ on an important moment.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Facilitators can continue conferencing with individual students and offering differentiated instruction and support.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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| Share: Writing Circles | ➢ Direct students to return to their writing circles from yesterday and choose a new sharing order.  
➢ Each student has 1 minute to show their plan to their small group and tell them a bit about the events they are planning on including in the story.  
➢ Then, the sharer spends another ~2 minutes listening to feedback from their group, guided by the following prompt:  
  As a reader, what is one event that they might want to “zoom in” on and hear about in a lot of detail? What is one event that they might want to “zoom past” at a faster pace?  
➢ The sharer offers gratitude and records notes from their group’s feedback in their writer’s notebook, then switches roles with the and repeats the process. |
**WORKSHOP #5 - Draft: Writing a Strong Introduction**

**Objective:** Students will be able to write an introduction that engages the reader with a hook and orient the reader by introducing relevant characters and context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Standards:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| ✷ W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.  
  ➢ W.6.3.A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.  
  ✷ W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SEL Competencies:</th>
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</table>
| ✷ SELF-MANAGEMENT: Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation, setting personal and collective goals, using planning and organizational skills, showing the courage to take initiative  
  ✷ SOCIAL AWARENESS: Recognizing strengths in others, demonstrating empathy and compassion, showing concern for the feelings of others, understanding and expressing gratitude |

**Agenda**

| Mini-lesson: Introducing Your Story | ➢ Give each student a copy of the [Introduction Mentor Text Excerpts](#). Ask volunteers to take turns reading aloud the five strategies for starting stories at the top of the sheet.  
  ➢ *Think-Aloud.* Display a copy of the first example introduction from the handout so students can clearly see it. Then, model for students annotating the example to identify what strategies the writer is using to engage and orient their reader, thinking aloud as you mark up the text. (Facilitators can either model the process as an expert, or solicit volunteers to suggest what to mark and explain their thinking. After you have identified the strategy, ask volunteers to discuss:  
  o Why do you think the author chose to start this way?  
  o What does this introduction tell us about what will come next? (Characters, conflict, setting, themes or ideas about what courage means?)  
  o What other approaches would you suggest that this author try?  
  ➢ Once the full group has discussed the first example, direct students to continue the process for the remaining examples, either on their own or in partners, making time in the last few minutes of the mini-lesson to share what students about each example. |

| Independent Writing Time | ➢ Prompt students to pick up where they left off yesterday on their evolving draft. Encourage them to try to focus on writing a strong introduction once they have their narrative planned, and to try out at least one strategy from the mini-lesson.  
  ➢ Facilitators can use this independent writing time to conference with individual students about their essays, and/or to offer differentiated instruction and support—individually or in small groups—based on students’ needs. Try to limit each 1-on-1 conference to 3-4 minutes in order to reach multiple students per workshop.  
  o As you conference with students, invite a few who have been working on their introductions to share a small part of their introductions with the full group. |

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| **Share: Whole Group Sharing** | ➢ *Notice/Think/Wonder.* As students are finishing their independent writing time, display the sentence starters: “I notice...” “I think...” “I wonder...”  
➢ Frame for students that a few brave volunteers are going to share their writing with the group so students can hear each other’s examples of strong introductions; set norms for active listening and supporting students who share their writing.  
➢ Invite students who you checked in with in advance and were willing to share to read a sentence or two from their introduction.  
➢ After each student shares, invite 2-3 peers to choose one of the sentence starters on the board and finish the sentence. For at least the first time, provide a model: e.g., “I notice that [name] used dialogue when she started off her story with [quote from student’s writing].” |

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**Objectives:** Students will be able to use description (precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language) in order to convey experiences and events vividly and develop their personal style and voice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Standards</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>❖ RL6.4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of a specific word choice on meaning and tone.</td>
<td>❖ SELF-AWARENESS: Identifying assets; having a growth mindset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</td>
<td>❖ SELF-MANAGEMENT: Exhibiting self-discipline, using planning and organizational skills, showing the courage to take initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ W.6.3.B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</td>
<td>❖ SOCIAL AWARENESS: Recognizing strengths in others</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</td>
<td>❖ RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, seeking or offering support and help when needed</td>
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### Agenda

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Entry Activity: Exploring the Five Senses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Write or project the following quote on the board as students enter: “Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass.” —Anton Chekhov.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Beneath it, display the following prompt; direct students to read the quote and respond to the prompt in their writer’s notebooks as they enter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ When was the last time you had a meal that you REALLY liked? In one short, complete sentence, tell me what that meal was. (Example: “I ate chicken and rice with my family last week.”)</td>
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<tr>
<td>○ Now, close your eyes and try to place yourself in the moment you ate that meal, and remember it as clearly as you can, focusing on your senses. Describe the meal in as much detail as possible:</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ What did you see?</td>
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<td>■ What did you hear?</td>
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<td>■ What did you feel?</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ What did you smell?</td>
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<tr>
<td>■ What did you taste?</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mini-lesson: Description and Sensory Imagery</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Invite 1-2 volunteers to share their short sentence, then their description, with the full group. Then, ask the group which was more enjoyable to listen to as an audience: when their classmate told them what they ate, or when their classmate showed them what they ate.</td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Discuss how writers use description. Optional script: “Writers use description to help their readers visualize the people, places, objects, and situations in a story—finding a key moment, and placing the reader in that moment. When a narrative conjures a vivid</td>
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</table>
impression in the reader’s mind, it both makes the writing more enjoyable and helps them understand the author’s point and the deeper meaning of the moment. One big way that authors do this is by using the five senses—sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste. These descriptions and details are the foundation for describing any moment.”

➢ Distribute copies of the Description Mentor Texts to each student. Instruct students to read the first narrative (by Ngoelela K.) in partners, and annotate (mark up) words, phrases, and sentences where they notice the following techniques:
  ○ What moments in the story does this writer describe using the 5 senses?
  ○ If you were giving this writer feedback...
    ■ What else does this writer do well?
    ■ What would you suggest this writer do to make their description stronger?

➢ Project a copy of the first mentor text on the board and invite students to share what they noticed. Discuss other strategies for descriptive writing that are visible in the essays, such as:
  ○ Precise, vivid verbs and adjectives (the student does not just write that she feels “scared,” but “doomed”; what happens is not just “good,” but “miraculous”)

➢ Repeat the partner reading process with the second mentor text (by Sean Michael B.)
  ○ What moments does this writer describe using the 5 senses?
  ○ What else do you notice that this writer does to make their description more vivid, and to show you their perspective instead of just telling you their perspective?
  ○ If you were giving this writer feedback, what would you suggest they do to make their description stronger?

➢ Project a copy of the mentor text on the board and invite students to share what they noticed. Discuss other strategies for descriptive writing that are visible in the essays, such as:
  ○ Specific details (ex., “Every hour, doctors came in and checked my vitals.”)
  ○ Figurative language (ex., “It felt like fire was in my stomach.”)

### Independent Writing Time

➢ Students can use most of this workshop to work on their evolving draft. Encourage students to try at least one strategy they saw in the mentor texts to add description in their own writing.

➢ Facilitators can use this independent writing time to conference with individual students about their essays, and/or to offer differentiated instruction and support—individually or in small groups—based on students’ needs. Try to limit each 1-on-1 conference to 3-4 minutes in order to reach multiple students per workshop.

### Share: Whole Group Whip-Around

➢ *Whole-group whip-around.* Each student selects one phrase or sentence from their draft that they’re proud of to share with the whole group, focusing on identifying moments of rich description in their writing. Set a clear order for sharing (ex., in a circle clockwise) and norms for appreciating what’s being shared (ex., snaps, one clap, silent active listening) in advance, then have each member of the group read out their sentence until everyone’s work has been heard.
**Objective:** Students will be able to build on their developing descriptive writing skills in order to strengthen their drafts’ character development and internal thinking.

**Related Standards:**
- RL.6.3. Describe how a particular story’s or drama’s plot unfolds in a series of episodes as well as how the characters respond or change as the plot moves toward a resolution.
- W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - W.6.3.A. Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
  - W.6.3.B. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.6.5. 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.

**SEL Competencies:**
- SELF-AWARENESS: Identifying emotions; linking feelings, values, and thoughts; having a growth mindset
- SELF-MANAGEMENT: Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation, setting personal and collective goals, using planning and organizational skills
- SOCIAL AWARENESS: Taking others’ perspectives
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, seeking or offering support and help when needed

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**Agenda**

**Entry Activity:** Freewrite

- As students enter, present them with a list of things we fear:
  - fear that you will lose friends
  - fear of disappointing your family or friends
  - fear of being made fun of
  - fear of being wrong or failing
  - fear of bodily harm
- Direct them to choose one of the two prompts below and write about it in their notebook for 5 minutes. Frame that students should try to write for the full time, just putting down whatever comes into their minds without pausing and worrying about what words to use or going back to change things.
  - Prompt 1: Can you recall a time when you (or someone you know) overcame fear to act according to your belief or persevere toward a goal that was important to you? Think about a time like this, and describe what happened, how you felt, and what you learned.
  - Prompt 2: Sometimes the example we might share is not when we acted in a courageous way, but when we had the opportunity to show courage but our
fear kept us from making the courageous choice. What lessons can we learn from these times as well? Think about a time like this, and describe what happened, how you felt, and what you learned.

**Mini-lesson: Character and Internal Thinking**

- **Review.** Ask for a few volunteers to share what they remember about description from the previous workshop: HOW do writers use description—what strategies do we use? WHY do writers use description—how can it make our writing stronger?

- **Optional Script for Framing.** “We practiced using the principle ‘show, don’t tell’ to help our reader really visualize and connect on a deeper level with our stories. Today, we’re going to build on those strategies to give our readers a more vivid sense of WHO they’re connecting with, by developing strong characters.”

- **Think-aloud.** Give each student a copy of the Character and Internal Thinking Mentor Texts and display a copy of the first text on the board. Frame for students that as you read aloud, you’re going to look for places in the essay where the student shows us something about the traits of the characters in the story: who they are and what they look like; what they say; how they act; what they think; or how they feel.
  - Read the first 1-2 paragraphs aloud, stopping every few moments to note when the text reveals something about character. Focus particularly on how the story uses dialogue and internal thinking to reveal who the student is.
  - Direct students to pick up the process, on their own or in partners, from where you left off, marking places in the essays by Arwen and Ashley that feature:
    - Dialogue: What’s being said, how, and by whom?
    - Internal thinking: What are the characters thinking?
    - Other places in the text where you notice the writer doing skillful character development.

**Independent Writing Time**

- Students can spend the rest of this workshop working on their evolving draft. Encourage them to draw on their learning earlier in the workshop to shape their stories.

- Facilitators should use independent writing time to conference with individual students about their essays, and/or to offer differentiated instruction and support—individually or in small groups—based on students’ needs. Try to limit each 1-on-1 conference to 3-4 minutes in order to reach multiple students per workshop.

**Share: TAG Strategy for Fast Partner Feedback**

- In the final moments of the workshop, direct students to partner up with a member of their writing circle and establish an order for sharing feedback (e.g., “Person with the most siblings goes first” or “Person whose birthday is soonest goes first.”). Guide them through the following protocol:
  - Partner A shares a few sentences from their narrative that they would like feedback on. They can also choose to frame why they would like feedback on this section.
  - Partner B provides comments about the writing, using the acronym T.A.G. to structure 3 different types of feedback.
    - **Tell your partner something they did well.** Be as specific as possible. (Not just: “This is good,” or “I like it”; every single writer has specific strengths and specific things to improve! Example: “When you gave specific details about how your heart was beating and your hands were shaking, it really helped me put myself in your shoes in this moment of the story as the reader”)
    - **A: Ask your partner a question.** What questions arose in your mind while reading? What is missing that you want to know as a reader? What was unclear that you need more help understanding? Why did your partner choose to write this passage the way they did?
    - **G: Give your partner a suggestion.** Share something your partner can
try as they continue to refine this part of their writing; be as specific as possible, drawing on what you’ve seen in the mentor texts we’ve looked at, what we’ve been practicing in our writing, and what you’ve encountered outside the writing workshop. (A suggestion is not necessarily a correction; you don’t have to point out something wrong with the writing in order to give your partner a new idea or a fresh perspective for how to approach this passage!)

○ Switch partners and repeat.
## WORKSHOP #8 - Draft: Writing a Strong Conclusion

**Objective:** Students will be able to write a conclusion that wraps up the events of the narrative and reflects on their personal experiences, their growth, and their understanding of courage.

### Related Standards:
- W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
  - W.6.3.E. Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.
- W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

### SEL Competencies:
- SELF-AWARENESS: Integrating personal and social identities; identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets; identifying emotions; linking feelings, values, and thoughts; experiencing self-efficacy; having a growth mindset; developing interests and a sense of purpose
- SELF-MANAGEMENT: Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation, setting personal and collective goals, using planning and organizational skills
- SOCIAL AWARENESS: Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones; recognizing situational demands and opportunities; understanding the influences of organizations/systems on behavior
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Resolving conflicts constructively, resisting negative social pressure, showing leadership, seeking or offering support and help when needed, standing up for the rights of others
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING: Identifying solutions for personal and social problems; anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one’s actions; reflecting on one’s role to promote personal, family, and community well-being; evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

### Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entry Activity: Visual Representations</th>
<th>As they enter, direct students to draw a visual representation of the meaning of this quote: “Fear and courage are brothers.” - Proverb.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think → Pair → Share. Once everyone has had time to settle in, think, and draw, instruct students to share their visual representation in partners using the following protocol:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Partner 1 shares what they drew.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>○ Partner 2 explains why they think Partner 1 represented the quote in this way.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Partner 1 then has a chance to respond to Partner 2’s thoughts about their representation by sharing their answer to the question: <em>How do the ideas that you represented in this drawing relate to the narrative you’re writing about what courage means in your life?</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>○ Switch roles and repeat.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>○ If partners have extra time, reflect together on the following questions in an open discussion: “What similarities do you notice between both of your</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Mini-lesson: Writing a Strong Conclusion | ![Image](image.jpg) **Optional Script for Framing:** “As you prepare to complete your first draft of your courage essay, we’re going to spend today’s workshop reflecting on what you learned from the experience that you are writing about: how you grew as a person, why the experience was important or meaningful for you and for your readers, and what it shows about what courage means.”

- Pass out copies of the [Conclusion Mentor Text Excerpts](#) to each student. In partners, direct students to take turns reading the bullet points at the top of the page about the qualities of a strong conclusion. Then, students should work together to read each excerpt and answer: *How do these conclusions of past courage essays wrap up events and share reflections? Annotate the strategies you notice each student author using, and discuss the impact of the author’s choices on the reader.*

- **Reflection Journal.** In their writers notebooks, prompt students to write a journal entry reflection on the significance of story they have been working on, providing the author
  - *Why does this story matter to you?* How did the experience you have been writing about change who you are as a person? How did it change the way you see others in your life, or the larger world around you?
  - *What does courage really mean to you, and how did this experience shape your definition of courage?* Now that your reader knows what happened, this is your chance to tell them clearly how your story connects to the idea of courage.
  - *What are you saying to your reader with this story?* Are you calling the reader to action—trying to inspire them to stand up for a cause, or act as you acted in your story? Are you trying to expand the reader’s own definition of courage and their understanding of your world? Are you trying to inspire them, comfort them, or make them wonder something? Hit this message to the reader home in your conclusion.

| Independent Writing Time | ![Image](image.jpg) Students can spend most of this workshop working on their evolving draft. Encourage them to try at least one strategy for an effective conclusion from the mini-lesson in their own conclusion.

- [It may be helpful to frame that, even if they don’t feel the middle of their essay is “done,” they can still experiment with ideas for how they will conclude the story—many professional authors leave and return to sections as they feel inspired, skip ahead to the ending and go back to figure out how the story will end up there, and revise and rewrite throughout their process.]

- **Facilitators can use this independent writing time to conference with individual students about their essays, and/or to offer differentiated instruction and support—individually or in small groups—based on students’ needs.** Try to limit each 1-on-1 conference to 3-4 minutes in order to reach multiple students per workshop; if students are feeling stuck on their conclusion, try prompting them by discussing their responses to the reflection journal questions.

| Share: Writing Circles | ![Image](image.jpg) In the last several minutes of the workshop, direct students to return to their writing circles from earlier workshops. Establish a sharing order, and provide each group member equal time to read out a portion of their draft that they worked on today. After the sharer has read, direct each student to give 3 sentences of feedback,
using the “Notice/Think/Wonder” routine from workshop #5.
### WORKSHOP #9 - Revise: Peer Feedback

**Objective:** Students will be able to seek out and offer support within a community of writers in order to develop their writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Related Standards:</th>
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<td>❖ W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.</td>
<td>❖ SELF-AWARENESS: Demonstrating honesty and integrity, experiencing self-efficacy, having a growth mindset</td>
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<tr>
<td>❖ W.6.5. 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.</td>
<td>❖ SOCIAL AWARENESS: Taking others’ perspectives; recognizing strengths in others; demonstrating empathy and compassion; showing concern for the feelings of others; understanding and expressing gratitude</td>
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<td>❖ W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.</td>
<td>❖ RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving, resolving conflicts constructively, seeking or offering support and help when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>❖ SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.</td>
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### Agenda

| Entry Activity: What makes feedback work? | ➢ As students enter, direct them to respond in their writer’s notebooks: Describe a time when you got feedback that was helpful? What made it helpful? Then, describe a time when you got feedback that was unhelpful. What made it unhelpful? |
| Mini-lesson: Qualities of Effective Feedback | ➢ Frame for students why strong writers seek and offer support from other writers who are their peers. |
| | ➢ Provide time for student volunteers to share their descriptions of types of feedback that they do or don’t find helpful. Use this as a jumping-off point to identify the qualities of good feedback: |
| | o **Specific.** Feedback shouldn’t be about the entire piece; push yourself to zoom in on one paragraph, sentence, or even word, to give the writer a precise thing to work on. Specific feedback is not just identifying something as “good” or “bad,” but describes why and how the writer could develop that element of their work, with details or specific examples/reasoning. |
| | o **Actionable.** Think about if your feedback is something that the writer can immediately act on to move their writing forward. For instance, when writing a true personal narrative, feedback on the plot events themselves might not be actionable, because the writer cannot change their lived experiences; but, you could suggest that they change the pacing of the events or share more details to impact how the reader experiences the story. |
| | o **Kind.** This does not just mean the feedback only includes what the writer does really well; rather, kind feedback is respectful and comes from a desire to help |
each other grow. Focus on the work and not the person, be respectful of the effort that your peers have put into their writing and how important this personal story might be to your peer, and always orient feedback towards the writing’s potential for success.

- Work with students to set group norms for feedback based on the entry activity (and/or remind students of any existing community norms).

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<tr>
<th>Independent Work Time: Peer Feedback</th>
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<td>➢ Direct students to partner up with a member of their writing circle and trade their evolving drafts. Students should read through their partner’s draft and leave comments based on the group norms set at the beginning, including at least one piece of praise, one probing question, and one suggestion.</td>
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<td>➢ Facilitators can use this independent writing time to circulate and offer support and differentiated instruction with the revision process where needed.</td>
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<th>Share: Responding to Edits and Sharing Gratitude</th>
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<tr>
<td>➢ Direct students to return each other’s drafts and read through each other’s edits, asking clarifying questions to their editor to help them understand the feedback.</td>
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<td>➢ Prompt both partners to share gratitude before ending: “In your feedback, I appreciated how you...”</td>
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<td>➢ In the last moments of the workshop, provide time for volunteers to shout out partner to the whole group for helpful feedback. Model using the following examples:</td>
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<td>o “[Name] gave me feedback [about ____], which was helpful because...”</td>
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<td>o “One thing I appreciated about the way [Name] gave me feedback was...”</td>
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**WORKSHOP #10 - Revise: “Explode a Moment”**

**Objective:** Students will be able to utilize a growth mindset and revise their writing, focusing on responding to peers’ feedback and strengthening their unique writer’s voice.

**Related Standards:**
- W.6.3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.6.5. 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.
- W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

**SEL Competencies:**
- SELF-AWARENESS: Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets; experiencing self-efficacy; having a growth mindset
- SELF-MANAGEMENT: Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation, setting personal goals, using planning and organizational skills
- RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING: Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness, identifying solutions for personal problems, learning to make a reasoned judgment

### Agenda

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<tr>
<th>Entry Activity: Approaching Revision from a Growth Mindset</th>
<th>Mini-lesson: “Exploding the Moment”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ As students enter, display the following quote on the board: “Revision is the heart of writing. Every page I do is done over seven or eight times.” —Patricia Reilly Giff, Newbery Award-Winning Author.</td>
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<td>➢ Direct students to re-read the peer feedback they received in the previous workshop. Think (and document in writer’s notebooks):</td>
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<td>o What is my one big takeaway from my partner’s feedback about how I can grow in this piece of writing?</td>
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<td>➢ Framing the Process of Revision. Direct students to the quote on the board. Discuss how all writers, from the newest writers to the greatest professionals, are constantly revising and reworking their product, during the beginning, middle, and end of their process. Frame for students that revision is not the pursuit of perfection in a “final” draft or a process to weed out the “wrong” or “bad” parts of our writing, but a process where we get to continually experiment and grow through many strategies, one of which they will try today.</td>
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<td>➢ Exploding the Moment. Then, play the following video clip (from 0:00 to 2:38) of educator Barry Lane reading two drafts of a story—one before revision, and one after revision. <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA9YeKBRal8">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mA9YeKBRal8</a>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Think, Pair, Share: Instruct students to discuss what they just heard with a partner, then take volunteers to share out with the full group: (1) How did this writer revise her scene? What techniques did she use to slow down time and “explode” this moment? (2) How do writers choose which moments of their story to “explode”?</td>
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<td>o Use this discussion to spiral back to previous workshop lessons about pacing and description, reviewing and checking students’ understanding of how and why authors use pacing and rich description.</td>
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<td>➢ Applying the Strategy to a Mentor Text. Group students in small groups and provide copies of the mentor text (Tyler Rogers, 2022). Read each step to students, keep time, and circulate between groups to help facilitate as students practice the strategy.</td>
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</table>
- **Step One**: “Imagine you are the author, and this is your first draft, which you are sitting down to revise. What is ONE moment that you would ‘explode’ to make the story more engaging? Why? Discuss with your small group for 2 minutes, and come to an agreement on a moment to ‘explode.’”
- **Step Two**: “Once you’ve identified a moment, use a blank page in your writer’s notebook or the back of the handout to ‘explode’ the moment. (Since you are not really this author, you may have to use your imagination to add details!”
- **Step Three**: “When I stop you, return to your small groups and take turns sharing your writing. What similarities and differences do you notice between your revisions of the same moment in the story?”

| Independent Writing Time: Revision | ➢ Students should spend the remaining time revising their draft. Encourage them to try “exploding” one well-chosen moment in their story as a revision strategy.  
➢ While students write, facilitators circulate and conference with students or provide differentiated small group support. |
| Share: Following Up on Peer Feedback | ➢ In the last few moments of the workshop, allow students to return to the pairings they were in for peer feedback, share their revisions and edits, and share gratitude for their partners’ help. |
**WORKSHOP #11 - Celebrate! Author Showcase**

**Objective:** Students will be able to celebrate their and their peers’ growth as writers by sharing their essays in an authors’ showcase!

**Related Standards:**
- W.6.10: 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 discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 6 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

**SEL Competencies:**
- SELF-AWARENESS: Integrating personal and social identities, identifying assets, experiencing self-efficacy, having a growth mindset
- SOCIAL AWARENESS: Recognizing strengths in others, demonstrating empathy and compassion, understanding and expressing gratitude
- RELATIONSHIP SKILLS: Communicating effectively, developing positive relationships, practicing teamwork, seeking or offering support

**Description**

At the end of the workshop process, MAXCourage recommends setting aside an intentional time to celebrate ALL students who participate in the capstone essay-writing experience—not just those who are selected for publication in the contest—and provide a platform to amplify their voices and showcase their stories. These celebrations of students’ growth as writers will look different in each unique educational setting, but a few potential ways to structure them include...

- **Coffeehouse Reading.** Create an intentional setting for students to read to their peers (e.g. a stage area with a chair or stool for a sharing student facing an audience area with flexible seating). Be sure to set norms for active listening and demonstrating support for the courage students are drawing off to share a personal story in front of the whole group. One by one, allow students to take turns in the author’s seat, reading part or all of their story to the class. (To provide an even wider platform for students’ stories, consider inviting caregivers or other members of your community to your showcase event!)
  - For students who might struggle with reading in front of the full group, consider offering to read the story for them or allowing them to select a friend as a representative to read their work. Additionally, students could record themselves in advance reading in a more comfortable setting or with facilitator support, then play the recording for their peers.
- **Create Your Own Courage Books.** Compile your students’ essays into a booklet once they have been submitted. Schedule a day to distribute the booklets to the whole group (or beyond, across your larger school/organization/community), and set up a fun, comfortable space for students to spread out and read each other’s stories!
- **Gallery Walk.** Prompt each student to select a quote or short excerpt from their essay that they are particularly proud of, or that they feel sums up their story, and write it in the center of a piece of construction paper with their name (if desired). Students can customize their quote posters with any illustrations or decorations they choose, then post them anywhere around the perimeter of the room. Play music and have time for students to circulate around the “gallery” of their peers’ quotes; if desired, teachers can also provide sticky notes for students to post positive notes and reactions next to the quotes from their peers that stand out to them.) After the activity, display the quote posters more permanently on a designated wall in your classroom—or in a space where people beyond the students can pass by them!
APPENDIX A: MENTOR TEXTS & HANDOUTS

- Types of Courage Handout (pdf)
- Partner Interview Handout (pdf)
- Selecting a Topic Mentor Texts (pdf)
- Order of Events Mentor Text (pdf)
- Introduction Mentor Text Excerpts (pdf)
- Description Mentor Texts (pdf)
- Character and Internal Thinking Mentor Texts (pdf)
- Conclusion Mentor Text Excerpts (pdf)
- Explode the Moment (Revision) Mentor Text (pdf)

APPENDIX B: ESSAY GUIDELINES

DRIVING QUESTION (PROMPT): How have you experienced courage in your life?

OVERVIEW: As the capstone experience of the Max Courage Curriculum, each student will write a personal narrative essay about courage in their own life. The process of brainstorming, writing, and revising with their teacher and classmates will tie together all of the ELA skills they have been practicing—reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking. It will also allow them to apply the social-emotional capacities they have been building over the course of the Max Courage program by reflecting on their thoughts, feelings, values, and actions related to courage. Once the students submit their essays, a panel of judges composed of local authors, professors, journalists, educators, and members of the community will read each essay and select at least one essay from each school, based on the writer’s ability to demonstrate their understanding of courage. These chosen essays will be published in an anthology titled The Courage of Children.

CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS: A successful student author will...

- Write a complete personal narrative. (For more specific narrative writing guidelines, see the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts, Grade 6 Writing)
- Answer the Driving Question by reflecting on their actions, thoughts, and emotions in a situation in which they were called to show courage. Though our stories’ topics vary widely, the common theme of courage unites them all.
  - We strongly encourage students to tell a story about themselves, but if they feel compelled to do so, they may also choose to tell a story about how they grew from witnessing the courage of another person.
- Channel their own unique writer’s voice to make their story heard!

SUBMISSION DETAILS

- Length: Around one page, preferably 550 words or less. There is no minimum word count.
- Format: Each essay should include the following heading in the upper right corner of every page:
  - Line 1: Student Name (First Name and Last Initial)
  - Line 2: Teacher Name
  - Line 3: School Name
- Word Processing: If possible, we would prefer that essays be typed. However, all essays, whether typed or handwritten, will be evaluated equally.
- Graphics: Please refrain from including any graphics or images.
APPENDIX C: FURTHER RESOURCES TO EXPLORE

- Overview of the Writing Workshop process from the Government of Victoria, Australia’s Literacy Teaching Toolkit (web)
- Anchor Chart/Checklist: ARMS and CUPS Strategy for Revision vs. Editing (pdf)
- Handout from ReadWriteThink: Evaluate the Effectiveness of Example Peer Review Comments (pdf)
- Handout from Penny Kittle: Qualities of Narrative Writing (pdf)
- Video from Edutopia: Demonstration of the TAG feedback strategy (web)
- Article by Mary Ehrenworth: Strategies for incorporating grammar into writing workshops as a “transformative agent” (pdf)

SOURCES


