



5TH GRADE

VOLUME 5.5

Science Fiction Writing Unit for *The City of Ember*

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Welcome to the 5.5 Science Fiction Writing Unit for *The City of Ember!*

If this is your first time using this guide, you will want to read through this introduction carefully, as it provides information that you will find critical to your establishment of a successful language arts block!

This science fiction writing unit is meant to be taught in conjunction with the *Read Side by Side Reading Program*, Unit 5.5, *The City of Ember*. The book *The City of Ember* will be used as a mentor text to build students' background knowledge and expose students to the craft of writing.

This unit takes approximately 15 days to complete, from brainstorming and planning to sharing the published piece! Lessons in this unit give students explicit instruction in the steps of the writing process and the structure of narrative writing. Some craft and grammar lessons will be incorporated as students revise and edit their writing. You may want to supplement with additional craft, grammar, and spelling lessons between writing units.

Prior to starting the unit, you will want to consider how students will publish and share their writing. Here are a few suggestions:

- illustrated book,
- chapter book,
- handwritten book;
- audio book.

Students might read their story to their own classmates, visit another classroom, or make their writing available for others to read in the classroom, library or other public location.

After students have had the opportunity to publish their writing, assess their work using the checklist for grading a narrative story provided at the end of the unit.

Schedule

To complete this unit, you will need to set aside 30-minutes for writing, 2-4 times a week.

Instructional days begin with a whole-class lesson. Lessons will be 10-15 minutes in length, allowing a short time after the lesson for students to work on the assignment. While working, students will access the help of a writing partner as needed. It may be helpful to seat partners next to each other during the work time. The teacher then confers with partnerships as needed.

Working days allow students to get started right away on writing projects. During the work time, students will continue to access a partner or the teacher for help as needed. If it is challenging to find time every day for writing, teachers might assign these work-projects as homework.

Narrative schedule:

1. Brainstorm & Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make a list of story ideas.• Select a strong idea from the list.• Complete a <i>Narrative Writing Map</i>.• Write a blurb.• Design a cover.	Day 1-4
2. Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Write a draft using the 4-quadrant method.	Days 5-8
3. Revise & Edit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use dialogue to show a character's thoughts and emotions.• Use the rules for punctuating dialogue.• Use dialogue tags to show who is speaking.• Add suspense.	Days 9-10
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Edit and revise using a checklist.	Day 11
4. Publish & Share	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complete a final product that is handwritten, typed, or other.• Share with a real audience.	Days 12-15

Day 1: Brainstorm Ideas & Plan

Lesson Goals: Brainstorm several ideas for writing and select one to write about. Begin to plan a piece of writing using the *Narrative Writing Map 1*.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 1

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* A science fiction story tells about a future world. It is a fictional story with fictional characters. The story is believable based on the events and/or problems of today. Science fiction is typically written in the first or third person.
2. The book *The City of Ember* tells a fictional story using fictional characters. The story is told in the third person; from the perspective of an outsider looking in. The following pronouns are used: *he, she, it, and they*. The events of the story are fictitious but believable and are inspired by the time-period and events of the Cold War (1947-1989).
3. *Introduce the writing prompt:*
Write a story about the future in which one event or advancement has significantly altered our way of life.
You will tell the story from an outsider looking in. You will write in the third person, using the pronouns *he, she, it, and they*.
4. *Brainstorm:* Model brainstorming 2-3 ideas for your own piece of writing. Examples might include:
Events:
 - Climate change has led to food and water shortages,
 - Another global pandemic has occurred,
 - The Woolly Mammoth has been brought back to life,
Inventions:
 - A time travel machine has been invented,
 - A space station is open to tourists,
 - 3-D printed food is now available.
5. *Select:* Model selecting one story idea from your list. Share tips for selecting a strong idea for a story:
 - The story should be believable.
 - The story should have a series of problems and important events.
 - The events should create a change in the main character or teach a lesson.
 - The story should be something that you would enjoy writing about.

6. *Plan*: Model filling out *Narrative Writing Map 1* for the story you will be writing, saving the last section (question/prediction) for Day 3. Demonstrate how to think about and jot notes about the:
- main character,
 - secondary characters,
 - setting (time, place, and circumstance); and
 - problem/conflict.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time brainstorm ideas, select an idea, and fill-out *Narrative Writing Map 1*. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story idea?
- What might I do to improve my story idea?

(Title)

Main Character			
Secondary Character(s)			
Setting	<u>Time</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Circumstance</u>
Problem/ Conflict			
Question / Prediction			

Day 2: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing using the *Narrative Writing Map 2*.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 2

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be planning for the events of their story. They will write their story in four-quadrants.
2. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 1 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How does the problem start?
3. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 2 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How does the problem continue?
 - How does the main character feel?
4. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 3 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - What causes the main character to change? How does the main character change?
5. *Plan:* Model planning quadrant 4 of your story using *Narrative Writing Map 2*.
 - How is the problem resolved?
 - What does the main character learn?

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to fill-out *Narrative Writing Map 2* for their own story. Then, give time for partners to share their writing plan and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

NARRATIVE WRITING MAP 2

Q1	<i>How does the problem start?</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q2	<i>How does the problem continue? How does the main character feel?</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q3	<i>What causes the main character to change? How does the main character change?</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Q4	<i>How is the problem resolved? What does the main character learn?</i> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Day 3: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by writing a blurb.

Materials:

Narrative Writing Map 1

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will be writing a blurb for their story. Remind them that the blurb does not give away how the story will end. The blurb usually ends with a question so that the person reading the blurb will want to read the story. For example, the blurb for *The City of Ember* might end with the question, “What will happen if the lights go out forever?”
2. *Plan:* Model writing a question to use in the blurb of your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to finish filling-out *Narrative Writing Map 1* and then write the blurb for their own story about conflict. Then, give time for partners to share their blurb and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my blurb?
- What might I do to improve my blurb?

Day 4: Plan

Lesson Goals: Continue to plan a piece of writing by making a cover.

Materials:

Blank paper and art materials for designing a cover or illustration software.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will be designing the cover of their book. Every book cover begins with a great title. Share tips for writing a good title:
 - It should provide a clue about the conflict in the story.
 - It should be relatively short.
 - It should get the reader interested.
 - It should put a picture in the reader's mind.
2. *Plan:* Model writing a title for your own story.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to create a cover for their book. Then, give time for partners to share their covers and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my cover?
- What might I do to improve my cover?

Day 5: Draft, Quadrant 1

Lesson Goals: Begin drafting a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be drafting quadrant 1 of their story.
2. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 1 of your story. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Characters
 - Setting
 - Conflict

Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader picture the characters and the setting in their mind.

TIP: Share with students that an appropriate length for quadrant 1 is about 1.5 pages, handwritten. (Each quadrant should be about the same length so that the full story is about 6 pages.) To help keep students organized, it may work best to have students use a new sheet of paper for each quadrant, even using different colors of lined paper if available.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to draft quadrant 1 of their book. Then, give time for partners to share writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

Day 6-8: Draft, Quadrants 2-4

Lesson Goals: Continue drafting a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be drafting quadrants 2-4 of their story.
2. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 2 of your story. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Conflict
 - The main character's actions, words and feelings

Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader feel how the main character is feeling.

3. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 3 of your story about conflict. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Conflict
 - Change in the main character

Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader understand that the main character is changing.

4. *Draft:* Model writing quadrant 4 of your story about conflict. Demonstrate how to include details about the:
 - Resolution
 - Author's message

Model using descriptive language and details to help the reader understand how the story ends and a lesson is learned.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to continue drafting their own stories. Then, give time for partners to share their writing and receive feedback.

- What do you like about my story?
- What might I do to improve my story?

Day 9: Revise & Edit, Dialogue

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make revisions and edits.

Materials:

Dialogue Sheet 1

Dialogue Sheet 2

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.
2. *Revise:* Narrative stories use dialogue to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Dialogue is between two or more characters.

Read the example at the top of *Dialogue Sheet 1*.

“Did we ever find it?”
“Find what, Granny?”
“The thing that was lost,” Granny said. “The old thing that my Grandfather lost...”
“Yes,” said Lina. “Don’t worry, Granny, we found it, it is safe now.”
“Oh, good.” Granny sank back onto her pillows and smiled at the ceiling. “What a relief,” she said.

Discuss: *How does this dialogue reveal each character’s thoughts and feelings?*

Model searching for a place in your writing where two or more characters are talking. Model revising the dialogue to reveal the feelings, thoughts and emotions of the characters.

3. *Edit:* When authors use dialogue in their stories they follow rules for punctuation.

Discuss: the dialogue rules listed on *Dialogue Sheet 1*.

Model editing the dialogue in your story to match the dialogue rules.

4. *Revise:* Authors use dialogue tags to tell who in the story is talking.

The most common dialogue tags are:

- *said* – used when the character makes a statement.
- *asked* – used when the character asks a question.
- *exclaimed* – used when the character says something in surprise, anger, or pain.

When used repeatedly in our stories, these dialogue tags can make the story feel flat.

Discuss: *Dialogue Sheet 2* which provides some other ideas for dialogue tags. Encourage students to add some of their own ideas to each list.

Revise: Model revising dialogue tags in your own writing, choosing alternatives to *says*, *asks*, and *exclaims*.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise and edit dialogue in their own stories. If a student does not have dialogue, encourage them to add it. Then, give time for partners to share their dialogue and receive feedback.

- What do you like about the way I used dialogue in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

DIALOGUE SHEET 1

Narrative stories use dialogue to reveal the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Dialogue is between two or more characters.

Example from page 134 of *The City of Ember*:

“Did we ever find it?”

“Find what, Granny?”

“The thing that was lost,” Granny said. **“The old thing that my Grandfather lost...”**

“Yes,” said Lina. **“Don’t worry, Granny, we found it, it is safe now.”**

“Oh, good.” Granny sank back onto her pillows and smiled at the ceiling. **“What a relief,”** she said.

Dialogue rules:

1. Put quotation marks around words that are being spoken. **“Did we ever find it?”**
2. Punctuation goes inside the quotation marks. **“Did we ever find it?”**
3. Use dialogue tags to show who is speaking. **“The thing that was lost,”** said Granny.
4. Typically, the dialogue tag comes *after* the dialogue. Put a comma inside the quotation marks and a period after the dialogue tag.
“The thing that was lost,” said Granny.
5. Capitalize the first word of what is being said. **“The thing that was lost,”**
6. Use commas to separate spoken language from the rest of the sentence.
“Yes,” said Lina. **“Don’t worry, Granny, we found it, it is safe now.”**
7. Start a new paragraph each time a new person speaks.

—> **“Did we ever find it?”**

—> **“Find what, Granny?”**

—> **“The thing that was lost,”** Granny said. **“The old thing that my Grandfather lost...”**

—> **“Yes,”** said Lina. **“Don’t worry, Granny, we found it, it is safe now.”**

—> **“Oh, good.”** Granny sank back onto her pillows and smiled at the ceiling. **“What a relief,”** she said.

DIALOGUE SHEET 2

STATEMENT	QUESTION	EXCLAMATION
said	asked	exclaimed
uttered declared announced mentioned shared blabbered blurted proclaimed commented whispered murmured remarked answered replied responded	questioned quizzed begged demanded pressed	blurted uttered cried hollered shouted chirped bellowed thundered hailed shrieked announced

Day 10: Revise, Suspense

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and add suspense.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students that they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.
2. *Revise:* Today we are going to add suspense to our stories.

Authors create suspense in their books by exposing the main character to danger. The main character's reaction to this danger makes the plot even more dramatic. He/ she responds to danger with hesitation, indecision, and doubt. Often the main character becomes anxious, nervous, or worried.

3. In the book *The City of Ember*, Jeanne DuPrau creates suspense when she describes how the characters are feeling afraid, worried, and anxious.
 - “Lina slept restlessly that night. She had frightening dreams in which something dangerous was lurking in the darkness,” (p. 132).
 - “I’m worried and afraid at the same time, but I am also excited...and all these feelings are whirling around in my head which makes it hard to sleep,” (p. 176).

Another example of suspense is when Jeanne DuPrau's characters respond to danger with hesitation, indecision, and doubt.

- “[Doon] looked at his drawings for a long time...Should he take this with him?...He might never see such things again. But no, he'd leave it behind,” (p. 197).
 - “Doon was so stunned that he stood still as a stone for a long minute,” (p. 200).
 - “[Lina] should be hurrying to join him—but a sadness held her back, like a heavy stone in her chest,” (p. 222).
4. *Revise:* Model revising your own writing to include suspense by having your characters responds to danger with hesitation, indecision, and doubt. Show how your character is feeling anxious, nervous, or worried.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise their own stories by adding suspense. Then, give time for partners to share.

- What do you like about the way I used suspense in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

Day 11: Edit & Revise

Lesson Goals: Reread a piece of writing and make revisions and edits.

Materials:

Editing and Revision Checklist

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be revising and editing their stories to make them easy to read and enjoy.
2. *Edit:* Model editing your own writing using the editing checklist.
3. *Revise:* Model revising your own writing using the revision checklist:

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to revise and edit their own stories. Then, give time for partners to share their stories and receive feedback.

- How did I use proper punctuation, grammar, and spelling in my story?
- What might I do to improve it?

Editing Checklist:

- _____ Sentences start with a capital letter.
- _____ I used capital letters for proper nouns.
- _____ I have punctuation at the end of each sentence.
- _____ I checked my words for spelling.
- _____ I indented paragraphs.

Revision Checklist:

- _____ I started with an introduction that is clear.
- _____ I ended with a conclusion that is clear.
- _____ I used transition words at the beginning of paragraphs.
- _____ I used language to show how one event may have caused another event.
- _____ Sentences make sense.
- _____ Sentences stay focused on the topic.
- _____ I added details and elaboration that are important to the topic.
- _____ I used key vocabulary.

Day 12-15: Publish & Share

Lesson Goals: Publish a piece of writing.

Instructional Procedures:

1. *Introduction:* Tell students they will now be preparing their piece of writing for others to read. This is called publishing.
2. *Discuss:* how stories will be published—handwritten, typed, or other. Let them know when and how their stories will be shared with the class.

Work Time & Collaboration: Give students time to publish their writing and share their writing with an audience.

Ideas for publishing:

- illustrated book,
- chapter book,
- handwritten book; and
- audio book.

Ideas for sharing:

- read stories aloud to classmates,
- read stories aloud to another class,
- make stories available for others to read (in the classroom, library, or other); and
- take stories home to share with family.

An **author's chair** is a fun classroom tradition. It is a decorated chair in which an author sits to share his/her writing. Teachers can paint a wooden chair or have each new class decorate a pillowcase to go over the back of a chair. This quickly transform a standard classroom chair into something special for young authors.

Checklist for Assessing a Narrative Story (Science Fiction)

<p>Cover _____/6</p>	<p>____ Has a title that is short. ____ The title puts a picture in the reader's mind.</p> <p>____ Includes a blurb talks briefly about the story. ____ The blurb entices the reader to read the book.</p> <p>____ The cover gives the reader a clue about the story. ____ The cover gets the reader interested.</p>
<p>Exposition ____/6</p>	<p>Characters ____ Introduces more than one character. ____ Gives important details about each character. ____ Written in the first or third person.</p> <p>Setting ____ Establishes a future setting: time and place. ____ Gives important details about the setting.</p> <p>Problem ____ Introduces a problem/conflict.</p>
<p>Rising Action ____/8</p>	<p>Text Structure ____ Presents a logical series of events that result from the conflict. ____ Events build toward a climax. ____ The events reveal the author's central message or theme.</p> <p>Craft ____ Includes the development of a main character. ____ Includes dialogue and/or interior monologue. ____ Uses language to show the passage of time. ____ Uses descriptive language. ____ Includes suspense.</p>
<p>Falling Action & Resolution ____/3</p>	<p>____ The problem is resolved. ____ The character has changed or learned something. ____ The ending is satisfying to the reader.</p>
<p>Revision and Editing ____/5</p>	<p>____ Writing is edited for spelling. ____ Writing is edited for grammar. ____ Writing is edited for punctuation. ____ Writing shows evidence of revision. ____ Published writing is polished.</p>
<p>Collaboration & Effort ____/4</p>	<p>____ Worked well with a partner. ____ Respectfully gave feedback to a partner. ____ Respectfully received feedback from a partner. ____ Showed good effort and persistence.</p>
<p>Total: ____/32</p>	<p>Comments:</p>