

Lower Township Elementary Schools
Cape May, NJ
Grade Level: Fourth Grade (4) / Content Area: Reading, Writing, Phonics

Month	Reading Unit	Writing Unit
September- October 8	Unit 1- Interpreting Characters (Spiral 1)	Unit 1- Narrative Writing Unit (Up the Ladder)
October 12	Unit 2- Reading the Weather, Reading the World (Spiral 2) Through Nov 12th Unit 3- Details and Synthesis Start Nov 15th	Unit 2- Boxes and Bullets (Spiral 2) Through Nov 12th Unit 3- Literary Essay (Spiral 4) Start Nov 15th
November		
December		
January	Unit 4- Reading History (Spiral 3) Through Feb 17th Unit 5- Historical Fiction Book Clubs (Spiral 4) Start Feb 22nd	Unit 4- Bringing History to Life (Spiral 3) Through Feb 17th Unit 5- Arc of a Story (Spiral 1) Start Feb 22nd
February		
March		
April	Test Prep- NJSLA	Test Prep- NJSLA
May/June	Unit 6- Power and Perspective	Unit 6- Writing About Research (Optional)

[Reading and Writing Mentor Texts \(Click Here\)](#)

4th Grade Reading Unit 1

Interpreting Characters

The first unit of the year brings students back to being “nose-in-the-book” readers. You will not only remind children to choose books that can be read with comprehension and fluency, you’ll also set them up to take responsibility for keeping track of the reading that they do. Readers need to read deeply and with conscious intent. Many of your students will enter fourth grade only reading to grasp the sweep of a story, so one of your first messages will be that as they move into more complex texts, they’ll find the details in those texts that matter.

Across Bend I you’ll acclimate children to the structures, routines, and habits of a richly literate reading workshop. Students will also retell stories chronologically and to summarize using the key details of the story. Then, in Bend II, students will grow significant, text-based ideas about characters. They will think in more complex ways by drawing evidence-based conclusions, tweaking their ideas so they are grounded in the text and defensible. Finally, in Bend III, you’ll shift your students’ focus from studying characters to building interpretations. You will teach them to connect ideas that are supported across a whole text, conveying to students that there is no one-and-only correct way to interpret literature.

Reading	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers make inferences and build theories about characters.• Readers develop ideas about characters’ traits, motivations, problems, transformations, and lessons learned.• Readers develop complex theories about characters.• Readers utilize partnerships to enhance their understanding of books.	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do readers think in complex ways about characters?• How do readers build a reading life, and why is that important?• How do readers use partnerships to interpret text in sophisticated ways?	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers walk in a character’s shoes by predicting, envisioning and reading with fluency.• Readers build theories about characters by thinking about a character’s personality, habits, motivations, and beliefs.• Readers analyze relationships between the main character and secondary character(s).• Readers build complex theories across multiple texts, noticing how characters change and stay the same across texts.

4th Grade Writing Unit 1

Narrative Writing Unit

This unit is designed as an introduction to fourth grade writing workshop. Students will learn procedures for participating in their new classroom community, writing independently, and working with partners. Students will become familiar with the routines and expectations of each classroom as well as engage in writing to build stamina and independence. Students will demonstrate their writing stamina and proficiency through their narrative writing. Students will continue with their small moment stories by brainstorming topics choices, planning/rehearsing their stories, sketching, and writing with an emphasis on editing and revising too.

Writing

Big Ideas Course Objectives

- Establish routines and expectations
- Build their writing stamina and proficiency
- Develop small moment narratives and strengthen narrative writing by building upon their repertoire of strategies
- Students notice craftsmanship of one author and then apply that craft to their own work
- Students produce a well developed piece of writing to develop high-level skills in narrative writing

Essential Questions

What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

- What is Writer's Workshop?
- What are habits that good writers use when writing personal narratives?
- What are the routines, procedures, and expectations of writing workshop and working with our partnerships?
- How do writers rehearse and draft lots of stories under the influence of one mentor author?
- How do writers take the strategies of one mentor author and try their craft in their own writing?
- What are some powerful revision techniques writers use to revise?

Enduring Understanding

What will students understand about the big ideas?

Students will understand that...

- Writers have routines and procedures to follow in a workshop setting and with their writing partnerships
- Writers think about a topic, rehearse it, sketch their ideas and then write as a strategy for their narrative writing.
- Writers need to edit their writing for capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Writers have various planning strategies for drafting our small moment writing.
- Writers have various ways we let our mentor author influence our own work to make our stories better.
- Writers have various revision strategies they can apply from other writing teachers in class.

4th Grade Reading Unit 2

Reading the Weather, Reading the World

This unit has been designed to help educate a generation of young people to have the skills necessary to engage in the research teams and “skunk works projects” that will be necessary for solving the problems of the future. These and other challenges require that the students we educate are ready to be inventive, thoughtful researchers, collaborators, and listeners.

In Bend I, students begin by reading far and wide, picking up any nonfiction text that speaks to them. Students will be taught essential research skills such as identifying text structure, summarizing, and reading multiple texts on topics of interest. In Bend II, students will read about extreme weather and natural disasters. They will close this bend by holding a mini-celebration to teach one another what they have learned. In Bend III, students will take on a different--yet related--topic of extreme weather or natural disasters. The unit ends with a celebration and a nod towards activism. The goal is for readers to not only *read* differently after this unit but also *live* differently.

Reading	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Researchers utilize text structures in order to determine importance in a nonfiction text.• Researchers discern the difference between narrative and expository nonfiction and ascertain the different ways to approach texts.• Researchers notice patterns across a topic, especially repeated information, to determine the most important concepts.	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In what ways do researchers closely read text to learn as much as possible about the topic?• How do researchers plan, develop, reflect, and set goals throughout the research process?	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers pay attention to text features such as the table of contents, diagrams, charts, graphic organizers, photos, and captions.• Readers synthesize nonfiction by being alert to the visual features of these texts and anticipating what content they will encounter.• Nonfiction readers make connections between details within a text and across multiple texts.• Nonfiction researchers adopt the technical jargon of the subject they’re exploring when teaching others about their topic.• Nonfiction is densely packed with important information.• Readers must keep track of ideas as they read.

4th Grade Writing Unit 2

Boxes and Bullets: Personal and Persuasive Essay

This unit, like a number of other units in the series, begins with a quick immersion into the whole process of writing this new kind of text. The goal for “essay boot camp,” as the opening days of the unit are called, is to help students develop a sense of what it feels like to write a whole essay.

In Bend I, the students will work together as a class to construct a simple class essay by “writing in the air” together, and then they go off to flash-draft the spoken essay on paper. Then, students will spend the next few days gathering entries in their notebook, writing long about ideas about people and events. Students will also develop thesis statements. In Bend II, students will write out evidence to support the reasons for their opinions. They will also collect mini-stories, utilize transition words and phrases, and learn about how to structure an essay. Bend III is about transference and raising the quality of work. Students will develop persuasive opinions that are more generalized and develop a plan for a persuasive essay. They will learn to include a greater variety of evidence, set goals and self-assess, and revise/edit their drafts.

Writing

Big Ideas Course Objectives

- Essayists develop quality thesis statements.
- Essayists decide strategically how they will structure their essay with their audience in mind.
- Essayists use transitional words to guide their readers through the content of their essay.

Essential Questions

What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

- How do writers live their lives like an essayist?
- Why is essay writing important?
- What is the difference between an essay and narrative writing?
- How do authors use partnerships when writing essays?

Enduring Understanding

What will students understand about the big ideas?

Students will understand that...

- Writers grow ideas that are central to the story (grounded in close reading), with text evidence, and reflection to support the claim.
- Essayists mindfully and deliberately organize their writing to communicate their intended message to an audience.
- Essay writers read, reread, and rethink a text in increasingly sophisticated ways.

4th Grade Reading Unit 3

Details and Synthesis: Close Reading of Fiction

The goal of this unit is to support kids reading up a storm, reading books that matter to them, and moving up levels of text complexity, while working on strengthening skills that were taught in Unit 1, especially inference and interpretation. The unit helps kids use their earlier instruction around character and theme with greater independence as they read their own increasingly challenging books. Furthermore, the unit brings them closer to the demands of the high-stakes tests – encouraging them to cite text evidence to back up their ideas and to elaborate on details in partnership conversations. This unit also supports students with analyzing parts of a story in relation to the whole, and interpreting fiction texts with more depth. Kids are invited to choose “books-that-go-together” to read with a partner.

Reading	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Making More of Details to Grow Deeper Ideas about Characters• Finding and Tracking Themes Across a Story• Comparing and Contrasting Across Texts	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do readers make more of details to grow bigger ideas about character?	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers read with an awareness of character• Readers get better at growing bigger ideas as they read• Readers notice what they tend to do well as a reader• Readers reread to come up with better ideas• Readers analyze how change happens in a story• Readers examine motivations and obstacles characters face and what they learn• Readers write essays in their minds, gathering text evidence to support their ideas

4th Grade Writing Unit 3

The Literary Essay: Writing About Fiction

To write well about reading, students not only need to learn more about *writing*, they also need to learn more about *reading*. Throughout the unit, students are taught the value of close reading of complex texts. From the get-go, students will learn to write structured, compelling essays in which they make and support claims and analyze, unpack, and incorporate evidence.

In Bend I, you'll remind students of the work they did on essays prior to this unit. Students will focus on arguing for ideas about characters while carrying forward what they have been taught about planning and drafting a boxes-and-bullets essay, writing introductions and conclusions, and marshalling evidence in support of reasons. In Bend II, you will teach children the power of higher-level interpretive reading. In Bend III, students will write compare and contrast essays, noting the different texts' approaches to the same theme or issue.

Writing	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify possible structures of a literary essay• Construct sophisticated opinions about text(s)• Support opinions with highly relevant and carefully selected examples/evidence• Synthesize opinions and text evidence to engage in analytical thinking/interpretation	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do essayists generate ideas for writing?• How do essayists read closely to make connections within and across texts?	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify possible structures of a literary essay• Construct sophisticated opinions about text(s)• Support opinions with highly relevant and carefully selected examples/evidence• Synthesize opinions and text evidence to engage in analytical thinking/interpretation

4th Grade Reading Unit 4

Reading History: The American Revolution

This unit complements the *Bringing History to Life* writing unit. **The expectation is that you will start this unit a few days before you start the corresponding writing unit, in order to immerse students in research during reading workshop.** It is also recommended that you immerse students in social studies content pertaining to the American Revolution *prior* to launching this unit. Throughout this unit of study, students will read and engage in quick forms of research about topics and make connections between historical and current events. Furthermore, students will expand their note taking skills to generate their own thinking in the content area by learning how to summarize, compare and contrast, and analyze quotations.

In Bend I, students embark on a research project about the events leading up to the American Revolution. They will closely study text structure and pay special attention to the people, geography, and chronology of the event they are studying. Bend II moves the chronology forward to the eve of the American Revolution. Students will research to prepare to debate the question of independence from Great Britain, considering multiple points of view to develop a strong argument. Finally, in Bend III, students will work in partnerships to begin a new research project, this time in the time period after the Second Continental Congress.

Reading	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Determine importance and synthesize information in nonfiction text• Read from various nonfiction text structures• Read contrasting texts to determine new complexities within them• Apply knowledge about nonfiction reading to inquiry	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can I use all that I know about nonfiction reading and research to learn more about my topic?• How does a text's structure impact our understanding of a topic?• How does engaging in research across multiple texts on the same topic impact our learning?• How can I build theories by studying multiple perspectives on a topic?	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers read to gather information about a topic.• Readers synthesize information as they read.• Readers read from various nonfiction text formats, paying attention to the text structure.• Reading across multiple texts will give multiple perspectives on the same topic.

4th Grade Writing Unit 4

Bringing History to Life

This powerful unit requires students to tackle the rigorous task of writing TWO research reports on the Revolutionary War. Unlike other units, this unit is purposefully scaffolded throughout to allow students to dive deeper into their research, making interpretations along the way. This unit teaches students how to research well, cite important sources, and recognize conflicting perspectives about a topic. The challenging work of this unit asks students to collect, synthesize and organize their research into logical, structured chapters. This will prepare students to tackle more independent research endeavors later in the year.

Writing

Big Ideas Course Objectives

- Writers synthesize research to write about a topic.
- Informational books are written in a clear, organized structure.
- Writers incorporate text evidence and multiple perspectives in their informational books.

Essential Questions

What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

- How does text structure help writers teach about a topic?
- Why is it important for writers to synthesize multiple sources?

Enduring Understanding

What will students understand about the big ideas?

Students will understand that...

- Writers use their writing notebooks to research important topics.
- Writers use that research to compose informational books.
- Writers write in specific structures to support what they are trying to teach.

4th Grade Reading Unit 5

Historical Fiction Book Clubs

The unit is appropriately complex for fourth graders who have engaged in a year of character analysis, determining themes, inferring within a text, comparing and contrasting texts, synthesizing across texts, and talking/writing about reading. The goal of this unit is for students to emerge from the unit as knowledgeable readers who can build complex interpretations, who know how to listen closely to learn from others, and who carry ideas across book club discussions *and* across more than one text.

In Bend I, students will focus on deep comprehension and synthesis of complex story elements while working in book clubs. In Bend II, students will focus on interpretation, paying attention to perspective and point of view as they carry ideas across a text. Finally, in Bend III, readers will enhance their thematic understanding by comparing both fiction and nonfiction texts.

It is important to note that students may need to see and feel the world of these historical events. Students will benefit from closely reading resources such as historical images, primary documents, and movie clips to help readers envision the historical settings of their stories. Furthermore, it will be important to organize book clubs around one historical era.

Reading	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students will compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g. chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of ideas, events, concepts, or information in two or more texts.• Students will analyze several accounts of the same event or topic across multiple texts.• Students will determine the theme of a story from details in the text, including how characters respond to challenges.	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do readers tackle complex texts?• Why is it important to read about history?• How does studying historical events help us understand current events?• How does a reader approach historical fiction similarly/differently than other genres?	<p>Students will understand that...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers know that as books become more sophisticated, the setting becomes significant. It may function as part of the problem that a character has to overcome, it can be an emotional space that creates the tone or mood of a place, or the setting can operate at a symbolic level.• Readers pay attention to the beginning of the story where a tremendous amount of crucial information will reveal the kind of place the story is set and also the kind of people who occupy the story.• Readers of historical fiction know that as their books get harder, they have to use tools such as timelines, graphic organizers, and lists of characters to track the events and/or narrative of the story.

4th Grade Writing Unit 5

Arc of a Story: Writing Realistic Fiction

This unit is a favorite for students, as they love (and have an extensive background in) reading and writing fiction. This enthusiasm will be a gift and a challenge, as students will be very willing to write a lot. On the other hand, their enthusiasm may impact the quality of their work. If your teaching is not decisive and strong, students will carry on, undeterred by your teaching. Therefore, your conferences and partnership check-ins will be an important part of your daily routine.

In Bend I, students will discover ways to live like writers, to see ideas for fiction stories everywhere. They will create complex, three-dimensional characters who could exist in the real world. They will ponder their characters' wants and needs to do this. In Bend II, students will use a story arc as a road map for how their story will go. Bend III asks students to delve into focused drafting, deep revision work, and editing. The unit also highlights the importance of grounding the entire story (not just the introduction) in a sense of place (read: setting). Finally, in Bend IV, students will synthesize all they have learned about realistic fiction writing to carry through their own independent fiction projects.

Writing

Big Ideas Course Objectives

- Students will write with volume and stamina throughout the writing process.
- Students will choose realistic fiction topics that are rooted in everyday experiences.

Essential Questions

What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?

- Why do authors write about their personal experiences?
- How do authors decide what stories from their life are worth sharing?
- Why is revision important?

Enduring Understanding

What will students understand about the big ideas?

Students will understand that...

- Authors not only use their notebooks to write stories, but to collect, plan, and organize their ideas.
- Authors make thematic connections between the important moments in their lives.
- Authors plan/rehearse their stories multiple times before putting pen to paper.
- Authors maintain a balance between planning/drafting and revising/editing

4th Grade Reading Unit 6

Reading with the Lens of Power and Perspective

In this unit, students will closely read and interpret text through the lens of author's craft. It is deliberately placed near the end of the year, when students have already done considerable work with understanding story arc and other aspects of fiction. Within this unit, it may be helpful to have students in a fiction book club. Because power and perspective can be found in all aspects of fiction, it does not necessarily matter if students are in realistic fiction, historical fiction or fantasy - so that is a school to school, teacher to teacher choice. The lessons are designed in a way that will allow students to collect lots of evidence and flag specific text evidence and jot throughout their club books so they are coming to club conversations ready to have deep conversations.

In terms of mentor texts, there are several picture books listed at the end of this unit that may serve as strong read aloud texts. Collect a variety of shorter picture books so students can have authentic experiences with several texts on the same topic (as opposed to a longer read aloud). Again, the list at the end of the unit is by no means comprehensive, as this work can be done in several different books across several different genres.

Reading	
Big Ideas Course Objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Readers use a critical lens to deconstruct texts.• Readers consider the intersection of power and perspective as they read.	
Essential Questions <i>What provocative questions will foster inquiry, understanding, and transfer of learning?</i>	Enduring Understanding <i>What will students understand about the big ideas?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can we bring a critical lens to our reading?• Why is it important to acknowledge the power and perspective of multiple characters within a text?	Students will understand that... <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To read critically, readers read with specific lenses in mind.• Readers question choices the author makes throughout a text.