



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 7: Module 3A: Unit 3: Overview



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Unit 3: Writing a Narrative Based on an Event from the Life of Frederick Douglass

In this unit, students write a picture book based on an event from the life of Frederick Douglass. First, students return to *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*¹, which they encountered in Unit 2. This children’s book serves as the model text, and the students read it and another children’s book closely to examine how the author used the tools of a narrative writer to craft a powerful story. Students then write their own book through a series of structured lessons, which are designed to help them all produce high-quality work. First, using their notes from Unit 2, they select an episode on which to focus and write a general plan for their story. Then they take those plans to a Writer’s Roundtable, where they discuss their plans and participate in a peer critique. In addition to being a valuable step in the writing process, this structured conversation serves as Part 1 of the mid-unit assessment (focusing on SL.7.1b, c, and d). Also leading up to the mid-unit assessment, students do a variety of learning activities that focus on sentence

structure and build on the instruction from Unit 2. Part 2 of the mid-unit assessment consists of selected and constructed response centered on L 7.1a, b, d, and 7.2a. Students then begin a series of writer’s workshops. Within these lessons, students continue to learn about narrative writing techniques and the teacher gives a series of mini lessons centered on sensory language, precise word choice, strong verbs, and dialogue. They have class time to write several drafts of each page on storyboards. At various points they revise their writing based on peer review and self-assessment. Next, they turn in their completed storyboards (which serve as the end of unit assessment) for formal teacher feedback. Students also reflect on how they addressed audience and purpose in their stories. After the teacher returns the storyboards with feedback, the students create their illustrated children’s books. This book is the final performance task; students synthesize all they have learned about Frederick Douglass and the power of stories.

Guiding Questions and Big Ideas

- **What gives stories and poems their enduring power?**
- **When you write a story, how does your purpose and audience shape how you tell that story?**
- **How can you use language, images, and theme to give the story you write enduring power?**
- *Stories and poems have enduring power because they tell about important or interesting events, people, and places; they have themes that help readers understand the world and often empower people; and they use powerful language and powerful images.*

¹ This children’s book is integral to several lessons in this module, and is widely available in public and school libraries. However, by January 15, alternate lessons that use a free alternative children’s book will be available on EngageNY.org and at commoncoresuccess.elschools.org to accommodate schools/districts that are not able to secure a copy of *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*.



Mid-Unit 3 Assessment	<p>Part 1. Writer’s Roundtable Standards: SL.7.1b, c, d In preparation to write the first draft of their story, students create a planning guide and bring that work and several questions to a focused small group discussion at which each author presents his or her work and gets feedback on key questions such as: How well does my storyboard capture the significant events of the story? I’m thinking of “zooming in” on these moments—are they critical to the story? Which events should I illustrate? What might those illustrations convey? Is my thematic statement appropriate to the story? Students revise their work based on peer commentary.</p> <p>Part 2: Sentence Structure Quiz Standards: L.7.1a, b, c; L.7.2a Students complete a quiz about conventions.</p>
End of Unit 3 Assessment	<p>Second draft of Storyboards for the Children’s Book Standards: W.7.3, W.7.9, W.7.11 Students turn in the second draft of the children’s book, which is written on storyboards. The first draft has already been revised (during Lesson 8) based on peer feedback and self-assessment. Following the teacher’s feedback on their storyboards, students write the final drafts of their text on their illustrated pages for the final performance task.</p>



Final Performance Task

Crafting a Powerful Story: Children’s Book to Retell an Episode from *Narrative Life of Frederick Douglass* (with author’s note)

Students write and illustrate a children’s book based on an episode from Douglass’s life, selecting the episode from the excerpts of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* they read closely in Unit 2. First they revisit *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*², which serves as the mentor text. After closely examining the model, students plan their children’s book. Before they begin writing, they present and critique their plans in small groups. Then the class transitions into workshop mode and the students use class time to draft their pages on storyboards. Students have several days to write. Within these workshop lessons, the teacher presents focused instruction on narrative writing techniques. The students also peer edit and revise portions of their storyboards. Toward the end of the workshop lessons, students evaluate their first drafts against the rubric and revise accordingly. They turn in the second draft of their storyboards for the End of Unit 3 assessment. While they wait for feedback from the teacher, the students begin working on their illustrations using some basic artistic techniques. Finally, based on the feedback they receive from the teacher, the students write a final draft of the text, which they add to the illustrated pages of their books. **This task centers on NYSP12 ELA CCLS W.7.3, W.7.4, W.7.5, W.7.9, W.7.11, L.7.1, L.7.2, L.7.3, and L.7.6.**

² See footnote 1 on page 1 of this document.



Content Connections

This module is designed to address English Language Arts standards as students read literature and informational text about slavery, abolition, and Douglass. However, the module intentionally incorporates Social Studies Practices and Themes to support potential interdisciplinary connections to this compelling content. These intentional connections are described below.

**Big ideas and guiding questions are informed by the New York State Common Core K-8 Social Studies Framework:
Social Studies Key Ideas and Conceptual Understandings, Grade 7**

- 7.12 Unequal and oppressive social structures sparked resistance efforts by slaves and reform movements to address social, political, and economic inequalities in the United States.
- 7.12.b Enslaved African Americans found a variety of ways to resist the institution of slavery.
- 7.12.c Abolitionists' actions increased the awareness of slavery and motivated enslaved African Americans to take greater risks to achieve freedom in the United States.
- 7.13.d Deeply entrenched systems of social and political inequality existed on southern plantations, in urban centers of the South, and in the growing industrial cities of the North.

This unit also has connections to visual arts standards:

Students will actively engage in the processes that constitute creation and performance in the arts (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts) and participate in various roles in the arts. (standard 1) (from <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/ciai/arts/artstand/arts1.html>)



Texts

1. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (Project Gutenberg, 2006; originally published Boston, 1845; no purchase required³). <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm>.
2. William Miller, *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery* (New York: Lee and Low Books, Inc., 1995), ISBN: 978-1-880-00042-7. (One copy per teacher; recommended, not required⁴).
3. Ten additional illustrated children's books. See Preparation and Materials.

³ Purchase of *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* is not required. All excerpts that students read are provided in the lessons themselves. Schools that already purchased this book are strongly encouraged to use it enhanced close reading.

⁴ Regarding *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*, see footnote 1 on page 1 of this document.



This unit is approximately 2 weeks or 10 sessions of instruction.

Lesson	Lesson Title	Long Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 1	Introducing the Performance Task: The Children's Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.7.1a and b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can articulate the difference between a narrative and a summary. I can combine phrases into a complete sentence. I can identify where a modifier goes in relation to the noun it modifies. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative Writer's Toolbox
Lesson 2	Discussing and Identifying Themes: What Makes a Good Children's Book?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.7.1a and b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write a concluding thematic statement that connects the experience of Frederick Douglass to situations beyond the story. I can recognize narrative techniques in a children's book. I can combine phrases into a complete sentence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Book Scavenger Hunt 	
Lesson 3	Preparing for the Mid-Unit Assessment: Planning the Children's Book	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about seventh-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.7.1) I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.7.1a and b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can plan a children's book that is organized in a way that makes sense to the reader. I can use narrative tools purposefully. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My Children's Book Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladder to Success



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 4	Mid-Unit Assessment Part 1: Writer's Roundtable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can effectively engage in discussions with diverse partners about seventh-grade topics, texts, and issues. (SL.7.1) I can build on others' ideas during discussions. (SL.7.1) With support from peers and adults, I can use a writing process to ensure that purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.7.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can effectively engage in discussion with my peers. I can give and receive useful feedback on My Children's Book Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid Unit 3 Assessment Part 1: Writer's Roundtable: Whole Class Discussion Tracker Mid-Unit 3 Assessment Part 1: Writer's Roundtable: Self-Assessment 	N/A
Lesson 5	Mid-Unit Assessment Part 2: Beginning the Writer's Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) With support from peers and adults, I can use a writing process to ensure that purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.7.4) I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.7.1a and b) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use the tools of a narrative writer efficiently and deliberately. I can recognize the importance of sensory details and using nouns and verbs instead of adjectives in narrative writing. I can use feedback from my peers to make my story more clear and thoughtful. I can recognize and correct common sentence errors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mid-Unit 3 Assessment: Part 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladder to Success Narrative Writer's Toolbox
Lesson 6	Writing the Children's Book: Day One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) With support from peers and adults, I can use a writing process to ensure that purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.7.5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use narrative tools deliberately and effectively. I can recognize the importance of strong verbs, precise description, and sensory imagery in narrative writing. I can give useful and specific peer feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Book Storyboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Praise-Question-Suggest protocol



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 7	Writing the Children's Book: Day Two	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use narrative tools deliberately and effectively. I can recognize the way dialogue can help a reader "show-not-tell" the story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent reading check-in 	N/A
Lesson 8	Writing the Children's Book: Day Three	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) I can use correct capitalization, punctuation and spelling to send a clear message to my reader. (L.7.2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can use resources to correct my spelling. I can assess my writing based on a rubric. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children's Book Storyboards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladder to Success
Lesson 9	End of Unit Assessment and Independent Reading Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) I can read grade-level literary texts proficiently and independently. (RL.7.10) I can use correct grammar and usage when writing or speaking. (L.1) I can use correct capitalization, punctuation, and spelling to send a clear message to my reader. (L.2) I can express ideas with precision. (L.3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can recognize coordinating adjectives. I can illustrate my children's book in an effective and interesting way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> End of Unit 3 Assessment: Second draft of Storyboards for the Children's Book End of Unit 3 Assessment: Self Assessment of My Draft Storyboard Independent reading assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladder to Success



Lesson	Lesson Title	Long Term Targets	Supporting Targets	Ongoing Assessment	Anchor Charts & Protocols
Lesson 10	The Performance Task: The Children’s Book Final Draft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can write narrative texts about real or imagined experiences using relevant details and event sequences that make sense. (W.7.3) With support from peers and adults, I can use a writing process to ensure that purpose and audience have been addressed. (W.7.5) I can produce clear and coherent writing that is appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (W.7.4) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I can revise and polish my children’s book into a final, publishable version. I can write an author’s note to explain how I addressed audience and purpose. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Performance task: children’s book—final draft Author’s note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ladder to Success



Optional: Experts, Fieldwork, and Service

Experts:

- Invite a local children’s book author to share his or her work, as well as the process of writing and illustrating a children’s book.
- Invite a local artist to talk about creating powerful images.
- Invite a local storyteller to share his or her work with the class, which should make the process for creating a story more compelling and engaging.

Fieldwork:

- Arrange for students to read their completed children’s books to an elementary class.

Optional: Extensions

- Partner with the art teacher to support students in an in-depth exploration of different illustrating techniques.
- Partner with the drama teacher and replace the visual art component (the illustrations) with a performance art component by asking the students to memorize and perform their stories.
- Partner with the media arts teacher and make an audio recording and/or a digital copy of the children’s book.



Preparation and Materials

Student Materials

In Lessons 3–10, students work with a scaffolded writing process. They create a plan, write multiple drafts of each page of their book, keep track of their revisions, peer edit, and self-assess their work. The students will need access to these documents over multiple days. Consider what organizational structures in your class might support your students in keeping track of these papers. You are strongly encouraged set up an in-class filing system where the students can keep their work in progress.

Alternative for *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*

This unit uses a picture book called *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery* as the mentor text for the performance task. This children's book is integral to several lessons in this module. If your school does not have this book, it is widely available in public and school libraries. However, by January 15, alternate materials that use a free alternative children's book will be available on EngageNY.org and at commoncoresuccess.elschools.org. These alternate materials will accommodate any schools/districts that are not able to secure a copy of *Frederick Douglass: The Last Day of Slavery*.

If you use the alternate text, some of the components and supporting materials of Lessons 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 8 change. Please see the teaching notes in each of these lessons for guidance regarding which lesson components and supporting materials should be drawn from the alternate materials, which you will find with the book on the Web site.

Additional Children's Books

In Lesson 2, the students work in pairs (or triads) on a literary scavenger hunt and read an additional children's book to find the elements of a narrative. Consult with your local librarian to find good children's books that are thematically linked to this module. As you choose the children's books, look for ones that have a clear and compelling theme, exemplify narrative techniques, and are short enough that students can read them during the time allotted. See the Children's Book Scavenger Hunt in the supplementary materials of Lesson 2. Consider these recommended titles.

- *Sweet Clara and the Freedom Quilt* by Deborah Hopkinson
- *Dave the Potter* by Laban Carrick Hill
- *Aunt Harriet's Underground Railroad in the Sky* by Faith Ringgold
- *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led Her People to Freedom* by Carole Weatherford
- *Henry's Freedom Box* by Ellen Levine



Additional Children's Books (continued)

- *Only Passing Through: The Story of Sojourner Truth* by Anne Rockwell
- *Words Set Me Free: The Story of Young Frederick Douglass* by Lesa Cline-Ransome
- *Most Loved in All the World* by Tonya Hegamin
- *When Harriet Met Sojourner* by Catherine Clinton
- *Sojourner Truth's Step-Stomp Stride* by Andrea Pinkney
- *Fifty Cents and a Dream: a Young Booker T. Washington* by Jabari Asim
- *Night Running: How James Escaped with the Help of His Faithful Dog* by Elisa Carbone

Choosing a Medium for the Children's Book Illustrations

Students will illustrate their children's books. Discuss with your local art teacher some media that are good options for inexperienced artists. You may find that drawing in pencil, painting in watercolor, and then outlining some of the images in thin black marker will yield good results. Another good option for beginners is a collage, either of photos, found images, or torn paper. Whichever medium you choose, be sure to create a model for yourself to better understand the skills and process the students will need in order to be successful. Consider using the more artistic students in your class as consultants. Also, launching the next module or independent reading project between Lessons 9 and 10 will give the students more time to work on their illustrations.

Independent Reading

This unit builds on the work the students have already completed toward finishing their independent reading. It includes two lessons (Lessons 1 and 7) in which you check the students' progress. By Lesson 9, the students should be ready to write (or present) a formal book review. A significant portion of the lesson is dedicated to this task. See the separate stand-alone documents on EngageNY.org: **Launching Independent Reading in Grades 6–8: Sample Plan**, which provides practical guidance for a culminating project. Be sensitive to the fact that students will be generating a lot of writing in this unit and may wish to do a less traditional book review. Oral book presentations, "book chats," and dramatic readings can all be good culminating activities that also help students develop their speaking and listening skills.