SUGGESTED LEARNING STRATEGIES: Think-Pair-Share, Brainstorming, Marking the Text, Graphic Organizer, Drafting, Rereading, Adding, Substituting, Self-Editing/Peer Editing, Sharing and Responding, Marking the Draft

Focus:
A reflective essay is a type of personal narrative in which writers share insights and observations about life. This type of writing draws upon personal experiences and imaginative thinking. It provides rich opportunities for recollection of past, present, or imagined experiences and thoughtful reflection on these experiences.

Goal:
To write reflective essays that:
- Describe a significant incident and your response to it.
- Reflect on the significance of the incident.

To achieve this goal, you will engage in a series of activities in which you work with your teacher and with your classmates to construct two model personal narratives. You will then use these models to construct your own personal narrative.

Activity 1: Reading and Analyzing a Reflective Essay

1. You have probably read and written personal narratives. What are some common elements of good personal narratives?

2. A reflective essay is a kind of personal narrative in which the writer reflects on the significance of an incident. As you read the sample reflective essay, look for elements of a good narrative and mark the text when you find them.

4. Most reflective essays are structured to include three parts:
   - Incident: a description of an incident or situation.
   - Response: the writer’s initial or immediate thoughts and feelings in response to the incident.
   - Reflection: the writer’s reflection on the incident, after some time has passed and the writer is able to thoughtfully consider the importance of the incident or situation to his or her life.

5. Mark the word Incident on the graphic organizer below with a highlighter or colored pencil. Now use a different color to mark the word Response. Reread the sample of a reflective essay and mark the text by color-coding it to show the description of the incident and the author’s response.

6. Use a third color to code the reflection. Remember to highlight or underline the word Reflection on the graphic organizer in the color you are using in your color-coding key. Analyze the reflection in the last paragraph. What is the author’s tone? How can you tell?

7. What is Kincaid’s thesis?
8. What images and phrase does the author repeat? How does she use this repetition? To what effect?

Activity 2: Writing a Class-Constructed Reflective Essay

Prompt: Write a reflective essay that meets the requirements listed in the goal statement.

As your teacher models the process of creating a reflective essay, you will be expected to take notes and participate in the class writing of the essay.

1. After your class has decided upon a topic for the reflective essay and your teacher has retold the story, use the strategy of the reporter’s questions (who, what, when, where, why, and how) to ask questions that will help create a more detailed retelling of the incident, response, and reflection. Brainstorm your questions here.

2. Take notes on the incident, response, and reflection as your teacher leads guided notetaking. As you listen and take notes, think about the tone of the unfolding narrative. Is it humorous, or thoughtful, regretful, or nostalgic? Jot some ideas about the tone and a central image you could incorporate as a symbol of the experience. Place this thinking in the center of the graphic.

Incident

Personal Essay

Response

Reflection
3. As your teacher adds details to the incident and response, be thinking about an image or repeated phrase that could lead toward the reflection about the significance of the incident. Brainstorm some additional ideas about images or details you have included so far.

4. With a partner, scan Kincaid’s essay and choose a sentence or two that you find intriguing or powerful in syntax and style. Write the sentences below, and then write an emulation of the sentence that could fit into the class essay.

5. With a partner, think of some possible titles for the class essay. Try to tie the reflection to the repeated phrases or images as a way of creating coherence.

Activity 3: Writing a Reflective Essay with a Partner

Prompt: Write a reflective essay that meets the requirements listed in the goal statement.

Generating Content

1. Brainstorm topics that you might write about. Briefly, tell your partner the story; work together to choose a story for each of you to write.

2. Plan the structure of your reflective essay, identifying the incident, response, and reflection. Use the reporter’s questions to help you and your partner fill in details of these three parts.

3. You should try to remember the incident as clearly as you can, but you might find that there are gaps in your memory. List others who were there and might be able to fill in gaps, and make a plan to ask them for information.

4. Identify an image or phrase that you could repeat for effect.

5. Participate in sharing and responding to refine your plan.
Reflective Essay

Drafting and Refining an Incident and Response

6. Use Kincaid’s sample and your class-constructed model to help you draft an opening that leads to a narration of an incident and your initial response to it.

7. Participate in sharing and responding to refine your description of an incident and your response to it. Discuss with your partner how you might revise by emulating a powerful sentence of the original, including more precise description, or using more vivid verbs. Use indirect quotations or dialogue.

Drafting and Refining a Reflective Conclusion

8. Draft a reflective conclusion that reveals the significance of the incident and that comes to a satisfying closing. Give your essay an effective title.

9. Participate in sharing and responding to refine your reflection and your title.

Reflecting and Publishing

10. Use the writer’s checklist and feedback from your partner to make sure that you have included the essential elements of a reflective essay, and revise as needed.

11. Use available resources as you edit your narrative and prepare it for publication.

Activity 4: Independent Writing

Prompt: Write a reflective essay on an incident of your choice that meets the requirements listed in the goal statement.
### Writing Workshop 4  Reflective Essay

#### SCORING GUIDE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scoring Criteria</th>
<th>Exemplary</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development of Ideas</strong></td>
<td>The composition recreates an experience with careful attention to using a variety of narrative techniques (e.g., multiple plot lines, symbolism, and repetition) that effectively develop the incident and response • incorporates insightful reflective commentary that reveals the importance of the experience.</td>
<td>The composition recreates an incident with relevant details and a reflective point of view so that the importance of the incident is forceful and clear • uses narrative techniques to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.</td>
<td>The composition recreates an incident using irrelevant, minimal, and/or repetitive details and an unclear point of view • contains little or no use of narrative techniques • contains limited reflection on the importance of the incident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Structure</strong></td>
<td>The composition provides a purposeful and engaging organizational structure that develops the incident, elaborates on the response to the incident, and insightfully reflects on the meaning of the experience • uses transitions and a variety of techniques to guide the reader through the incident and build toward a particular tone and outcome.</td>
<td>The composition follows an effective organization with a beginning that situates and develops the incident • uses transitions and techniques to create a smooth progression of events • concludes with an ending that follows from and reflects on what is experienced.</td>
<td>The composition contains a beginning that is unclear and/or does not directly relate to the story • presents disconnected ideas and limited use of transitions and techniques • contains an ending that is disconnected, unfocused, and/or non-reflective.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Use of Language</strong></td>
<td>The composition uses diction, sentence variety, sensory detail, and figurative language creatively and purposefully to create an effect • demonstrates command of conventions of standard English.</td>
<td>The composition uses diction, syntax, sensory detail, and figurative language purposefully • demonstrates general command of conventions; minor errors in punctuation, grammar, capitalization, or spelling do not interfere with meaning.</td>
<td>The composition uses diction, sensory detail, and figurative language ineffectively or not at all • contains an unclear or inconsistent tone • demonstrates limited command of conventions; errors in grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling interfere with meaning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Writing Process</strong></td>
<td>The composition reflects skillful revision and editing to produce a draft ready for publication.</td>
<td>The composition reflects revision and editing to produce a draft ready for publication.</td>
<td>The composition reflects minimal revision and editing and is not ready for publication.</td>
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