

Unit 5: Author Studies


Introduction


“Reading, studying, and learning about an author can be like making a new friend.” (America’s Choice)

In this unit, students look deeply across several works of one author. The best way to develop a rich literary life is to immerse students in literature. By reading one author’s works, students explore themes, characters, and settings from several titles. In this author study, students in ELA-E and mainstream classrooms learn about Mem Fox and explore her books, while ELA-S students learn about Ofelia Dumas Lachtman and explore her books. ELA-S teachers use lesson ideas from America’s Choice *Author Study: Mem Fox* to present similar concepts for this author, who created the *Pepita* series, written in Spanish and English.

During Reading Workshop, students hear, read, and discuss many works by the same author and learn to develop ideas about the author as a writer, while making connections to help them understand texts better. They engage in thinking strategies, such as predictions based on previous texts, comparing and contrasting, making judgments, and looking for recurring themes. They learn to make evaluative statements about an author, then use the text to support their ideas. Rereading books is a crucial part of an author study, because it allows students to revisit texts for different purposes. Help students understand the richness of rereading familiar texts by helping them see new things each time they reread.

During Writing Workshop, students emulate different writing techniques observed in the author’s work. For example, students notice how the author introduces a story through character descriptions or how the author uses research to add interesting and authentic details to a piece. Once students learn to “let” an author mentor them in this scaffolded process, we hope they continue to mentor themselves, for they have learned to read like writers. Students also learn to write in-depth responses to reading and letters to the author, explaining what the author’s work meant to them.

 English Language Learner (ELL) connection—These planning guides were written to intentionally integrate transitioning ELLs’ needs. The star symbol indicates a strategy and/or additional support essential for transitioning ELLs and embedded throughout the lessons. These suggestions may also benefit other learners. The Notes column shows details and reminders related to ELL strategies, as well as additional information for teachers working with different student populations.

 Information Literacy and Technology (ILT) connection—Throughout this unit of study are suggestions to infuse informational literacy and technology into the lessons to provide students with opportunities for 21st century learning.

Standards

- Standard 1: Read and understand a variety of materials.
- Standard 2: Write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Standard 3: Write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
- Standard 4: Apply thinking skills to reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing.
- Standard 5: Read to locate, select, evaluate, and use relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.
- Standard 6: Read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.

Reading Workshop: Big Ideas

- Explore one author’s work and life.
- Compare and contrast themes, characters, and language from multiple works by one author.
- Use connections and wonderings to understand meanings of texts.
- View themselves as readers and know good reading strategies.
- Use reading strategies for decoding and comprehension.
- Respond to stories in writing or using accountable talk and creative dramatics.

Writing Workshop: Big Ideas

- Draw upon everyday life to create stories.
- Analyze author’s work to identify and reproduce writing techniques.
- Respond to books, including introductions, retellings, connections, and reactions.
- Produce writing that tells stories that writers and others can read, using conventional and approximate spelling.

Reading Resources

- *Making Meaning, Grade 1*
- *Author Study: Mem Fox* by America's Choice
- Mem Fox books:
 - *Night Noises*
 - *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
 - *Koala Lou*
 - *Possum Magic*
 - *Tough Boris*
- *An Extraordinary Egg* by Leo Lionni
- *Charlie Anderson* by Barbara Abercrombi
- *The Secret Life of Snakes/La vida secreta de los serpientes* by Lynn M. Stone ★
- *What Do You Do With a Tail Like This?/¿Qué haces con una cola como esta?* by Steve Jenkins and Robin Page ★
- Ofelia Dumas Lachtman books:
 - *Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita habla dos veces* ★
 - *Pepita Thinks Pink/Pepita piensa del color rosa* ★
 - *Pepita Takes Time/Pepita siempre está tarde* ★
 - *Pepita Packs Up/Pepita empaca* ★
 - *Tina and the Scarecrow/Tina y el espantapájaros* ★





Writing Resources

- *Avenues Teacher Guide* by Hampton-Brown ★
- *Fifty Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners, Second Edition* by Adrienne Herrell and Michael Jordan ★
- *Units of Study for Primary Writing: A Yearlong Curriculum*, Unit 5, "Authors as Mentors," by Lucy Calkins and Amanda Hartman
- *Author Study: Mem Fox* by America's Choice
- *Using Rubrics to Improve Student Writing* by NCEE
- Mem Fox books:
 - *Night Noises*
 - *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge*
 - *Koala Lou*
 - *Possum Magic*
 - *Tough Boris*
- *The Grouchy Ladybug/La mariquita malhumorada* by Eric Carle ★
- Ofelia Dumas Lachtman books:
 - *Pepita Talks Twice/Pepita habla dos veces* ★
 - *Pepita Thinks Pink/Pepita piensa del color rosa* ★
 - *Pepita Takes Time/Pepita siempre está tarde* ★
 - *Pepita Packs Up/Pepita empaca* ★
 - *Tina and the Scarecrow/Tina y el espantapájaros* ★

Lessons 1-5	Reading Workshop	Lesson 1: Wondering and Questioning During Reading I ★	Lesson 2: Wondering and Questioning During Reading II ★	Lesson 3: Identifying What Good Readers Notice ★	Lesson 4: Introducing the Author Study ★ 🖨️	Lesson 5: Analyzing an Author's Work
	Writing Workshop	Lesson 1: Collecting a Baseline Writing Sample ★	Lesson 2: Discovering Small Moments ★	Lesson 3: Stretching Small Moments ★	Lesson 4: Studying Mem Fox: Describing a Character ★	Lesson 5: Learning from Mem Fox: Introduction with Character Description I ★
Lessons 6-10	Reading Workshop	Lesson 6: Using Strategies for Meaning ★	Lesson 7: Using Accountable Talk ★	Lesson 8: Making Connections to Our Reading ★	Lesson 9: Applying Reading Strategies to New Words and Phrases ★	Lesson 10: Making Connections to Build Meaning ★
	Writing Workshop	Lesson 6: Learning From Mem Fox: Introduction with Character Description ★	Lesson 7: Studying Mem Fox's Writing: Come-back Lines ★	Lesson 8: Learning From Mem Fox's Writing: Come-back Lines ★	Lesson 9: Applying Strategies From Mem Fox's Writing: Come-back Lines ★	Lesson 10: Studying Mem Fox's Writing: Using Research Details ★
Lessons 11-15	Reading Workshop	Lesson 11: Making Text-to-Self and Text-to-World Connections ★	Lesson 12: Dramatizing Text to Increase Meaning ★	Lesson 13: Expanding Our Writing Using Connections ★	Lesson 14: Making Text-to-Text Connections ★	Lesson 15: Comparing Books by the Same Author ★
	Writing Workshop	Lesson 11: Applying Mem Fox's Strategy: Using Research Details in Our Writing ★	Lesson 12: Editing Our Pieces I ★	Lesson 13: Editing Our Pieces II ★	Lesson 14: Writing to a Prompt: End-of-Unit Assessment ★	Lesson 15: Writing a Response: Looking at Story Structure ★
Lessons 16-20	Reading Workshop	Lesson 16: Studying Characters in a Story ★	Lesson 17: Reviewing What We Have Learned About Mem Fox ★	Lesson 18: Clarifying Thinking About the Author ★	Lessons 19-20: Preparing to Celebrate the Author Study ★	
	Writing Workshop	Lesson 16: Using a "Story Structure" Chart to Write a Retelling ★	Lesson 17: Writing a Response to Reading: Giving a Connection ★	Lesson 18: Writing a Response to Reading: Giving an Opinion	Lesson 19: Writing a Response to Reading: Developing a Rubric ★	Lesson 20: Writing a Response to Reading: Finishing Touches ★

Unit at a Glance

Grade 1: Unit 5: Author Studies

Lessons 21-23	Reading Workshop					
	Writing Workshop	Lesson 21: Writing a Letter to the Author  	Lesson 22: Polishing Letters to the Author  	Lesson 23: Celebrating the Author Study 