

# Reality Check 2

## Don't forget, presentation matters!

Be sure students follow the key qualities for the Presentation trait:

- Applying Handwriting Skills
- Using Word Processing Effectively
- Making Good Use of White Space
- Refining Text Features

## Transition Tips

Ask students to clean out their writing folder of narrative papers from Unit 3. Tell them they will be adding new argument writing pieces over the next three weeks. Options for the papers being retired:

- Organize favorite narratives into a small reference portfolio for future narrative assignments.
- Polish the best piece(s) and submit to a student literary magazine for publication.
- Rework selected pieces for particular audiences, such as younger classes or local senior centers, and read the works aloud to them.
- Take the papers home to share with family members.

## Publishing Activities

Have students adapt and extend ideas from their narrative unit projects by carrying out one or more of the following publishing activities. Pick and choose from them as your schedule allows.

### Technology Activities

#### Animation

Animation programs can bring students' narrative unit projects alive on the Web. Go online to find animations created by middle school students, and have students view them for ideas and tips for creating their own. Then tell them to create storyboards and scripts based on their projects. Encourage them to keep the animation simple by, for example, using the same background throughout. Students can then use the drawing and graphic tools to create their animations. Invite students to an animation afternoon. Pass the popcorn, project the animations, and enjoy. Creating animations takes practice, but it's well worth the time and effort.

#### Music Video

Some students may want to rewrite their narrative unit projects as songs (ballads, raps, country tunes, and other genres) and perform them on video. They can compose their own music for their lyrics or select free music downloads on the Web. Before recording the video, encourage students to practice their songs to make sure their lyrics match the music. Students may also want to create colorful sets and choreograph dances for themselves and backup performers. If available, reserve the school's auditorium for taping. Once the music videos are a wrap, students can share them in class or post them on the school's or another safe and secure website.



# Reality Check 3

## Don't forget, presentation matters!

Be sure students follow the key qualities for the presentation trait:

- Applying Handwriting Skills
- Using Word Processing Effectively
- Making Good Use of White Space
- Refining Text Features

## Transition Tips

Ask students to clean out their writing folder of papers from Unit 4. Tell them they will be adding new informative/explanatory pieces over the next three weeks. Options for the papers being retired:

- Revise a favorite paper and turn it in, along with the rough draft, for extra credit.
- Keep the papers in a notebook to refer to later, when a new argument writing unit is under way. Include notes about the key qualities just studied and ideas for strengthening those areas in the future.
- Ask students to donate papers to the class library. Organize the papers by mode, subject matter, or genre.
- Take the papers home to share with family members.

## Publishing Activities

Have students adapt and extend ideas from their argument writing unit projects by carrying out one or more of the following publishing activities. Pick and choose from them as your schedule allows.

### Technology Activities

#### Podcast Broadcast

Have pairs of students debate the topic of their argument writing unit projects using an audio podcast format, with each debater taking a “for” or “against” position. Encourage students to use a regular tape recorder to practice their debate, listening for ways to improve content and presentation, before they record their actual podcast. Then follow online instructions on how to set up a podcast (using available audio software). Change the podcast daily, or set up a multiple-clip podcast page for simultaneous presentations. You might also have students include a poll tabulator on the website for audience members to vote in favor of the debate they support.

#### A Commercial

Challenge students to produce a clever commercial based on their argument writing unit projects. Have them videotape their commercials in live action, using themselves as the actors, or in animation using an online digital story-making program. Encourage students to incorporate backdrops and props, but remind them that their goal is to persuade viewers to buy a product or support a cause, not just entertain. Provide time for students to share their commercials with the class.



# Reality Check 5

## Don't forget, presentation matters!

Be sure students follow the key qualities for the Presentation trait:

- Applying Handwriting Skills
- Using Word Processing Effectively
- Making Good Use of White Space
- Refining Text Features

## Transition Tips

Ask students to clean out their writing folders of narrative papers from Unit 6. Tell them they will be adding new argument writing pieces over the next three weeks. Options for the papers being retired:

- Revise a favorite paper and turn it in, along with the rough draft, for extra credit.
- Keep the papers in a notebook to refer to later, when a new unit is under way. Include notes about the key qualities just studied and ideas for strengthening those areas in the future.
- Create a class website to showcase all the narratives from this unit. Post the link to the website on a bulletin board or in the school library so that other students can enjoy reading the class stories.
- Take the papers home to share with family members.

## Publishing Activities

Have students adapt and extend ideas from their narrative unit projects by carrying out one or more of the following publishing activities. Pick and choose from them as your schedule allows. They're a lot of fun!

### Technology Activities

#### Animated Comic Strip

Have students turn their narrative unit projects on friendship into an animated comic strip, using the text as inspiration for characters and speech bubbles. Students may hand draw the strip or use a "Create Your Own Comic" program or website to create it. (A program usually will allow students to select and manipulate animated characters, objects, and backgrounds, and incorporate dialogue into a variety of speech-bubble styles.)

Have students post their completed comic strips on a class website for online viewing, or have them print a copy for posting in the classroom or putting in a bound collection of comic strips.

#### Updated Old-Fashioned Radio Show

Before movies and television shows captivated audiences, radio shows did. Families would gather around the radio, listening to stories involving Sherlock Holmes, Dick Tracy, Little Orphan Annie, and The Shadow. Ask students to create a modern version of an old-fashioned radio show based on their narrative unit projects, using podcast technology. Start by having them listen to recordings of a few shows that you find online or at your local library. Then have them write a script for their radio show, assemble a cast to perform it, and rehearse. From there, have them record and produce their show, using a computer program, or following directions at a website dedicated to creating audio shows. When they've finished, provide time for each group to share their radio shows with the class.