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Photographic Eye: Capturing the Moment through Personal Narrative [8th-9th grade]

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UNDERSTANDING BY DESIGN

Unit Cover Page

Unit Title: Photographic Eye: Capturing the Moment through Personal Narrative

Grade Level: 8 / 9

Subject/Topic Area(s): English Language Arts

Designed By: Amy Anderson

Time Frame: 5 weeks, 90 minute periods, AB scheduling

School District: Pineywoods Community Academy

School: Pineywoods Community Academy

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Brief Summary of Unit (Including curricular context and unit goals):

Students will explore the connections between the writing process, art and memory. Through the lens of photography and art, they will refine and publish a “moment in time” personal narrative. This unit was created for the beginning of the school year, and serves the dual purpose of reviewing the writing process and helping students create meaningful connections with each other. Learning culminates as students produce and present a literary magazine celebrating their work.

Unit: Photographic Eye: Capturing the Moment through Personal Narrative
Grade: 8th / 9th

Stage 1: Desired Results

Understandings

Students will understand that...

- Good writers, like photographers, capture a moment.
- We capture the moments in our lives for many reasons: to define our cultures and identities, to create social change, to persuade others, etc.
- Writers often use a single moment to represent something greater.
- Writing is a process.

Essential Questions

- Why do we strive to capture moments in time?
- How do writers and artists use “captured moments”?
- How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact?
- Who are we as writers?
 - What do we want our audience to gain from our writing?

Knowledge

Students will know...

- The steps of the writing process
- Traits of good writing
- The definition of “literary magazine”
- More about their fellow classmates
- More about themselves

Skills

Students will be able to...

18A: generate ideas and plans for writing by using prewriting strategies such as brainstorming, graphic organizers, notes, and logs.
18C: revise selected drafts by adding, elaborating, deleting, combining, and rearranging text.
18G: refine selected pieces frequently to “publish” for general and specific audiences.
19D: analyze published examples as models for writing.

Stage 2: Assessment Evidence

Performance Task:

As a class: Your goal is to create a literary magazine centered on the idea of “capturing the moment” through the combination of images and words. As a class, you must come up with a title for our literary magazine, a cover design, a cover page, a table of contents, and an explanation of what our magazine is about that answers the essential questions of the unit.

As an individual: Your goal is to capture a **specific moment** from your life combining text and image. While you will not be required to publish your entire personal narrative in our literary magazine, you have to include some work in the magazine. If you are squeamish about sharing your writing, you can submit your image and “word cloud” instead.

Other evidence:

Developing a Negative – Students will create an image in class that depicts the moment they chose to write about.

Image Grammar Journal Assignment – In order to help students “capture the moment,” we will be discussing the “five basic brushstrokes” from Harry Noden’s “Image Grammar: Using Grammatical Structure to Create Writing.”

Stage 3: Learning Activities

Day 1: What is a Literary Magazine?

- **Materials:** copies of different literary magazines (from a variety of sources: high schools, universities, independent publishers), pieces of butcher paper with one of the questions from the worksheet at the top of each.
- **Essential Questions: How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact?**
- **Plan:**
 - ***“What is a Literary Magazine?” Activity***
 - Put students into pairs, and give each pair a copy of a different literary magazine and a literary magazine exploration worksheet.
 - Ask pairs to work together to come up some notes about their magazine that they can write on the butcher papers to share with the class.
 - As the groups finish, have students do a gallery walk; as they look at the work of their peers, they will come up with three traits that literary magazines seem to share .
 - One partner from each pair will share their three traits with the rest of the group.
 - As a class, students will come up with a list of traits and write them on a piece of poster board to hang in the room for the duration of the unit.
 - ***Assigning the Performance Task***
 - Surprise! Tell students that they are going to be creating a literary magazine which will represent their high school for posterity. All the choices they make will have an impact outside of their classroom. They will be responsible for creating everything, from posters advertising our magazine to submission forms. I will choose the theme for the first issue, but at the end of the unit, they will get to choose the theme for our next issue.
 - Hand-out the “Capturing the Moment: Literary Magazine Assignment Sheet” and discuss timeline.
 - **Exit Slip:** How can we collectively use our personal experiences to make an impact on our new school community?

Day 2: Review of the Writing Process

- **Materials:** photography equipment / negatives / prints in different stages of creation, art cards (pick ones out that tell a story)
- **Essential Questions: Who are we as writers? What do we want our audience to gain from our writing?**
- **Plan:**
 - ***Focusing in on our Work***
 - Lay art cards on a table for students to pick up as they walk in. Tell them to choose the card that tells the most interesting story.
 - After students have picked a card, give them each a “Focusing in on our Work” worksheet. Ask them to study the image and draw the part of the image that draws their

focus.

- Have students trade their images with a partner and repeat the same activity.
- Ask students to share some of the ways that artists create focus in their work and then brainstorm a few ways writers create focus.
- **Review of the Writing Process**
- Pass around the following and talk about the writing process while students take notes on a graphic organizer (could use double-entry notes, Cornell notes, etc). If you are not a photographer, you could either leave this step out or give students a different visual / tactile experience to help them remember the writing process (cooking and some scientific processes would work well).
 - *Negatives / Negative Proofs*
 - This is the brainstorming / prewriting stage; in this stage, you are choosing your subject and deciding what you want to focus on.
 - *Uncropped, Underdeveloped Image*
 - This is the drafting stage; in this stage, you are getting something down on paper. Your draft is imperfect, but it has potential.
 - *Different Crops / Levels of Exposure*
 - This is the revising / editing stage. In this stage, you are figuring out what to leave in, what to take out; you are moving things around and developing your writing with details. By now, you should be aware of your audience and what you want them to gain from your writing.
 - *Final Photograph*
 - This is the final draft stage. To others, this stage may look like a single step, but we know the sweat, blood and tears that were needed to create our baby, our masterpiece, our legacy.
 - Remind students that this process also applies to creating a publication, like our literary magazine.
- Hand-out the “Developing a Negative” Worksheet. Tell them this is their negative: the stage when they are choosing where they want to put their focus. If there is time, they can start on this assignment today.
- **Exit Slip:** What do you, as an individual, want to do with your writing? Do you want to persuade people to do something, do you want to show them more about yourself, or do you just want a way to “get things out of your head”?

Day 3: Examples of Good Writing (“16 Pictures of My Father”)

- **Materials:** copies of Marion Winik’s “16 Pictures of My Father” from her book, *Telling*
- **Essential Questions:** Why do we strive to capture moments in time? How do writers and artists use “captured moments”?
- **Plan:**
 - **Begin Image Grammar Journal**
 - Explain that using image grammar, we are going to be expanding our writing palette the

next few weeks. The first of Noden's "Five Basic Brush Strokes" that we will cover is "Adding an Absolute Brush Stroke." These brush strokes will help us capture our moments with more sophistication.

- The activity for this part of the unit will be copied from pages 3-5 of "Image Grammar: Activity Book."
 - **Pictures of _____**
 - Read excerpts of "16 Pictures of My Father" together as a class.
 - After students finish reading have them do a chalk talk with some of the essential questions of the unit:
 - Why do you think Winik strives to capture moments in time?
 - How does Winik use "captured moments"?
 - Using Winik's work as an example, have students write four to five pictures under the title: *Pictures of _____*.¹ One of these must include an "absolute brush stroke."
 - Continue work on "Developing a Negative" Activity
 - **Exit Slip:** Why do you think people want to capture the moments of their life? Give some examples of how people capture these moments?
-

Day 4: Buffer Day ("Developing a Negative" work day + peer feedback unless they create these at home)

Day 5: Examples of Good Writing ("On Keeping a Notebook")

- **Materials:** examples of student narratives (should have both strong examples and weaker examples), copies of Joan Didion's "On Keeping a Notebook" from *Slouching Towards Bethlehem*.
 - **Essential Questions:** Why do we strive to capture moments in time? How do writers and artists use "captured moments"? What do we want our audience to gain from our writing?
 - **Plan:**
 - **Continue with Image Grammar Journal**
 - Provide examples for "Adding an Appositive Brush Stroke." The activities for this part of the lesson are on pages 6-7 of "Image Grammar: Activity Book."
 - **"On Keeping a Notebook" and Audience**
 - Read an excerpt of Joan Didion's "On Keeping a Notebook" as a class.
 - Continue the Chalk Talk from yesterday. Today, students will be focusing on the differences between Winik's and Didion's motivation for capturing moments.
-

¹ Activity developed by Jeff Anderson, author of *Mechanically Inclined: Building Grammar, Usage, and Style into Writer's Workshop* (Stenhouse, 2005).

- Why does Didion capture moments in time?
 - How does Didion use these “captured moments”?
 - After the Chalk Talk, ask students how the audience for Winik’s “16 Pictures of My Father” differs from Didion’s notebooks?
 - **Personal Narrative Examples: Editorial Choices**
 - In groups of three, students will critique some sample student “moment in time” narratives. Give students a few narratives and have them critique using a “6 traits” rubric.
 - Each group will pick the strongest narrative their group received, read it to the class, and then explain why they picked it. Ask students if they had to choose between all the narratives read to the class, which would they publish in our literary journal.
 - **Exit Slip:** Why do we write personal narratives? Do we write them for ourselves, for someone else, or some combination of both?
-

Day 6: First Drafts of Narratives

- **Materials:** lots of paper
 - **Essential Questions:** Who are we as writers?
 - **Plan:**
 - **Continue with Image Grammar Journal**
 - Provide examples for “Adding an Adjective.” The activities for this part of the lesson are on pages 7-8 of “Image Grammar: Activity Book.”
 - **Drafting Narratives**
 - Give students the rest of the class period to write the first draft of their personal narratives. Be available to conference with each student as they come to a place where they would like some help.
 - **Exit Slip:** Rate your confidence about your personal narrative assignment. Rating a “1” means “I made no progress, I have no idea what I’m doing”; rating a “10” means “That was the best thing I’ve ever written, I love it.” Comments are also welcome.
-

Day 7: Revising Narratives

- **Materials:** personal narratives with problems that need revision on transparency (can use examples from last year, or create purposefully rough personal narratives)
- **Essential Questions:** Who are we as writers?
- **Plan:**
 - **Continue with Image Grammar Journal**
 - Provide examples for “Adding an Adjective.” The activities for this part of the lesson are on pages 9-10 of “Image Grammar: Activity Book.”
 - **Revising Personal Narratives**

- Put students into groups of four and give each group examples of personal narratives that are deliberately disorganized; I think this would work best with examples from the paragraphless, stream-of-consciousness style of personal narrative.
 - Tell students to pretend that some students want feedback on their personal narratives before submitting them to the literary magazine. Have them write their changes in organization with an expo marker to show the student which revisions would make their work most ready for publication.
 - They will present their changes to the class, practicing warm and cool feedback as if the student who wrote the narrative was in the room.
 - Next, have students “clock” their own narratives within their groups, using warm and cool feedback and a protocol of your choice.
 - **Exit Slip:** Rate your confidence about your personal narrative assignment. Rating a “1” means “I made no progress, I have no idea what I’m doing”; rating a “10” means “That was the best thing I’ve ever written, I love it.” Comments are also welcome.
-

Day 8: Revising Narratives (continued)

- **Materials:** Laptop Cart
 - **Essential Questions:** How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact?
 - **Plan:** Who are we as writers?
 - ***Turn-In Image Grammar Journal / Journal Checklist***
 - ***Second Drafts***
 - Students will use their peer revisions from Day 7 to work on creating a typed second draft of their personal narratives.
 - If students finish early, they may begin working on the layout for publication of their work.
 - **Exit Slip:** Rate your confidence about your personal narrative assignment. Rating a “1” means “I made no progress, I have no idea what I’m doing”; rating a “10” means “That was the best thing I’ve ever written, I love it.” Comments are also welcome.
-

Day 9: Final Drafts

- **Materials:** Laptop Cart
- **Essential Questions:** How do writers and artists use “captured moments”? How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact?
- **Plan:**
 - ***Polishing***
 - Teach students how to use Wordle.org. Students will make “word clouds” from their personal narratives; they can use these for submission in lieu of using their entire personal narrative, or just use them to see their word choice graphically represented.

- Students will also have some time to finalize their drafts and artwork.
- **Publication / Layout**
- Split student up into focus groups. Give each group of students several sample student publications and have them answer the following questions on butcher paper:
 - Which publication did you like the best?
 - What did you like about the publication?
 - How could we emulate parts of this publication with the resources we have available?
- Have students choose groups for tomorrow (by ranking them on a note card):
 - **Cover design committee:** This committee is responsible for coming up with a presentation to help students decide on a cover. The cover design committee will create a choice of at least two cover designs for the students to vote on. Their cover may be completely original or include artwork from other classmates.
 - **Layout and graphic design committee:** This committee is responsible for coming up with a presentation to help students decide on the fonts and final layout of the magazine. The layout and graphic design committee will create a choice of at least two font schemes and two sample page layouts for the students to vote on.
 - **Editorial committee:** This committee is responsible for writing the cover “blurb” and organizing table of contents, cover page and bios.
 - **Public relations committee:** This committee is responsible for creating a plan to advertise our literary magazine and coming up with promotional materials. If fundraising is needed for publication, this committee will also be in charge of creating a plan. On the last day before publication, this committee will become the party planning committee.
 - **Other:** I only have about 15 students in each of my classes, so you may need to change the roles for a larger class size so that groups don’t get unmanageable.
- **Exit Slip:** Think of a title for our literary magazine. We will vote on this next class. If you can’t think of one before the end of class, think of one tonight and hand in your note card next class.

Day 10: Publication

- **Materials:** More stuff that you could ever imagine
- **Essential Questions:** How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact? What do we want our audience to gain from our writing?
- **Plan:**
 - **Bios**
 - Show students a few examples of writer bios for literary magazines (especially the funny ones).
 - Have each student write a bio for themselves to be included in the literary magazine

- *Put students into groups and have them complete the tasks outlined in Day 9.*
-

Day 11: Publication

- **Materials:** More stuff that you could ever imagine
 - **Essential Questions:** How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact? What do we want our audience to gain from our writing?
 - **Plan:**
 - Students will present their work from Day 10 and receive feedback
 - Using this feedback, students will continue to work on their literary magazine tasks and report back to the group at the end of the day.
-

Day 12 (maybe later): Publication Party

- **Materials:** Food? Décor?
- **Essential Questions:** How can we use our personal experiences to make an impact? What do we want our audience to gain from our writing?
- **Plan:** Students will have some way to celebrate their success as a staff! Give students extra credit for presenting their work to the class. If you are binding the magazine yourself, this is a great time to get some extra help.

Name: _____ Pd: _____

Focusing in on our Work

Look carefully at the image you have chosen today. What do you focus on when you look at the image? Do you focus on someone's face, something that is happening in the background, or something else?

Draw a quick sketch of the first thing you focus on in this box:



How did the artist get you to focus on that part of the image?

Switch cards with your neighbor without looking at his / her paper...

What draws your focus in this new image? How did the artist get you to focus on that part of the image?

How do writers draw our attention to certain parts of a memory or experience?

Developing a Negative Assignment Sheet

To help you develop ideas for your “snapshot” personal narrative, you will be creating an image that shows your moment in a thoughtful way. Think of this as the “negative” for your final product; it’s the raw material that you will use to inspire what your later work.

Guidelines:

- You can create your image using the medium / material of your choice.
- Your image must **thoughtfully** represent your moment.
- Your image must be roughly 8” x 10” (a little smaller than a sheet of copy paper).
- You must get your ideas approved, and turn in the bottom of this assignment sheet today.
- Your image is due _____

Name: _____

Developing a Negative: Planning Sheet

Description of the moment I want to capture...

What is the significance of this moment? What made it important?

The materials I want to use to capture this moment...



Capturing the Moment: Literary Magazine

Assignment Sheet

As a Class...

You will be creating **the first issue of the PCA literary magazine**; the theme of this issue will be **capturing the moment**. A literary magazine is a magazine dedicated to literature in the widest sense. Literary magazines often have some focus, but can incorporate poetry, short fiction, art and other work all behind the same cover. Sometimes referred to as “little magazines,” literary magazines are usually “indie” (or independent) publications. Many schools and universities produce literary magazines to showcase the work of their students.

To create a successful literary magazine, you will need to come up with the following as a class:

- A title for our school literary magazine
- A cover design
- A cover page
- An index
- A description of what our magazine is all about that answers our essential questions

As Individuals...

You will be creating writing and artwork to go in the first issue of the PCA literary magazine. Your goal is to **capture a specific moment from your life combining image and text**.

Requirements:

- You will write a “moment in time” personal narrative (should be roughly one page in length).
- You will carefully revise / edit your narrative for publication (specifics outlined in rubric).
- You will publish your image and either your entire personal narrative or a “word cloud” (created on www.wordle.org) version of your personal narrative.

You work must be submitted for publication on: _____

Name(s): _____, _____

Literary Magazine Exploration

As you and your partner look at your literary magazine, discuss these questions (and jot down some notes to write on the corresponding butcher paper).

Who publishes your literary magazine (hint: look at the inside cover and first few pages)?

Why do you think people create literary magazines? What is the purpose of your literary magazine?

What kind of things does your literary magazine include?

How is your literary magazine different from “normal” magazines?

Write down three common traits of literary magazines (from the butcher papers):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Name: _____

Individual Project Rubric

	Exceeds Expectations	Approaches Expectations	Fails
Ideas / Content	This paper is clear and focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant anecdotes and details enrich the central theme.	The writer is beginning to define the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	The paper has no clear sense of purpose or central theme.
Organization	The organizational structure of this paper enhances and showcases the central idea or theme of the paper; includes a satisfying intro and conclusion.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	The writing lacks a clear sense of direction.
Voice	The writer of this paper speaks directly to the reader in a manner that is individual, compelling, engaging, and shows respect for the audience.	The writer seems sincere, but not fully engaged or involved. The result is pleasant or even personable, but not compelling.	The writer seems uninvolved with the topic and the audience.
Sentence Fluency	The writing has an easy flow, rhythm and cadence. Sentences are well built.	The text hums along with a steady beat, but tends to be more pleasant or businesslike than musical.	The reader has to practice quite a bit in order to give this paper a fair interpretive reading.
Art Work	Artwork integrates seamlessly with narrative. The work is successful both as a stand-alone piece and a component of the writing process.	Artwork attempts to capture the moment, but lack of artistic skill or choice of media prevents the work from fully integrating with the text.	Artwork attempts to capture the moment, but lack of effort prevents the work from fully integrating with the text.