Lessons from the Masters:
Improving Narrative Writing

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SECOND GRADE IS A SPECIAL YEAR in children’s writing lives. The kids are growing up, and they are able to write with greater facility and sophistication. And they are eager to be given important new challenges. Launching the year with a unit in which they take lessons from the “masters” is a way of saying to them, “You’re grown-up writers now, ready to write like the best of the best.”

Your students will respond to your confidence in them. Many of them will come to school with two years of writing workshop under their belts, and they will therefore be especially ready to carry on with greater independence. Their increasing knowledge of phonics and of high-frequency words and their growing repertoire of writing skills and strategies also means that they are coming closer to capturing stories that flow from their imaginations onto the page. You will teach them, then, to mine their lives for stories that matter and then to turn those stories into shapely narratives under the influence of finely crafted mentor texts.

This book stands on the shoulders of its predecessor, Authors as Mentors in Units of Study for Primary Writing. Those of you familiar with that book will recognize its spirit of inquiry and mentorship very much at play in this new version, now tailored to second-graders and almost completely rewritten. Rather than spotlighting multiple texts by particular authors, this book focuses on just two titles, each by a “master” author. That is, this is not a mentor author study so much as a close study of craft. Specifically, students will study how authors use craft to convey meaning.

You will share two demonstration texts with your students—Jane Yolen’s luminous Owl Moon and Angela Johnson’s deeply moving The Leaving Morning (the latter was also spotlighted in Authors as Mentors). These two books weave through six weeks of instruction, and they are worthy of such deep study. Each book brims with craft that children this age can recognize and then replicate in their own writing—to their best seven- and eight-year-old ability. These texts also feature two very different families and very different small moments; it was important to us that they resonate with children of different backgrounds and yet feel universal.

Of course, the point isn’t the content of these books so much as the ways their authors use craft to convey meaning. You could actually choose other books; the instruction is designed to be transferable across texts, just as it is transferable across units.

This may sound like sophisticated work for second-graders—and it is—but that is, after all, the message of the Common Core State Standards. The Standards ask teachers to ramp up instruction and expectations, and this unit, this year, does just that. According to the Standards, second-graders should “recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events, include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings, and provide a sense of closure” (W.2.3). This little list doesn’t begin to describe the level of writing the Common Core features in its appendix—pieces that are full of both voice and mood and that seem to suggest an understanding on the part of their authors of the rhythm of writing and a sense of what it means to write for effect. Writing narratives “using effective technique” is a third-grade standard (W.3.3), and even that standard doesn’t make mention of mood or voice. Implicit in these model pieces, then, is that the authors of the Common Core expect primary-aged students to produce work that is higher than the descriptors indicate. If we are to help our students write like the pieces included in the appendix of the CCSS, we must teach them not only the basic elements of story writing, but also how to put stories onto the page in ways that make the writing “sing.”
Welcome to the Unit

Meanwhile, our bigger goal is that the work children do positions them to be thoughtful writers—ones who write with intent about stories and topics that matter to them. You’ll notice, throughout this book, that we teach children ways to write so as to bring out meaning—with the knowledge that children will grasp this to varying degrees and to the best of their second-grade ability. We introduce some big ideas early on, simply to lay the groundwork for what’s to follow in ensuring years of writing workshop. After all, the curriculum we describe in this series—and have developed over many years at the Reading and Writing Project—is a spiral curriculum, which means that students will have many opportunities, in later grades, to practice using the craft moves we introduce this year—as well as others they acquire—with increasing sophistication and to greater effect.

Of course, even in the case of your most advanced writers, you won’t expect that children will leave this unit writing perfectly crafted pieces. Children cannot create even rough approximations of well-crafted writing without a great deal of instruction and practice. But in this unit, children can draw on their backpack of tools for writing narratives in general and small moments in particular, using those tools to draft stories that readers are eager to read. Whereas in first grade, the emphasis in the opening unit is on bringing characters to life by making them move and talk, think and feel, now students will also draw on simple craft moves, such as using precise words to make their writing more specific or beautiful.

Across the unit, children will add to this repertoire, learning ways that authors draw on their senses to describe what they see, feel, hear, and so on, to make readers feel like they are there, in the story, or learning to write in ways that lead readers to hope that something happens in the story or to create a beautiful image or spotlight a strong feeling. Students will learn ways to orient readers by establishing a clear setting and situation—which is, once again, work that the Common Core expects of third- and fourth-graders. As you read this first book, though, you’ll see that we describe how to teach in ways that second-graders can understand and with the expectation that children will produce not third- or fourth-grade writing but second-grade writing. Your job will be to inspire your second-grade writers to create the types of narratives that read like real literature, stories that published authors themselves would craft, while accepting their second-grade best. “You, too, can be master writers,” you’ll say, and by the end of the unit you’ll celebrate your youngsters as such.

As with other writing units, your second-graders will also spend time learning to write by reading. Of course, the reading-writing connections they make in this unit are particularly pointed toward growing their skills in both capacities, because this unit is a mentor text study; that is, children will study craft moves as readers and then try them out as writers. Perhaps the area of reading, above all then, is where you’ll find that this unit challenges children to reach toward grade 3 standards while simultaneously fulfilling grade level standards. As they examine the two whole-class mentor texts—Owl Moon and The Leaving Morning—as well as their own just-right books, you’ll teach students to talk about books, paying particular attention to “their central message” (R.2.2), to “describe how words and phrases (e.g., regular beats, alliteration, rhymes, repeated lines) supply rhythm and meaning in a story” (R.2.4), to “determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language” (R.3.4), to “describe the overall structure of a story, including describing how the beginning introduces the story and the ending concludes the action” (R.2.5), and to “refer to parts of stories . . . when writing or speaking about a text . . . [and] describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections” (R.3.5).

This is quite a list, and it comes up front at the start of a new grade. We want to reiterate, again, that this is merely an introduction for your young students to work that they will be doing again and again, both this year and in years to follow. Don’t let this list of standards overwhelm you; as always, you’ll shape the teaching in this book to your particular class of students, tailoring it so that your students thrive. But do keep in mind that second-graders aren’t entirely little kids—and their energy for trying new challenges is boundless. Children this age are eager to try again and again to get something just right, so a good portion of this book focuses on the work of revision.

This unit is also designed to support your second-graders’ growing skills in the conventions of writing and their ability to communicate as members of a community—or partnership—listening and speaking in turn, “building on others’ talk in conversations by linking their comments to the remarks of others” (SL 2.1), and of course, “recount[ing] or describ[ing] key ideas or details from a text read aloud” (SL 2.2). The more practice you can give your students to discuss books and their own writing with one another, the better chance you will have of setting them up to present themselves, their work, and their ideas to the world, not just in this one unit, but in life.
OVERVIEW OF THE UNIT

“Writers,” you’ll say to your children early in the unit. “I bet you’re wondering how Jane Yolen and Angela Johnson came up with the ideas for their books, *Owl Moon* and *The Leaving Morning*. Maybe, in the middle of their regular lives, Jane and Angela grabbed hold of particular moments, moments that stayed with them, ones that got them thinking, ‘Hey, I could write a story about that,’ and then let those moments spark ideas for their stories.” You can then say, “Starting today, each one of you is going to live like these ‘master’ writers, finding small moment ideas in your own lives and recording them on Tiny Topics notepads, just as Jane probably did, in the middle of the night, and as Angela probably did, in the middle of a big move.” Over the course of Bend I, then, you will teach your students ways to stretch out and magnify their small moments, writing these with great attention to detail and to crafting powerful beginnings and endings. The bend ends with a day of goal setting, during which children can use the narrative checklist to assess their work and to set goals for themselves as writers.

In the next bend, you will spotlight writing with intentions and learning from authors’ craft. You’ll begin this bend by asking children to name their intentions as writers—what they hope their readers will feel—and revising on the go toward these. On the second day, you’ll lead children in an inquiry into what makes *Owl Moon* so powerful; together, the class will examine a couple parts closely to consider what effect these have on readers and how the author has achieved that effect. Then students will try out these craft moves in their own writing. As the bend progresses, the emphasis shifts to understanding why an author would use a particular craft move, and children will revise with that in mind, paying attention, too, to word choice and language.

The final bend sets children up to make reading and writing connections, drawing on everything they have learned up until this point to discover craft moves in books they are reading on their own and to apply these to their own writing. There are two main goals in this bend: first, students will work with increasing independence, transferring what they have learned under your guidance and through shared inquiry to work that is now largely self-initiated. Second, children will devote careful attention to revision and editing, aiming to make their writing as clear and as powerful as it can be. The bend ends with a celebration in which you introduce your new class of “master writers” to their audience.

ASSESSMENT

The Common Core State Standards require that students develop some proficiency at writing three kinds of texts: opinion writing, informational writing, and narrative texts. We recommend, then, that you begin the year by giving children initial assessments in these three genres. Over the course of the year, you’ll be able to measure children’s growth against these initial writing tasks, which you may opt to repeat periodically, during relevant units, and certainly at the end of the year in the form of a summative assessment.

Before you begin teaching this unit, you can use the pieces of writing both to assess your new class of students and to inform your teaching plans for this first unit of study. Most likely, many of your students will be at level 1, which sets them up to work toward level 2 on the Narrative Writing Learning Progression found in the *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K–5* book. That will mean that by the end of second grade, they’ll be aligned to the expectations that the Common Core State Standards set forth. You can expect that most entering second-graders will “write narratives in which they recount a well elaborated event or short sequence of events” (W 2.3) and that by the year’s end, students will not only narrate well-elaborated sequential events, but also “include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings” and “use temporal words to signal event order, and provide some sense of closure” (W 2.3).

Of course, you will want to assess not only what your children can do on Day One and as they leave your room, but how they progress across the year. That is, you will want to have a sense of how each child learns, of how he or she moves across a variety of skill sets, acquiring increased proficiency in writing, speaking, and listening.

For the initial narrative writing task, for assessment, give your children a four-page booklet and ask them to write a story about something they have done. We recommend using the following prompt from the *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions, K–5* book to start them off:

“I’m really eager to understand what you can do as writers of narratives, of stories, so today, will you please write the best personal narrative, the best Small Moment story, that you can write. Make this be the story of one time in your life. You might focus on just a scene or two. You’ll have only forty-five minutes to write this true story, so you’ll need to plan, draft,
are elaborated with some dialogue, thoughts, and feelings. Second-graders should demonstrate an increasing use of craft moves and detail—sometimes at the cost of clarity. Expect that they’ll introduce their stories with an initiating action, establish a setting, and end their pieces with a sense of closure. Meanwhile, their writing should display a growing understanding of grammar conventions. As you review the narrative writing assessments your children submit and consider your instruction for this first unit, keep an eye on these year-long goals.

GETTING READY

As you prepare for this unit, you will need to select two mentor texts that will be front and center during your instruction. We chose Jane Yolen’s *Owl Moon* (featured largely in Bends I and II) and Angela Johnson’s *The Leaving Morning* (featured in Bend III) and offer detailed teaching plans throughout this book that show you ways you and your students might explore the craft moves in each one. You might choose other texts, of course. What matters especially is that you use texts whose pages include the kind of craft you hope children will both notice and admire and also find success replicating in their own writing. To that end, we suggest you read your mentor texts again and again before beginning the unit, mining them for any craft moves you intend to explicitly teach, as well as for ones you will guide children to “discover” on their own. Read these like a reader first, enjoying the sounds and rhythm of each story and the feelings they inspire. Then pick up a stack of Post-its® and read these stories as a writer, noting what, exactly, each author does to create such powerful texts. Over the course of the unit, you and your students will do this same kind of careful reading and rereading, so you will be preparing for that work.

In addition to the two mentor texts you select for use during your minilessons, you’ll want to fill your library with a variety of narratives that span your children’s just-right reading levels. These should be stories that feel accessible to children both as readers and as writers, so that as children pore over them, studying craft, they will think to themselves, “What a great story! I could write one like that!” And then they will draw on that inspiration to write stories whose craft (not content) mimics that of these mentor texts.

Beginning on Day Two, children will carry around Tiny Topics notepads (two-by-one-inch spiral notepads) to record anything from their lives that revise, and edit in one sitting. Write in a way that allows you to show off all you know about narrative writing.

“In your writing, make sure you:
• Make a beginning for your story
• Show what happened, in order
• Use details to help readers picture your story
• Make an ending for your story.”

When children are done, collect their pieces to see what they produced, using the Narrative Writing Learning Progression to determine a starting level for each child. This will inform what you teach in terms of structure, elaboration, craft, cohesion, and meaning.

Many teachers duplicate their students’ on-demand narratives for students to keep inside their writing folders. These initial pieces of writing can then serve as reminders to students of the level of work they were able to do at the start of the year. Meanwhile, they can measure any subsequent writing they do during this unit (and year) against this first piece, striving always to do better.

You can use this first writing task to assess where the bulk of your class falls, to inform your instruction for this first unit. You’ll also see where each student falls in the Narrative Writing Learning Progression by comparing these initial pieces to the exemplar texts and then reading the specific descriptors to determine concrete next steps for each child. Note that no one piece will match a checklist in its entirety; a piece can be at level 1 even if a category or two don’t add up.

Use the level descriptors to suggest next steps to individual students. You might say, for example, “You used to develop the people in your stories by . . . ,” and read the descriptors from the prior level, “but now you are . . . ,” and read the level 1 descriptor. “Here’s one way to make your writing even better! You can . . . ,” and read from the level 2 descriptor. You might even say, “Let me show you an example,” and then cite a section of the level 2 exemplar text.

As the unit progresses, of course, you can expect that not all students will progress at the same rate, while nonetheless holding in mind certain year-end grade goals. Your goal is that by the end of this year, students will be able to craft focused, small moment narratives that depict several linked scenes and
sparks story ideas. You’ll keep one of your own and will bring it with you to school, with ideas for stories you’ll share with the class. This means, of course, that you’ll need to have in mind possible stories from your own life that you can use to model, one for each bend. You’ll grow these over the course of each bend to show children how to turn ideas for writing into deliberately crafted pieces of literature.

Occasionally we incorporate objects in our lessons—usually to drive home a metaphor we hope will illuminate the day’s teaching. For example, we bring seashells and magnifying glasses in on Day Four to signify the work of looking at something closely to describe it in detail. You might use entirely different objects (or none at all). The idea is simply to help clarify any potentially obscure teaching.

Finally, you’ll need to have on hand the writing supplies children will use over the course of this unit: different kinds of paper, pens, markers, writing folders, and anything else you might imagine incorporating into this narrative writing unit.
LAST YEAR, STUDENTS LEARNED how to select a small moment (seed) topic rather than a much larger (watermelon) topic. Today, you will give them a new metaphor to describe the work not of choosing an idea, but of stretching out a small moment with detail. You’ll suggest that children “magnify” their small moments, noticing and recording what they see. This provides a concrete image of the work you hope children do, and it also links narrative writing to the work children have done in the content areas. We suggest you bring in as many magnifying glasses as you can so that children can first examine seashells (or another object of your choice), and then share the details they notice. By setting children up to think across various contexts, applying what they learn in one to the other, you set them up to engage in the kind of strategic, high-level cognitive work that Norman Webb describes as Level 4 in his Depth of Knowledge (DOK).

Although the teaching in this session is about seeing, you won’t stop there. You’ll tell children that writers use all of their senses to write. They notice and record not only what they see, but also what they hear, feel, smell, and taste to describe a moment in detail. They pay close attention to everything about the small moment they are trying to describe so that their readers can experience that moment as if they, too, were there. This is important work. Few things are as essential to good writing as writing “small” about something big. When children write about their lives with precise details, not generalities, when they record the exact sensory elements of that moment, they create lush, powerful narratives.

Today’s session sets the stage for the craft work you will do in Bend III. It also reinforces a big theme of the unit—living like a writer. Your hope is that children will transfer this close study of the world not only to other writing units of study, but to the way they live outside of your room and outside of school.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.2.3, W.2.5, W.3.3.a; RL.2.1, RL.2.3, RL.2.4, RL.2.7; SL.2.1, SL.2.3; L.2.1, L.2.2, L.2.3, L.2.5
MINILESSON

Writing with Detail

Magnifying a Small Moment

CONNECTION

Introduce the concrete object children will study closely—seashells, flowers, or something else with details—and then give one to each set of partners.

“Writers, give me a thumbs up if you’ve ever been to the beach.” A flurry of thumbs went up. “Oh wow, lots of you have visited the beach! Thumbs up again if you collected shells when you were at the beach.” Again, thumbs flew up. “Look at all the shell collectors we have in this room! Guess what, writers? I went to the beach this summer, and I collected shells, too. Look—I brought in some of my favorites. I’m going to pass these around. Partner 1, when you have a shell, put it between you and Partner 2. You two will share the shell in just a second.”

Set children up to make close observations of their objects, zooming in on the details with the help of a magnifying glass.

Once each partnership had a shell I said, “Writers, remember last year when we studied worms in science? You looked at those really closely to describe what you noticed. You looked through magnifying glasses and saw lines on the worms’ bodies, and watched how the worms moved. Right now, you are going to look that closely at your shells. I’m going to give each partnership a magnifying glass that will help you zoom in on the details of your shell. Pick up your shells and look closely at them. Talk to your partner about the things you notice.”

As children talked, I listened in, taking note of their observations. Then I reconvened the class.

Share some childrens’ observations, pointing out the kinds of details they noticed.

“Writers, I want to share some of the things I heard you say just now. Lots of you described the colors of your shell. You said things like, ‘It’s pink and white’ or ‘It’s light brown.’ Some of you noticed the markings on your shell—lines and dots, squiggles and swirls. And some of you described the shapes of your shells—I heard words like round, oval, fan-shaped, cones. Great noticing, writers. You really saw lots of detail in your shells. One of my favorite authors, Kate DiCamillo, once said, ‘Writing is seeing. It is paying attention.’”
**Name the teaching point.**

“Writers, that kind of seeing, paying attention, is at the heart of living a writerly life. Today, I want to teach you that when writers want to zoom in on a small moment, to capture it so that readers see it as they do, they magnify it, by writing with lots of details.”

**TEACHING**

**Study one page of the mentor text, noticing how the author zooms in on a small moment to write with detail.**

“Let me show you what I mean. I’m going to turn to a page in *Owl Moon*. I could pick any page to model this, so I’ll just pick one randomly.” I flipped open the book to the third page. “As I read, pay attention to the details Jane Yolen includes to describe this moment.”

```
We reached the line
of pine trees,
black and pointy
against the sky,
and Pa held up his hand.
I stopped right where I was
and waited.
He looked up,
as if searching the stars,
as if reading a map up there.
The moon made his face
into a silver mask.
Then he called:
the sound of a Great Horned Owl.
"Who-o-whoo-who-who-who-whooooo."
```

“Wow, I have goose bumps. The way Jane has written this, it’s as if she held up a magnifying glass to this moment, just like each of you did with your shells just now. She could have just written, ‘We reached the trees. Pa made an owl noise,’ but that wouldn’t have had nearly the same effect. So instead, she stretched out this moment with lots of tiny details that allow us to see the scene just as she imagined it.

“The first thing I notice is how Jane describes the pine trees as ‘black and pointy against the sky.’ It’s like I’m seeing those trees through a magnifying glass—so tall they touch the sky!

“What else do I see? Hmm, . . . Oh! This part about how Pa ‘looked up, as if searching the stars, as if reading a map up there.’ Again, it’s like Jane Yolen has magnified the moment for us. I can picture how intently Pa is studying the sky, can you?”

Here, you model for children how to envision a moment, step by step, and invite them to notice with you how Jane Yolen uses details to draw the reader in. The goal is that children feel the power of descriptive writing—how it can put a reader right into the world of story.
"I’ll stop there. I’m sure we’ll be looking at this part again sometime soon because there is so much in it to notice. But right now, it’s enough to study how Jane magnifies the details she notices so that her reader can see them, too."

**Demonstrate how to write like the mentor author, zooming in on your own Small Moment story and stretching it out with lots of details.**

“So writers, if I were to do like Jane does and like what we as scientists do, I could try to write my own small moment by looking at it through an imaginary magnifying glass. Let me do that and think about what I might add. Here’s the second page of my piece about riding the bus.” I put my second page up on the white board (see Figure 4–1).

Finally we came to my stop. Everyone rushed to the door. I felt crushed.

“Hmm, . . . No details here yet. So let’s see. If I want my readers to see exactly what I saw, as if they’re looking through a magnifying glass at this little scene, what could I add? Well, I might include what I saw. I remember lots of people all around me. There was a tall man wearing headphones, and a couple of teenage girls, whose linked arms blocked my path. It was hard to squeeze through. If I add those details, my page might go like this:

Finally we came to my stop. Everyone rushed to the door. A tall man, wearing headphones, swayed his body as he barged ahead of me. Two teenage girls, arms linked, blocked my path, making a barricade. I felt crushed."

"Is that clearer, writers? Can you see what happened on the bus with those new details added?" The kids nodded.

Notice that I have included a word that many second-graders may not know: barricade. This is intentional. It introduces children to new vocabulary, and allows me to scaffold them as they learn. As I talk about the scene on the bus I use other words children will know—blocked my path—to introduce what barricade means.
ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

Challenge writers to zoom in on a small moment in their own stories, writing with detail. Offer suggestions as they work.

“Writers, it’s your turn to try this with your own writing. Open up your folders and take out the story you wrote yesterday.” I gave them a second to do this. “Find a part of your story that’s a little bare right now, that could use magnifying for your reader.” After a moment, I said, “Now, turn to your partner and help each other ‘hold magnifying glasses’”—I made quotation marks with my fingers—“to your writing.”

I coached into partnerships, “Help your partner think of the details that will help a reader picture what is there and what is happening.”

LINK

Send students off to write, and encourage them to add detail to their stories. Tuck in reminders of how to add on to their writing, and demonstrate one way.

“It may seem easy at first to add a detail here or there. But to add in details, the way that writers like Jane Yolen do, is hard work. It will take time and certainly a lot of practice! You can work on this as you write today. Some of you might be starting new stories, and some of you might be adding into ones that you have finished.

“Rocio was worried that she had no more space to add details. Remember, though, in first grade how in your writing center you had strips, flaps, and Post-its to add details anywhere in your writing? We have those, too. They are in your writing caddies and in the writing center if you run out. You can stick them anywhere on the page. You can line one up exactly with the line where you want to add on, or you can write the number 1 in the space where you want to add some writing and a number 1 on your Post-it, so that you know where the writing goes. Let me show you.” I gave a quick demo to show them what this would look like in my writing.

“I hope you will take this challenge, and try to magnify your stories so that your readers will feel like they are right there—beside you. I’ll be on the lookout for the ways in which you do this. At the end of writing workshop, you’ll have a chance to share how you used details to tell your small moments in big ways.”
“I thought it would go in the gutters.”

“Keep going. Act out what you did next,” I said.

“I let the ball go,” Heather said, reenacting in slow motion the way she released the ball.

Session 4: Writing with Detail
"Say exactly what you did."

"My arm went down and my waist went down," she said, as she reenacted the position bowlers take as they release the ball. "Then I looked away 'cause I didn’t want to see it," she said.

"And then?" I prompted.

"Then I saw it and I said, 'I got a strike! I got a strike!'" Heather said, reenacting how she jumped for glee.

"Heather, I recorded what you said. Will you reread your writing and ask yourself, ‘Is there anything I should add on that shows the exact story of what happened when I went bowling?’" I opened her book to the page we’d discussed at some length.

I reread my transcript of what she’d described. Soon Heather had added to her page.

Wrapping up the conference, I reminded Heather of the steps that we followed to show more, and reiterated that often just using her body would help her to "magnify the details." In this way, I emphasized the strategy she could use on another day and with a different piece.
Highlight the work of two students who used details to zoom in on small moments.

“One two three, all eyes on me.” The students all stopped what they were doing immediately this time. I said, “Remember what you say back? One . . . ,” I prompted. They chimed in, “One two, all eyes on you!”

“Will you bring over your writing, a Post-it from your caddy, and a pen? Let’s gather in the meeting area. Quickly and quietly, find your rug spot!” As children took their places, I gave every partnership a copy of writing done by one of their classmates.

“Writers, I’m giving you a copy of a piece of writing that Kenzy did. We’ll study this closely, almost as if we are studying it through a magnifying lens.”

I pointed to an enlarged copy of Kenzy’s draft and said, “Listen to Kenzy’s first version of her story beginning.” (See Figure 4–3.)

One summer morning I was in my country Egypt and at my grandma’s house. Today I was going to see the pyramids. “Inty rayha al pyramids,” said my grandma. So I got dressed super quickly. “Hurry up,” I said, and me and my mom and my sister went to the car.

“One summer morning I was in my country Egypt and at my grandma’s house. It was super hot. My grandma’s house has a balcony. Today I was going to see the pyramids. “Inty rayha al pyramids,” said my grandma. So I got dressed super quickly. “Hurry up,” I said, and me and my mom and my sister went to the car. In the car I heard the air conditioner beeping. My family was so nice to let me go see the pyramids in the summer.
One summer morning I was in my country Egypt and at my grandma’s house. Today I was going to see the pyramids so I got dressed super quickly and me and my mom and my sister went to the car.

My family was so nice bringing to let me go see the pyramids in the summer.
“Turn and talk about the details Kenzy added,” I said.

I listened as April asked her partner about the words Kenzy’s grandmother used. “It’s Arabic,” Kenzy explained.

“You are right. She included dialogue, what people said,” I said, naming the craft move. “She used her first language, Arabic. That really helps us imagine life in her grandma’s house in Egypt, doesn’t it? What a wise decision to write in both languages!”

I convened the class, noting to them all, “April realized that Kenzy didn’t just tell us what people said, she used their language to show exactly what and how they said it!” I let the class name a few more things.

Debrief. Name the big work of the day and rally students to set goals for tomorrow’s workshop.

“Wow, writers! You noticed so many things! Right now, jot on a Post-it something you want to try tomorrow. I have extra Post-it notes if you want to write two or three things.” “Put the Post-its on the part of your writing where you’ll do this work.”

“Writers, now we have a plan for tomorrow! Put your writing on the ‘In Progress’ side of your folder? Then put your folder away. Table monitors, put your writing caddies back in the writing center. Ready, set, everyone—off you go to do your jobs!”