Grade 4
English Language Arts
Unit 7: Autobiographies and Biographies

Time Frame: Approximately four weeks

Unit Description

This unit focuses on reading and writing biography and autobiography. Through a series of mini-lessons, students have the opportunity to read models of biographical works to compare and contrast how authors handle subject matter effectively in first-hand and second-hand accounts. Teachers facilitate discussions that help students learn writing strategies to collect and share information about themselves and another person of interest.

Student Understandings

Students read examples of biographical and autobiographical texts to learn how authors impart information about personalities, customs, and events of a particular time period. They examine the author's style, accuracy of informational sources, visuals, other documents, and organization of the text structure to gain insight into what makes a biographical piece meet the criteria for good literature. Students try these techniques themselves as they write autobiographical sketches and research biographical information on a person of interest.

Guiding Questions

1. Can students identify criteria for making a biography/an autobiography interesting?
2. Can students demonstrate how a biographer's/an autobiographer's writing style is used to capture the attention of or "hook" the reader?
3. Can students identify distinguishing characteristics between biographies and autobiographies (firsthand and secondhand accounts)?
4. Can students write autobiographical sketches of themselves?
5. Can students use knowledge and examples from other authors' biographies to compose a biography of people of interest to them?

Unit 7 Grade-Level Expectations (GLEs) and Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

Grade-Level Expectations	
GLE #	**GLE and Text and Benchmarks**
02.	Determine the meaning of unfamiliar words using knowledge of word origins and inflections (ELA-1-E1)
03.	Determine word meanings, word choices, and pronunciations using a broad variety of reference aids such as dictionaries, thesauruses, synonym finders, and reference software (ELA-1-E1)

14e.	Demonstrate understanding of information in grade-appropriate texts using a variety of strategies, such as comparing and contrasting story elements or information within and across texts (ELA-7-E1)
14g.	Demonstrate understanding of information in grade-appropriate texts by making simple inferences (ELA-7-E1)
19d.	Demonstrate understanding of information in grade-appropriate texts using a variety of strategies, including generating questions to guide examination of topics and real-life situations (ELA-7-4)
20d.	Write compositions of at least three paragraphs organized with a logical, sequential order (ELA-2-E1)
20e.	Write compositions of at least three paragraphs organized with transitional words and phrases that unify points and ideas (ELA-2-E1)
22.	Identify an audience for a specific writing assignment and select appropriate vocabulary, details, and information to create a tone or set the mood and to affect or manipulate the intended audience (ELA-2-E2)
23a.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including selecting topic and form (ELA-2-E3)
23b.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including prewriting (e.g., brainstorming, researching, raising questions, generating graphic organizers) (ELA-2-E3)
23c.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including drafting (ELA-2-E3)
23d.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including conferencing with peers and teachers (ELA-2-E3)
23e.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including revising based on feedback and use of various tools (e.g., LEAP21 Writer's Checklist and rubrics) (ELA-2-E3)
23f.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including proofreading/editing (ELA-2-E3)
23g.	Develop grade-appropriate compositions by identifying and applying writing processes, including publishing using available technology (ELA-2-E3)
24.	Develop paragraphs and compositions of at least three paragraphs using the various modes (i.e., description, narration, exposition, and persuasion), emphasizing narration and description
26a.	Write for various purposes, including formal and informal letter format, include relevant information, and use an appropriate closure (ELA-2-E6)
26b.	Write for various purposes, including informational reports that include facts and examples and that present important details in a logical order (ELA-2-E6)
26c.	Write for various purposes, including book reports that include an opinion and/or a persuasive viewpoint (ELA-2-E6)
28.	Use standard English punctuation, including apostrophes in contractions and in possessive case of singular and plural nouns (ELA-3-E2)
29.	Capitalize greetings, titles of respect, and titles of books, articles, chapters, movies, and songs (ELA-3-E2)
30b.	Write using standard English structure and usage, including avoiding writing with sentence fragments and run-on sentences (ELA-3-E3)

31a.	Apply knowledge of parts of speech in writing, including selecting and using common interjections appropriately (ELA-3-E4)
31b.	Apply knowledge of parts of speech in writing, including identifying and using transitive and intransitive verbs correctly (ELA-3-E4)
31c.	Apply knowledge of parts of speech in writing, including identifying and using verb tenses correctly, including present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect (ELA-3-E4)
31d.	Apply knowledge of parts of speech in writing, including using irregular verb tenses correctly (ELA-3-E4)
32.	Use knowledge of root words, affixes, and syllable constructions to spell words (ELA-3-E5)
34.	Adjust pacing to suit purpose, audience, and setting when speaking (ELA-4-E1)
36a.	Deliver presentations that include information drawn from several sources and identification of the sources (ELA-4-E4)
36c.	Deliver presentations that include details, examples, anecdotes, or statistics that explain or clarify (ELA-4-E4)
38.	Adjust speaking content according to the needs of the audience (ELA-4-E5)
42.	Locate information using a broad variety of reference sources, including almanacs, atlases, newspapers, magazines, and brochures (ELA-5-E1)
43a.	Evaluate the usefulness of information selected from multiple sources, including library and online databases (ELA-5-E2)
43b.	Evaluate the usefulness of information selected from multiple sources, including electronic reference works (ELA-5-E2)
43c.	Evaluate the usefulness of information selected from multiple sources, including Internet information (ELA-5-E2)
43e.	Evaluate the usefulness of information selected from multiple sources, including interviews (ELA-5-E2)
46.	Construct simple outlines with main topics and subtopics that reflect the information gathered (ELA-5-E3)
48.	Create a list of sources (e.g., books, encyclopedias, online resources) following a specified format (ELA-5-E5)

ELA CCSS	
CCSS #	**Common Core State Standard Text**
Reading Standards for Literature	
RL.4.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
Reading Standards for Informational Text	
RI.4.6	Compare and contrast a firsthand and secondhand account of the same event or topic; describe the differences in focus and the information provided.
RI.4.9	Integrate information from two texts on the same topic on order to write about or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS #	Common Core State Standard Text
Reading Standards for Informational Text	
RI.4.10	By the end of the year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4-5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.
Reading Standards: Foundational Skills	
RF.4.3a	Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words. a. Use combined knowledge of all letter-sound correspondences, syllabication patterns, and morphology (e.g., roots and affixes) to read accurately unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context and out of context.
RF.4.4a	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. a. Read on-level text with purpose and understanding.
RF.4.4c	Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension. c. Use context to confirm or self-correct word recognition and understanding, rereading as necessary.
Writing Standards	
W.4.2a	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
W.4.2b	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
W.4.2e	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. e. Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented.
W.4.6	With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.
W.4.7	Conduct short research projects that build knowledge through investigation of different aspects of a topic.
W.4.9b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. b. Apply grade 4 Reading standards to informational texts.
W.4.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS #	Common Core State Standard Text
Language Standards	
L.4.3c	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening. c. Differentiate between contexts that call for formal English (e.g., presenting ideas) and situations where informal discourse is appropriate (e.g., small-group discussion).
L.4.4a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and context, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. a. Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
Speaking and Listening Standards	
SL.4.1c	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grade 4 topics and texts*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. c. Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
SL.4.1d	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 4 topics and texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly. d. Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.
SL.4.5	Add audio recordings and visual displays to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.

Sample Activities

Activities 1-7 are ongoing throughout the curriculum.

Activity 1: Silent Sustained Reading and Guided Reading (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (CCSS: RL.4.10, RI.4.10, RF.4.3a, RF.4.4a, RF.4.4c)

Materials List: a wide variety of trade books, non-fiction, classroom sets, and chapter books at various reading levels, student library books

Reserve a specific amount of time every day for Silent Sustained Reading. This reading time should supplement the standard reading program by encouraging students to read independently. This time also provides an opportunity for students to read according to a variety of student interests and abilities. This daily reading time should not take the place of regular guided reading instruction.

Teachers will discuss with students that reading skills are improved and fluency goals best met when the students choose texts that are not too easy and not too difficult. Usually students can tell immediately if the text is too easy or too difficult. The five-finger rule is helpful in teaching students to check if the reading level is right for them. Have students open to any page in the book and read the page (aloud if possible). Students should put one finger up for every word that cannot be pronounced. If a student puts up five fingers while reading one page, the book is too difficult.

Guided reading instruction should take place daily. Provide instant feedback to students to confirm and self-correct word recognition and understanding of unfamiliar multisyllabic words in context. Have students re-read passages until both recognition and understanding are achieved. Continually probe and question students throughout the process to address new strategies and skills as well as individual deficits, and have students respond to those probes and questions orally and in short written responses while providing teacher scaffolding. Each student should meet in guided reading groups weekly. However, provide struggling students with more time in guided reading intervention groups. A variety of texts should be provided including nonfiction and technical texts.

Activity 2: Vocabulary Activities (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (GLEs: 02, 03)

Materials List: 3 x 5 or 5 x 7 index cards, pictures or video clips, index cards, colored pencils/markers/crayons, Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart BLM, dictionaries, thesauruses, glossaries

Use a variety of vocabulary-building activities throughout the year to help students gain meaning of words from unfamiliar texts through application of context clues and determination of base word meanings. These strategies will be repeated, built upon, and ongoing. Assess student understanding of vocabulary either formally (written tests) or informally (writing stories, poems, or sentences using the vocabulary words, etc.) Choose from these activities to reinforce weekly vocabulary comprehension. Students may use dictionaries, thesauruses, and/or glossaries to assist with the activities. It is not necessary to use every activity.

Vocabulary Cards Activity

Have students create *vocabulary cards* (view literacy strategy descriptions) related to words in the stories they are reading. Give each student an index card and a word from the story. Have students write the word (or a sentence using the word) on the front and the definition on the back (Have these ready before class to save time). Give each student one vocabulary card. Say, "Stand up, hands up, and pair up." Students will walk around the room and find a partner. Students will hold up their cards, and the partner they are paired with will state the definition. If the partner does not know it, the student may give hints or use the word in a sentence. After two chances the student should show the definition to the partner, who turns to hold up his/her vocabulary card and asks for the definition. When the two students are finished, they trade cards. Then, say," Stand up, hands up, and pair up" again, and have students find a new partner and repeat the process.

Illustrate the Word Activity

Show pictures or video clips that demonstrate the meaning of a word. Give students a list of the vocabulary and instruct them to draw and label a picture illustrating the meaning of the words from the story. This activity is not limited to concrete nouns—for example, a ***grim*** expression. The labels explain how the word and drawing fit. Drawing skills are not important; stick figures with accurate labels can succinctly express an idea as much as a well-drawn picture. The student should not replace an abstract idea with a concrete example of it. The vocabulary cards above can also be used to illustrate the definition of the words. After learning the word meanings, students can also play a Pictionary or charades style game to practice and reinforce vocabulary meanings.

Vocabulary Self-Awareness Activity

Before reading a story, give students a list of vocabulary words and direct them to complete a *vocabulary self-awareness chart* (view literacy strategy descriptions) to determine their knowledge of the words. Do not give students definitions or examples at this stage. Prompt them to rate their understanding of each word with either a "+" (understand well), a "?" (limited understanding or unsure), or a "—" (don't know) and add definitions and sentences as best they can at this stage. After reading the story and exposing the students to context clues and other information, have them return to the chart to make revisions and add new information to it. The goal is to replace all check marks and minus signs with plus signs. Give the students many opportunities to revisit their vocabulary charts to revise their entries.

Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart

Word	+	?	--	Definition	Sentence/Example
Author	+			The writer of a book, article, or other text.	Who is the author of that book?
Paraphrase	+			A restatement of a text or passage in another form or other words, often to clarify meaning.	Please paraphrase the article.

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Activity 3: Vocabulary Activities (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (CCSS: L.4.4a)

Materials List: 3 x 5 or 5 x 7 index cards, pictures or video clips, index cards, colored pencils/markers/crayons, Vocabulary Self-Awareness Chart BLM

Activity 3 is an extension of Activity 2. In 2013-2014, add the following extensions to address the added transitional material:

Vocabulary Cards Activity

Students create *vocabulary cards* (view literacy strategy descriptions) related to words in the stories they are reading. Demonstrate how to create the vocabulary cards first. The cards should include the word on one side of the card. On the other side, the word should be repeated in the middle. Place the definition on the upper left hand corner, the part of speech on the upper right hand corner, a sentence using the word on the lower left hand corner, and an illustration on the lower right hand corner. For words with multiple meanings, have the students complete the vocabulary card activity on both sides of the card representing one meaning on one side and the other meaning on the other side.

Example of a vocabulary card:

Games can be played with these vocabulary cards for reinforcement. For example, say, "Stand up, hands up, and pair up." Students will walk around the room and find a partner. Students will announce their word to a partner who will state the definition. If the partner does not know it, the student may give hints or use the word in a sentence. After two chances, the student should show the definition. Then the partner turns to hold up his/her vocabulary card and asks for the definition. When the two students are finished, they trade cards. After allowing a reasonable amount of time for partners to identify definitions, say, "Stand up, hands up, and pair up" again, and students will find new partners.

A modified version of this activity can be conducted with multiple-meaning words. However, instead of stating one meaning, the students would be expected to give both meanings of the word.

Illustrate the Word Activity

Show pictures or video clips that demonstrate the meaning of a word. Give students a list of the vocabulary they will use to draw and label pictures illustrating the meaning of the words from the story. This activity is not limited to concrete nouns—for example, a ***grim*** expression. The labels should explain how the word and drawing relate. Drawing skills are not important; stick

figures with accurate labels can succinctly express an idea as much as a well-drawn picture. The student should not replace an abstract idea with a concrete example of it. The vocabulary cards above can also be used to illustrate the definition of the words. Multiple-meaning words can be illustrated multiple times. After learning the word meanings, students can also play a Pictionary or charades-style game to reinforce vocabulary meanings.

Vocabulary Self-Awareness Activity

This will be the same as in Activity 2.

Activity 4: Spelling Activities (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (GLE: 32; CCSS: RF.4.3a)

Materials List: weekly spelling lists that include appropriate grade-level words, 20 Ways to Practice Spelling BLM

Provide students with ample opportunities to practice spellings and basic recognition of grade-appropriate words with common syllabication patterns, phonetic patterns, and roots and affixes. This ongoing study should encourage and develop grade-level phonetic and word decoding skills.

Students can practice spelling patterns in a variety of ways through the use of the 20 Ways to Practice Spelling BLM. Particular activities may be assigned each week, or students may be given the freedom to choose one activity from each level. However, emphasize the importance of choosing activities that require students to practice syllabication, spelling patterns, and phonetic awareness. Allow students to have some freedom to choose activities that are more fun but perhaps require one specific activity that is more skill based each week. At times, it may be necessary to choose the activity from the skill-based or word-meaning sections based on class needs.

When practicing a specific spelling skill, add or manipulate activities to match the content. For example, when studying words with silent letters, have students write the words and circle the letters that are not pronounced.

Activity 5: Daily Language (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (GLEs: 31a, 31b, 31c, 31d)

Materials List: daily sentences that are to be edited, printed copies for each student, transparency copy for use as a class

The Everyday Edits can be used in many ways. Here is *one* possible procedure:

- Copy the daily edit passage onto a transparency. As students return from recess or lunch, hand them a copy of the passage and instruct them to settle into finding the ten errors of capitalization, punctuation, or grammar included in that passage.
- Give students 5 minutes or so to find and mark ten errors in the passage.
- Divide the class into two or more teams. The teams established in this way will be "permanent teams" (for at least a month). Start with one team and ask a student on that team to identify an error in the passage. When a student correctly identifies one of the ten errors in that day's passage, award a point to the team. Then give the other team(s) a chance to identify an error. Go back and forth until all ten errors have been found in that day's passage. (Students might even find additional errors in a daily passage. Also, give credit if a team offers an idea that would improve the passage.)
- Keep score over the course of a month and award a special treat (an ice pop, a homework-free-night coupon, or something else that students will value) to members of the team that has the highest score at the end of the month. The makeup of the teams may be changed for the following month.

Be sure to include sentences that have errors with interjections, transitive and intransitive verbs, irregular verb tenses, and present, past, future, and perfect verb tenses.

Activity 6: Daily Writing Activities (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (GLEs: 22, 23a, 23b, 23c, 24, 26a, 26b, 26c)

Materials List: journal, pencil

Have students keep a daily journal. Writing in the journal can include any or all of the writing processes that are addressed in unit 2 including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and/or publishing. Give students some autonomy with daily journal writing, and allow them to identify their own audience and determine their own tone and mood. This should be more of an exploratory activity rather than a structured, modeled writing lesson. Daily writing activities should cover a broad range of writing styles which include but are not limited to the following list:

Narratives: daily journal prompts, picture prompts (use pictures to create a story), word wall or spelling activities, story starters, Round Robin Writing (Students create and add to stories as they are passed around.)

Expository: descriptions, how-to papers

Informational: biographies, autobiographies, brief reports on a topic

Response to Fiction: story summaries, character analyses, story responses
(respond to reading story or trade book)

Response to Nonfiction: responses to news articles, current event summaries, summaries of nonfiction texts, responses to non-fiction articles, books, or digital sources

Letters: pen pals (write to another class), business letters, letters to the principal

Express an Opinion: argumentative responses to a topic, letters to the editor

Other: daily news (write about things that happened at school that day), poetry, comic strips (fill in what the characters are saying), greeting cards, want ads, advertisements, directions

A website for writing prompts is located at http://www.canteach.ca/elementary/prompts.html.

2013—2014

Activity 7: Daily Writing Activities (Ongoing throughout curriculum) (CCSS: W.4.10)

Materials List: My Writing Inventory BLM

Activity 7 is an extension of Activity 6. In 2013-2014, add the following extensions to address the added transitional material:

Have students keep track of their writing progress on the My Writing Inventory BLM. Students should include all of their daily writing activities from Activity 6 as well as all of their significant writing assignments derived from the remaining activities. Students should determine whether their writing is a "short time frame piece" or an "extended time frame piece." Facilitate a discussion to determine the difference between these two terms. Students should also identify their purpose for writing on the BLM. Purposes for writing may include, but are not limited to narration, (entertainment), description, information, explanation, persuasion, expressing an opinion, reflection, or analysis. Students should also use the BLM to identify the stages of the writing process that were completed.

Over the course of the year, impress upon students that it is not necessary that each writing piece go through all stages of the writing process. For example, explain to students that reflection may only require drafting. Not every piece of writing is intended for publishing.

Activity 8: Introduction to Biographies and Autobiographies (GLEs: 19d; CCSS: RI.4.6)

Materials List: a variety of biographies and autobiographies, chart paper, journals

To give students background for studying the genre, bring in a variety of biographies and autobiographies from the library for students to peruse. Conduct a discussion and take notes on chart paper of genre-related elements. The following are some elements that should be included in the discussion: the difference between a biography and an autobiography, how interesting the biography/ autobiography is, and what writing style the biographer/autobiographer uses to capture the attention of or "hook" the reader.

Next, direct students to select and read aloud models of autobiographies and biographies from a variety of sources, including selections from the class or school library, their own writing from previous grades, and magazines such as *Kids National Geographic*, *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, *Children's Digest*, and *Teen* magazines. Guide students to critique biographies and autobiographies based upon discussed characteristics from the previous paragraph. Emphasize during the class discussion that sometimes biographical and autobiographical accounts are sensationalized in order to attract more readers.

Next, create a quick Venn diagram *graphic organizer* (view literacy strategy descriptions) on large chart paper to show the differences between biographies and autobiographies. Review the terms "firsthand account" and "secondhand account." Prompt student discussion with the objective being to understand the difference between the two. By the end of the discussion, students should comprehend that an autobiography is a "firsthand account" of a person's experiences and feelings told by that person and includes his or her actual thoughts and emotions. A biography, however, is considered a "secondhand account" because the subject's experiences, feelings, and emotions are described by someone who is related to or connected to the subject. Biography writers do not include their actual thoughts and feelings about the subject but simply relate their personal experiences and understanding of their subjects.

After this exploration, instruct students to identify one person in the field of sports, entertainment, or government about whom they are interested and then list in their journals five questions they would like to ask that person.

Sample questions include:

- What have you accomplished that you believe has been your biggest success?
- What things have you done to assist other people in your lifetime?
- Who is your role model or your biggest inspiration?
- What do you most enjoy doing in your spare time?

- What is one goal you have for the future?

After each student brainstorms a list of questions, direct all students to participate in a Think-Pair-Square-Share *discussion* (view literacy strategy descriptions) to determine whether their questions would be sufficient enough to write a thought provoking biography that would pique curiosity about their chosen person's life. This *discussion* should improve student processing of what an interesting biography should include by allowing them to participate in thoughtful dialogue. It also allows them to present their diverse perspectives, feed off of one another's understandings, and revise insufficient questions with partner feedback.

Still with partners, have students exchange questions, read and think about them, and give feedback about how the questions can be improved to create an intriguing portrayal of the subject. Have students then reverse the roles. After pairs discuss and improve questions, have them join another pair and repeat the discussion of questions. Throughout the discussions, monitor and encourage struggling pairs or groups. Be sure to remind students not to automatically assume that another student's suggestion is better than theirs and to truly think about their questions and the effect they may have on a written composition.

While monitoring, jot down questions that are extremely effective. Upon completion of the *discussion,* invite students to share their best questions. Create a shared class list of effective questions for biographies. This list can be used again in activity 12.

2013-2014

Activity 9: Focus Lesson (GLEs: 14e; CCSS: RI.4.6, RI.4.9, RI.4.10, W.4.9b, SL.4.1c, SL.4.1d)

Materials List: two biography and/or autobiography selections, chart paper, journals, reading learning logs

Choose two selections about a person, each representing a different approach. For example, there are multiple biographies written on a fourth grade level about Anne Frank. Choose one or two of these for the students to read in small groups or independently. Also, read aloud excerpts from the autobiography, *The Diary of a Young Girl*. Each represents a different approach to biography and gives students two different views of biographical and autobiographical writing.

Next, have students discuss the works using *Student Questions for Purposeful Learning (SQPL)* (view literacy strategy descriptions). *SQPL* will provide the students with a direct purpose for learning and thinking when studying the biographies and autobiography by encouraging pre-reading questioning. This will provide the students with a prompt to further question and engage with the topic. To begin *SQPL,* generate a statement based on the two books. The statement does not have to be factually true as long as it provokes interest and curiosity. Two examples follow:

> "I want to be a champion skater, and a writer. I want my picture in all the magazines. Maybe I'll be a movie star. I want to be different from all the other girls. I want to be a modern woman, I want to travel. I want to study languages and history. I want to be everything!" Anne Frank

> Anne Frank had dreams just like any other child, and none of her dreams came true. Anne Frank's life and dreams were cut short all because she was born Jewish in Germany during a terrible time.

Next, place students in pairs to think of two good questions about the books based on the statement. Have students then report their questions and record them on the chart paper or the board. Star or highlight questions that are similar. It may be necessary to add questions if the student-generated list does not include enough pertinent material. Some possible questions include the following:

- Why did Anne Frank not get to live out her dreams?
- What was going on in Germany when Anne Frank was born?
- Why did her religion cause her life to be cut short?
- Do these conflicts with religion still exist in Germany today? Explain your answer.
- Do you think Anne Frank knew that she would become famous like a movie star and that her picture would be all over books for kids to read? Explain your answer.
- Why was Anne Frank different from other children?

Read aloud the excerpts from *The Diary of a Young Girl* first to model the process and foster student thought. Prompt students to listen carefully for the answers to their questions. Stop after the section or page that supplies an answer, and ask students whether they heard an answer to their question. Mark questions that are answered.

Then, have students work in pairs or small groups to read the chosen biography or biographies pertaining to Anne Frank to continue the process. Remind students that while they read they should look for answers to all their classmates' questions and should provide each other with comments that would contribute to group members' understanding as well as link to the remarks of others. As students find, discuss, and agree upon answers to questions, they should record them in their reading *learning logs* (view literacy strategy descriptions). A *learning log* is a bound collection of a student's ideas, questions, reactions, reflections, summaries, and responses. This reading *learning log* will be used for recording information during guided and independent reading activities.

After reading the books, facilitate a class discussion focused on identifying how the reader is hooked in each text, how the selections are organized, what is important to remember about this person, and how this person made a difference for others. Elicit student responses about key ideas and facts they discovered while reading, and have them explain their own understandings and ideas about the questions they answered.

To culminate the activity, instruct students to write in their journals a first-person summary of two to three paragraphs comparing/contrasting the approaches of each text and expressing thoughts about what they liked best about each one. Have students include facts from the text that illustrate the two approaches to handling this subject. Also have students include their own opinions and feelings about how effective the texts were. Allow students to do pre-writing in pairs to generate more ideas to compare/contrast and then individually write a draft of their comparison/contrast composition. Assess for completion and content.

Activity 10: About Me (GLEs: 19d, 20d, 20e; CCSS: W.4.2a, W.4.2b, W.4.2e)

Materials List: chart paper, projector system, LEAP 21 Writer's Checklist BLM (See unit 1), LEAP 21 Writing Rubrics BLM (See unit 1), journals

Facilitate a conversation about the kinds of information that can be included to make a biography or autobiography more interesting. Assist the class in brainstorming a list of questions that would provoke thought about a student's personality, life experience, and personal ambitions. Create a list on chart paper. Examples may include:

- What is my best childhood memory?
- What moment am I the proudest of?
- What was my most embarrassing experience?
- What is my best/most unique attribute?
- What makes me the happiest?
- Who are the people I most admire?
- Where do I want to go to live when I grow up or to go to college?
- Where in the world would I most like to travel?
- What are my dreams for my future?

Explain to the students that they will use these questions to write a well-organized autobiographical sketch. The composition should be organized to include an introduction that gets the reader's attention, paragraphs with main ideas and supporting details generated by the guiding questions, and a concluding paragraph. The autobiographical sketch should flow in a logical, sequential order, using transitional words and phrases that unify points and ideas and subheadings or titles.

In preparation for writing autobiographies and to give students a clearer understanding of what is expected, give them guided practice using a *text chain* (view literacy strategy descriptions), which will serve as a model for autobiography writing and promote effective writing skills. In this process, the students will participate in writing an autobiography based on teacher-provided details. Either create a fictional character or use personal experiences to answer the brainstormed questions. Display the answers either on chart paper or a projector. Then, have students work together using those provided details to create an accompanying autobiography. In other words, collectively, the class will write an autobiography about the fictional character or their teacher.

Initiate the process by writing the first line on the board or projector. For example, "The story of my life begins way back in October of 1981." Then, call upon students randomly to elicit a second line, a third line, and so on, using the displayed information until the story is completed. Make sure each student is called on at least once, and call on some students more than once to keep them engaged and constantly thinking about what the next line should be. As students add information to the story, prompt them to create complex sentences by adding more details. Guide students into placing ideas in proper sequence, beginning new paragraphs when necessary, adding transitions and subheadings where appropriate, and effectively concluding at the natural

ending of the story. Remind students that when they are called on, they can certainly go back and insert lines into the text if they feel that something was left out.

> Example Text Chain:
> Initial Statement: The story of my life begins way back on October 7, 1981.
>
> Student #1: Although I do not remember that day, I do remember many sunny afternoons playing in our backyard with my sister and brother on Gloria Street.
>
> Student #2: Those times spent making mud pies and chasing our dog Pete were some of the best times of my life.
>
> Student #3: Eventually, those times became shorter and shorter as I started school at Cadwell Elementary. (Initiate a discussion here about how this sentence should begin a new paragraph because the topic shifts from early childhood to school days.)
>
> Student #4: The work was very hard, and I only got to play outside for about fifteen minutes at school and an hour at home because of all the homework.
>
> Student #5: However, the hard work has all been worth it because I have been on the honor roll every nine weeks!

This should continue until every student has had at least one turn to contribute and the story uses all the displayed details and is complete.

Then go back through the composition as a class and revise and check for accuracy. Point out strengths of the composition and weaknesses and discuss ways to improve.

Then, have students write their own autobiographies of three or more paragraphs in their journals using the list of guiding questions. Give each student a copy of the LEAP 21 Writer's Checklist BLM. Require students to use the writing process to create a final draft by using the steps that they learned in Unit 2, and remind them that their autobiographies will be scored using the LEAP 21 Rubric.

Finally, create a class book bounded together with all of the autobiographies. Keep it in the reading center for students to peruse when time is available.

2013-2014

Activity 11: It's About Me and My Community of Writers (GLEs: 23e, 23f; CCSS: W.4.6)

Materials: computers with word processing and emailing capabilities

Activity 11 is an extension of Activity 10. In 2013-2014, add the following extensions to address the added transitional material:

Assist students in sending a published version of their autobiographies via email to their assigned community members from Unit 2 for feedback. This work should be sent when it is at the student's absolute best. Invite the community member to offer praise, suggestions for improvement with organization or elaboration, and redirect the student if there is something inadequately or incompletely explained. After collaborating with community members and making final revisions, have students make corrections and re-publish. This will allow the students to understand that the writing process is never finished and that writing can always be improved. By this point, students should be able to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

Activity 12: Map It Out! (GLEs: 19d, 23a, 23b)

Materials List: Biography Research Checklist BLM, Graphic Organizer BLM

Discuss with the students what kinds of information are needed to write a complete biography.

A. Name or names
B. Place and date of birth
C. Family
D. Places lived
E. Hobbies
F. Occupations
G. Significant incidents in his/her life
H. What made him/her famous

Show students the list of questions they developed in activity 8 and have them manipulate them to add to their list of information to be included in researching a subject for a biography. Then, have students choose a person they want to research and write about. Using Biography Research Checklist BLM and the strategies discussed in Activities 8 and 9 to formulate a plan for their work, allow each student time to pre-conference and report preliminary ideas about the subject, possible resources, essential questions, and thoughts on how to hook the reader. To complete these prewriting steps, have students use a *graphic organizer* (view literacy strategy descriptions) to plan a potential framework for the biography (see Graphic Organizer BLM).

Activity 13: Know Your Subject (GLEs: 14g, 23b, 42, 43a, 43b, 43c, 43e, 46, 48 CCSS: RI.4.9, RI.4.10, W.4.7)

Materials List: GISTing BLM, Bibliography BLM (See unit 4)

As students use available resources to learn important information about the subject, continue to model how to learn more about a subject using a variety of resources such as interviews, the Internet, books, etc.

Review note taking and information about *GISTing* (view literacy strategy descriptions) from Unit 3, Activity 8 (see GISTing BLM). This strategy will assist students in selecting an appropriate amount of information to include in a summary, instead of choosing too little or too much. *GISTing* requires students to limit the summary of a paragraph to a specific, predetermined number of words so they think about and include only the most important information.

Establish a predetermined number of words to be used in each paragraph, for example, 15 words. Model *GISTing* with the first paragraph of a non-fiction selection. Mark off 15 spaces on a visual for all students to see. Read the first sentence of the paragraph and use no more than the fifteen words to summarize that sentence. Include only the most important information. It is not necessary to use all 15 spaces if they are not needed. Then, read the second sentence and rewrite the gist statement by combining information from the first and second sentences. Once again, only use the allowed 15 spaces. Continue this process by rewriting the gist statement with each additional sentence in the paragraph. For example, if the paragraph has 5 sentences, then by the completion of the *GISTing* process, there should be 5 gist statements. None of the statements should exceed the 15 spaces, and the last sentence should include the most important information from all 5 sentences. See Example in Unit 3, Activity 8.

After an in-depth investigation of their subjects, students should use the *GISTing* strategy and draw conclusions about what information is important to know and remember about this person and how this person made a difference for others. Remind students that they are not allowed to copy directly from a source but should make an outline, use *split-page notetaking* (view literacy strategy descriptions), or other organizers of their information to be included in their biography draft, listing main headings and supporting details. Students should have some autonomy with this process because they have already been guided through it in the research process in Unit 4. *Split-page notetaking* has been used multiple times throughout the curriculum. Remind students to refer to their examples from Unit 6, Activity 14 for a review of this process.

Require students to cite all references as they independently research multiple sources and complete a bibliography (see Bibliography BLM) according to the specified format. Give students some autonomy with this process because they have already been guided through it in the research process in Unit 4.

Activity 14: Final Publication (GLEs: 20d, 20e, 23c, 23d, 23e, 23f, 23g, 28, 29, 30b, 31a, 31b, 31c, 31d, 32; CCSS: W.4.2a, W.4.2b, W.4.2e)

Materials List: LEAP 21 Writer's Checklist BLM (See Unit 1), LEAP 21 Writing Rubrics BLM (See Unit 1)

Instruct students to begin the actual draft of the biography. This biography should encompass many facets of this person's life, such as what is important to know about this person, what relationships this person has in his or her life, who has influenced him or her and how, what experiences shaped his or her values and beliefs, etc.

Instruct students to use the LEAP 21 Writer's Checklist BLM as they work through the writing process—drafting and revising, focusing on introductions and conclusions, supporting details, sequential order, legibility, interjections, hyphenation and syllabication/spelling, and verb usage. When first drafts are complete, direct students to read their drafts aloud to a peer who should listen for transitional words and phrases that unify the writing and for interesting word choice. Have peers also proofread for run-on or fragmented sentences, standard usage errors, capitalization, and punctuation errors. Direct writers to make revisions and edit their work paying close attention to correct use of conventions. Students should publish using technology if possible and use spelling and grammar checks before printing a final draft of their multi-paragraph essays. Students' essays will be graded using a rubric such as the LEAP 21 Writing Rubrics BLM.

Activity 15: Showtime! (GLEs: 34, 36a, 36c, 38)

Materials List: Presentation Rubric BLM (See Unit 6)

Have students prepare to give oral presentations of their compositions. Encourage them to bring in everyday objects as artifacts that reflect their subjects. For example, if a biography is about Ben Franklin, a student might choose to bring in a key or a calligraphy pen as a departure point to understand Franklin's life and how he made a difference in today's world. Review and clearly establish audience expectations for oral presentations, using scoring rubrics (see Presentation Rubric BLM) that address speaking, listening, and presentation skills.

2013-2014
Activity 16: Showtime! (GLEs: 34, 36a, 36c, 38; CCSS: SL.4.5, L.4.3c)

Materials List: Presentation Rubric BLM (See unit 6)

Activity 16 is an extension of Activity 15. In 2013—2014, add the following extensions to address the added transitional material:

Require students to accompany presentations with visual and multimedia aids such as *Power Point* presentations or short video clips, if appropriate. Also if appropriate, students should include audio recordings to enhance the development of the main idea. These should also be assessed in the rubric.

Sample Assessments

General Guidelines

Use a variety of performance assessments to determine student understanding of content. Select assessments that are consistent with the type of product that results from the student activities, and develop a scoring rubric collaboratively with other teachers or students. The following are samples of assessments that could be used for this unit:

General Assessments

- Observe student performance in locating and using references, and use anecdotal records to determine which students need individual assistance in this process.
- Meet with students individually to have them read passages aloud and ask both literal and inferential questions in order to assess word recognition and content reading skills.
- Provide students with a checklist of required steps and timeframes for the biography project. As each step is completed, have students bring their checklists to be initialed and discussed.

Activity-Specific Assessments

- Activities 10 and 14: Students will use the *LEAP 21 Writer's Checklist* and *LEAP 21 Writing Rubrics* for self- and peer editing. Use this list as a standard for grading the final drafts.

- Activity 13: Assess each student's notes for accurate, sufficient information and proper organization before allowing them to begin their first drafts.

- Activities 15 and 16: Assist students in constructing a presentation rubric (see Presentation Rubric BLM) that includes standards for speaking (content, pacing, volume, posture), listening (eye contact, listening etiquette, questioning), and presentation (props, visuals, timing). Use the rubrics to score the student's final presentation and provide written commentary about strengths and weaknesses.

Possible Biography and Autobiography Samples

Abramson, Ann	*Who was Anne Frank?*
Adams, Patricia	*The Story of Pocahontas: Indian Princess*
Anderson, William	*Pioneer Girl: Story of Laura Ingalls Wilder*
Ashby, Ruth	*Anne Frank: Young Diarist*
Coles, Robert	*Story of Ruby Bridges*
Cooney, Barbara	*Eleanor*
Dahl, Roald	*Boy*
DePaola, Tomie	*26 Fairmount Avenue*
Fleischman, Sid	*Abracadabra*
Frank, Anne	*The Diary of a Young Girl*
Kwan, Michelle	*Michelle Kwan, Heart of a Champion: An Autobiography*
Lowry, Lois	*Looking Back*
Lyons, Mary	*Catching the Fire: Philip Simmons, Blacksmith*
Martin, Jacqueline	*Snowflake Bentley*
Milburn, MaryJo Fante	*Sacajawea*
Parks, Rosa	*Rosa Parks: My Story*
Pickney, Andrea	*Duke Ellington*
Ransom, Candace	*Lewis and Clark*
Sis, Peter	*Starry Messenger: Galileo Galilei*
Towle, Wendy	*The Real McCoy*
Wells, Rosemary	*Mary on Horseback: Three Mountain Stories*