

**Genre Study**  
**Responding to Literature**  
**Grade 4**

**Background Information:** This study was developed for use with fourth-grade classrooms that are already implementing the writing workshop, as defined by the Literacy in Action Initiative. The intent of the study is to teach children to write a response to various forms of literature that have previously been studied (narrative, informational, poetry). The study is most effective when the following assumptions are true.

Assumptions:

- Students can read the material
- Students have been taught to summarize
- Students have had experience reading informational and narrative text
- Students have already done a narrative study this year and an author study in previous years

**Teaching Objectives:**

Students will understand the difference in responding to narrative, informational text and poetry. Students will produce a response to literature that:

- Engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, and otherwise developing reader interest
- Advances a judgment that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative or reflective
- Makes connections which refer to the text, other works, authors, non-print media or personal knowledge
- Demonstrates an understanding of the characteristics of genre-specific literary works
- Provides a sense of closure to the writing

**Sequence:**

Week one - Students will be introduced to Response to Literature as a genre of writing. Students will learn how to present in writing a response to narrative which includes a summary, a judgment, a personal connection, a lead and closure.

Week two - Students will learn how to present in writing a response to informational text which includes a summary, judgment, a lead and closure



Week three - Students will learn how to write a response to poetry which includes judgment, an interpretation, and connections.

Week four - Two days writing rubric and then writing workshop to produce papers.

**Materials Needed for this Unit:**

- Chart paper
- Chart markers
- Highlighters
- Favorite examples of:
  - Narrative writing, informational writing, poetry\*
  - Responses to literature (both student and professional, if possible)\*

\* Some examples and/or suggested titles are included if you choose to use them.

**Responding to Literature (Narrative)**



## Identifying Critical Elements of a Good Response

### Week 1, Lesson 1

### Grade 4

#### Mini Lesson Goal:

*Students will understand the “real world” reasons for responding to narrative writing and, using adult and student models, identify critical elements of a good response to literature.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.11 A-D; 4.12 B, C, D, F, G Writing - 4.20 C; 4.22 A</p>
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#### Materials Needed:

- Chart paper and markers
- Selection of children’s books
- Professional reviews of children’s books. Suggested resources: *The Horn Book Magazine*; *Valerie & Walter’s Best Books for Children: A Lively, Opinionated Guide*; selected excerpts from Jim Trelease’s *The Read Aloud Handbook* are also helpful.

#### Before the Lesson:

Review the attributes of narrative writing from rubric. You could invite the school librarian to come in and briefly tell how she or he uses professional reviews in ordering books for the library.

<b>Mini Lesson</b>
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#### Connections:

Remind students how the librarian uses professional reviews to select books for the library.

#### Teach:

Real world reasons for writing a response to literature:

- To review/recommend books in magazines for kids (*Stone Soup*, etc.)
- In magazines for adults, librarians, kids (*Horn Book*)
- In book stores when there is a display of books for “The Staff Recommends”
- On book jackets to entice a reader to buy the book



- In classrooms (to show that the reader understands the book)

Show examples of reviews of *Chato's Kitchen* by Gary Soto and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* by Roald Dahl

**Active Involvement:**

Chart noticings (keeping in mind indicators on the rubric). Sample chart attached.

**Link:**

Students choose a familiar narrative of their choice to respond to in their notebooks. Remind students to refer to the attribute chart.

**Follow-up (Homework):** Find a book review and bring it to class tomorrow.

**Closure:** Return to carpet and a couple of students share noticings.

Sample chart

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Good Response to Literature</b></p> <p><b>Mentions the title and author of the piece</b></p> <p><b>Tells the main events that happen</b></p> <p><b>Makes a judgment of the piece</b></p> <p><b>Supports the judgment with details from the text or personal knowledge</b></p> <p><b>Gets the reader's attention</b></p> <p><b>Tells the plot of what happens</b></p> <p><b>Includes details about character and setting</b></p> <p><b>Has a sense of closure</b></p> <p><b>Tells the theme (message)</b></p> <p><b>Makes connections (text to text, text to self or text to world)</b></p>
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**Responding to Literature (Narrative)**  
**Writing a Summary that States Big Ideas and Details**  
**Week 1, Lesson 2**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will write a summary of a narrative piece demonstrating their understanding of the text read. The summary will state the big ideas and identify important details.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.8 B, C; 4.10 F, G; 4.11 A-D; 4.12 B, C, D, F, G Writing - 4.20 B, C</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox
- Summary of *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox

(A sample is available in Primary Literacy Standards or from Amazon.com or other book sellers' websites.)

**Before the Lesson:**

Read aloud *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Reread attribute chart and point out that this lesson's focus will be "summary."

**Teach:**

Read a summary of *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* summary. If possible make a transparency of the summary.

**Active Involvement:**

Talk to a partner about why this example is a good summary. Record student responses on mini- chart **What Makes an Effective Narrative Summary?**



Include in chart:

Big ideas

Important details

Not a retell

Refer to plot, setting, character

**Link:**

Students choose a familiar narrative to summarize in their notebooks. (May be the same as in Lesson 1.)

**Note to Teacher:**

Working definitions of a summary and a retelling -

Summary: A brief passage that contains the essence of a longer passage.

Retelling: A reader's description of what happens in a passage

**Closure:** Bring students back to the carpet and call on a few to share their summaries of the book they chose.



**Responding to Literature (Narrative)**  
**Making Judgments and Supporting Them Through References**  
**Week 1, Lesson 3**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will make a judgment about a narrative text and support that judgment through references to the text, to other works, to authors, to non-print media, or to personal knowledge.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.10 A, B, I; 4.11 A, B, C, D Writing – 4.15 A; 4.20 B, C</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

Review of *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox from previous lesson.

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Revisit the *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* review/summary on the overhead and continue to analyze it.

**Teach:**

Mentally highlight the personal connections made in this review. Remind students of the other kinds of connections they can make (other texts, other works by this author, works by other authors or references to personal knowledge).

**Active Involvement:**

Students think about the book they reviewed yesterday. They talk about the connections they can make with Wilfrid Gordon.

**Link and Closure:**

Students will write connections to a familiar narrative in their notebooks and share.



**Responding to Literature (Narrative)**  
**Making Interpretive, Analytic, Evaluative or Reflective Judgements**  
**Week 1, Lesson 4**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*The student will make judgments of a narrative text that is interpretive, analytic, evaluative or reflective. (At this point they are not expected to be able to identify which kind of judgment it is. Their understanding should be that there are many different kinds of judgments that can be made.)*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading – 4.8 C; 4.10 A, B; 4.11 A, B, C, D Writing – 4.15 B, F; 4.20 A, B, C</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Copies of a book review (sources include Horn Book, Library Journals, etc.)
- Overhead transparency of the review
- Highlighters for students and for teacher to use on overhead projector

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Remind students that this week they have focused on writing a summary and making connections to a narrative text. Today they will focus on making judgments in their response to literature.

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

- Read the book review. The teacher will find a judgment statement in the review. Highlight this on the overhead and identify it as a judgment.
- Teacher reads the review aloud while students look for other judgments. As students find a judgment, have them highlight on their paper. Go through the entire review and find judgment statements.
- Next, the teacher will model finding where the author refers to the text to give details which support his/her judgments. Underline these details. Students will find places in the review where the author gives details from the text to support his judgments and underline them.



**Link:**

Students should reread the responses they have written. Do they have judgments they could add? What would they refer to in the text to support those judgments?

**Closure:** Students will come to the carpet and share the judgement statements they added to their responses. They will refer to text to support those judgements.



**Responding to Literature (Narrative)**  
**Writing a Lead and a Closure**  
**Week 1, Lesson 5**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will write a response to literature which engages the reader by establishing a context, creating a persona, or otherwise developing reader interest. Students will write a response to literature which provides a sense of closure to the writing.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading – 4.8 C, 4.10 A, B; 4.11 A, B, C, D; 4.13 G Writing – 4.15 A, B, F; 4.19 C; 4.20 A, B, C</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Highlighters for students
- Copies for each student of short reviews from a source such as Cricket Magazine which publishes student writing
- **Characteristics of Good Writing** rubric, from earlier in the year.

**Before the Lesson:**

Review **Characteristics of Good Writing** rubric from earlier in the year.

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Today students will look at several student reviews of literature. They might be interested in writing a review and sending it in to the magazine to see if they would publish it.

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

Read a selected student review. Model identifying the lead and the closing and highlighting them. Then have students find leads and closing statements in the other reviews you've chosen.



**Link:**

Students choose one of the responses that they have been working on, or create a new one, and draft a complete response to narrative. They should refer to the chart that includes a summary, judgment, lead and closure.

**Closure:** Students will come to the carpet, and teacher will choose a couple of students to share their leads and a couple to share their closures.



**Responding to Literature (Informational)**  
**Differentiating Between a Narrative and Informational Response**  
**Week 2, Lesson 1**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will understand the differences between a response to narrative and a response to informational writing.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.8 B; 4.11 A-C Writing - 4.15 A, F; 4.20 A</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Attribute chart — **A Good Response to Literature** (included)
- Additional chart paper and markers to add to above chart
- Selection of informational texts for students
- Selected book jacket blurb — copies for students or overhead transparency
  - \* “blurb” refers to the information found on the book jacket or back of book giving a short synopsis of the text.

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connections:**

Not only do we write responses to narratives, we also write responses to informational texts.

**Teach:**

- Read the selected book jacket synopsis
- Discuss noticings of the book jacket blurb
- Review the chart — **A Good Response to Literature**
- Discuss the similarities and differences between response to narrative and response to informational literature.



**Active Involvement:**

Add to noticings about response to informational writing that is not already on the chart. Highlight the noticings unique to narrative and point out that the original noticings (that are not highlighted or just added) are common to both narrative and informational responses to literature.

**Link:**

Students choose a simple informational text of their choice and write a response in their notebooks. Remind students to refer to the attribute chart.

**Follow-up (Homework):**

Find a book blurb and bring it to class.

**Closure:** Students will come to the carpet and share noticings of informational text.

Sample chart

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>A Good Response to Literature</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Mentions the title and author of the piece</b></li><li><b>Tells the main events that happen</b></li><li><b>Makes a judgment of the piece</b></li><li><b>Supports the judgment with details from the text or personal knowledge</b></li><li><b>Gets the reader’s attention</b></li><li><b>Tells the plot of what happens</b></li><li><b>Includes details about character and setting</b></li><li><b>Has a sense of closure</b></li><li><b>Tells the theme (message)</b></li><li><b>Makes connections (text to text, text to self or text to world)</b></li></ul> <p><i>Informational elements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>Summary has facts and details</i></li><li><i>Summary reflects the text structure (can add Day 2 of week)</i></li></ul>
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**Responding to Literature (Informational)**  
**Summarizing Informational Writing**  
**Week 2, Lesson 2**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will understand that summarizing informational writing requires an understanding of its structure.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.8 B; 4.10 G; 4.11 A-D Writing - 4.15 A, F; 4.20 D</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Selection of informational texts that show compare and contrast such as *Why is a Frog Not a Toad?* by Q.L. Pearce or *Houses, Houses* by Jane Yolen
- Handouts — teacher written or commercially written summaries of selected informational texts

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

In informational writing, the way the facts of information are organized is important. A summary of informational writing often reflects that organizational pattern. A common way of organizing information is using compare and contrast.

**Teach:**

Show a compare/contrast text and discuss its organizational structure as a compare and contrast, identifying the clue words. Explain that a summary of informational writing often reflects the organization of the text.

**Active Involvement:**

- Students will examine the informational texts and discuss their structure
- Share the written summaries and discuss the elements of the summary as compared with the actual text
- Add “Summary reflects the text structure” to the chart from Lesson 1, if not already written.



**Link:**

Students choose a simple informational text with a compare and contrast text structure to summarize. Remind students that they wrote a summary of a narrative text the week before. Today students will write a summary of an informational text.

**Note to the teacher:**

This lesson could be combined with the next (Lesson 2b), depending on the students' prior knowledge about text structure.

**Closure:** Students will come to the carpet to share the summaries of informational text.



**Responding to Literature (Informational)**  
**Summarizing Informational Writing**  
**Week 2, Lesson 2b**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will understand that summarizing informational writing requires an understanding of its structure.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.8 B; 4.10 G; 4.11 A-C Writing - 4.15 A, F; 4.20 D</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Selection of informational texts that have a table of contents and headings such as *The Cod's Tale* by Mark Kurlansky, *Mummies and their Mysteries* by Charlotte Wilcox or Social Studies texts.
- Handouts — sample table of contents from an informational text

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

The table of contents in an informational text outlines the main sections of the book. The headings are often used to show that the author is moving to a different topic. The table of contents and headings can be used to organize a summary of an informational text.

**Teach:**

- Show a selected sample table of contents from an informational text
- Show the use of headings in a selected text
- Show Social Studies or Science textbook which uses table of contents and headings



**Active Involvement:**

- Give students copies of the table of contents and a book jacket blurb that summarizes the text using the table of contents as a basis
- Discuss how the blurb reflects the table of contents

**Link:**

Students choose a table of contents from an informational text, look at their headings and create summary based on the headings.

**Closure:** The students will come to the carpet and share their process of how the summary came to be as they studied the headings of their table of contents.



**Responding to Literature (Informational)**  
**Making Judgments and Supporting Them through References**  
**Week 2, Lesson 3**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will make a judgment about an informational text and support that judgment through references to the text, to other works, to other authors, to non-print media or to personal knowledge.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.11A-C; Writing - 4.15 B</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Books used from previous lessons this week
- Mini-chart made by teacher that includes questions from the **Teach** section below

**Before the Lesson:**

Teacher prepares a book talk from one of the informational texts previously used. The book talk should include a summary and judgments about the texts. Be sure to refer to the text to substantiate your claims. Include answers to the questions listed under Teach

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

When you write a response to literature, you are often recommending a book to others. A recommendation is a type of judgment. Refer to chart —**A Good Response to Literature** and notice points about making a judgment. (Note in the chart that a response to informational writing does not have to have a personal connection.)



**Teach:**

Share teacher prepared book talk with students, making sure judgments are supported by references to the text. Emphasize judgments using the following questions:

**Questions to think about when judging an informational text**

Is it well organized? \*

Is it understandable? \*

Was it interesting and/or enjoyable? \*

Did I learn something? \*

\*Show evidence in the text

**Active Involvement:**

Pair-share a judgment about a familiar informational text from this week.

**Link:**

Students write a notebook entry that includes a judgment substantiated by the text.

**Closure:** Students will gather at the carpet to share their judgment statements and the text that helped them to come to that conclusion.



## Responding to Literature (Informational)

### Writing a Lead and a Closure

#### Week 2, Lesson 4

#### Grade 4

#### Mini Lesson Goal:

*Students will write a response to informational text that engages the reader by establishing a context (includes title and author), that develops reader interest and that has a sense of closure.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.11 A-C Writing - 4.15 A; 4.20 A-D</p>
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#### Materials Needed:

Overhead transparencies of book jacket blurbs from two selected informational texts

<h4>Mini Lesson</h4>
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#### Connection:

Review the chart — **A Good Response to Literature**, stressing the elements of good writing. Review the example leads and endings lessons from the Informational Text genre study.

#### Teach and Active Involvement:

Share the two book jacket blurbs, focusing on how the writer crafts a lead and a closing. Discuss how they draw in the reader. Discuss how closings wrap up the response. Explain how the examples come from the book jackets which have the title on the cover. If they are not writing a book jacket, they need to include the title and author in the beginning of the piece.

#### Link:

Students choose one of the responses to informational writing that they have been working on or create a new one. Students craft a lead that engages the reader and an ending that has a sense of closure.

**Closure:** After gathering at the carpet, a couple of students will share their leads and a couple share their closures.



**Responding to Literature (Informational)**  
**Writing a Response to Informational Text Using Elements Taught**  
**Week 2, Lesson 5**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will draft a response to informational text using the elements taught: summary, judgment, a well-crafted lead, including title and author and a closing.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.11 A-C Writing - 4.15 A; 4.19 B; 4.20 A, C, D</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- All charts pertaining to the unit
- Teacher-crafted response to informational text based on book talk shared in Lesson 8.

**Before the Lesson:**

Teacher drafts an example of a response to informational text.

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Review all charts. Tell students they will use their notebook entries to pull all the essential elements together to draft their response to an informational text.

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

Teacher shares draft of response and students identify the summary, noting the organizational structure, tin judgments, the lead and closing.

**Link:**

Students choose one of the responses that they have been working on or create a new one and write a complete response to an informational text. When writing their piece, they should think about all of the attributes of a good response to an informational text that are listed on the chart.

**Closure:** A few students will sit in the Author’s Chair to share their responses to Informational literature.



**Responding to Literature (Poetry)**  
**Writing Responses Making a Judgment**  
**Week 3, Lesson 1**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will make a judgment (a recommendation) about poetry collections and support that judgment through references to the texts.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading - 4.8 A; 4.10 A, B, D, F; 4.11 A,C, D, G Writing – 4.15 A; 4.20 A, B, C, D, E; 4.22 A; 4.23 A</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

Suggested texts-

- *Laughing Tomatoes* by Francisco X. Alarcon
- *Iguanas In The Snow* by Francisco X. Alarcon
- *Sol y Sol* by Lori Marie Carlson
- *Confetti* by Pat Mora
- Attribute chart- *A Good Response to Literature* (included)
- Additional chart paper and markers to add to above chart
- Transparency of review and copies of reviews for students
- Highlighters

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connections:**

Remind students that not only do we write responses to narrative and informational texts, but also to poetry. Today they will focus on making judgments in their response to poetry.

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

- Read the jacket reviews from *Iguanas In The Snow*. The teacher will find a judgment-“We are dazzled by the promise of the seedling redwoods...”. Highlight this on the overhead and identify this as a judgment.
- Teacher reads review aloud while students look for other judgment statements. As students find judgments, have them highlight them on their paper.
- Next, the teacher will model finding where the author refers to the text to give details which support his judgments. Underline these details. Students will find places in the review where the author finds details from the text to support his judgments and underline them.



**Link:**

Students select a poem and write a response which includes a personal judgment supported by the text. Remind students to refer to the attribute chart.

**Closure:**

Students pair share their personal judgments from their poetry response.



**Responding to Literature (Poetry)**  
**Writing Responses Making Interpretations**  
**Week 3, Lesson 2**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will learn how to write a response to poetry which includes an interpretation through summarization.*

**TEKS:** Reading – 4.8 C; 4.10 A, B, D; 4.11 A, B, C  
Writing – 4.15 A, F; 4.20 B

**Materials Needed:**

Suggested texts-

- *Laughing Tomatoes* by Francisco X. Alarcon
- *Iguanas In The Snow* by Francisco X. Alarcon
- *Sol y Sol* by Lori Marie Carlson
- *Confetti* by Pat Mora
- Teacher selected poetry
- Attribute chart- *A Good Response to Literature* (included)
- Additional chart paper and markers to add to above chart

**Mini Lesson**

**Connection:**

Reread attribute chart. Point out that this lesson’s focus is interpretation through summarization.

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

- Teacher reads a selected poem and thinks aloud as he/she summarizes her interpretation. Teacher emphasizes that individual responses may vary because of differing background experiences.
- Teacher will chart with students various “interpretation stems” to support their own interpretations of their selected poem.  
Include in chart below:

Stems for Understanding Poetry

- What do you think the author was trying to say?
- How did the author feel about the subject?
- Why did the author write this?
- What did the poem say to you?



**Link:**

Students will refer to the stems to analyze their poem and write their interpretative response.

**Closure:**

Teacher will select a few students for Author's Chair. These pieces should reflect what was taught in the mini lesson.



**Responding to Literature (Poetry)**  
**Writing Responses that Include Connections**  
**Week 3, Lesson 3**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini-Lesson Goal:**

*Students' responses to poetry will include a connection. This may be a personal connection or a connection to another text or author. Students will practice adding adding detail to convey this connection to the reader.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading – 4.10 F; 4.11 A, C Writing - 4.15 A; 4.20 B</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- A favorite poem of the teacher's
- A collection of poetry. Some good poems to use are: "April Rain Song" from *The Dream Keener and Other Poems* by Langston Hughes, Scholastic 1994; "Baseball Cards # 1" by Jim Daniels from *The Place My Words Are Looking For*, edited by Paul Janeczko, Simon & Schuster 1990; "Haunted House" by Valerie Worth from *The Place My Words Are Looking For*; "Enchantment" by Joanne Ryder from *The Place My Words Are Looking For*; "The Questions" by Dennis Lee from *Poetry From A to Z* edited by Paul Janeczko, Simon & Schuster 1994.

**Before the Lesson:**

- Choose a poem to share with the class that means a lot to you and be prepared to discuss your connection (personal or textual) with the class.
- Ask students to bring to the lesson the poem they selected that means a lot to them.

<p><b>Mini-Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

As Georgia Heard says, "Poetry has to hit a person right in the heart, or it doesn't work."

**Teach:**

Read the favorite poem you selected to the class. Model writing your connection to the poem.



**Active Involvement:**

Ask a student to share his/her favorite poem that is a favorite and to talk about their connection to it. Ask the class to determine which (if either) they have a connection with.

**Note to Teacher:**

As students discuss connections, be sure to monitor the detail they give so that the connection is understood, but not so detailed that they are telling a whole new story.

**Link:**

- Have students reread the poem they have selected, thinking about the connection they made to it.
- Ask them to write about their connection, keeping in mind the element of detail; they should be able to provide sufficient detail while leaving out extraneous information.

**Closing:**

- Be sure to have enough time for the students to meet with response partners.
- Students should take turns reading their poems and then their connections.
- Partner feedback to the writer should focus on the use of sufficient detail and the deletion of extraneous detail.

**Follow Up (Homework):**

If students need time to revise their connections after meeting with response partners, ask them to do this for homework.



## Responding to Literature (Poetry)

### Writing a Lead and a Closure

#### Week 3, Lesson 4

#### Grade 4

#### Mini Lesson Goal:

*Students will write a response to poetry that engages the reader by establishing a context (includes title and author), that develops reader interest and that has a sense of closure.*

**TEKS:** Reading - 4.11 A-C

Writing - 4.15 A; 4.20 A-D

#### Materials Needed:

Overheads of book jacket blurbs from *Iguanas in the Snow* by Alarcon and Gonzalez and *Laughing Tomatoes Jitomates Risuenos* by Francisco Alarcon and the poetry book review for *Sol a Ssol* by Lori Marie Carlson and *Confetti* by Pat Mora

#### Mini Lesson

#### Connection:

Review the chart — **A Good Response to Literature**, stressing the elements of good writing.

#### Teach and Active Involvement:

Share the two book jacket blurbs, focusing on how the writer crafts a lead and a closing. Discuss how they draw in the reader. Discuss how closings wrap up the response. Explain how the examples come from the book jackets which have the title on the cover. If they are not writing a book jacket, share the two book reviews and remind them that they need to include the title and author in the beginning of their review.

#### Link:

Students choose one of the responses to poetry writing that they have been working on or create a new one. Students craft a lead that engages the reader and an ending that has a sense of closure.

**Closure:** Teacher will choose a couple of students to share leads and closures.



**Responding to Literature (Poetry)**  
**Writing Responses that Include Interpretation, Connection,**  
**Analytical Judgement and References**

**Week 3, Lesson 5**

**Grade 4**

**Mini-Lesson Goal:**

*Students will draft a response to poetry which includes interpretation, connection, analytical judgment and references to the text.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading – 4.10 B; 4.11 A, B, C Writing – 4.15 A, F; 4.20 B</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

Attribute chart — **A Good Response to Literature**

**Before the Lesson:**

Review with the students the characteristics of good writing (lead, closure, detail, etc.)

<p><b>Mini-Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Remind students of all the work they have done this week in responding to poetry.  
Review the attribute chart.

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

Ask students to look over their entries which respond to poetry. Then they will read over some of their favorite poems.

**Link:**

Today they will pull together all they have learned to draft a complete response to poetry. This draft will be written outside of the notebook.



**Follow Up:**

As students finish their drafts, encourage them to meet in response groups and revise their work as needed.

**Closure:** Teacher will choose a couple of students to share at the Author's Chair.

**A Good Response to Literature**

**Mentions the title and author of the piece**

**Tells the main events that happen**

**Makes a judgment of the piece**

**Supports the judgment with details from the text or  
personal knowledge**

**Gets the reader's attention**

**Tells the plot of what happens**

**Includes details about character and setting**

**Has a sense of closure**

**Tells the theme (message)**

**Makes connections (text to text, text to self or text to world)**

*Informational elements:*

*Summary has facts and details*

*Summary reflects the text structure (can add Day 2 of week)*

*Poetic elements:*

*Has an interpretation of the poem*

*Makes a judgment of the use of poetic elements*



**Responding to Literature**  
**Publishing a Response and Generating a Rubric**  
**Week 4, Lessons 1-2**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini-Lesson Goal:**

*Students will select a draft to publish, choosing from drafts created in this unit of study.  
The class will create a Response to Literature rubric.*

<p><b>TEKS:</b> Reading – 4.11 A, C, D; 4.12 A, B, C, D Writing – 4.20 A, C, D, E</p>
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**Materials Needed:**

- Attribute chart, *A Good Response to Literature*
- Rubric: *Elements of Good Writing*
- Example of Response to Literature Rubric (see attached)

**Before the Lesson:** Review the sample Response to Literature Rubric and prepare rubric grid and title only for the class.

<p><b>Mini Lesson</b></p>
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**Connection:**

Tell the students that today they'll be choosing one of their draft responses to literature to develop into a published piece by the end of the week.

**Teach, Lesson 1:** Remind students to use attribute chart in their selection. Review charts.

**Active Involvement:** Students reread all their drafts and select one. (Note: Allow no more than 10 minutes for this.) Reassemble on the carpet with their selected drafts to begin creating a rubric for **Response to Literature**.



**Teach, Lesson 2:** Tell the students that today they will begin to generate a rubric for response to literature. The rubric will build on what they already know is fundamental to good writing — strong introduction, important details, organization that is easy for readers to follow and some sort of conclusion.

Reassure students that all year they've been working to get good at including all of these things in their writing. Explain that today the class will build a rubric which acknowledges all these prior learning and incorporates some special things that writers do when they write a response to literature.

At this point - if you have a **Characteristics of Good Writing** rubric — display it and review it with your students. Display the **Response to Literature** rubric grid.

Draw students' attention to the noticing about how response to literature usually begins. With narratives and informational pieces, writers frequently start out mentioning the title and author of the piece and then they move into a summary. With poetry, the author and title are usually mentioned, followed by an interpretation.

The first criterion on the rubric, then, might be how the work begins. Ask students to help you put into words what a really good beginning would include. You want them to realize that a good beginning:

- Has a strong lead that makes a reader want to read more and/or that mentions who the writer of the piece is and what the title is. By mentioning the title and author, the writer is attempting to build interest on the part of the reader. This is actually a way of establishing context. (highest score level - 4)
- A less good beginning might not attempt to build reader interest but may refer to the author/title of the piece being reviewed. (second score level - 3)
- A still less effective response might make an oblique reference to the text being responded to. (third score level - 2)
- A response that needs serious revisions might make no reference to the piece being reviewed and just start with a summary or judgment. (lowest score level - 1)

Now have the students look at the piece they have brought to the rug. Ask them to consider whether their beginning is a “4” — or a “3” or a “2” or a “1.” Explain that if they need to revise their work upward towards a “4” they should look carefully at the rubric for cues about what to put in their beginning. Explain also that most papers will have some good features and some others not as good. Remind them that their job as writers is to use the rubric to figure out what they do well and then to work at making better the things they don't do so well. The rubric is an important tool to use when planning and revising their piece.

At this point, go to the next feature on the rubric. Complete the rubric during the next class session.



## Lesson 2

### **Continuation of Rubric Drafting:**

Be sure to use students' own language in creation of the rubric. Complete all levels of the rubric with your students.

Note: Rubric construction may require all of two class sessions, leaving no time for in-class writing. On those days, be sure students write at home to continue the norm of daily writing. They should work on their **Response to Literature** drafts.



**Responding to Literature**  
**Publishing a Response**  
**Week 4, Lessons 3-5**  
**Grade 4**

**Mini Lesson Goal:**

*Students will complete a published Response to Literature by the end of the week.*

**TEKS:** Reading - 4.15 A, C, D, E, F  
Writing – 4.19 A, B, C, D, E, G, H

**Materials Needed for this Unit:**

- Chart paper
- Chart markers
- Favorite examples of: Narrative writing, informational writing, poetry
- Responses to literature (both student and professional, if possible)

**Teach and Active Involvement:**

Continue using the writing workshop format. Be sure to complete the steps of the writing process, including:

- drafting
- criterion-based response groups (using rubric)
- revising
- conferring
- editing
- final draft/publishing
- celebration

**Follow Up:**

For classes wishing to extend this unit of study:

- class literary magazine
- recommendations for Touchstone Books and/or principal's Book of the Month



- submit reviews to children’s magazines, such as:

Stone Soup  
P.O. Box 83  
Santa Cruz, CA 95063  
(800)447-4569

Cricket Readers Recommend  
P.O. Box 300  
Peru, IL 61354  
(800) 827-0227

Riverbank Review  
1624 Harmon Place, Suite 305.  
Minneapolis, MN 55403  
(612) 486-5690

Or websites, such as

kidpub.com  
cyberkids.com  
newkidsnews.com  
amazon.com

- “shelf talkers” (“the staff/customers recommend ...”) for your local independent bookstore
- local or school library display

**Closure:** Daily at the carpet, students will share any concerns or ideas in their process of writing. On the final day, teacher along with students, will plan the celebration of this Response to Literature Unit. Students will choose which response they want to share whole group.



**Sample Rubric for Response to Literature \***

	4	3	2	1
<b>Lead &amp; Closure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has a strong lead that makes a reader want to read more, and where necessary, mentions who the writer of the piece is and what the title is.</li> <li>Has an effective closing that satisfies the reader.</li> </ul>	A less good beginning might not attempt to build reader interest but may reference the author/title of the piece being reviewed.	A still less effective response might make an oblique reference to the text being responded to.	A response that needs serious revisions might make no reference to the piece being reviewed and just starts with a summary or judgment.
<b>Summary/ Interpretation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focuses on the most important ideas</li> <li>References the text</li> <li>Narrative summary includes plot, setting, characters</li> <li>Informational summary includes how information is organized</li> <li>Poetry response may be an interpretation instead of a summary</li> </ul>			
<b>Details</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contains sufficient details for the reader to understand</li> <li>Excludes extraneous details (not a retelling)</li> </ul>			
<b>Connections/ Judgment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes a connection &amp; supports it with references to the text, other texts, or personal knowledge, and/or</li> <li>Makes a judgment by naming specific elements of the genre and supports it by referencing the text.</li> </ul>			

\*This partial rubric is written as a guide for the teacher, to help you get started. Be sure to create your rubric with the students. The writing should be in student language.

