

Best Practices in Unit Writing

Step One: Unpack standards, identify major concepts (topics for units), and create unit content map

Step Two: Map the units (create a pacing guide based on the school calendar and testing windows)

Step Three: Create the unit

1. **Determine acceptable evidence (create culminating activity/assessment with rubric)**
 - a. Is assessment balanced? Are all types of assessment included, e.g. informal assessment, selected response, constructed response, and performance assessment?
 - b. Will the Culminating Activity demonstrate student understanding of unit Essential Question?
 - c. Is the Culminating Activity authentic?
 - d. Does the scoring rubric use content that matches standards/elements and the instructional emphasis?
2. **Create acquisition lessons**
 - a. **Standards/Element**
 - i. Are the standard/element(s) listed?
 - ii. Do the specific instructional activities reflect what students need to know, understand, and be able to do to master the standard(s)?
 - b. **Essential Question:** Does the lesson list only one Essential Question? (Key questions are acceptable if identified.)
 - c. **Activating Strategy**
 - i. Is this strategy motivating?
 - ii. Does it link to student prior knowledge?
 - d. **Acceleration/Previewing**
 - i. Are provisions made to preview the vocabulary, content map, etc. for acceleration?
 - ii. Has this information been shared with the appropriate support staff?
 - e. **Teaching Strategies**
 - i. Does each lesson have at least one graphic organizer?
 - ii. Is the graphic organizer completed as a prompt for delivering instruction?
 - iii. Does the lesson supply prompts to accompany your collaborative pair summarizing?
 - iv. Have you included formative assessments throughout the lesson, e.g. distributive summarizing, two-column notes, collaborative pairs?
 - v. Does the lesson include a performance task/assessment?
 - f. **Summarizing** Does the summarizing strategy answer the Essential Question?
 - g. **Assignment and/or Assessment**
 - i. Is an answer key included?
 - ii. Does the assessment match the Enduring Understanding, Knowledge, and Skills as addressed in the unpacking of the standards?
 - iii. Has the assessment provided the evidence needed to demonstrate that the students have met the standard?
3. **Extend and refine**

Does the unit provide opportunities for extending and refining student thinking? Does it include?

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Compare/Contrast• Classifying• Cause/Effect• Justification	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Error Analysis• Induction/Deduction• Abstracting• Evaluation
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4. **Differentiate**
 - a. Is there evidence of differentiation by addressing student interests, learning styles, and abilities?
 - b. Has appropriate accommodation been made for content, process, and product?