Teachers College Reading and Writing Project
Curriculum Calendar, Fifth Grade, 2017-2018
Unit 5 - Journalism (If… Then…)

Unit 5 – *Journalism*

October/November

Welcome to the Unit

This year we have made some important revisions to the journalism unit so we highly encourage you to use this curricular calendar to teach from rather than the *If…Then…* unit from the Units of Study. We invite you to come to a calendar day in 2017-2018 on this unit when we will offer more details about the unit and show you resources and tools you might use to help you to teach it. This year we are offering journalism as a unit for both spring of fourth grade and fall of fifth grade.

There has never been a more important time for students to know the craft of journalism than now. It has never been more critical for students to learn about responsible, ethical journalism. Then too, journalism is a form of writing that allows students to blend so much of what they know from writing other genres—weave in bits of powerful narrative, draw on their information writing skills to explain ideas and events, and even make arguments. In many of the schools that have taught journalism, teachers exclaim over their kids' high energy and excitement as well as their focus on getting the details right and their willingness to revise for precise language. In short, journalism writing can do kids a world of good.

This unit imagines that you first teach your class to write quick news reports—with an emphasis on helping students write concise, focused reports that tell the who, what, where, and when, with a sense of drama. A typical news report might feature headlines such as, *Spider Gets Loose from Science Lab* or *Tears During Dodge Ball.* We know that getting students to write about events happening on-the-spot tends to present particular challenges and this new version of the unit offers more support with helping students to do that on-the-spot writing as well as helping them to sustain a high volume of writing.

In the second part of the unit, you'll launch students into feature article writing. In the real world, journalists cut their teeth on news reporting and then tend to move to feature article writing. So, this unit now suggests that you help students follow that trajectory, helping them to see the connection between the event reporting they have just done and this new form of writing. In this part of the unit, you will also reinforce essential work on the foundations of information writing.

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Overview

Essential Question: *How can I be a journalist that writes quickly, revises purposefully, and exposes thoughtful observations about my community?*

- **Bend I: Reporting on Events: Lifting the Level of Journalism Writing**
  How can I write concise, focused news reports that give details about an event following the conventions of journalism writing?

- **Bend II: Feature Article Writing**
  How can I write an article that teaches about a topic and engages my reader?

A Summary of the Bends

In Bend I, students will write short focused news articles about events. The unit will start with students writing about a shared event--either one that you stage in your classroom or an event you show on video. Following that, you will help students to write about events happening in the world around them. You can take them on inquiry walks around the school, set them up to videotape events that happen in the yard or at home and then show them how to take quick notes as they watch the events and mine these to write quick pieces. The focus will be on helping students to structure their pieces by giving the most important facts up front and on pushing them to use the language and tone of journalists ("witnesses claim….", "Apparently, this started when…"). Across this first bend, students will also write short event reports on current events. By the end of the first bend, your journalists will choose a piece to take through a final round of revisions and edits. We suggest you have a mini celebration to mark the end of this bend, as it can create a lot of energy and rally writers for the work ahead.

In Bend II, students will work to draw on all they have already learned about information writing to write feature articles to teach readers about topics. They'll see how this writing is similar and different to the quick event reporting they have just done. Students will research and gather information about their topic in many ways--interview, conduct surveys, make observations--as well as engage in some research from text-based sources. You'll especially reinforce teaching about categorizing information and organizing writing. Then, too, you'll also support students in doing large-scale revision. The unit will end with students publishing their feature articles and celebrating their journey as journalists.

Assessment

Other units often begin with an on-demand assessment that allows students to show what they know about writing in a specific genre. Journalism need not be an exception. You might gather your students close and say, "Writers, you are about to embark on a new journey. You are about to begin a new type of informational writing - journalism! As journalists, you are going to report on events that matter to you and your life. So, today we are going to give this a try. Think of an issue or event that you know a lot about. You might think about the wrestling match that happened after school yesterday, or the fact that there are not healthy options for lunch in the cafeteria. You are going to

have a period to report on that event or issue by writing an informational piece. As you do so, you will want to show off all you know about information writing. Specifically, you will want to make sure you…

- Write an introduction
- Organize your writing
- Elaborate with a variety of information
- Write a conclusion

In addition, you will want to think about what you want your reader to think or feel after reading your writing. You will want to make sure that message comes out loud and clear in your writing."

As you assess your students' writing, you will want to use the Information Writing Learning Progression from *Writing Pathways*. In addition to the elements of the progression, you will also want to assess students' command of tone, and their ability to express their ideas in a concise and straightforward manner.

Getting Ready

We suggest you take a bit of time to get ready for this unit and gather materials. As always, you'll want to begin by reading through this write-up, first getting a general sense of the terrain and then reading more specifically for the teaching points that will guide each day's teaching. You'll also want to consider the materials you'll need to support this unit. Just as you have with other writing units, you will want to gather a variety of mentor texts to support students. Luckily, there are no shortage of mentors for this unit. In addition to local newspapers, Time for Kids and scholastic magazines, you might also gather articles from online resources such as www.newsela.com. Be sure that you collect mentors of news reports from newspapers and feature articles from magazines. You will also want write alongside the children, perhaps choosing some topics that your whole class has experienced together. Field trips, classroom fiascos, book shortages…. they all make for great articles when written with a dramatic, journalistic tone!

Bend I: Reporting on Events – Lifting the Level of Journalism Writing

Many teachers have found that one attention-grabbing way to start the unit is to create a scene (perhaps between two teachers) in order to stage a drama. As the children look on, they are clueless (we hope). Then, something enthralling happens. For example, one teacher, Katie, was reading aloud, and her colleague came into the room and started snooping through Katie's desk. Katie continued reading, but the children could see that Katie was distracted by her colleague nosing through her stuff. Finally Katie said, "Do you need help?" and her colleague said, "I'm just looking for my math book. Did you borrow it and forget to return it?" Katie assured her that no, she hadn't seen it, and tried to resume reading, but the teacher persisted in rummaging about Katie's desk. Finally the colleague said, "I'm pretty sure it is here somewhere," and then helped herself to Katie's favorite pens—her "colors"—saying, "I'm borrowing your colors because I know you have my math book somewhere." The kids, of course, were temporarily in a total tizzy.

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If you are having trouble staging an event or are looking for another option, you might show a video of an event that students can write off of. One of our favorites is a short YouTube video clip of a bird that chaotically and abruptly interrupts a teacher's speech on back to school night (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrwqBVBlSGs). Whatever you choose, you'll want to be sure it is an event that hooks kids right away and gives them enough information to generate a short news article that includes the who, what, when and where of the event.

After watching a live or recorded event, you can tell your kids that, as writers, when they see things happen, they can think, "I can write about this." Tell kids that they could actually write a news story on what just happened, but reporters first jot notes about what happened while the event is fresh in their mind. With a sense of urgency, you can say, "Open up your notebooks. You have five minutes to write down what you just witnessed." Keep this quick, writers should not be writing full articles, just focusing on getting down the most important information. Give students tips as they write, reminding them to capture the details that will make for a strong article. "Don't forget to use what you know about showing, not telling, to describe what you saw." Then later, "Journalists are always looking for people to quote. Try to remember some of what was said and jot it down, along with the name of the person who said the words." Students will already be realizing the importance of getting the names right, capturing the quote exactly in their notes as they watch an event unfold.

You will then want students to move quickly from note-taking and rehearsing their articles to flash-drafting in their notebooks a news story on the witnessed or watched event. It will be important to get students off on the right foot so you might start by saying something like, "If I was writing a news article on this, I might say something like, 'At 8:55 am on April 7, 2017, children in room 506 were startled to see…'" From there you will decide how much scaffolding writers need-- in some cases you might choose to keep this as a shared writing experience and ask students to write-in-the-air then have a few students share as you scribe more of the class text before sending students off to each flash draft a version of this article. Another option is to just model a start of an article, then give students a quick chance to orally rehearse the rest of what they'd say and then send them off to each flash draft an article on the event. Keep in mind that this is day one and the intention is not to have a perfectly published news article, rather it's to immerse kids in the type of writing and give them a feel for what it means to write as a news reporter.

You might notice students writing in the first person ("I saw this… I saw that…"), and so likely, you'll want to offer the whole class a tip that journalists tend to write in the third person, even about themselves. You might model doing this with your own news report, including yourself as an eyewitness. It might sound like: "At 8:55am, children in room 506 were startled when their principal, John Smith, came rushing through the door during book club time. (Your name), a fourth grade teacher at P.S. 62, immediately ran to Mr. Smith to ask why he was there. She was visibly startled by his presence." You might even quote yourself, showing students how you refer to yourself in the third person as well as giving the reader some context as to who you are. It is important to emphasize the fact that students are writing for readers who *do not* know who Mr. Smith or you are. You might show them a few news articles that quote a person and then give information about who that person is.

Of course, our school yards and lunchrooms are full of mini-dramas every day. You'll want to help students recognize stories in all that is going on in the world around them. So, on day two, you might tell them, "Today I want to teach you that journalists live wide awake lives, seeing stories in

everyday moments. They notice newsworthy events and capture the details by taking notes on the who, what, where and when."

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On this day, we highly suggest that you take your class on an inquiry walk around the building, first pointing out a possible news event or two, and modeling the quick start of an article about each one then have students start to notice, name and record their own findings. For example, they might notice a student in the nurse's office after an injury in gym, a group of students practicing for an upcoming band concert, broken playground equipment, a kindergartener bumping into a teacher, students hanging new published work outside their classroom, etc. Encourage students to jot quick notes about each event they see--remind them especially to get the key details--who, what, when, where (and why and how). You can also coach them to conduct quick interviews and jot down responses in their notes. Many teachers find giving students tiny notepads where they can record their notes raises their energy and excitement and can help them to feel like "real journalists". You might also find it helpful to give students a list of places where stories live around a school, similar to a "beat" that a news reporter in the real world might follow. We've given a list of suggestions at the end of this document.

After spending a little bit of time gathering ideas and collecting information, you'll return to your classroom and suggest that students try to write news articles about the information collected. Even though the first several days of this bend suggest writers rehearse by collecting ideas then writing lots of news articles, you'll want to make sure you are also layering in some explicit teaching of how students write news articles in their writing notebook, as opposed to just telling them to go off and write.

So, you will likely also want to teach students that the who, what, when and where of an incident are supremely important to journalists, not just when collecting information but also when writing. You will want to teach students that journalists often structure their writing by placing the most important information up front.

"Today I want to remind you that when journalists collect ideas, they make sure to include the who, what, when and where of the event. Journalists know that this is the most essential information in a news report, and that it must appear at the very beginning of the article."

Start by showing them a mentor text in which the author starts with information about the place, time, and people involved, and proceeds to explain what happened. Point out the way that journalists often do this in long, complex sentences that involve commas. You might model the way in which a writer can tuck in extra details using commas. For instance, "On May 9th, 2014, at 7:00pm, Joan Jetson of Manhattan was about to board the 1 train when she suddenly saw a young child wandering close to the tracks." This will take some practice and explicit teaching. For students who struggle, you might give them a few template sentences and have them use the same sentence structure but simply plug in their own information. So, the sentence above would become

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"On month and day, year, at time, person and what they saw or did. Emulating someone else's sentence structure will allow students to get the feel for this kind of writing.

One of the biggest considerations in planning for this unit is what students will be reporting on. Obviously we've already touched on one way, seeking out newsworthy events across a school and community, but suggest that for the next two days you could also spend a little bit of time before the minilesson exposing writers to current events and stories. As cell phones have become more popular, one of the most common ways we get information on current events is through video. Tapping into the digital age, we suggest that you start day three and four by watching coverage on current news events. You might choose to watch a local segment, one that is posted on a website like Time for Kids or DOGO News, or even suggest that students share stories they'd like to watch and/or cover. Keep in mind that on these days, it is important that students have time to write, so the news you watch should be quick. If video is not an option, you could of course rely on additional learning walks or print sources such as the local newspaper, a current issue of Junior Scholastic, etc.

The idea is that you are pumping stories into writers' heads while they are exploring and watching with a clipboard and pencil in hand, collecting important details and information needed for writing. It will likely be important to watch quick or more quick videos about an event so that students can report on the event rather than just retell what they saw in one video clip.

On days 3 and 4, after gathering new stories ideas, students will once more draft quick news reports--either about the current events they have just watched or about events happening in the school. In order to lift the level of their writing, you'll want to be sure that you also incorporate some explicit instruction before sending students off to write. For example, on one day you might teach them that news reporters know it is important to teach the information they are reporting about in as specific and detailed a way as possible and they do this by revisiting their notes as they write to ensure they are including exact and accurate details. On another day you might look at the information writing checklist and have students note parts of the checklist that are applicable to this genre of writing and other parts that might need some revision then push them to set goals from their new checklist and work to meet those goals. Students can also be revising all of their pieces they have written so far as they learn these new strategies.

Across all of these days, share student work immediately, probably in mid-workshop teaching points and partner or table shares. This way your community of writers should begin to shift its language and attitudes because the kids are intuitive and mimetic.

At this point in the bend, you will want to suggest that students select one news story that they will take through a final round of revision and editing. Since this type of writing is intended to be brief, direct and to the point, it is important to help writers recognize the reality of writing with a word count in mind. You might channel them to revise thinking about word count. You might say: "Today I want to teach you that journalists know that every word counts! After capturing the details of an event, they return to what they've written with a critical eye, cutting and revising to make their work more focused and concise."

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They'll get right to it, heads down, doing immediate revision. If students need more scaffolding for this work, some teachers have found it helpful to give students an ideal "word count" for their article then push them to start cutting. You will probably ask students to share their revised writing with a partner first and then at their tables. You may ask them to simply read out some of the lines they've written that they really like. Their second versions will be better. They may add a title, which begins to teach them angle or perspective. Typical titles include: *Girls Jump on Desks, Boys Find Snake; Reptile Seeks Freedom*, and so on. Finish your lesson by starting a word chart of technical and academic words that relate to news reporters, such as *witness, this reporter, incident, bystander,* and *quoted.* You'll keep adding to this list; a chart of vivid words and verbs also helps, and this could probably start with *shocked, bolted, surprised, dismayed, perplexed*, as well as any other verbs you or your students have included in your writing.

Other ideas for quick revision might be to teach students to revise for detail or drama. You can also teach them to revise for technical and academic language, referring back to the vocabulary charts you created a few days earlier. You may collect some news reports (the inner pages of the *Post*, *News Day*, and *Sports Illustrated for Kids* often have short, kid-friendly examples) and the students can study these as touchstone texts, charting their qualities and trying some of the craft moves that they admire in their own pieces. Be careful not to give your students editorials, feature articles, or investigative pieces to study; for now, stick to short, local, current news.

As an added note, it is important to introduce students to the concept of "yellow journalism," like that found in tabloids. Explain that while journalists take liberties by making events more dramatic, they don't lie or fabricate information. This is an important distinction you will want to make.

If you are looking for additional sources of ideas for minilessons, get ahold of Roy Peter Clark's books. *Free to Write*, a Heinemann publication, discusses a Unit of Study in journalism. Clark also has a number of current books on the craft of journalism.

Keep adding to your word charts, and return to your touchstone texts for lively language and phrases. By the end of the first part of the unit, students will have analyzed a variety of news reports, drafted several and published one or even two, in addition to learning to observe, write, and revise quickly. We suggest ending the unit with a celebration of students' news reports. One fun way to do this might be to stage a class newsroom live report, perhaps videotaping students as they deliver their reports on happenings around the school and current events. Imagine staging the event by having news anchors who cut to "reporters" in the field who deliver their news story. Of course, another easy way to celebrate might be a publication of a class newspaper. Some teachers have bound the articles together and copied them, then handed the collection out to each classroom. Then too, you might allow students to hang their articles around the school, placing them in strategic place. Articles about happenings in the lunchroom can be posted on the walls of the cafeteria, while articles about the office can be hung there. Whatever you do, make sure to give students an opportunity to share their publications with a larger audience. That is, after all, the true purpose of journalism.

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Bend II: Feature Article Writing

Bend II truly represents a "bend in the road" for this unit. Writers will shift from writing news reports about specific events to writing feature articles which forward an idea and teach the reader about an aspect of their topic.

Feature articles are commonly found in magazines and, because magazines aren't published daily like newspapers, have a longer shelf life. To help your writers distinguish between a news report and a feature article, you might start with an inquiry into the similarities and differences between the two types of journalism.

You might start your inquiry by saying, "Writers, so far you have been working as reporters for a daily` newspaper writing about current and local events. Now you're ready to graduate to a new kind of journalism: feature articles." At this point, you might display a feature article that you might have found in Scholastic News or Time for Kids. Also, on a piece of chart paper, display a class news report (one that the class is already familiar with).

The question you pose might be, "How is this feature article the same as the news reports we've been writing? What differences are you noticing?"

"Today we're going to study a new kind of journalism: feature articles. To help us understand the qualities of a feature article we're going to ask ourselves, 'How is this feature article the same as the news reports we've been writing? What differences are you noticing?"

After co-creating a t-chart of the similarities and differences between news reports and feature articles, ask students to think of a topic they know a lot about. This expert topic will be the topic for their first feature article. Then send them off to try writing a quick feature article or two in their notebooks, using the one you have just studied together as a mentor. By the end of the day, students may have several short attempts at feature articles in their writing notebooks.

Your second day might focus on teaching another way that students might come up with topics for feature articles, in addition to their topics of expertise from yesterday. Reporters also develop ideas for feature articles by looking for patterns across their news reports. For example, if a reporter wrote news reports titled *2nd Grader Injured During Recess, Tears during Tag,* and *Long Line at the Slide* the reporter might notice a pattern of writing about problems at recess. This could lead the reporter to write a feature article about problems all schools have at recess or new ways schools are organizing recess.

To model this work, you will need a few teacher-written or class-written news reports that you could use to model studying to discern possible patterns and ideas for future feature articles. As students move to their seats to start gathering ideas, they will be looking across their news reports from Bend I for patterns, jotting down the pattern/possible topic, and then trying a quick feature article about their new topic. Help students see they shouldn't worry right now about knowing every detail about this new topic. Push them to write quickly, coaching them to put question marks and notes to themselves in places where they'd need more information.

A predictable problem that may occur is that you will have writers who don't have any recognizable pattern across their news reports. Address this in your mid-workshop teaching by saying, "Reporters, may I have your attention for a moment? I love how you're studying your past work, finding patterns, and getting ideas for new feature articles. Some might be saying to yourself, 'but Ms_____, I don't see ANY patterns in my news reports!' Don't worry! That's okay. Another way reporters come up with ideas for feature articles is by rereading their news reports and asking themselves, 'What feels big and important in this news report that I could turn into a feature article? Why does this event really matter?' So now you know three ways to gather ideas for feature articles: topics of expertise, patterns across news reports, and something big and important from ONE news report." Across these two days, then, writers can be jotting quick mini feature articles in their notebooks.

After two days in Bend II, during what is likely to be your Share, prompt your writers to choose one of their gatherings from their writing notebook to develop further and take through the writing process. , You'll want to help your readers to see that feature articles are about choosing an issue or topic that feels important to you. You will also need to make sure that students choose topics that are 'close to home.' For instance, a student might feel strongly about a recent event that happened in Alaska, but because they are not there and do not have the resources or opportunity to explore the issue first-hand, it is not something they can write about.

Now that writers have settled on a topic, you're teaching will shift into research. You might begin by reminding writers of all the ways they already know how to research an informational topic.

"Writers, today I want to teach you that journalists teach their readers by including factual information from a variety of sources. Journalists rely on research strategies like interviewing, surveying, and observing."

In your minilesson, you could show students some of the research you have done and notes you have taken for an article you are writing (perhaps for, say an article on technology at the school). You could show how you have jotted down some notes from an interview, written a bunch of quick thoughts about an observation, sketched something you witnessed. You might model how you read over your notes and decide which additional information you still need. Be sure to think aloud how you decide which research strategies you decide to use. You might choose to teach this lesson using the method of guided practice.

Students will leave the meeting area ready to decide upon a research strategy and start collecting information. This means that during independent writing, some writers may interrupt other students to quickly interview or survey them. Be observant. If you see a writer who isn't getting any writing done, because they are constantly being interviewed or surveyed, put an end to it. Some teachers have managed this by giving each student two post-its. Writers have to turn in a post-it when they are interrupted. If a student runs out of post-its, they can't be interrupted anymore.

You might find that your writers need another day of research before they start drafting out of their notebooks. Another research strategy you could teach is crafting search terms for online research. Your lesson could begin, "Reporters, it was thrilling yesterday seeing all of you interviewing each other, taking surveys, and adding notes to your notebooks. Some of you may find that you still need

more research. Today I want to teach you that reporters efficiently search online by crafting search terms that will help them quickly find the information they need."

During your model, you might show how you would choose an important word to search by asking yourself, "What is my article about?" Next you could demonstrate webbing out additional search terms to use, if your original one is not successful.

If your model writing is on *Creative Solutions to Problems at Recess*, for example, you could model choosing recess as your search term. Your web of 'Recess' might include words like "playing at school", "games at school", or "playground problems".

During your active engagement, you could involve kids in helping you go through the same process with another article topic, possible a shared class topic. Writers will go off on this day conducting more research using today's strategy as well as using the previous day's research strategies.

You'll also want to help set your students up for drafting by helping them to organize the information they have collected, showing them how they can group information together. You might let students know that just as writers can make table of contents for a whole information book, they can also make a kind of table of contents for a feature article, while will help them know how the parts will go. Doing this organization will help raise the level of the drafts students will soon do even before they are written.

At this point in the bend, your students are probably ready to draft out of their notebooks. Your teaching on this day could focus on oral rehearsal. You'll want to push your students to rehearse by teaching others then draft that teaching. The teaching point might sound something like, "Today, I want to remind you that when you are writing to teach about a topic, as you are whenever you do any information writing, it helps to *actually do some teaching*. Knowing that you have audience can help you figure out what you need to teach. And the questions people ask in real life are probably questions that *readers* will ask, so it helps to try to answer those questions."

Students will leave the meeting area teaching their topic to their writing partner and then move quickly into drafting their feature articles out of their notebook.

Now that writers have drafted, your lessons will shift to focus on revision. You might start by helping students to angle their writing. Feature articles tend to be more angled—a feature article tends to be suggestive and focuses on an idea or a concern. However, the writer is not writing a persuasive piece—he or she doesn't have to answer questions or have a totally clear stance, but can *pose questions* in order to open up investigations. So, to help your students to start to angle their work, you may teach your students to consider their feature article through different lenses. You might make a class list of issues that exist in life (friendship problems, injustice, inequality, cruelty, bullying, and so on) and then ask, "Do any of these issues apply to what I'm writing about? Is this story really about inequality? Or cruelty? Determining the issue an event touches upon, as well as the impact it has on others, will help students to determine their own *angle* for their article. Will they write to reveal an injustice? To highlight an act of kindness and emphasize the need for more of the same? Will they write to uncover the truth behind something mysterious? Or to expose a problem and suggest solutions? Just as students ask, "What is this story really about?" when writing narratives and develop a thesis when writing essays, it will be important for them to develop an *angle* for their articles. You might teach students to do this by taking your own article and

imagining the possible angles you might take. Show students that there are multiple possibilities and model how you might begin to revise your introduction to start to bring out that angle before letting them try this work. Encourage them to begin their drafts over again, if that seems to be what is needed.

Next, you might teach your students some of the craft of writing a feature article, which is both longer and more substantial than a news report. The writer's narrative craft will serve them well, but here, they need to be concise and purposeful with their craft—for instance, any dialogue is usually in the form of a quotation. If there is setting, it's to create a vivid image. Some craft moves in feature articles you can teach them include: creating a vivid image that lets the reader picture a scene by describing details and using sparkling language; using an anecdote to get the reader to care; using repetition to hook and persuade the reader; writing with a journalistic "tone" that is powerful; and asking burning questions. Having mentor texts that students can study and emulate will be very important as they learn to write in this new genre. When teaching revision, you might teach students that journalists revise specific details about places, people, objects, and actions in order to convey an angle. You might also teach them that journalists have to think about word count. They make sure that their writing is concise and that every sentence included has a purpose. Journalists must also revise for accuracy, checking names and information about people and places featured in their article, checking for the accuracy of quotes, and ensuring that any facts included are correct. This often means returning to their original notes on an incident and/or doing additional research.

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As with other genres, you'll want to spend a bit of time teaching students about the importance of leads and endings in feature articles. You might have them study a few mentors, naming out the ways in which the author began and ended, before trying the same in their own pieces. Students will likely notice that reporters begin either by hooking the reader (with a question or anecdote) or by diving directly into the recounting of an incident (including the 4 W's). When ending pieces, journalists might state how this event will affect the future, tell how the event ended or was resolved, or end with a question the reader should ponder.

"Reporters learn to write well by studying other reporters. Today I want to teach you that reporters often revise after studying the ways in which published writers wrap up their articles. They often notice that the author ends an article by stating how the event will affect the future, ending with a question the reader should ponder, or telling how the event ended or was resolved."

Finally, you will want to take this opportunity to explore more complex connectives with your writers, such as: *a result, in comparison, in that case,* or *on the other hand*. You could also do a grammar lesson on verb tense by demonstrating how to use more challenging irregular verbs, as many young writers tend to shift tenses in the middle of articles..

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Whereas students usually write a few news reports, they'll probably only write one feature article. Some students may draft two and only publish one, if they have a few topics they are interested in. Then, you can decide where and how to publish these pieces. Some teachers have students publish a newspaper by typing in the pieces (a lot of work, but lets you focus on some editing or word-processing skills if you have the resources), others had an awards ceremony that mimicked the Pulitzer prize for journalism—where writers gather to support each other, their field, as well as their own extraordinary accomplishments—and some used the school building itself as a virtual newspaper—so that students published their piece in the spot where they thought it would be most relevant. Regardless of the publishing method you choose, be sure to celebrate the newfound skills your young reporters have acquired, and ensure that they feel their feature articles have an audience that is rapt with attention.

A list of "beats" students might explore:

The Neighborhood	New neighbors, pets, communal space, apartment rents, apartment malfunctions, famous neighborhood people, popular hangouts
The School Cafeteria	Nutrition, working conditions, cliques, social problems, fights, injustices
Recess/ The Playground	Cliques, injustices, fights, games, crazes and fads, equipment for play, social issues
A Classroom	Homework, workload, curriculum, different learning styles, working with others, class units or studies
The Bus	Travel conditions, behavior, social issues, commuting, bullying
The Weather	Sudden blizzards, storms, weather problems, delays, cancellations, effects on health
Entertainment News	Award shows, just released songs, CD's, movies, books, sightings of famous people

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Special Events	Current holidays, special school events like dances or fundraisers, report cards, plays, concerts, art shows, writing celebrations
Social Issues	A fight that just broke out in school, problems between social groups in schools, injustice about grades or current school policies, internet wars, bullying, cliques, racial tensions, religious tensions
Crime	Vandalism, graffiti, petty robberies, crimes that affect communities
People	Important or interesting people in the community, people who do kind things or incredible things