

THE POWER OF VOICE

Whose Story Gets Told?

**8th Grade English Language Arts
5-Day Mini-Unit Sample**

VOICE • PERSPECTIVE • IDENTITY • WRITING

Designed by More Than Just A Thought LLC

Where Creativity Meets Purpose

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Unit at a Glance

GRADE	LENGTH	CONTENT	FOCUS
8	5 Days	English Language Arts	Voice & Perspective

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

Whose stories get told, and why does every voice matter?

Why This Matters

Every student enters the classroom with a story. Their experiences, families, communities, challenges, dreams, and perspectives influence how they see the world. This mini-unit creates space for students to examine how voice and perspective shape the stories we read - and recognize the power of their own voices.

Students should not only see themselves in what they read. They should understand that their stories are worth telling too.

Learning Outcomes

- Analyze how point of view and perspective influence a text.
- Identify how an author's word choice develops voice and tone.
- Compare multiple perspectives surrounding the same topic or experience.
- Participate in meaningful academic discussion and support ideas with textual evidence.
- Develop an original written piece that communicates a clear perspective.
- Reflect on how personal experiences influence voice.

Standards Connection

Designed around Grade 8 ELA expectations in reading, writing, and speaking/listening, including citing evidence, analyzing perspective and word choice, producing coherent writing, revising, and engaging in collaborative discussion.

Day 1 | Your Voice Matters

LEARNING TARGET

I can explain how my experiences and perspective influence the way I understand a story.

Do Now

STUDENT PROMPT

Something I wish people understood about my generation, community, family, or experience is...

Turn & Talk

Why might two people experience the same event but tell completely different stories about it?

Mini-Lesson | Voice vs. Perspective

VOICE	PERSPECTIVE
How a writer sounds on the page.	How experiences and beliefs influence what someone sees and understands.

Collaborative Activity | Same Moment, Different Story

Scenario: A student walks into class ten minutes late.

Groups retell the event from four perspectives: the student, the teacher, a classmate, and the principal.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

What changed when the perspective changed? What stayed the same?

EXIT TICKET

Why does perspective matter when we read someone else's story?

Instructional Moves

- Talk before write
- Teacher modeling
- Collaborative meaning-making
- Immediate formative check

Days 2-3 | Analyze & Expand Perspective

Day 2 | Who Gets to Tell the Story?

LEARNING TARGET

I can analyze how an author's choices communicate perspective and voice.

Students read a short, age-appropriate narrative or informational passage featuring a distinct perspective, then annotate for voice and perspective.

VOICE

- Powerful words
- Repeated ideas
- Emotional language

PERSPECTIVE

- What does the writer believe?
- What experiences may have influenced that belief?
- What does the writer want the reader to understand?

EVIDENCE CHALLENGE

Select one sentence that strongly demonstrates the author's voice. Explain what it reveals about the person telling the story.

Day 3 | The Missing Voice

LEARNING TARGET

I can compare perspectives and identify whose voice may be missing from a story.

Students examine two short accounts of the same event or issue and discuss where perspectives agree, differ, and what may explain those differences.

SIGNATURE ACTIVITY | THE EMPTY CHAIR

An empty chair represents a perspective missing from the texts. Students decide whose voice belongs in that chair and explain how including it could change the reader's understanding.

QUICK WRITE

A story changes when we hear more voices because...

Days 4-5 | Finding & Sharing My Voice

Day 4 | Finding My Voice

LEARNING TARGET

I can develop a piece of writing that communicates my perspective and authentic voice.

Students choose one writing pathway:

- Something People Should Understand - explain something others should better understand about your generation, community, family, school experience, or life.
- A Moment That Changed Me - tell the story of an experience that taught you something important.
- Whose Story Is Missing? - identify a voice or perspective that deserves greater attention and explain why.

WRITING PROCESS

THINK → TALK → DRAFT → REVISE → SHARE

TEACHER COACHING QUESTION

What do you want your reader to feel, understand, or remember?

Day 5 | The Power of Voice

CULMINATING PERFORMANCE TASK | MY VOICE MATTERS

What is something you believe deserves to be heard, understood, or remembered?

Students may create a personal narrative, open letter, short argumentative piece, or spoken-word style piece.

VOICE + PURPOSE + EVIDENCE/DETAIL + AUDIENCE

Student Reflection

1. What do you want your reader to remember?
2. Where is your voice strongest in your writing?
3. What did you change during revision?
4. What did this unit teach you about listening to perspectives different from your own?
5. Why does your voice matter?

Performance Task Rubric

Criteria	4 - Strong	3 - Developing	2 - Emerging	1 - Beginning
Voice & Perspective	Distinct, authentic voice and clear perspective	Voice and perspective generally clear	Voice is inconsistent	Perspective difficult to identify
Ideas & Development	Thoughtfully developed with meaningful details	Supported with relevant details	Some ideas need development	Ideas minimally developed
Evidence / Details	Evidence or details strongly support message	Appropriate support included	Limited support	Little support
Organization	Purposeful and easy to follow	Generally logical	Some sections unclear	Meaning difficult to follow
Conventions	Conventions strengthen communication	Minor errors do not interfere	Errors occasionally interfere	Errors frequently interfere

Differentiation & Student Support

Additional Support	Multilingual Learners	Extension
- Sentence stems - Vocabulary support - Chunked texts - Graphic organizers - Teacher-led small group - Partner rehearsal - Exemplars and modeling	- Visual vocabulary - Discuss before writing - Home-language brainstorming when appropriate - Sentence frames - Strategic peer partnerships	- Analyze another perspective - Incorporate research - Create a multimedia version - Develop writing for publication or presentation

Designed for Learning. Built for Impact.

This sample demonstrates More Than Just A Thought's approach to curriculum development:

Rigor with relevance. Standards-aligned reading, writing, speaking, listening, and critical thinking around meaningful questions.

Student voice. Students talk, question, write, reflect, collaborate, and create.

Talk before writing. Structured academic conversation helps students develop thinking before putting it on paper.

Responsive instruction. Formative assessment is embedded so teachers can adjust instruction based on student evidence.

Access for all learners. Differentiation is part of the original design rather than something added after students struggle.

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Joy and purpose. Strong instruction can be rigorous without removing creativity, relationships, curiosity, or joy from learning.

DESIGN PRINCIPLE

The evidence students give us today should influence what we teach tomorrow.

Educational Services

Curriculum & Instructional Design

Standards-aligned units, lessons, assessments, intervention resources, and customized instructional materials.

Instructional Coaching

Teacher coaching cycles, classroom observation and feedback, instructional planning, and implementation support.

Professional Learning

Interactive professional development designed around the actual needs of educators and schools.

School Improvement & Systems Support

Support with instructional systems, data cycles, Tier I practices, school culture, and sustainable improvement.

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