

Choosing and Nurturing a Seed Idea

After gathering many notebook entries, writers will begin to find "writing territories," or subjects that they are drawn to writing about. As your notebook grows you will be more likely to uncover recurring themes or ideas. For this unit, it might be more helpful for you to think about some areas where there might be opportunities for students to decide on a writing idea/topic and think more deeply about what they have to say about it. We often call this "nurturing a seed," because much like planting a garden, there are still many things we need to tend to in order to grow our writing. Workshop writers re-read their notebooks or folders to inform this choice—the idea they wish to make into something—a memoir, a poem, an All-About book, a commentary, a feature article, or a story. In choosing this seed, writers decide to stay with one idea for a long time until it becomes their own best work.

The following video shows an example of the mini-lesson provided in the resources section of this page. It shows one strategy for uncovering what more there is to say/write about a particular seed idea. Double-click on the black box below to watch the video.

Choosing a Seed: Writerly Life Partnerships
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UNbz57vvNiU>

Try It:

Share one of your notebook entries with a colleague or family member to uncover what more you have to say about that piece of writing.



Unit of Study Writerly Life Day/Date After gathering notebook entries

Focus: (What one thing will you teach and why?):

Writers choose to write about topics that are important to them. To do this writers reread their notebooks to select an idea that they will develop into a finished piece. It often helps to talk with someone about the topics you choose to develop.

Connection (What will you say to the students about why you are teaching this?):

We have been thinking about how writers hold onto potential ideas for writing projects by making entries in their notebooks and we started to do this ourselves in our own notebooks. We are just about ready to make a draft, but before we do this we want to think about how we might make a decision about what we wish to write. Writers write about topics that are important to themselves, and as writers we want to do that to.

Give Info: (How will you teach this? What exactly do you want to say?)

One way to discover where you have chosen a topic of significance to you is to talk to someone about it.

Model selecting a seed idea with another adult or student who is prepared to ask you questions about your writing. Students will watch as I am asked questions about a seed idea. "Why does it seem like this might be a seed idea you would like to develop? Why does this seed idea feel important to you?" My writing partner should ask more questions that get me thinking about how I might develop my seed idea further.

Active Involvement: (How will students "try-it" before they go off to work independently?)

Read through your notebook entries to find one that you would like to develop into a finished piece of writing.

Link: (What is the relationship between what you taught and what you expect them to do during workshop time?)

When you go back to your seats, you will do with your partner what I did with my partner. Make sure that both of you get a chance to talk and think more about your topic. The talking you do with your partner today will support you in developing your seed ideas. Remember to use the thinking out loud that you do in your writing.

MWTP: (Optional) Begin developing the seed idea into a discovery draft.

Share: (How will students share the work they did w/ each other to further develop TP?)

Students will be sharing seed ideas during workshop today. Look for an effective conversation that could be shared with the entire class.