

**Unit 8.4: Personal Essay and Beliefs**  
**English as a Second Language**  
**6 weeks of instruction**

**STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)**

<b>Unit Summary:</b>	In this unit, the student learns to craft a personal essay. He/she reads samples of personal essays (culturally connected with Latino Authors) and discusses content, structure, and skill.
<b>Transversal Themes:</b>	Culture (Sociology, History, Geography)
<b>Integration Ideas:</b>	Knowledge, Skills and Competencies, School to Work, Technology and Culture

**Essential Questions (EQ) and Enduring Understandings (EU)**

<p><b>EQ1.</b> How does family play a role in shaping my beliefs?  <b>EU1.</b> Family has a deep impact on the way we think and feel and how we view the world.</p> <p><b>EQ2.</b> To what extent do belief systems shape and/or reflect my culture?  <b>EU2.</b> The beliefs I hold are deeply rooted in my culture, community, and family.</p> <p><b>EQ3.</b> How do beliefs shape and influence my behavior?  <b>EU3.</b> My words and actions are an extension of my beliefs.</p>
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**Transfer (T) and Acquisition (A) Goals**

<p><b>T1.</b> The student will be able to apply his or her insights into the varying points of view of writers to develop personal essays with a strong sense of voice and perspective.</p> <p><b>T2.</b> The student will be able to identify and apply his/her own beliefs when writing a personal essay.</p> <p><b>T3.</b> The student will leave the class with the necessary skills to write his/her own personal essay.</p> <p><i>The student acquires skills to...</i></p> <p><b>A1.</b> Distinguish the writer’s point of view.</p> <p><b>A2.</b> Determine the correct punctuation to change the meaning of words and phrases.</p> <p><b>A3.</b> Determine his/her beliefs and write a personal essay.</p>
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Puerto Rico Core Standards (PRCS)	
<b>Listening</b>	
<b>8.L.1</b>	Listen and collaborate with peers during social interactions, read-alouds (of fictional and informational text); oral presentations; and class, group and partner discussions.
<b>8.L.1b</b>	Follow turn-taking and show consideration by concurring with others. Extend ideas or arguments with support from a teacher.
<b>8.L.1d</b>	Listen, respond to, analyze, give, and discuss complex instructions, statements, and directions; answer and formulate closed and open-ended questions.
<b>Speaking</b>	
<b>8.S.2</b>	Respond orally to closed and open-ended questions.
<b>8.S.2b</b>	Describe, explain, support, discuss, and synthesize information to express self.
<b>8.S.3</b>	Use a growing set of academic words, content-specific words, synonyms, and antonyms to tell, retell, explain, and analyze stories, personal experiences, and current/world events with increasing precision and differences in meaning while speaking.
<b>8.S.6</b>	Plan and deliver oral presentations on a variety of topics using details and evidence to support ideas.
<b>Reading</b>	
<b>8.R.2L</b>	Determine a theme or main idea of a literary text and analyze its development over the course of the text.
<b>8.R.3L</b>	Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
<b>8.R.4L</b>	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a literary text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of rhymes and other repetitions of sounds (e.g., alliteration) on a specific verse or stanza of a poem or section of a story or drama.
<b>8.R.6L</b>	Analyze how an author develops and contrasts the points of view of different characters or narrators in a literary text.
<b>Writing</b>	
<b>8.W.3</b>	Write literary texts using transitional words and other cohesive devices to better organize writing that develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
<b>8.W.8</b>	Write routinely for short and extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) for a variety of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. This includes, but is not limited to, narrative, persuasive, and descriptive writing and knowledge of their qualities.
<b>Language</b>	
<b>8.LA.2a</b>	Use advanced punctuation (e.g., comma, ellipsis, dash) correctly.
<b>8.LA.4b</b>	Use common Greek or Latin affixes and roots correctly (e.g., precede, recede, secede).
<b>8.LA.5a</b>	Interpret figures of speech (e.g. verbal irony, puns) in context.

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STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)			STAGE 2 – (Assessment Evidence)		STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)
Alignment to Learning Objectives	Content Focus <i>(The student understands...)</i>	Content Vocabulary	Performance Tasks	Other Evidence	Learning Activities
<p><b>PRCS:</b> 8.L.1 8.L.1b 8.S.2 8.S.3 8.S.6 8.R.2L 8.R.3L 8.R.4L 8.R.6L 8.W.8 8.LA.4b 8.LA.5a</p> <p><b>EQ/EU:</b> EQ2/EU2</p> <p><b>T/A:</b> T1/A1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What to look for when analyzing a Personal Essay.</li> <li>How a personal essay differs from a memoir and a persuasive letter.</li> <li>How to use a Venn diagram to compare and contrast.</li> <li>How to use a graphic organizer to break down the beliefs presented in the essay he/she reads.</li> <li>The images the writer uses to show readers.</li> <li>Point of view; how the narrator’s perspective shapes the essay.</li> <li>The difference between 1st and 3rd person point of view.</li> <li>How the writer’s</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Use Marzano’s Six Ways to Teaching Vocabulary. See attachment 8.4 Resource - Marzano's Six Steps for Teaching Vocabulary</li> <li>Infer</li> <li>Key words for first person: I, me, we, us</li> <li>Key words for third person: third person: he, she, they, them</li> <li>Memoir</li> <li>Narrator</li> <li>Personal essay</li> <li>Perspective</li> <li>Persuasive</li> <li>Voice</li> </ul>	<p><i>For complete descriptions, refer to the section ‘Performance Tasks’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><b>Integrated Assessment 8.3</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before completing this unit, the teacher should administer the first integrated assessment to students (see Attachment: “Integrated Assessment 8.3”).</li> </ul> <p><b>Analyzing a Personal Essay</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher assigns the student a new personal essay. The student analyzes the personal essay, using his/her experience in the group activity to inform his/her analysis. The student repeats this activity with a different essay, as needed. The more practice the student has, the more ready he/she is to write his/her own personal essay.</li> <li>Scaffold: The teacher can have each group/individual analyze a different essay</li> </ul>	<p><b>Graphic Organizer Analyzing a Personal Essay</b></p> <p>(See attachment 8.4)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student reads the texts and completes the decision-making reading log to document the decisions characters make (See Attachment 8.4: Other Evidence – Decision Making Reading Log).</li> <li>The teacher creates a Word Wall using unit vocabulary and new concepts/words the student encounters in the text he/she reads during the unit (See Attachment: 8.4).</li> </ul> <p><b>Informal Observations of Student’s Abilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher Informally observes the student’s ability to think critically and respond to the work of his/her peers during classroom discussions about the essays he/she listens to and reads while he/she is working to narrow his/her own thinking.</li> </ul>	<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><b>Building Background and Contextualizing for ELLs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Analyzing a Personal Essay (Consider using Puerto Rican Writer, Judith Ortiz Cofer to tie into cultural context and engage students.)</b></li> <li>The student reviews elements of personal essays and identifies how personal essays differ from memoirs and persuasive letters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal essays are focused on a belief or insight about life that is significant to the writer (the student).</li> <li>Personal narratives (memoirs) are focused on a significant event that took place.</li> <li>Persuasive writing is focused on conviction; a point of view.</li> </ul> </li> <li>The student works in a small group to read “A Drive to Achieve the Extraordinary” by Juliet Frerking (See Attachment: 8.4 Text – A Drive to Achieve the Extraordinary).</li> <li>He/she discusses the characteristics of the essay that make it a personal essay and not a narrative or a memoir. The student uses a Venn Diagram to compare and contrast.</li> <li>The student completes a graphic organizer (See Attachment: 8.4 Graphic Organizer –</li> </ul>



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	<p>voice influences tone and mood in writing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategies for making inferences.</li> <li>• How to distinguish between first and second person.</li> </ul>		<p>depending on level of English language proficiency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher has each student keep a word journal for this unit <i>or</i> for the entire school year (See Attachment: 8.4 Other Evidence – Word Journal).</li> </ul>		<p>Analyzing a Personal Essay) to break down the belief presented in the essay, the images that the author uses to show readers her belief, and the stories that show what that belief means.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student shares his/her findings and observes if his/her analysis was different, similar to or the same as his/her peers.</li> </ul> <p><i>Point of View</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The teacher reviews the concept of ‘perspective’ and hones in on the perspective from which the essay is written. For example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ How someone views a particular time period;</li> <li>○ Varying sides of a story told by different people.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The teacher uses sample YouTube lesson: <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfmtojHUMs">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfmtojHUMs</a></li> <li>• The teacher reinforces with the student that the narrator’s experience shapes an essay/story. The teacher makes certain that the student understands this concept (the teacher scaffolds and reviews until all English language learners understand perspective).</li> <li>• The student re-reads the personal essay from the activity above.</li> <li>• He/she circles pronouns and other key words, deciding if the essay is written in the first person or third person (key words for first person: I, me, we, us; key words for third person: he, she, they, them) based on his/her findings.</li> </ul>
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**Unit 8.4: Personal Essay and Beliefs**  
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STAGE 1 – (Desired Results)			STAGE 2 – (Assessment Evidence)		STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)
Alignment to Learning Objectives	Content Focus <i>(The student understands...)</i>	Content Vocabulary	Performance Tasks	Other Evidence	Learning Activities
<p><b>PRCS:</b> 8.L.1 8.L.1b 8.S.2 8.W.3 8.W.8</p> <p><b>EQ/EU:</b> EQ1/EU1</p> <p><b>T/A:</b> T3/A2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to infer whom the character is in a text.</li> <li>How to read key words or imagery to listen to the voice of the character.</li> <li>How he/she agrees or disagrees about certain beliefs.</li> <li>His/her beliefs more in depth.</li> <li>How to sum up and speak succinctly about his/her beliefs.</li> <li>How to analyze personal essays.</li> <li>How to establish purpose in a personal essay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Belief</li> <li>Character</li> <li>Words and concepts that student identifies as he/she reads text</li> </ul>	<p><i>For complete descriptions, refer to the section ‘Performance Tasks’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><b>Self-Reflection</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher asks the student to think about the exercise that the class has completed. The student writes a self-reflection using the following prompts as guiding questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What was your overall experience with this exercise? Why?</li> <li>What did you learn about yourself? Why?</li> </ul> </li> <li>The teacher can scaffold the amount of writing from one paragraph to one page, based on the student’s English language proficiency level.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As the student reads a text, he/she completes the decision-making reading log to document the decisions characters make (See Attachment 8.4: Other Evidence – Decision Making Reading Log).</li> <li>The teacher creates a Word Wall using unit vocabulary and new concepts/words the student encounters in texts he/she reads during the unit (See Attachment: 8.1: Other Evidence – Using Word Walls to Improve Instruction).</li> <li>The student keeps a word journal for this unit or for the entire school year (See Attachment: 8.4 – Word Journal).</li> </ul>	<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><b>Exploring Character &amp; Personal Beliefs</b></p> <p>The teacher can use the same essays from the previous lessons or choose new ones. The teacher can also ask the student to bring in newspapers and magazines to look for essays/letters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student takes out sentences from a text and infers whom the character is. He/she looks at key words or imagery that the author uses to bring out the voice of the character.</li> <li>Example: “When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees” (from <i>The House on Mango Street</i> by Sandra Cisneros).</li> <li>When working with Cisneros, the teacher should give appropriate cultural context, as needed.</li> <li>The student reads/listens to a list of beliefs or values and checks “A” for agree or “D” for disagree.</li> <li>The teacher creates four corners in the classroom, 2 labeled agree and 2 labeled disagree.</li> <li>The teacher reads aloud the belief, and the student goes to a corner of the room with no</li> </ul>



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					<p>more than 8 students per corner (vary based on number of students per class).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The student shares stories/life experiences that lead him/her to have this particular belief.</li><li>• The teacher repeats this process several times as he/she reads aloud each belief.</li><li>• The student writes a list of his/her personal beliefs.</li><li>• The teacher challenges the student to sum up his/her beliefs in one sentence.</li></ul>
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<p><b>PRCS:</b> 8.L.1 8.L.1b 8.L.1d 8.S.2 8.S.2b 8.W.3 8.LA.2a</p> <p><b>EQ/EU:</b> EQ3/EU3</p> <p><b>T/A:</b> T2/A3</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>When to use a comma.</li> <li>When to use a semicolon.</li> <li>How the meaning of sentences change when punctuation is changed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Colon</li> <li>Point of view</li> <li>Purpose</li> <li>Semicolon</li> </ul>	<p><i>For complete descriptions, refer to the section ‘Performance Tasks’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><b>Exit Tickets</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After the commas and semicolons lesson, the teacher asks a question relevant to the lesson.</li> <li>The student answers the question.</li> <li>The teacher can have the student deliver the answer orally or in writing.</li> <li>If pressed for time, the student can write his/her answer(s) on a slip of paper and hand it to the teacher as he/she exits the classroom at the end of class/day.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Quizzes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Comma quiz (See Attachment: 8.4 Other Evidence – Commas Quiz)</li> <li>Colon quiz (See Attachment: 8.4 Other Evidence – Colon Quiz)</li> <li>Semicolon quiz (See Attachment: 8.4 Other Evidence – Semicolons and Colons Quiz)</li> </ul>	<p><i>For sample lessons related to the following group of learning activities, refer to the section ‘Sample Lessons’ at the end of this map.</i></p> <p><b>Punctuation</b></p> <p><b>Commas &amp; Semicolons</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student reviews the rules of when to use commas and semicolons in a sentence (See Attachment: 8.4 Learning Activity – Rules for Commas and Semicolons).</li> <li>The student reads sentences that have incorrect comma punctuation and discusses how the meaning of the sentence changes with the incorrect comma punctuation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Example: “Large black and white bear-like mammal, native to China. Eats, shoots and leaves.” (Truss, Lynn. <i>Eats, Shoots and Leaves: Why Commas Really Do Make a Difference</i>. Putnam Juvenile, 2006)</li> </ul> </li> <li>The student reads sentences without the proper comma and semi colon punctuation and writes the correct punctuation (See Attachment: 8.4 Learning Activity – Comma and Semicolon Worksheet)</li> </ul>

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**STAGE 3 – (Learning Plan)**

**Suggested Literature Connections**

- **Juliet Frerking (See Attachment: 8.4 Text – A Drive to Achieve the Extraordinary)**
  - *“A Drive to Achieve the Extraordinary”*
- **Judith Ortiz Cofre <http://whisperdownthewritealley.wordpress.com/2012/03/05/judith-ortiz-cofers-essay-the-myth-of-the-latin-woman/>**
  - *“The Myth of the Latin Woman”*
- **Sandra Cisneros**
  - *The House on Mango Street*
- **Dylan (See Attachment: 8.4 Text – The Bird Who Broke Through the Window)**
  - *The Bird Who Broke Through the Window*
- **Samantha (See Attachment: 8.4 Text – Live Life Like It’s Your Last Day)**
  - *Live Life Like It’s Your Last Day*
- **Lynn Truss**
  - *Eats, Shoots and Leaves: Why Commas Really Do Make a Difference*

**Additional Resources**

- Analyzing Point of View: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= mfmtojhUMs>
- This I Believe Middle School Curriculum online resource: <https://thisibelieve.org/store/product/middle-school-curriculum/>
  - A public dialogue about beliefs -[Please note: after you make your purchase you will receive an email with a link to the curriculum file you have requested, which you can then download to your computer and print out. Also, this product provides a single license for one educator to use this material with their students only. If your school or school system is interested in purchasing an institutional license, please contact them directly. <http://thisibelieve.org/educators/>
- The Top 10 Lessons I learned from Charlie Brown: [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1096/top10\\_lessons.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1096/top10_lessons.pdf)
- Rules on how to use semicolon (See Attachment: 8.4 Resource – Semicolons, Commas, and Colons)



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## Performance Tasks

### *Analyzing a Personal Essay*

- The teacher assigns the student a new personal essay. The student analyzes the personal essay, using his/her experience in the group activity to inform his/her analysis. The student repeats this activity with a different essay, as needed. The more practice the student has, the more ready he/she is to write his/her own personal essay.
- Scaffold: The teacher can have each group/individual analyze a different essay depending on level of English language proficiency.
- The teacher has the student keep a word journal for this unit *or* for the entire school year (See Attachment: 8.4 Other Evidence – Word Journal).

### *Exit Tickets*

- After the commas and semicolons lesson, the teacher asks a question relevant to the lesson.
- The student answers the question.
- The teacher can have the student deliver the answer orally or in writing.
- If pressed for time, the student can write his/her answer(s) on a slip of paper and hand it to the teacher as he/she exits the classroom at the end of class/day.

### *Self-Reflection*

- The teacher asks the student to think about the “Exploring Character & Personal Beliefs” exercise that the class has completed. The student writes a self-reflection using the following prompts as guiding questions:
  - What was your overall experience with this exercise? Why?
  - What did you learn about yourself? Why?
- The teacher can scaffold the amount of writing from one paragraph to one page, based on the student’s English language proficiency level.

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**Suggested Sample Lessons**

- This I believe Middle School Curriculum.(See Attachment: 8.4 Sample Lesson – This I Believe Middle School Curriculum)
- Lesson on giving voice to students: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/giving-voice-students-through-1096.html>
- Lesson on using commas and semicolons (See Attachment: 8.4 Sample Lesson – Using Commas and Semicolons)

Examples:

(Also see and use as Sample Resource: The Top Ten Lessons I Learned from Charlie Brown): [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1096/top10\\_lessons.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1096/top10_lessons.pdf)

\_\_\_\_\_ Life is fair.

\_\_\_\_\_ Words can hurt.

\_\_\_\_\_ What goes around comes around.

\_\_\_\_\_ How you act in a crisis shows who you really are

\_\_\_\_\_ An eye for an eye...

- The student writes a list of his/her personal beliefs.
- The teacher challenges the student to sum up his/her beliefs in one sentence.
- Two Beliefs Statements [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1096/twobelief\\_statements.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1096/twobelief_statements.pdf) (Can reproduce for Educational Purposes only)
- Five Belief Topics (adapt as it is written for a high school student): [http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson1096/fivebelief\\_topics.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson1096/fivebelief_topics.pdf)