Grade 6: Module 1: Unit 2: Lesson 14
Building Writing Skills: Receiving Feedback and Varying Sentence Structures

Long-Term Targets Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)
I can write informative/explanatory texts that convey ideas and concepts using relevant information that is carefully selected and organized. (W.6.2) I can use a variety of sentence structures to make my writing and speaking more interesting. (L.6.3)

Supporting Learning Targets	Ongoing Assessment
• I can use feedback from my mid-unit assessment and the NYS Writing Rubric to set goals for myself as a writer. • I can create sentences of varied length and structure in order to keep a reader engaged in my writing.	• Mid-unit assessment • Strengths and Goals index card • Sentence Variety: Keeping Readers Engaged recording form

Agenda	Teaching Notes
1. **Opening** A. Engaging the Reader: *The Lightning Thief*—Discussing Homework Questions from Chapter 20 (8 minutes) B. Unpacking Learning Targets (2 minutes) 2. **Work Time** A. Processing Feedback from Mid-Unit 2 Assessment (10 minutes) B. Writing Mini Lesson: Sentence Variety (15 minutes) 3. **Closing and Assessment** A. Applying Writing Skill: Revising One Paragraph of Mid-Unit 2 Assessment Mini-Essay for Sentence Variety (5 minutes) B. Sharing: How Did Adding Sentence Variety Improve Your Writing? (5 minutes) 4. **Homework** A. Make a prediction about Zeus and Percy's interaction when Percy returns the lightning bolt. B. Read Chapter 21. Check whether your prediction was right.	• In this lesson, students use teacher feedback from their mid-unit assessment, as well as the NYS rubric, to identify their individual writing strengths and set goals for their own analytical writing. • Be sure to have students' mid-unit assessments ready to return (as noted in Lessons 12 and 13), with specific feedback based on Rows 1 and 2 of the NYS Writing Rubric. Feedback is most helpful in the form of a completed rubric in addition to a couple of specific written comments for each student. • This focus on Rows 1 and 2 is meant to emphasize students' work with ideas and evidence in their writing, as opposed to just correcting spelling, grammar, and punctuation. • Be sure to provide students with both positive feedback and steps for growth. Receiving positive feedback makes the process of working with negative feedback and setting goals easier. Consider using the language of "stars" for strengths and "steps" for goals. • Part A of Work Time gives students to think about their writing at the level of "ideas" and "command of evidence." • Then in Part 2, the class transitions to focusing on more sentence-level aspects of writing. They examine two model paragraphs (a paragraph and a revised version of the same paragraph) to build understanding of the role of sentence structure in maintaining a reader's engagement. • The goal is for students to understand, in a broader way, that using a variety of sentences structures and lengths is important for reader engagement. The mini-lesson does introduce students to the term *conjunctions*. But it is not meant to be a formal introduction to sentence structures (i.e. compound and complex sentences). Students simply begin to think about and try to create sentence variety by combining or breaking up sentences. • Throughout the lesson, help students distinguish between the writing skills of working with ideas and evidence (as reflected in Rows 1 and 2 of the NYS rubric) and more sentence-level issues. Both matter, but students often get confused and think that writing strong sentences is all that goes into being a strong writer. Help them understand that when writing from sources, strong writers first and foremost must know a lot about their topic and cite relevant and sufficient evidence. For more on this distinction, see *Writing for Understanding* by Eloise Ginty, Joey Hawkins, Karen Kurzman, Diana Leddy, and Jane Miller. • In Advance: Review the NYS Writing Rubric, particularly Rows 1–3.

Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
feedback, strengths, goals, rubric, variety, structure, compound, complex	• *The Lightning Thief* (book; one per student) • NYS Writing Rubric—Rows 1 and 2 (used in Lessons 12 and 13; fresh copies for this lesson; one per student) • Index cards (one per student) • Sentence Complexity and Variety: Keeping Readers Engaged recording form (one per student) • Equity sticks • Commonly Used Conjunctions (one for display and one per student) • Homework: Purpose for Reading—Chapter 21—Prediction (one per student)

Opening	Meeting Students' Needs

A. Engaging the Reader: *The Lightning Thief*—Discussing Homework Questions from Chapter 20 (8 minutes)
• Be sure students have their texts, **The Lightning Thief**. Invite students to pair up to share their answers to homework questions. Focus on questions 2, 3, and 4 in turn. For each of these three questions, read out the question, have pairs discuss their answers, and then cold call a couple of students to share their answers before moving on to the next question.
  1. Why does Percy suspect that Ares wasn't acting alone—that he was taking orders from someone?
  2. What does Ares mean when he says Percy "doesn't have what it takes"? Is this a fair criticism? Why or why not?
  3. What deal does Percy make with Ares?
• Where students have answered a question differently, invite them to revisit the text to determine whether there are multiple answers to the question or one of them has misread or misunderstood.	

Opening	Meeting Students' Needs

B. Unpack Learning Targets (2 minutes)
• Invite students to read the learning targets aloud with you:
    * "I can use feedback from my mid-unit assessment and the NYS Writing Rubric to set goals for myself as a writer."
    * "I can create sentences of varied length and structure in order to keep a reader engaged in my writing."
• Invite students to Think-Pair-Share:
    * "So now that you have seen the learning targets for this lesson, what do you think you will be doing today? Why?"
• Listen for: "Looking at comments on our writing and trying to figure out how to be a better writer" and "Trying to make our sentences more interesting.	

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Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs

A. Reading Row 2 of the NYS Writing Rubric and Applying to the Model Essay (10 minutes)
• Congratulate students on a job well done on their mid-unit assessments. Tell them that across the class, you saw some really great reading, thinking, and writing skills. Tell students that when a writing piece is done and feedback is given, the next step for all writers, writers in every kind of job, is to look back at their writing, asking themselves two questions: What did I do well? What can I do to be a better writer?
 	
• Return students' mid-unit assessments with your feedback, along with a blank **index card** for each student. Give students 2 to 3 minutes to read over your feedback.
 	
• Refocus students whole group. Tell them that the **index card** you distributed is going to serve as a place to write down their *strengths* and *goals* as a writer. You will hang on to these cards for them and give them back the next time they write.
 	
• Focus students first on the concept of writing strengths. Tell them it is always important to notice what we do well, so we can build on it. Ask:
 	
   * "What is an example of strength? What is an example of a writing strength?"
 	
• Invite a few whole-class shares so that students understand the type of strengths they should be thinking about. Listen for examples like: "A writing strength is using really precise words" and "A writing strength is using strong examples or evidence."
 	
• Ask students to look back at their mid-unit assessment and your feedback and take 2 to 3 minutes to write one strength of their writing on their index card. Remind them that being a great writer is not just about their spelling, grammar, and punctuation. As they think about their strengths as a writer, they should think about all the aspects of being a "writer": reading to collect ideas and evidence, learning and knowing a lot about a topic, and clearly explaining one's thinking and ideas to an audience.
 	
• As students work, circulate and support them in naming a specific strength. Continue to emphasize that writing is hard, and that people get better at it their whole lives. It is important to notice what one does well as a writer so you can do it even more intentionally next time. Students who do not think they have strengths in their writing may need extra support. Help them find concrete aspects of their writing to reinforce. This could be about great word choice, use of great examples, or clear organization. Or this could be writing mechanics: capitalization, punctuation, etc.
 	
• Refocus students whole group. Tell them that now they will think about a goal. Ask:
 	
   * "What is an example of a goal? What might a writing goal be?"
	• Developing self-assessment and reflection supports all learners, but research shows it helps struggling learners most.

Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs

• **Distribute the NYS Writing Rubric—Rows 1 and 2**. Remind students that these are the rows you focused on when you gave them feedback on their mid-unit assessment. Tell them that the rubric is there to help them process the feedback they are receiving and to make goals for their next writing experience.
 	
• Point out the questions on the top of the NYS Writing Rubric—Rows 1 and 2. Students can ask themselves these questions to set a specific writing goal:
 	
   * "Where are you now?"
 	
   * "What is a goal you can set that will help you move your writing up to the next column on the rubric?"
 	
• Point out that the rubric gives specific criteria, which makes it easier to set a concrete goal. For example, in Row 2, if you use "some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant" in your writing, then you would be trying to move from a score of 2 to a score of 3. So your goal would be: "I want to 'use facts, definitions, details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text.'" Using the rubric also helps you to avoid goals like "Work harder" or "Write more" or "Write neater." These types of goals do not guide students on *how* to write a better piece next time.
 	
• Invite the class to write one specific, feedback-based goal on the index card. Give students a few minutes to do this. Circulate and support them by assisting in the word choice and phrasing of their goals.
 	
• Collect students' index cards and save them. Students will use these again in Lesson 18.	

B. Writing Mini-Lesson: Sentence Variety (15 minutes) • Refocus students whole group. Congratulate them on the important and honest work of self-reflection they just completed. Tell students they will revisit their individual goals before they begin their next writing piece. • Tell the class: "Now that you have had time to look at your writing and think about your individual writing strengths and goals, we are going to work as a class toward a common, shared writing goal. I'm going to tell you about a pattern of writing I saw across the whole class while I was reading your mid-unit assessments, and we are going to learn a strategy to grow as writers." • Explain that this shared goal is more about the "nuts and bolts" of writing at the sentence level. Say that one way to keep a reader engaged in a piece of writing is through sentence *variety*. Ask: * "What does *variety* mean?" • If students do not know, give them the definition of *variety* as "a collection of things that are different from one another; an assortment." Relate this to the words *various* or *varied*.	

Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
- Ask: * "How could we add variety to our sentences?" Listen for answers like: "You could use different kinds of words," "You could make them different lengths," or "You could mix in different types of sentences, like statements mixed with questions." - Tell the class that if all sentences in a piece of writing start the same, sound the same, or are the same length, the reader will begin to get bored. Therefore, a good writing technique is to try to give your sentences variety. This means using a pattern of both *simple* and *complex* sentences in your writing. Tell students you will revisit the word *complex* later in the lesson. - Distribute the **Sentence Complexity and Variety: Keeping Readers Engaged recording form** to each student. Invite students to read over the first paragraph with a partner and fill in the box below "What do you notice about this paragraph?" Give the class about 2 to 3 minutes to read and make notices. Circulate and support students as they work. Ask guiding questions like: "How do the sentences begin?" or "How long are the sentences?" - Refocus students whole group. Ask: * "What do you notice about this paragraph?" * "What can you say about the sentences in the first paragraph?" - Listen for responses like: "The sentences are short," "It feels kind of boring," or "The sentences start the same way." If students do not notice this, point out to them that 9 out of 12 sentences begin with either the word "Percy" or "he." - Focus students' attention on the revised paragraph. Give directions: - Read the revised paragraph with a partner. - Underline changes the author made. - Circle new words the author used. - Answer the question: "How did the writer revise the paragraph to make it more interesting?" - Circulate and support students' conversations and annotating of the text. Help students to recognize words such as *while* and *with* as helpers to combine sentences.	

Work Time (continued)	Meeting Students' Needs

• After 3 to 4 minutes, refocus students whole group. Using **equity sticks**, call on two or three students to answer the question: "How did the writer revise the paragraph to make it more interesting?"
 	
• Confirm or correct students' thinking by telling them that one way to make writing more varied is to combine small sentences into longer ones, or break up long sentences into shorter ones. Having a variety of long and short sentences keeps readers engaged.
 	
• Ask:
    * "What is an example of two sentences that were combined in the revised paragraph?"
    * "How did the author of the paragraph combine them?"
    * "What words or punctuation were necessary to combine sentences?"
 	
• Tell the class that there are a lot of helpful words and phrases for combining sentences. These words and phrases are called *conjunctions*. Define *conjunction* as "the act of joining two things." Distribute and display **Commonly Used Conjunctions**. Tell students to review them now, but that they will have the chance to use them when they look back at their mid-unit assessment.
 	
• Explain that sometimes they may want to break up a really long sentence if it feels too long or if it feels like important information is getting lost in there.
 	
• Ask:
    * "What is an example of a longer sentence being broken up in the revised paragraph?"
 	
"Why do you think the author did this? What information are we more likely to notice now that it is two separate sentences?"	

Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs

A. Applying Writing Skill: Revising One Paragraph of Mid-Unit 2 Assessment Mini-Essay for Sentence Variety (5 minutes)
• Tell students that they will now have a bit of time to look back on some of their own sentence structure and to think about adding sentence variety to maintain reader engagement. Give directions:
 	
  1. Read back over your mid-unit assessment.
 	
  2. Focus on one paragraph.
 	
  3. For that paragraph, underline sentences that you could combine using conjunctions.
 	
  4. Using your Commonly Used Conjunctions, write the new, combined sentences at the bottom of your page.
 	
• Circulate and support students as they work. Be sure their revised sentences are grammatically correct and make sense (often, students will use resources like the Commonly Used Conjunctions as a way to just plug in words, ending up with sentences that do not make sense). Encourage students to give their new sentences an "oral rehearsal" before writing them down, asking:
 	
  * "Does this make sense?"
	• Consider allowing select students to work in partnerships as they revise their paragraph. Being able to talk about writing before actually writing is an important scaffold for many students.

Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs

B. Sharing: How Did Adding Sentence Variety Improve Your Writing? (5 minutes)
• As time permits, move students into triads. Invite them to share the work they just did to add sentence variety to one paragraph of their mid-unit assessment mini-essay.
• Give directions:
  1. Read your original paragraph.
  2. Read the revised version of your writing so your peers can make comparisons.
• Collect students' revisions as early formative assessment data on how well they are doing with this new skill of creating sentence variety.	

Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
A. Before reading Chapter 21, answer this question on your **Homework: Purpose for Reading—Chapter 21—Prediction** sheet: "What do you think will happen when Percy brings the lightning bolt to Zeus? Why?" B. Read Chapter 21. Once you have read the chapter, check the appropriate box of your sheet to mark whether you were right or wrong. If you were wrong, describe in no more than three sentences what did actually happen.	

EXPEDITIONARY LEARNING

Grade 6: Module 1: Unit 2: Lesson 14
Supporting Materials

Name:

Date:

CRITERIA	4 Essays at this level:	3 Essays at this level:	2 Essays at this level:	1 Essays at this level:	0 Essays at this level:
Content and Analysis: the extent to which the essay conveys complex ideas and information clearly and accurately in order to support claims in an analysis or texts	• clearly introduce a topic in a manner that is compelling and follows logically from the task and purpose • demonstrate insightful analysis of the text(s)	• clearly introduce a topic in a manner that follows from the task and purpose • demonstrate grade-appropriate analysis of the text(s)	• introduce a topic in a manner that follows generally from the task and purpose • demonstrate a literal comprehension of the text(s)	• introduce a topic in a manner that does not logically follow from the task and purpose • demonstrate little understanding of the text(s)	• demonstrate a lack of comprehension of the text(s) or task
Command of Evidence: the extent to which the essay presents evidence from the provided texts to support analysis and reflection	• develop the topic with relevant, well-chosen facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) • sustain the use of varied, relevant evidence	• develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, details, • quotations, or other information and examples from the text(s) • sustain the use of relevant evidence, with some lack of variety	• partially develop the topic of the essay with the use of some textual evidence, some of which may be irrelevant • use relevant evidence inconsistently	• demonstrate an attempt to use evidence, but only develop ideas with minimal, occasional evidence which is generally invalid or irrelevant •	• provide no evidence or provide evidence that is completely irrelevant •

Name:
Date:

Original:

The Lightning Thief is a book. It is a book about a hero. His name is Percy Jackson. His father is Poseidon, god of the sea. Percy goes on a quest with his friends Annabeth and Grover. Percy is trying to find Zeus's bolt. Percy faces many challenges, as part of the road of trials portion of his hero's journey, during his quest. He meets Medusa. He battles the chimera. He escapes the Lotus Hotel and Casino. Percy overcomes these challenges. He does this with the help of his friends. He also receives help from his father Poseidon, god of the sea.

What do you notice about this paragraph?

Revised:

The Lightning Thief is a book about a hero named Percy Jackson. With his friends Annabeth and Grover, Percy goes on a quest to find Zeus's bolt. While on the quest, Percy faces many challenges such as meeting Medusa, battling the Chimera, and escaping the Lotus Hotel and Casino. These challenges are part of being a hero. They are the road of trials. Percy, with the help of his friends and his father Poseidon, god of the sea, overcomes these challenges.

What do you notice about this paragraph?

Name:

Date:

after	if	though
although	if only	till
and	in order to	unless
as	not	until
as if	now that	when
as long as	once	whenever
as though	or	where
because	rather than	whereas
before	since	wherever
but	so	while
even if	so that	with
even though	than	yet
for	that	
however		

Name:

Date:

What do you think will happen when Percy brings the lightning bolt to Zeus? Why?

Prediction Right?	Prediction Wrong?

What did actually happen when Percy took the lightning bolt to Zeus? (No more than three sentences.)