

In this unit, students begin with narrative writing to quickly boost their interest and confidence and to learn the foundational skill of focus. Students then apply their new observational focus to some lively readings from Roald Dahl’s memoir *Boy*, and learn how to work closely with textual evidence.

Core texts your student will read:

- *Boy: Tales of Childhood* by Roald Dahl

What my students will do/learn:

- Students complete narrative writing exercises in which they “slow down the moment,” using observational details to focus on and develop small moments from their own experiences.
- Students learn key classroom routines, including the sharing routine, during which classmates respond to shared writing by noting one effective way the writer used language or details or evidence.
- Students read and discuss Roald Dahl’s recollection of his experiences as a schoolboy in England. As they read his memoir *Boy*, they analyze how he uses detail to convey the range of emotions—from excitement to fear—that he felt.
- Students write consistently throughout the unit, developing their idea or claim about the text and providing textual evidence.
- Students write an end of unit essay responding to the following prompt: Whom does Dahl describe as causing more trouble: the boys or the adults? Use details from one moment in the book to show who is really causing more trouble.

Here are some conversation starters that you can use during this unit to promote discussion and encourage continued learning with your student.

1. What are two of the moments from your experiences that you wrote about as you learned to focus on one moment? What caught your attention about those moments? What details stood out?
2. What moment in Dahl’s childhood was most surprising to you? Was there anything about his stories that reminded you of yourself or someone you know?
3. Can you share a piece of writing with me in which you used precise details to show, not tell? (Provide feedback to your student by finding something in their writing that you can respond to as a reader. For example, “I really like how you described your hanging head at the buzzer and how you dragged your feet to the locker room. I can see your disappointment at the loss.”)
4. In *Boy*, how does Dahl seem to feel about the adults in his life? How would you describe the relationship between the boys and the adults in Dahl’s childhood?