Lesson Title:	It's All In The Name
Background Information:	
Created By:	Juli Westrich, 2023 Teacher on the Trail™
Grade Level/ Subject:	K–12 Library/ SEL/ CR–SE/ ELA/ Writing
Essential Question: Learning Objectives:	How are my personal interests, culture and identity represented and valued in my learning spaces? I can: ● Define THEME – a group of things that have a characteristic in common with each other ● Identify five things in a theme to represent what is important to me ● Share a piece of writing about the theme, how the components are connected, and the history or importance to me, my family and/or my culture.
Standards Addressed:	[NYS ELA Standards](#) Language Anchor Standards: Conventions of Academic English/Language for Learning

	Standard 1: Demonstrate command of the conventions of academic English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

Standard 2: Demonstrate command of the conventions of academic English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.

Writing Anchor Standards:
Text Types and Purposes
Standard 1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

Standard 2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Standard 3: Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Standard 4: Develop personal, cultural, textual, and thematic connections within and across genres through written responses to texts and personal experiences. |

Standard I – Inquiry and Design Thinking: Use Inquiry and Design Thinking to Build Understanding and Create New Knowledge
*We are thinkers and designers.
- Standard 1.1: Information-fluent learners use an inquiry process to connect to prior experience and background knowledge, wonder and ask questions, investigate, construct new understanding, express learning, and reflect on the process and product of learning.
  - Shares what is known about the general topic to elicit and make connections to prior knowledge
  - Responds to background information (delivered through videos, stories, texts, discussions) by restating/retelling main ideas and details about the topic
- Standard 1.2: Information-fluent learners experience, experiment, and use a design process to discover creative solutions to authentic problems, form personal understandings, and propose original ideas.

Standard II – Multiple Literacies: Use Multiple Literacies to Explore, Learn, and Express Ideas
*We are readers, writers, and creators
- Standard 2.1: Information-fluent learners use multimedia literacy skills and knowledge to deconstruct and learn from texts in

| | multiple formats through comprehension, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.
○ Gathers information from illustrations and text features
● Standard 2.2: Information-fluent learners present their learning and ideas by constructing messages using multiple, authentic formats appropriate for the purpose and audience.
Standard IV – Personal Growth and Agency: Engage in Personal Exploration, Social and Emotional Growth, Independent Reading and Learning, and Personal Agency
*We are confident, independent learners. ● Standard 4.1: Information-fluent learners use information and ideas presented in any format to reflect on and pursue personal interests, develop strengths, and engage in personalized and independent learning. ○ Develops and pursues personal curiosity ● Standard 4.2: Information-fluent learners develop agency (personal identity and confidence) to express their ideas, raise awareness, advocate for change, and/or take social action. ○ Actively engages in conversations with others in a respectful and appropriate way |

Materials Needed:	1. Chart Paper & Markers 2. Photos/Videos of sled dog puppies 3. Sled Dog Puppy Worksheet (Elementary)
Procedure:	
Before Teaching:	• Make copies of worksheets • Reflect and create your own "Puppy Litter" to share as an example with your students.
Engagement: 5 minutes	Suggested Introduction: "This year we will be spending a lot of time learning together. I'd like to learn more about you as we start this journey together. What is important to you? What do you like? What represents your experience in the world? I'll go first!"
Lesson: Grade Level Dependent – 15 Min	1. Share a photo of dog sled puppies. Click Here for PHOTO LINK

"Today we are each going to have the opportunity to name these 5 puppies! First, I will tell you the names I selected and why they show what is important to me.

My five puppy names are:
Joe
Alaska
Nikolai
Pizza
Moose

I picked these names because they are all connected with a theme — an idea that explains what the group has in common.

2. These are all names that have to do with the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. This race is very interesting, fun, and important. We will learn more about the race this year in math, science, reading, and more! The important thing to know is that dog sled puppies spend years training and learning how to be successful in a race. The people who raise and race sled dogs are called Mushers — they name their puppies with a theme — an idea that

	shows they are all connected. Let's see if you can guess the THEME for these puppies!" Show examples: Colors, spices, gemstones, sports, book characters, etc. (base complexity of the theme on grade level) 3. Now let's look at my "theme" of puppies. Why did I pick these 5 names to represent the Iditarod? Joe: Joe Redington, Sr. is the founder of the race. He worked to make sure that sled dog culture and the historic Iditarod trail in Alaska were preserved. The first race was in 1973. Alaska: This is the state where the race takes place every year in March. Teams travel across the entire state by dogsled! Nikolai: There are many checkpoints, or places in the race that mushers stop to rest, get food, have vets check the dogs. Nikolai is the first checkpoint I went to in the 2023 Iditarod Pizza: In the checkpoint of Unalakleet the mushers get pizza sent to them by family and fans — it is one of my favorite traditions and it is delicious, too! Moose: I saw many moose in Alaska, and it is my favorite Alaska animal — after sled dogs of course!
Activity: 15–30 minutes	

At first, the names I chose might not seem to have anything in common, but when I explain what each means and how it is part of my interest in the Iditarod you can see the connections.

4. Now it is your turn! You are going to name 5 puppies with a theme that will tell me about what you like, what matters to you and your family, and what is important to you!

Show worksheet on overhead/screen and pass out to students.

5. First, let's define THEME:
THEME: a group of things that have a characteristic in common with each other

6. Think about what THEME you'd like to use for your puppies. Write that THEME in the space provided.

7. Fill in a name next to each puppy – remember your theme!

8. Please write a short paragraph/statement explaining why this theme is important to you and/or how it represents you.

Conclusion:	Thank you for sharing your sled dog team names with me! I look forward to talking to each of you about the choices you made and how they tell the story of what matters to you! (Hang them in the classroom to show all voices are represented and valued)
Assessment:	1. Student understanding of term :THEME 2. Student creation of puppy litter names around a defined theme 3. Student written response to identify writing skills and lesson comprehension.
Enrichment/ Suggestions:	Students expand on their puppy litter written response based on grade level – 4th–12th Grade write a multi-paragraph or essay to show understanding and writing skills.
Other:	Revisit puppy litters throughout the year. For example: students can do "dog bootie math" with their litter, measure the amount of material needed for 5 return dog blankets, or consider the weight of food for 5 dogs on the trail!