

Eastern Illinois
Writing Project

2008-2010

Demonstration Anthology

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Connie Almy: Writing Process: Emphasis on Revision

1. Content

The activity introduces narrative writing in a junior high resource room. I present the writing process as a thinking activity that requires constant self-monitoring,

2. Objective and Rationale:

After completing the activity, students will demonstrate understanding of the process by completing a narrative essay.

The complete writing process is considered a best practice in an effective writing program according to Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde.

Illinois State Learning Standards, goal three is “Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.” In the middle school, students should be able to “Write compositions that contain complete sentences and effective paragraphs using English conventions 3.A.3., “Produce documents that convey a clear understanding and interpretation of ideas and information and display focus, organization, elaboration and coherence 3.B.3a, “Compose narrative, informative and persuasive writings for a specified audience.” 3.C.3a

The writing process encompasses all these aspects of state goal three.

3. Materials:

For the activity, participants will need handouts provided, paper and pencil or pen. A whiteboard or Smart Board will be used for presentation.

4. Procedures:

- After a review of the writing process and a think-aloud of the prewrite, participants will produce their own opening paragraph, closing paragraph, and cluster for body paragraphs.
- After review of handouts with close examination of Smiley-Face Tricks: magic three, figurative language, specific details for effect, repetition for effect, expanded moment, humor, hyphenated modifier, and full-circle ending.
- Participants will make of rough draft of the body paragraphs.
- Participants will go through revision check list and number in their rough draft where all the elements are located.

- Participants will read their essay to one partner and ask if there is anything that is confusing or not explained clearly, then make revisions.
- Participants will listen to their paragraphs when someone else reads them to make sure their essays sound the way they meant them.
- Students will edit for spelling by reading backwards, and then check punctuation and capitals. Next they will check overall appearance, especially checking that paragraphs are indented.
- Students will make a final copy.

5. Closure:

Discussion of the use of Smiley-Face Tricks in the essays and sharing some that were written.

6. Evaluation:

Evaluation is based on completion of steps in the writing process and inclusion of all elements in the revised essays.

7. Extension:

Students will write two or three more narrative essays followed by selection of the best for more revising and editing prior to publishing.

8. References

Ellis, John

Illinois Learning Standards. Springfield, IL: Illinois State Board of Education, 1997. P.8-9.

Ledbetter, Mary. Writing on Demand: Increasing Your Students' Success When Writing to Prompts on Writing Assessments (Grades 6-12). Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research, 2009.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., and Hyde, A., Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1998.

Robin Augsburg: Teaching Descriptive Writing with Cookies, Crazies, and CSIs

Overview

These activities were designed to get students to begin practicing descriptive writing for inclusion in both fiction and non-fiction pieces.

Context

These activities can be used as a lead-in to a larger piece of persuasive writing. I have found that student writers often have the ideas in their heads, but they forget to put them down on paper, particularly when it comes to details in their persuasive arguments. These activities are designed to get students to focus more on adding description and details to their writing.

Learning Goals

- Students will use precise language to write distinct descriptions of similar objects.
- Students will collaborate to complete a finished project.
- Students will use descriptive language to persuade.

State Goals

- 3.B.4a – Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience, with clarity of focus, logic of organization, appropriate elaboration and support and overall coherence
- 4.A.4a – Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).
- 4.A.4b – Apply listening skills in practical settings (e.g., classroom note taking, interpersonal conflict situations, giving and receiving directions, evaluating persuasive messages).

Materials

- Cookies! Two different kinds
- Students need paper and writing utensils
- Book passage of your choice with descriptive language removed and original
- Slips of paper
- Basket/container for slips of paper
- Smartboard to display book passage and writing prompt (or other piece of suitable technology)

Activities/Procedures

1. Students will receive two cookies, one of each kind. They will be asked to write two separate paragraphs. Each paragraph should describe a cookie with as much detail as possible.
2. Students will pick their favorite cookie and find a student with the same favorite. In pairs, the students will write a persuasive piece explaining why their cookie is the better cookie.
3. Share paragraphs as a whole group while compiling a list of stand-out descriptive words or phrases.
4. Pull up book passage (in my case I used part of the first three pages from Janet Evanovich's *Lean Mean Thirteen*) and pass out copies for students. Have students fill in the blanks.
5. Once most of the class has finished filling in the blanks on their own sheets, have them raise their hands to offer suggestions for the copy on the Smartboard. When finished, read their created passage out loud. Then display and read the original passage.
6. For the next activity, students will get three slips of paper. They will be told to write one noun on each slip and place it in the basket. When all slips are collected, the basket will be passed back around and students will draw three slips of paper.
7. Place prompt up on Smartboard and allow students time to write.
8. If there is time, have students get into groups of four and share their writings and discuss their results.
9. Share a few writings with the whole class.

Evaluation

Since this activity is designed as a lead-in to a larger writing project, students will only be evaluated on their completion of this activity.

Extension

While I have this listed as part of a larger persuasive writing assignment, these activities would also work really well in a creative writing unit. The CSI activity could also get extended and turned into a mock trial scenario.

Resources

The cookie exercise and the book passage exercise came from this site:

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/detail/printformat.cfm?printformat=yes>

I also have to give credit to Aaron Sitze at Oregon High School. He was one of my cooperating teachers during student teaching, and he was the one that gave me the beginning idea for my CSI activity.

A crime occurred in Coleman Hall six months ago. You were a CSI assigned to the case. The three slips of paper in your hand are the pieces of evidence that you collected. They are sufficient to solve the case, but that isn't enough. You are about to be called on the witness stand, and you need to be able to PROVE your case to the jury by explaining your evidence. In order to do that, you need to write with as much detail as possible: what the crime was, who did it, and how it was done. Don't forget to use your evidence.

Remember to give as much detail as possible! If you go into court and say that Miss Augsburg is guilty of stealing Myrtle the Turtle because of this shoe, this crayon, and this strawberry, your case will be thrown out of court because you haven't explained your evidence!

Good luck!

The door to the bonds office opened, and Lula stuck her head out. “Are you gonna sit there all day, or what?” she yelled at me.

Lula is a black woman with a Rubenesque body and a Vegas wardrobe that’s four sizes too small. She is a former ‘ho, currently working as a file clerk for the office and a wheelman for me...when the mood strikes. Today she was wearing big fake-fur Sasquatch boots, and her ass was packed into poison-green spandex pants. Her pink sweat-shirt had *Love Goddess* spelled out in sequins across her boobs.

My wardrobe runs a lot more casual than Lula’s. I was wearing jeans and a long-sleeved knit shirt from the Gap. My feet were stuffed into knock-off Ugg boots, and I was bundled into a big quilted jacket. I have naturally curly brown hair that looks okay when I wear it shoulder length. When it’s short, the best you can say is that it has energy. I’d swiped on some extra mascara today, hoping to boost my bravado. I had a favor to perform that I suspected was going to come back to haunt me. I grabbed my bag, wrenched the driver’s side door open, and angled myself out of the car.

[paragraph omitted]

Connie Rosolli looked around her computer at me when I walked into the office. Connie is Vinnie’s office manager and his first line of defense against the stream of pissed-off bondees, bookies, hookers, various bill collectors, and stiffed smut peddlers hoping to reach Vinnie’s inner sanctum. Connie was a couple years older than me, a couple pounds heavier, a couple inches shorter, a couple cups bigger, and had hair a couple inches higher than mine. Connie was pretty in a kick-ass, central Jersey, third-generation Italian kind of way.

***Lean Mean Thirteen* by Janet Evanovich, p 1-3**

The door to the bonds office opened, and Lula stuck her head out. “Are you gonna sit there all day, or what?” she yelled at me.

Lula is a _____ woman with a _____ body and a _____ wardrobe that’s _____ . She is a former ‘ho, currently working as a file clerk for the office and a wheelman for me...when the mood strikes. Today she was wearing big _____ boots, and her ass was packed into _____ pants. Her _____ sweat-shirt had _____ spelled out in _____ across her _____ .

My wardrobe runs a lot more casual than Lula’s. I was wearing jeans and a _____ shirt from _____. My feet were stuffed into _____ boots, and I was bundled into a _____ jacket. I have _____ hair that looks okay when I wear it _____. When it’s _____, the best you can say is that it has _____. I’d swiped on some extra mascara today, hoping to boost my bravado. I had a favor to perform that I suspected was going to come back to haunt me. I grabbed my bag, wrenched the driver’s side door open, and angled myself out of the car.

[paragraph omitted]

Connie Rosolli looked around her computer at me when I walked into the office. Connie is Vinnie’s office manager and his first line of defense against the stream of _____, _____, _____, _____, and _____ hoping to reach Vinnie’s inner sanctum. Connie was _____ than me, _____, _____, _____, and had _____ than mine. Connie was pretty in a _____, _____, _____ kind of way.

Cathy Ball - Show Me Don't Tell Me

Overview:

This activity is designed to help students understand what type of elements need to be included in narrative writing to help them better describe events in their writing. This mini lesson is an anchor/shared experience for all students. When I tell students to remember Mrs. Potato Head's angry eyes- They remember the "showing" part of a narrative.

Objectives:

Mark Twain once wrote, "Don't tell me she was mad, bring the old bat kicking and screaming into the room". This activity helps provide the tools a student needs to more accurately describe events in a narrative rather than just tell them.

Materials:

- Mrs. Potato Head commercial <http://de.truveo.com/2009-super-bowl-commercials-bridgestone-mr-potato/id/3628162908>
- Pictures of various facial expressions
- Handout on which to record what each emotion looks like, feels like, the dialogue and a "thought shot".
- 4 colored pencils/crayons

Activity:

1. Introduce the idea to students that there are many ways someone can tell how a character is feeling.
2. Show the video clip- emphasize the "angry eyes" because that is an anchor point for their writing.
3. Show the pictures of the facial expressions. On the handout, anger is done as an example- review the example. Then either individually or pairs or groups, have students fill out the other blanks for different emotions. When completed I have students share for each emotion. This handout becomes a reference for them to use in their writing and can be added to when students come across good examples in their reading.

4. The next step is to see the technique in practice. Students are given an example telling sentence- make sure the sentence you use has a clearly defined emotion. Then let them see how it can be improved using the different elements (looks like, feels like dialogue and thought shot). The different areas are color coded to help students see that each part of the emotion is being used.
5. Students can then pair up or work in groups to brainstorm events that they felt particularly strong about. For example: being grounded, making the team, first day of school, opening their lunchbox after it had been left in their locker over break, homework assignments, losing a pet). Not all group members have to write about the same event, but brainstorming will help them come up with a bigger pool of ideas.

Assessment:

Since the assignment is to write only 3-4 sentences, students shouldn't feel overwhelmed with having to worry about length, and should focus on the task of showing the emotion. This is an in class assignment worth 10 points. Two points for incorporating each showing emotion element and 2 points for overall good conventions: capitals, periods and spelling.- because I just can't let it go.

Extensions:

- This activity is a small part of our narrative writing unit. See attached graphic organizer.
- This can be done teacher led whole group with pre emerging writers. An expression is shown and the teacher writes. This helps young writers to begin to understand how to describe emotion as well as name it.
- Having this activity make a reading connection, I have a "Brilliantly Written" wall. When students find a sentence, phrase, metaphor or some other figurative language that expresses good emotion they are encouraged to write it on the wall.
- Magazine or newspaper articles can be cut out and put on the wall also.

Angel Baumann - Around the World

1. Overview:

Around The World, what I knew and what I know now.

2. Rationale: (subject area, concept, and target audience):

This activity will help students work on a paper that will include their personal experience combined with research. After a brainstorming activity, they will choose a country or state of their choice and research it. Then they will write a 1-2 page paper about what makes this country a great place to visit. Students will have to review the proper way of citing, so the reader knows what information is new to the writer.

It can be adapted for any subject area (for math focusing on financial institutions and currency, for art, paying more attention to museums or art styles, for science looking into different habitat, and climate, etc).

3. Learning Objectives:

Through this exercise, students will become more aware of the different lifestyles, cultures, and activities in different countries. Students will have the opportunity to appreciate differences and similarities between their own culture and that of Spanish speaking countries. By enhancing their understanding, students will be able to have an open mind and acceptance about other people, even those that are part of their own culture.

4. Materials:

Handout

Access to library

Access to Internet (at home or/and at school)

Family members

Pictures from childhood or a vacation trip

A computer and an LCD projector in the classroom, for presentation day.

5. Activities/Procedures:

Complete the handouts

- a. Fill in the blanks to the best of your abilities. If you do not have information just continue to the next column or row.
- b. Select one country or state where you would like to go. It can be the one you know more about, or the one you do not know anything about.
- c. Go to computer lab and find information that you did not know about this country or state.
- d. Find 1 picture of the country's (state) map, 1 picture with the flag, and 3 pictures that will help your audience capture the uniqueness of this place.

Complete a paragraph based on your handout and research:

- a. Use the name of the country as part of your title.
- b. Try to use the handout as a guideline.
- c. Describe the place, location, people, food, traditions, holidays, etc.
- d. Personal experiences (when, where, why were you there, with whom, etc)
- e. What do you like about this place?
- f. What are three things that are important about this place?
- g. Write about anything you think it will be important for someone to know before going to this place.

6. Evaluation: Work on handout and writing activity.

-Work on handout to the best of your knowledge –Stay on task-

-Behave respectfully as you walk to the computer lab, and as you work at the computer.

-Use Internet in a proper manner –Stay on task-

-Write 1-2 paragraph paper.

-If possible, Include 3 pictures (1-map, 1-flag,1 –food, places, holiday, etc-)

7. Extension:

- Students could write another paper “A Day in....” using the information they gathered. They could write a paper pretending that they have spent a day at this country with their families or by themselves (depending on their age). Or if they have been at this place, what would they do differently, and why?
- Students could create a project using the information from their first paper. They can choose from a Power Point presentation, a newsletter on Word, or a brochure, created on Publisher. To ensure that everyone will be able to work on this assignment, students who have worked with these programs will pair with those who are not familiar with them before starting this project.
- Students can create post-cards, writing two or three things that they learned about this country/state and send it to a family member.

Sources:

Schrader, Drew. “Beyond ‘What I Did on Vacation’: Exploring the Genre of Travel Writing”. 18 Jul. 2008 <www.readwritethink.org>

Library of Congress. “Teaching with Primary Sources: Portals to the world.” Library of Congress Website. 17 Jul. 2008 <<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>>

Kid Info. “The Web's Best Homework and Student, Teacher/ Parent Reference Resource.” 19 Jul. 2008 <<http://www.kidinfo.com/Powerpoints.htm>>

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If you would have the time, the money, the right companion, and the best health; where would you like to go? (Now or ten years from now) It can be one of the places you listed above. _____

Why? _____

Country or State's name: _____

You can use the following items as a guide to write your 1-2 paragraphs. Include at least 10 of these items, but try to include, if possible, one thing that would make a perfect place to visit.

1. Capital	
2. Language	
3. Geography (boundaries)	
4. Population	
5. Climate	
6. Flag colors	
7. Currency	
8. Exchange Rate	
9. Type of government	
10. Food	

11. Priorities What seems to be important to people?	
12. Work schedule	
13. Landmarks	
14. Special holiday	
15. Other	

These are great websites to help you...

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/international/portals.html>

<http://www.infoplease.com/countries.html>

<http://www.theodora.com/wfb/>

http://www.studentsoftheworld.info/menu_infopays.html

<http://www.geographic.org/countries/countries.html>

Keri Buscher - Duck! Rabbit!

Title I Reading

Overview: The demonstration for today is a persuasive writing lesson. It will help students become familiar with the persuasive writing process and how to write a persuasive paper. This book can be used for any grade level.

Learning Objectives:

1. Students will construct complete sentences which demonstrate appropriate capitalization and punctuation. (State Goal 3.A.1)
2. Students will demonstrate the correct spelling of appropriate, high-frequently words. (State Goal 3.A.1)
3. Students will write a one paragraph paper that is focused on the topic given. (State Goal 3.B.1b)
4. Students will demonstrate organization of thoughts in the paragraph. (State 3.B.1b)

Rationale:

1. The research has led many educators to agree that integrating reading and writing has multiple benefits for development of literacy. (Gavelek, Raphael, Biondo, Wang, 2000)
2. Arrange for meaningful-to-students reasons to write. (Whitaker)
3. Reading affects writing and writing affects reading. (Brummit-Yale)
4. One of the most effective ways to help children build specific writing skills is to show and discuss with them models that successfully demonstrate the skill. (Brummit-Yale)

Materials:

1. Book: Duck! Rabbit! By Amy Krouse Rosenthal & Tom Lichtenheld
2. Story Writing paper
3. Writing utensils
4. Chart paper (for teacher)
5. Markers (for teacher)
6. Poster labeled "Duck" and "Rabbit"

Activities/Procedures:

1. Present the book to the class. Ask for ideas of what the book will be about. (Predicting)
2. List ideas on chart paper.
3. Discuss with the students that at the end of the story they will be writing a persuasive paragraph about the story.
 - a. A paragraph should have at least 4 sentences. (Beginning sentence (Opinion), Middle sentence (Support), Middle sentence (Support), Ending sentence (closing))
4. Read the book to the students. (I would only read it half way.-Before the carrot.)
5. Do not ask the students any questions throughout the story.
6. Tell the students they must convince you that the animal is either a rabbit or a duck. They must choose a side.
7. Once you have finished reading, share with the students your paragraph.
 - a. I think that it is a rabbit. Rabbits have very long ears. Their ears flop in the air when they hop. It is a rabbit.
 - b. I think that it is a duck. There is no nose for it to be a rabbit. Ducks have a long beak just like the pictures. It must be a duck!
8. Have students draw their picture of a duck or rabbit.
9. Have the students write their own paragraphs.
10. Have volunteers share their paragraphs with the class.
11. Hang students papers under a poster labeled Duck or Rabbit.
12. Finish reading the story.
13. Ask for a show of hands who still believes it is a duck, or rabbit.

Assessment:

1. Collect students' paragraphs and check to see if they have the 4 sentence paragraph.

Extensions:

1. Have students take the other side and write a paragraph.
2. Have students give more than one supporting detail.
3. Use other Visual Puzzles to write persuasive papers. (see attached)
4. Chart their findings using a picture graph, bar graph, tally marks, etc...
5. Have students write a book about the last page in the story.
 - a. Students would use two unseen characters to write a story arguing if this is an anteater or a brachiosaurus.
6. Students may write about the two unseen characters in the story. This could be used to teach characterization.

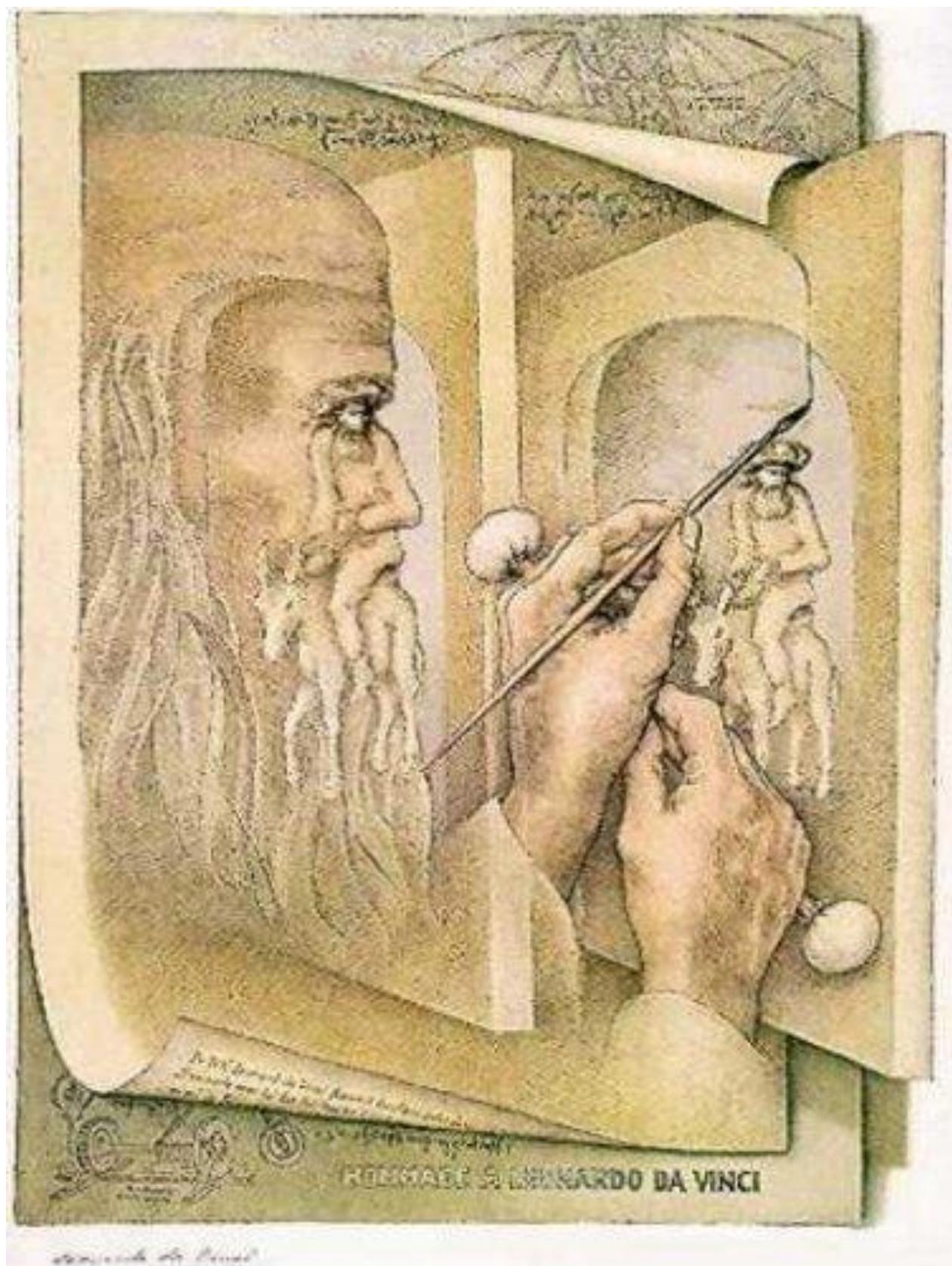
Resources:

Duck! Rabbit! By Amy Krouse Rosenthal and Tome Lichtenheld, 2009

<http://puzzles.about.com/od/opticalillusions/ig/OpticalIllusions/WomanWitch.htm>

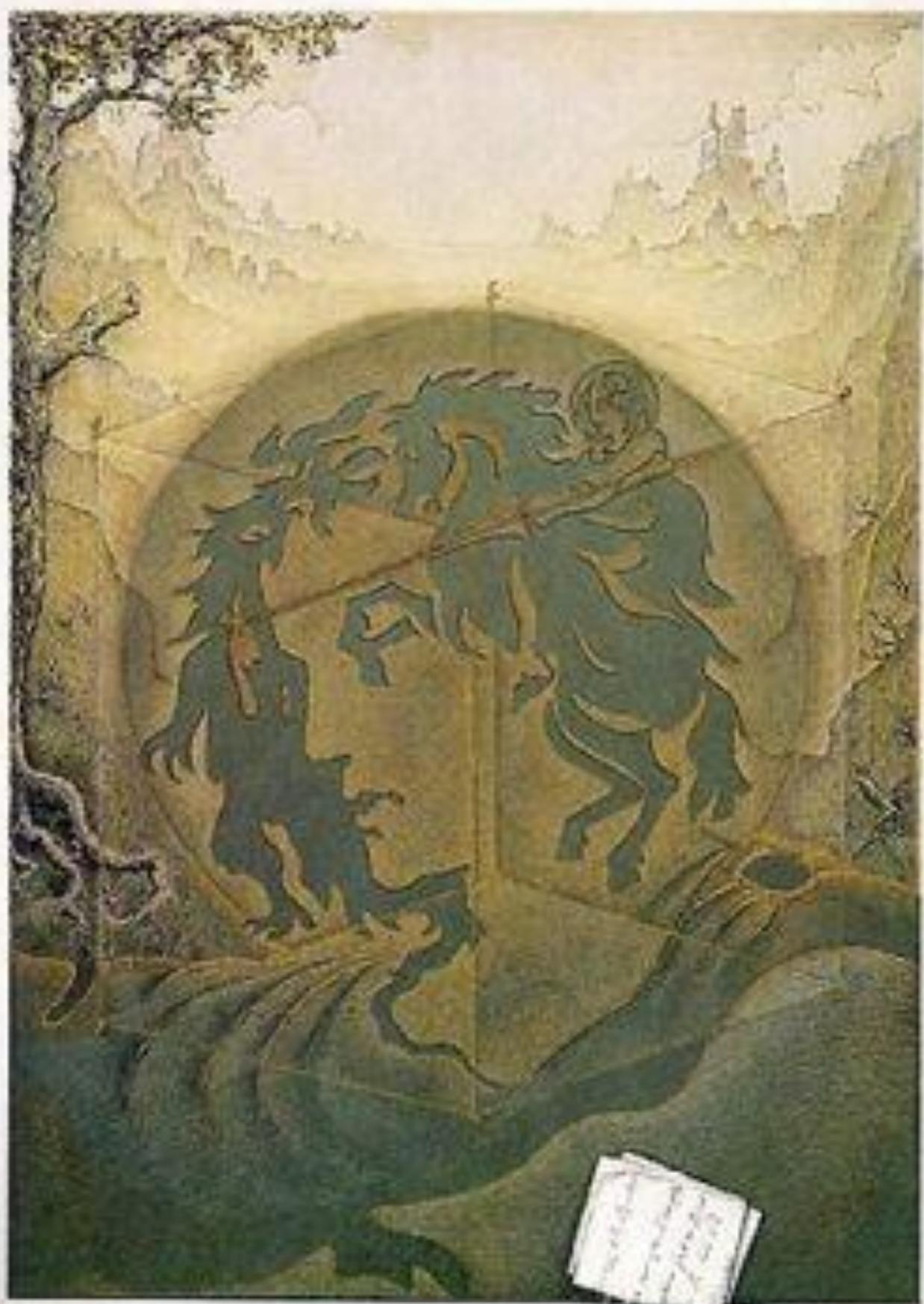
http://www.mindfake.com/illusion_25.html

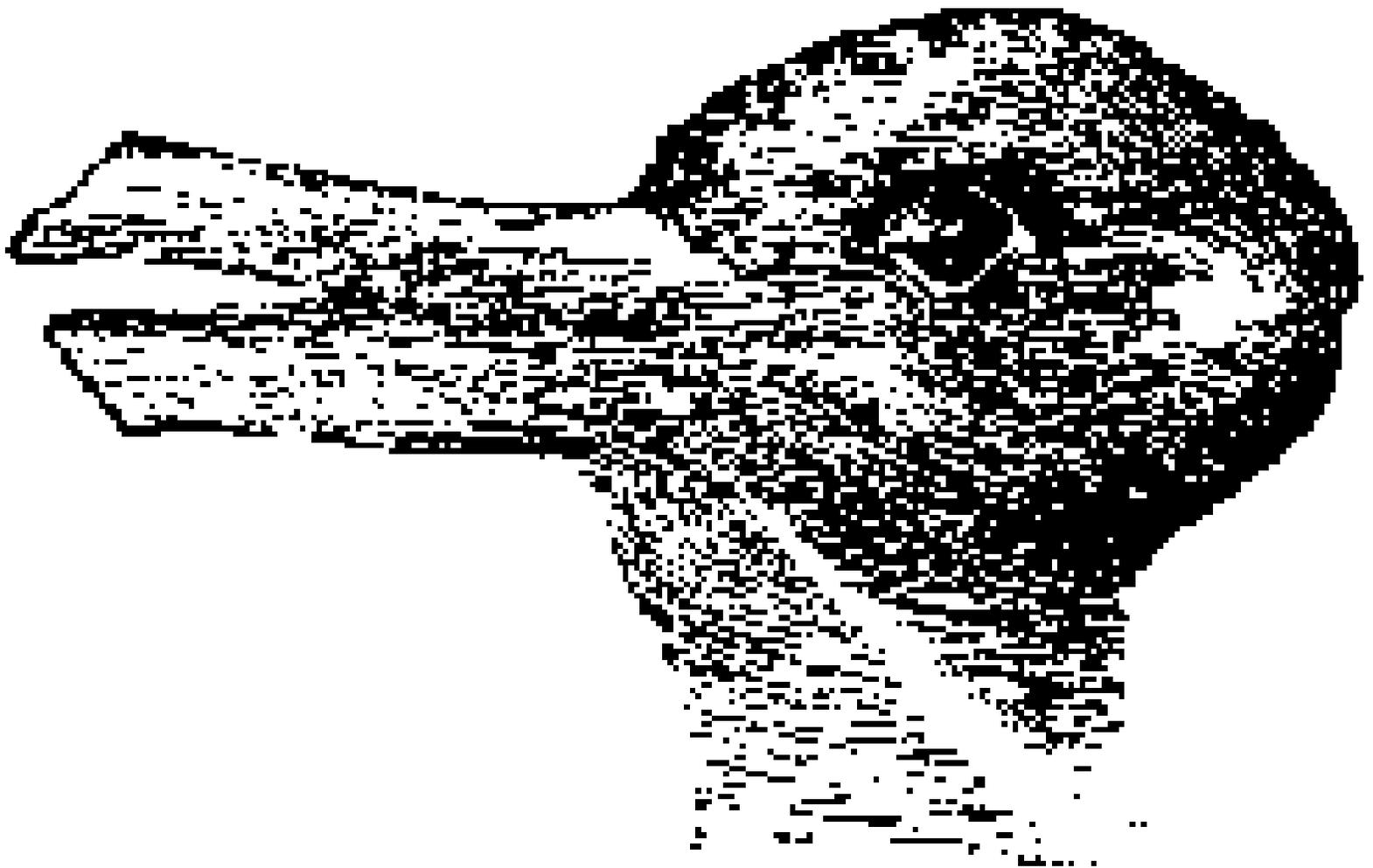


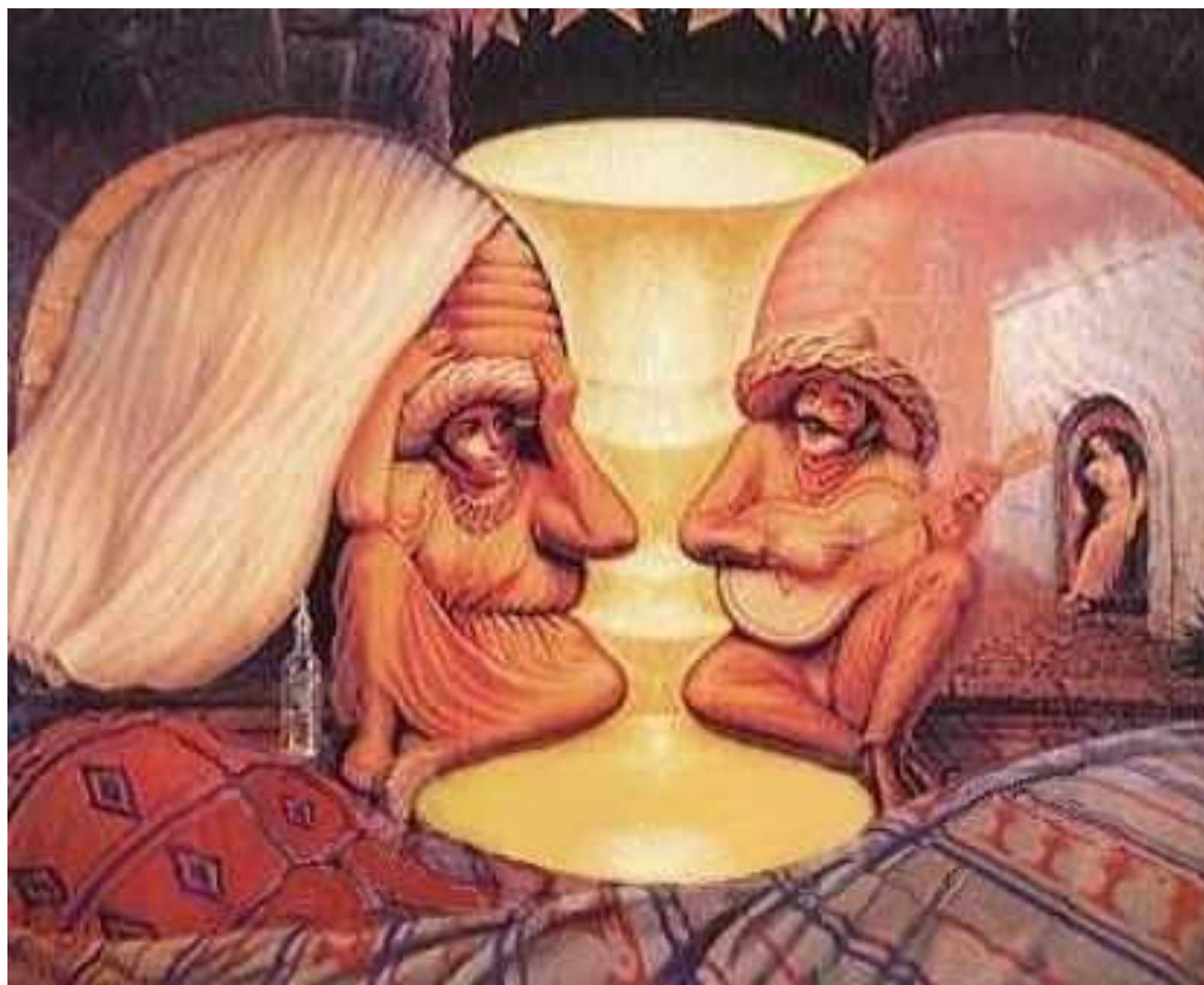


REINASCIMENTO E LEONARDO DA VINCI

Leonardo da Vinci







Al Church - Creating Culture

Overview:

Students will identify aspects of their own culture, Identify culture in writing, and create a fictional culture.

Rationale:

Students rarely visit other cultures. At most, a few affluent students may have had opportunities to travel, or there may have been contact with foreign exchange students. Students may not even realize elements of their own culture. Students can learn to recognize elements of their own culture and to identify elements of culture in literature. The focus of this lesson is for students to express culture in writing. The writing can be fictional or biographical. Students will understand that culture is a web of significance which we have spun. (Geertz 5).

Scope:

This lesson may be best completed after exposure to writings from other cultures. However, I will use this after students have become familiar with writing with characterization after a unit about Archetypes. Carol S Pearson's book, Awakening the Archetypes Within, is an excellent source for this. This lesson can use planned sources such as fairy tales, nursery rhymes, previous writing, or other familiar texts.

Materials: Writing materials: Paper and Pen. Brust excerpt.

Activity:

1. Begin by briefly writing about an incident. The incident can be a common occurrence that has meaning to you or an extraordinary situation. Give 10 Minutes.
2. Write and answer this Question: What is Culture? Or What Makes up Culture?
3. Items may include food, religion, holidays, traditions, etc.
4. Identify culture in student's brief writing.
5. Review handout from Jhereg and discuss any culture in this excerpt.
6. Students should rewrite the incident previously written. The rewrite should change so that the incident is set in a different culture. The culture can be fictional culture, a historical culture, a future culture, science fiction, fantasy, etc.

Assessment:

This is a “Stage” in a future project in which students will write a larger fiction/non-fiction. Inclusion of culture can be assessed during that assignment. For this, participation and appropriate completion of final revision can be assessed.

Extension:

This can be used as a building toward a greater work of writing. The activity can relate to studies of literature and other cultures. This is a good correlation to literature of any non-American writings.

Sources:

Brust, Steven. *The Book of Jherag*. New York: Ace, 1983. Print.

Card, Orson Scott. *How To Write Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Cincinnati: Writer's Digest Books, 1990. Print.

Geertz, Clifford. *Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. Print.

Pearson, Carol. *Awakening the Heroes Within: Twelve Archetypes to Help us Find Ourselves and Transform Our World*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991. Print.

From Jhereg by Steven Brust

There is a similarity, if I may be permitted an excursion into tenuous metaphor, between the feel of a chilly breeze and the feel of a knife's blade, as either is laid across the back of the neck. I can call up memories of both, if I work at it. The chilly breeze is invariably going to be the more pleasant memory. For instance...

I was eleven years old, and clearing tables in my father's restaurant. It was a quiet evening, with only a couple of tables occupied. A group had just left, and I was walking over to the table they'd used.

The table in the corner was a deuce. One male, one female. Both Dragaeran, of course. For some reason, humans rarely came into our place; perhaps because we were human too, and they didn't want the stigma, or something. My father himself always avoided doing business with other "Easterners."

There were three at the table along the far wall. All of them were male, and Dragaeran. I noted that there was no tip at the table I was clearing, and heard a gasp from behind me.

I turned as one member of the threesome let his head fall into his plate of lyorn leg with red peppers. My father had let me make the sauce for it that time, and, crazily, my first thought was to wonder if I'd built it wrong.

The other two stood up smoothly, seemingly not the least bit worried about their friend. They began moving toward the door, and I realized that they were planning to leave without paying. I looked for my father, but he was in back.

I glanced once more at the table, wondering whether I should try to help the fellow who was choking, or intercept the two who were trying to walk out on their bill.

Then I saw the blood.

The hilt of a dagger was protruding from the throat of the fellow whose face was lying in his plate. It slowly dawned on me what had happened, and I decided that, no, I wasn't going to ask the two gentlemen who were leaving for money.

They didn't run, or even hurry. They walked quickly and quietly past me toward the door. I didn't move. I don't think I was even breathing. I remember suddenly becoming very much aware of my own heartbeat.

One set of footsteps stopped, directly behind me. I remained frozen, while in my mind, I cried out to Verra, the Demon Goddess.

At that moment, something cold and hard touched the back of my neck. I was too frozen to flinch. I would have closed my eyes if I could have. Instead, I stared straight ahead. I wasn't consciously aware of it at the time, but the Dragaeran girl was looking at me, and she started to rise then. I noticed her when her companion reached out a hand to stop her, which she brushed off.

Then I heard a soft, almost silky voice in my ear. "You didn't see a thing," it said. "Got that?" If I had had as much experience then as I do now, I would have known that I was in no real danger--if he'd had any intention of killing me he would have done so already. But I didn't, and so I shook. I felt I should nod, but couldn't manage. The Dragaeran girl was almost up to us now, and I imagine the guy behind me noticed her, because the blade was gone suddenly and I heard retreating footsteps.

...

When the Phoenix guards arrived some time later, I was in back, and I heard my father telling them that, no, no one had seen what had happened, we'd all been in back. But I never forgot the feel of a knife blade, as it is laid across the back of the neck. (4)

Kathy Decker - Using Point-of-View To Evoke Empathy From an Audience

Grade Level/Subject:

Junior/English

Objectives:

As a result of this lesson, students will be able to define empathy, sympathy, and point-of-view. They will be able to compare and contrast empathy and sympathy, and will be able to create a piece of writing with the purpose of evoking empathy for someone or something. They will also be more aware of how different people see different situations, hopefully making them more empathetic citizens.

Standards:

Illinois State Writing Goals:

3.A.5, 3.B.4c, 3.C.5a, 3.C.5b

Illinois State Reading Goals:

1.B.5c, 1.C.5b, 1.C.5d 1.C.5e

Procedure:

1. As a bell ringer activity, have students write five status updates that reflect the way they feel today. The only restriction is that only one of the updates can begin with the verb, "is". Discuss with students the goal of status updates. Why do we do it? What kind of feedback are we looking for?
2. Discuss what students already know about the terms necessary to be successful in the lesson. After discussion, give official definitions of point-of-view, empathy, and sympathy. Discuss the similarities and differences of empathy and sympathy. (Use Venn Diagram for lower ability level.)
3. Divide class into small groups of four or five. Give each group of students a subject or event. (A basketball game, a trip to the doctor's office, flying on an airplane, going to the zoo, a day in court.)
4. Have students brainstorm the different points-of-view from which the subject can be seen. (offensive player, defensive player, referee, fan, coach, parent, kid on the bench, the ball, the basket)

5. Each group member then chooses one point-of-view from which to write. Students will then write a short narrative about their subject from their chosen point-of-view, doing their best to evoke empathy from their audience. (or ten status updates?)
6. After writing, students will share their pieces with their group members.
7. Group members will vote for whom they feel the most empathetic after hearing all examples.
8. The chosen essay from each group will then be shared with the class. The class will then vote on one overall winner.

Guided Practice:

Teacher will walk around the room while students are composing to answer questions/check to make sure students are “getting it.”

Closure:

Students will be reminded to think about situations they face from different people’s perspectives. The importance of trying to understand where others are coming from will be stressed.

Extension Activities:

- Use current events to help students better understand what motivates people from different cultures to act.
- Write a recipe for empathy.
- Draw the feeling of empathy.
- Create a chart or graph recording times students feel empathetic.
- Journal about a time when you wish someone would have been empathetic to your situation.
- Rewrite a familiar children’s story from another character’s point-of-view.
- Make students write from the antagonist’s point-of-view from a particular piece of literature.

Sources:

<http://www.buzzle.com/articles/empathy-vs-sympathy.html>

<http://www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/ela/pdf/goal1.pdf>

<http://www.lessonplanspage.com/SSOTerrorism-UnderstandingEmpathy57.htm>

Renee Felkamp - Teaching Pre-Writing Skills to Young Children

Rationale: Developing literacy skills at a young age will assist in the writing process as students advance through the grades.

Objectives:

- To connect writing to reading
- To learn to write in more than a single format
- To incorporate cross curricular activities into a lesson
-

Procedure:

Grabbing Their Attention:

The attention grabber in this lesson is “The Cool Bear Hunt” by Dr. Jean. This song introduces the concept of dwellings as well as allowing for physical movement before a period of sitting.

The Lesson:

Following the song introduction, a small discussion should be held to allow the children to identify various dwellings which could be a habitat for living things. After the reading of the book, A House is a House for Me, the discussion should be continued to include dwellings for inanimate objects. (Note: If the discussion dwindles, have the children look around the room while you make suggestions such as a crayon box is a house for ___?).

Follow Up Mini Groups:

Mini Group 1:

Scrabble Junior: This scrabble game is designed for young children to learn word making skills. It is also a game which can be diversified, as on one side of the game board words are made by matching letters, while the other side of the board allows for words to be made in the usual manner.

Materials: Junior Scrabble Game

Mini Group 2:

Lincoln's House: This activity allows the children some creativity while learning about Lincoln's dwelling. It also presents some history as we talk about how it was not unusual to live in a log cabin during the 1800s and how those homes were much different from the log cabins of today. Our writing skill for this part will be our heading, Lincoln's Home.

Materials: Construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons, craft sticks, and one penny

Mini Group 3:

Shining Pennies: Blending science into other activities utilizes our school time to a greater advantage as well as teaching us to write in a different format.

Materials: Pennies, baggies, pop, salt, toothpaste, white vinegar, ketchup, paper towels, containers, and worksheet.

Procedure: Soak a penny a few minutes in white vinegar (add salt to the vinegar if the pennies have a lot of oxidation) or pop. Try rubbing a little catsup or toothpaste on a penny, wiping it off with a paper towel. Choose the penny that is the shiniest for your Lincoln house. Fill out the discovery worksheet.

Mini Group 4:

Independent Writing: Following the format of the story, the children will write and illustrate five pages describing an object and its dwelling.

Materials: One booklet, crayons, and pencils

Conclusion:

Each child will share one page of their house book.

Adaptations for Higher Grade Levels:

Look up the word dwelling in a Thesaurus. Write down the synonyms given. In your reading, find the word house or dwelling and replace it with a synonym you found. Does it change the meaning of the sentence?

In a small group, choose one animate or inanimate object. What would the object's usual habitat be? Come up with another habitat that would suit the object and explain why this would be the ultimate dwelling.

Construct, draw, or find pictures of the dwelling you would find most comfortable. Explain why this particular dwelling would suit you. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the dwelling?

Read A House Is a House for Me. Come up with at least five original ideas to fit into the sentence, A ___ is a house for a ____.

Mini Group 1 Directions

Choose the board side with blank squares or those with letters. Draw seven tiles. Choose someone to go first. If you are using the side with letters, have the person going first play two letter tiles. Continue around the circle playing two tiles and drawing two tiles. If you can play only one tile, exchange one tile for one in the pool. If you can play no tiles, exchange two tiles for two in the pool. The person completing the word as you go around the circle collects the scoring chip. Play until time is up or all words are covered.

If you chose the side with no words, the first player will play two or more letters to make a word. As play continues, each person will play one or more letters to form new letters. Draw a new tile for each tile played. The game ends when all the tiles have been drawn and no new words can be made.

Mini Group 2 Directions

On your sheet of paper, draw some background. Construct Lincoln's house using eight craft sticks glued on top of one another. Select a square of construction paper and cut a roof a door and a window. If you have shined your penny, you may glue Lincoln's head in the window; otherwise it will be glued at the end of the period.

Mini Group 3 Directions

Choose three different methods to shine three different pennies. On your discovery sheet, write the three methods you chose. Put a happy face by the method that worked the best. Put a sad face by the method that did not work well. Compare your results with your friends. Later we will graph everyone's results to discover the best method for shining pennies.

Mini Group 4 Directiions

Sound out a word to fill in the blanks on each of your five sheets of paper to describe a house and the object or living thing that lives there. For example, a box is a house for a Kleenex. After you have filled in the blanks, make an illustration that goes with your words.

Kelly Hardiek - Awesome Adjectives and Detailed Descriptions!

Overview:

Students will practice using descriptive words and phrases in their writing while avoiding “boring” words.

Rationale:

Middle school students often try to use “boring” words (good, bad, small, big, awesome, etc.) in their writing; they don’t always know what “be more specific” means or how to even do this. The activities in this lesson are designed to help students break free of dull and weak descriptions and to help them practice using several ways to describe certain experiences. This lesson is to be used in a 6th grade language arts class.

Scope:

This lesson should be used very early in the year to help students develop the habit of using strong descriptions in their writing; it will also train students to avoid using “boring” words in writing. This lesson also works well in a grammar review of adjectives and how they are used.

Materials:

5 random objects of choice; model car, matchbox car, song “Surfin’ Bird,” cd player, paper, pencils, whiteboard

Activity:

1. Ask students to close their eyes and picture “a house in the country” and discuss some of the differences between the houses they visualized. Then, ask them to picture “a white mansion in southern Alabama.” Continue to add details to the house picture until every student sees almost the same picture. Talk about the importance of detail in writing.
2. Have students get out a piece of paper and pencil for the next exercise. The teacher will hold up an object, and the students will have 30 seconds to come up with as many descriptions as possible.
3. More than likely, a student will describe something as “big” or “small.” At this point, pull out a model car and discuss the size of the object. Then, use a matchbox car to compare sizes. The model car can no longer be described as “small.”
4. Continue to pull out random objects and give students 30 seconds to come up with descriptions for each object.

5. The last object students will be asked to describe is a song. Challenge: Can you come up with 20 adjectives/descriptions for the song before it is over? (Explain that students can describe anything about the song: lyrics, beat, melody, voice, etc.) Please do not use opinion in descriptions.
6. At the end of the song, discuss some of the descriptions given about the song.
7. Assessment: Students will be asked to create a music review for the song. They must use at least 10 adjectives/strong descriptions in their review. Here is where students can tie in their opinion to the song. They may describe all aspects and explain why they did or did not enjoy listening to the song. They cannot use any words on the “boring” list.

Extension:

- K – 4: This lesson can be used as an introduction to adjectives and describing words.
- High school: Find 5 pictures or paintings that are fairly similar and post them in front of class. Ask students to describe only one of the paintings without labeling which picture they chose. Read the descriptions aloud and have the class determine which picture was being described by the author. During the music portion of the lesson, add a twist to the assessment. At the top of their papers, students must write “LIKE” or “DISLIKE,” giving their opinion about the song. Then, they must write a review expressing the opposite (For example, if a student liked the song, he must write his review with the opinion that he did not like the song).

Tina Hausmann - Writing with Your Senses

Overview:

Introducing the sense of smell to my students' writing.

Rationale:

During the seventh grade I teach my students how to add detail, personality, and individuality to their writing. One element of this is by adding sensory details into the students' events. By doing this, their writing will not only paint a picture for the reader, but also submerge the reader into the event itself. I will do a series of activities that include the five senses to demonstrate how easy and important it is for them to be present in the students' narratives.

Learning Objectives:

Once the students complete a series of activities dealing with the five senses, they will show their understanding by including sensory detail in their narrative essays.

Materials for Sense of Smell Activity:

- A. • 4-6 small paper bags (so students cannot see what they are smelling)
- B. • 4-6 items that have different and distinct smells (vanilla, coffee, alcohol, strawberries, suntan lotion, baby powder/oil, moth balls, soap, bug spray...)
- C. • Student handout with same number of squares as smells
- D. • Pen/pencil

Activity/Procedure:

This is an activity that you will do once your students have already learned the basic elements of a narrative (exposition, characters, plot, rising/falling actions, climax, resolution).

1. As a class you will discuss the five senses and why they are important (tell us what things are dangerous, pleasant, good, bad, when we should be alert, help us learn, etc...)
2. Discuss why the senses are important to include in narratives (help create a much more complete picture of the event being written about)
3. Read a passage with sensory detail and without and discuss which is better and why.
4. Handout student response worksheets
5. Explain that you will be passing around a paper bag with an item in it. The student is to take one or two deep breaths, smelling the item then pass the bag to the next student.
6. Quickly write down the first image or memory that pops into your head in the corresponding numbered box. This should be brief.
7. Continue the previous step for each of the different items in the bags.
8. Once all the items have been passed around the class, discuss what some of the images or memories were for the different smells.
9. As an assignment, each student must choose one of the images or memories and write a 5-8 sentence paragraph about it including as many of the other four senses as possible. Students also need to include other smells that may also be present.
10. The next day in class the students will first read their initial brief statement about the image or memory and then share their paragraph.
11. Students will discuss the differences between the two works.

Evaluation:

A completion grade of 10 points will be taken. Students' paragraphs must be 5-8 quality sentences long and contain the sense of smell along with the other four senses. The end product will be evaluated with a rubric for their narrative essay.

Extensions:

For all ages

- a. • Continue doing the above activity with items in bags in which the students feel. Students then

pick their favorite and write a paragraph about the image or memory including the other five senses.
- b. • Record a variety of sounds or find a website with sound effects and play them for the students. Students then pick their favorite and write a paragraph about what caused the sound while incorporating the five senses.
- c. • Have students only write about what an object looks like and see if other students can guess

the item. They are not allowed to use any of the other senses. You could then have them describe the item using all five senses so the students can see the difference.
- d. • Have students do adjective word wall posters for different tastes: sweet, sour, salty, cold, hot,

spicy. Then have them write about their favorite or least favorite food using some of the adjectives while including the other senses.

Sources: (Helpful sites to use for extensions)

<http://www.a1freesoundeffects.com/>

<http://www.pacd.v.com/sounds/index.html>

Writing With Your Senses

In order to create an image for your reader, you must include details about your five senses. The reader needs to not only see what is going on, but they need to hear, taste, touch, and smell the surroundings as well. This activity is going to focus on the sense of smell. I will pass around several numbered bags that contain different smells. Your job is to briefly write down the first memory or image that pops into your head as soon as you smell each item.

#1	#2
#3	#4
#5	#6

--	--

Complete the graphic organizer on the five senses. Once the organizer is completed, write your paragraph about the image/event you chose. Try to include three to five of the senses in your writing.

Example of writing with and without sensory detail

This afternoon we went swimming.

See: blue pool, patio furniture, towels, fireplace, water bottles, pool toys

Taste: salt, water

Hear: giggles, splashes, music, birds, mower

Touch: hot, cool, wet, relaxed

Smell: suntan lotion, grass, plastic

Although the sun was beginning to set, its heat still scorched the cement causing our feet to burn as we dashed on tiptoes to the cool rescue of the crystal blue water. The kids both giggled with delight as they cannon balled into the pool creating waves of refreshing water to splash onto hot pavement. I unfolded a towel and placed it on the edge of the pool preventing the hot cement or metal frame of the pool from blistering me. I could have settled onto the shaded comfort of the pillow soft sofa or chairs surrounding the oasis, but wanted to dangle my feet in the water. The lingering smell of suntan lotion was occasionally replaced by the fragrance of fresh cut grass as my neighbor's mower interrupted the soft conversations of the birds beginning to settle for the night in the surrounding shrubs and trees. As the kids splashed and played, a few drops of water settled on my lips. The saltiness made me reach for my bottle of ice cold water that was covered in perspiration from the outside heat. As I let out a sigh and watched the kids play, I could feel the previous stresses of the day dissipate into relaxation.

Christy Hild – Nicenet



PART ONE: In the Classroom

Overview: Today's demonstration is a process lesson; it will provide learners another forum for sharing writing. It focuses on a tool that enhances written communication: www.nicenet.org. This resource can be used in any context which requires written thought, interaction, or revision.

What is Nicenet?

An online, interactive class, www.nicenet.org allows teachers to create safe online collaboration experiences. When you sign up as a teacher, you can create various classes. Each class gets a secure code, called a Class Key. This key must be used by any person trying to sign up to join the class. Once enrolled, they can browse a variety of topics and forums, including: Link Sharing, Document Uploads, and Conferencing Topics.

How have I used Nicenet? Some ideas for implementation:

- 1) Response to literature → Post questions to which students are able to respond and read others' responses. When teaching 8th grade writers in an urban school, I partnered with Okaw Valley's 8th grade language arts teacher. Our students read the same book, responded to the same questions, read others' responses, and then asked more questions of each other. (We could do this with our language arts classes.)
- 2) For persuasive writing → Post a controversial quote and have students respond pro or con, providing support. Teach them how to anticipate counter-arguments in their writing by responding to peers who believe differently.
- 3) For staff sounding boards → Our union in a Cincinnati-area school district used Nicenet to securely communicate with each other about pertinent issues and also to share resources.
- 4) For peer revision groups → Students post pieces of writing they've created in Word, (or they can create them on the spot) and peers respond with general reactions and suggestions for improvement. (All the peer revision resources we have used thus far would work here.)

- 5) For cross-curricular projects → Get your team involved, middle school teachers! During a thematic unit on ____, post relevant web resources and have the other teachers post writing assignments geared toward their content areas.
- 6) For prompted writing → Use Nicenet to help teach the differences of timed writing. Post a prompt and give students the amount of time they get on standardized tests. The next day, have them re-read their piece and write a reflection on how they would do things differently, what was hard? Easy? etc.
- 7) For Book Study Groups → Hard to meet with colleagues to discuss professional reading? Post assignments, prompts, and share instructional ideas here. You can even scan pieces of student writing and ask fellow teachers to respond with instructional implications.
- 8) For Writing Groups → Set a deadline for group members to post pieces – every other Friday, for example. At that time, all members will log on to the site and respond with suggestions for improvement.
- 9) OTHER?

Learning Objectives:

- 1) Students will demonstrate understanding of how to formulate written responses for a variety of purposes;
- 2) Students will write in required genres;
- 3) Students will write for specified audiences; and
- 4) Students will use technology to enhance communication.

Rationale:

PART ONE: Students

- 1) Satisfies adolescent students' need for socialized learning (Graham, et. al, 4).
- 2) "Students can pass drafts among each other for comment via a shared drive..." (Narin, 29) Even easier without a drive. Use Nicenet. ☺
- 3) "The whole process [technology] encourages revision," (Narin, 29).
- 4) "In the end, their writing can be available to audiences of one to many millions," (Narin, 30).
- 5) "Research has shown the positive effects of word processing (e.g., Goldberg, Russel, & Cook, 2003; Russell & Plati, 2001), spell-check (e.g., MacArthur, Graham, Hayes, & De La Paz, 1996), speech recognition (E.g., Quinlan, 2004), and multimedia software (e.g., Daiute & Morse, 1994) on different stages of the writing process." (Karchmer-Klein, 224).
- 6) According to the same resources, those studies showed effectiveness for all levels of writers.

PART TWO: Teachers

- 1) “To unlock the potential of these new tools [available technology], teachers need opportunities and professional development in using technology first for their own purposes: writing and communicating, planning lessons, evaluating student work, and researching and developing curricula,” (Narin, 69).

Materials:

- 1) Computers with Internet Access
- 2) Computers with Microsoft Word: I like students to craft responses in Word before posting on Nicenet. This avoids the inevitable & dramatic, “I lost everything!” Plus, they still have a document to revise without copying and pasting it from Nicenet.

PART TWO: In the Lab

Activities/Procedures:

- 1) If this is your first introduction to Nicenet, take care of basic setup. You can give a small handout with procedures, or to save paper, put it on the board. I also tell students once they are logged on, they may explore the site until everyone is ready. They may not post anything until I've given that directive.
 - a. Go to www.nicenet.org
 - b. On the upper right hand side of the screen, Click on Students: Join a Class
 - c. Enter Class Key: G6K348W88
 - d. Create a User Name & Password
 - e. Decide if you want your students to have an email linked. For this class (EIWP), please enter your email.
 - f. Enter First Name & Last Name
 - g. If your user name is taken, try another
 - h. Click on Finish Registration
- 2) Once everyone is logged on, give a guided tour. For this class, we will do this together.
- 3) Introduce your assignment.
 - a. For our class it is: *Click on the conferencing section of our page. Find the assignment called ROSE Quote. Comment on the following quote by Mike Rose: "Error marks the place where education begins."*
 - b. *You have fifteen minutes for this writing.* (For my classes, I have them compose in Microsoft Word, copy and paste. In this lab, though, feel free to type in the fields.)
 - i. NOTE: *If you finish early, evaluate your writing: Is it what you wanted to say? Where can you substitute for better word choice?*
 - ii. *POST*
 - iii. *Then you are free to explore the site!*
 - c. *Call time. Now, you will have 25 minutes to read two peer responses and comment specifically on your reaction to their writing. Remember to write your responses thoughtfully, with as much care as you put into your piece.*

The following questions may guide you if you are stuck:

 - i. *Discuss the writer's content (IDEAS) through the lens of the following prompts:*
 1. *What new ideas had you not considered?*
 2. *Do you agree? Disagree? Why?*
 3. *How is your perspective different?*
 - ii. *Comment on the writer's style (Word choice, syntactic variety, voice) through the lens of the following prompts:*

1. *What phrasing or terms are unique to this writer?*
 2. *Where could you most clearly understand his or her thoughts?*
 3. *Where were you confused?*
 4. *Are there any general parts that could be clarified or enhanced?*
- d. Call time. *Finally, I would like you to revisit your piece and consider your peer feedback.*
 - e. *In your journal (or wherever you are keeping EIWP notes), answer the following. You have five minutes.*
 - i. *What would you change about your piece if you could? (Typically, the peer feedback would be applied in the Word Document.)*
 - ii. *What do you like about this forum? Dislike?*
 - iii. *How might you use it in your classroom*
 - f. *Discuss.*
- 4) *Now it's time to create your own Nicenet page. Things to consider:*
- a. Who will you include? Students only? Would you like a separate page for parents? (Open House lesson!)
 - b. What topics would you want to include? Make a list of the units you teach.
 - c. Under Conferencing, create a topic that coincides with your first unit. Ask a relevant, thought-provoking question, or assign a response to text.
 - d. Under Link-Sharing, copy and paste a web resource that matches your first unit of study.

Evaluation:

- 1) If you want a formal evaluation:
 - a. Have students print their two feedback pieces, OR
 - b. Ask students to print their original thought and then their revised response to see changes
- 2) If you want more informal:
 - a. Log onto the cite later and do a “quick check” for a completion grade
 - b. Award discussion & participation points

Extension:

- 1) Give students time for posting links related to current unit.
- 2) Read a picture book and have students respond.
- 3) Create a site that includes parents: We did a parent-student book club in Ohio, and everyone responded to the same questions. Certain books can act as a catalyst for an important dialogue.
- 4) Give extra credit for students who post book reviews. (Links to authors' pages are popular!)
- 5) Allow EIWP Participants time to post in various Conferencing Topics (Demo Add-Ons, Stars & Wishes, Links you Love...) or upload Teaching Materials & Handouts to DOCUMENTS section.

Janet Kracht - Flash Films

After reading specific literature section, students will create a timed computer presentation to relate their personal connection to identified themes/vocabulary.

Examples of Novels – Pictures of Hollis Woods, Outsiders, Speak, etc.

Examples of Vocabulary – Family, Abandonment, Friendship, Honesty, Happiness, Responsibility, Loneliness ...

Process –

1. Completion of assigned reading
2. Class discussion and reflection on terms
3. Introduce project requirements and directions
4. Presentation of projects

Procedure to complete presentation

*Before beginning create a new folder within a folder and title, all parts must be saved in the same folder for music to work

1. Create a PowerPoint slides for:
 - a. Title
 - b. Intro thought
 - c. 1 slide for each work
 - d. Closing slide
2. Each line of slide should be separate.
3. Add picture representative of word on slide (selected from internet or personal photos) as background – each slide should have a different background.
4. Timed animation for each slide.
5. Appropriate slide transition – read each slide to determine appropriate transition.

6. Add music.
7. Watch and make adjustments as needed.
8. Present

Materials

A computer with PowerPoint, Internet and access to music sites.

Evaluation

- *Checklist for project elements

- *Comment on personal and literary links and reflections

- *Composition elements

Other Uses – Feedback

Heather Lindenmeyer - Making Your Writing (and Your Readers) Smile through Voice

Overview/Rationale:

This activity is completed near the beginning of the narrative unit in my College Preparatory Writing course, which is designed for juniors and seniors who are attending four-year universities. It is designed to equip students with tools to incorporate voice, make their writing unique and appeal to the given audience. The tricks I will teach are called smiley-face tricks, and they got their name from the smiley faces teachers would draw on students' papers to praise them for using voice. Although these tricks are implemented in the narrative writing unit, they are applicable to many different writing genres.

So often my students think writing for college means using flowery, gigantic vocabulary words and writing in an almost robotic manner. The smiley-face tricks are go-to tools they can utilize to make their writing come alive. The tricks eliminate the robotic feel in their writing and seem to be easy to understand and duplicate for the students.

Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will learn three types of smiley-face tricks, will write examples of their own in class, and will incorporate them into a narrative paragraph. Eventually, students will learn all eight tricks and will be required to use them in future writing assessments.

Materials:

For students: smiley-face tricks handout; writing utensil; paper/journal; highlighter

For teachers: pictures of given writing topics (projected on a Smartboard or other projecting venue); projector; smiley-face tricks handout; smiley-face stickers (optional); timer (optional)

Activities/Procedures:

1. Instruct students to take out paper and a writing utensil. (Withstand groans.)
2. Project a picture onto the Smartboard. Make sure the object in the picture is simple and one with which students will be familiar.
3. Ask the students to describe the object in one to two sentences, using as many specific details as they can.
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 two more times so students write about three different objects.
5. Introduce the concept of and rationale for the use of smiley-face tricks.

6. Choose one to three smiley-face tricks to teach in a given class period. With younger students, you may want to choose one. I have found my junior/senior level students can handle about two or three in a 45-minute class period. There are eight in all, and I am choosing to teach the magic three (#1 on the handout), figurative language (#2), and the hyphenated modifier (#7).
7. Read the examples given on the handouts with the students. Choose students to read the examples aloud and discuss with students WHY the examples work.
8. Have students try to write one “magic three” about each of the three objects. Ask for volunteers to share, and give each student who shares a smiley-face sticker to encourage others to share their writing. Also, have students type their examples on the board.
9. Repeat step 9, only have students write one example of each figurative language type (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification). They can use any of the three objects on which they previously wrote.
10. Repeat step 9, only have students write one hyphenated modifier for each object. Stress to students that they do not need to put a hyphen between the last word of the modifier and the noun it is modifying.
11. Now that students have learned all types of smiley-face tricks you have covered, put them to use!
12. Give students a choice of three to five topics. Project them on the Smartboard. Instruct students that you will be giving them 10-15 minutes to write a paragraph on one of the topics. You may give them guidelines (at least one example of the three smiley face tricks previously learned), or if it is a really competitive class, offer extra credit (or another prize) to the student who can incorporate the greatest number of smiley-face tricks in his/her paragraph. Of course, these tricks are more effective when used sparingly, but I have found that when you are introducing them, the more they can use, the better. Then they will buy into using them.
13. Ask students to highlight and label their smiley-face tricks in their paragraph (M3 = magic three; FL = figurative language – also label type; HM = hyphenated modifier).
14. Ask students to share their writing, either with the entire class or in a group setting. Give smiley-face stickers to volunteers.

Evaluation/Assessments:

1. Give students smiley-face tricks quizzes as they learn new tricks. Grade how you see fit, but I have chosen to grade on a 3-point scale (1: student attempted but the example does not follow correct format; 2: format is correct but example is awkward/still needs improvement; 3: great example that is effective and follows correct form). Students get one class period to complete quizzes, thus enforcing a “writing-on-demand” mindset that will prepare them for the ACT writing prompt or in-class essay exam writing in college or even other middle school/high school courses.

2. Require the students to find, highlight, and label smiley-face tricks in a classmate's piece of writing.
3. Require the students to use at least one example of each smiley-face trick in their future writing pieces and require them to highlight and label them.
4. When you read your students' writing, draw the smiley faces next to the tricks they use.
5. Create a smiley-face bulletin board in your classroom and have students type up their smiley-face tricks to place on the board. Offer them extra credit for EXCEPTIONAL use of smiley-face tricks.

Extension Activities:

1. Cooperate with an English teacher who works with students in younger grades. Require the older students to teach smiley-face tricks to younger students. These tricks are designed for students in grades 6-12. Grade the older students based on their mastery of the tricks they teach.
2. Point out smiley-face tricks in the literature you read in your classroom.
3. For a book report assignment, have students find a number of smiley-face tricks in their books, write them out (with page numbers), and identify what type of smiley-face trick each is.
4. For younger students, find the smiley-face tricks in literature and discuss WHY this example is an exceptional use of voice.

Works Cited

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Writing Assessments – Resource Handbook. Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research.

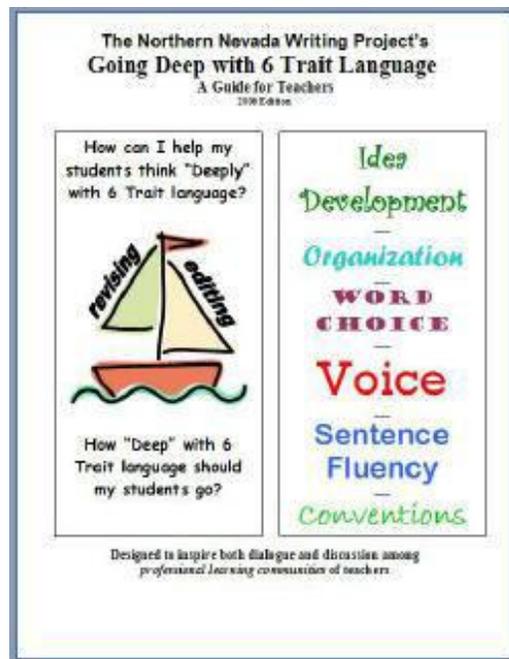
Vicki Martinez - Mental Snapshots

Vicki Martinez – ajm416@hotmail.com

Eastern Illinois Writing Project

July 24, 2008

- 1. OVERVIEW-** Turn on the television in your mind, take a snapshot, and be vivid.
- 2. RATIONALE-** Based on the 6 +1 Writing Traits, this activity will encourage students to increase their word choice. It will enable them to be more detailed and precise in expressing their ideas.



- 3. LEARNING OBJECTIVE-** The students will practice selecting words carefully to express complete thoughts using their childhood memories to paint a written picture for the reader.

4. MATERIALS: For this activity the following materials will be needed:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| -paper | -writing paper, pencil |
| -markers, colored pencils, crayons | -childhood memories |
| -stamps, stamp pad | -brain |
| -scissors | -access to internet |

5. ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES:

Memories/Selecting Word Choice

1. Teacher states, “Your memory is uncharted territory and like scrap bookers, it is your job to chart it on a big piece of blank paper.” Tell students to close their eyes and imagine a place/time that is/was very special to them.

**Explain that our brain is like a television. “If you close your eyes and remember, you can almost see that movie playing.

2. While eyes are closed the students will be instructed to “turn on the television”



in your brain. State to the class that you would like for them to....

- See their favorite time in their life that they may have had with a family member, friend, or animal. Notice the lands, buildings, people-everything. What colors do you see? What do you see on that television in your mind? Now while remembering that short television show,

-Tell students to pause their TV and get your camera and take a picture of your favorite part of the show. Remember all the details in that picture. Think about your 5 senses, smell, touch, sight, hear, and taste. Remember what made this time special.

1. Hand out construction paper. Share the childhood memory that you envisioned on your TV. Now take out your camera and take a snapshot of that memory.

2. On this construction paper, draw this memory. Remember all the little details that will help describe this memory. Think about the senses you were using at that time. After you have drawn this picture/memory, go back and write down words to describe what was happening at this time. Remember to think back to the television picture and make your words vivid. Get with a partner, and a thesaurus let them help you find words that help visualize your mental picture.

3. Students will go to computer lab with their pictures and write about their memory. Remind the students to remember the vivid words used in their description.

6. EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated on participation, staying on task, and behavior inside classroom and computer lab.

7. EXTENSION:

1. After paragraph is written, partner with someone new, read story aloud and have the new partner draw the picture based on the detailed description.
2. This would work across the curriculum. Teachers could have students turn their visual TV's on in multiple curricular areas. (Ex: Science – take a Nature Walk. Have students put on blindfolds, and use their other senses to describe what is happening.)
3. Students can try and imagine what life would be like of a person and write an autobiography of that person's life.

8. SOURCES

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Choice. < http://writingfix.com/6_traits/word_choice.htm>

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Memory." July – August 1999. < [http://www.discover-](http://www.discover-writing.com/aug99.html) [writing.com/aug99.html](http://www.discover-writing.com/aug99.html) >

Library of Congress. The Library of Congress: "American Life Histories:
manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940. <
<http://memory.loc.gov> >



Monica Moreschi - Using Voice in Nursery Rhymes

1. **Overview:** Using nursery rhymes to show voice in the first person format
2. **Rational:** This activity will be used to teach students about using voice in their writing. It will also touch on writing in 1st and 3rd person. Students 4th grade on through high school could benefit from the use of this activity.
3. **Learning Objective:** After completing this activity students will demonstrate the use of voice in their own writing.
4. **Materials:** the following materials will be needed for this activity.
 - Various nursery rhymes (2copies of each)
 - Writing utensils
 - Computers

5. Activities/Procedures

- a. The teacher will begin by asking if the class knows about 1st person and 3rd person in writing. The class will have a discussion of 1st and 3rd person and list examples of pronouns we use for each (I, me, he, she...).
- b. The teacher will read sentences to the students. As a class they will decide if the sentence is in 1st or 3rd person.
- c. After the difference between 1st and 3rd person is established, the teacher will then discuss voice. She will ask if students know what having voice in a paper means. She will ask if the students can name different emotions they may hear in a piece of writing (angry, sad, and happy).
- d. After discussing voice, the teacher will randomly pass out examples of various well known nursery rhymes. There will be two copies of each rhyme. Students will be paired up by the nursery rhyme they receive.
- e. In their groups students will read the nursery rhyme and brainstorm a list of characters in the rhyme. They may add characters that are relevant to the story but are not mentioned.
- f. Once the list has been constructed, students will read their poem and the list they have made. They will do this to get feedback from other students on any over looked characters. Students will then pick one

character from their list and write a story about what is going on in the nursery rhyme. The story should be written as if they are that character, in first person. They may use any style of voice they choose.

g. Students will then go to the computer lab where they will type their story.

h. Students will be asked to volunteer to read their story while the class tries to decide what kind of voice is being used.

6. **Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated by their participation in activities.

Papers will also be assessed for the correct use of first person, the use of voice and of grammatical errors.

7. **Extension:** An extension activity to this activity could be to have students now read nursery rhymes or fairy tales from other countries to include multiculturalism. The students could compare and contrast rhymes from the U.S. to one from another country.

8. Sources:

Henry, A., "Speaking up and Speaking Out: Examining "Voice" in a Reading and Writing Program." Journal of Literacy Research 30. 2 (1998): 233-252.

Moffet, J., Active Voice: A Writing Program across the Curriculum. New Jersey: Boynton. Cook Publishers, 1981.

Margo Riker - Kindergarten Literacy Centers

ACTIVITY

Lesson Objectives: To provide exploration and hands-on learning for students to practice, reinforce, and master kindergarten literacy skills. This particular lesson will focus on the literacy centers that I've implemented to enhance literacy growth throughout the kindergarten school year. This is just a small sampling of center activities as my kindergarten students participate in 4-25 centers a week.

Rationale: Kindergarten students love to socialize and play with their classmates. At this young age, it is difficult to maintain a kindergartener's attention for a long length of time. In my classroom, center work is between 7-15 minutes long. This shortened time period helps the student remain on task and complete the assignment. Learning centers can be individualized, completed with a partner, or be group focused. Centers help to provide differentiated instruction and include various activities to foster the different learning styles. Students are excited to participate in the activities because many of them consider the tasks as play and not work. Center work not only helps a child master a particular literacy skill but also integrates other literacy skills and subject areas.

☺Learning Center 1:

The students will make and decorate pom poms. The students will then play, dance, and cheer to the song "Who Let the Letters Out." During this activity the students will chant the alphabet letter sounds.

Rationale: This activity reinforces letter sounds, gross motor skills and rhythm. Movement and music help the students stay focused and active.

Supplies: Small brown or white paper bags, markers, masking tape, music, and a CD player

Directions for the activity:

1. Supply each student with 2 paper bags to make pom poms.
2. Ask the students to decorate both sides of the paper bags with markers.
3. Instruct the students to tear several ½ inch strips from the open end of the bag to the fold.

4. Roll the bottom section of the bag into a handle and wrap each handle with a long piece of masking tape.
5. Separate the torn sections to make the bag look more like a pom pom.
6. Put the music in the CD player and hit play.
7. Dance, sing, and move to the music reinforcing the letter sounds.

Writing Extensions for Center 1

K-2 Create an ISAT cheer

3-5 Cheer spelling words

6-8 Use as characters in a narrative

9-12 Teach or rewrite the school song

☺Learning Center 2:

The students will explore and create structures with various math manipulatives.

Rationale: This activity will improve the students' fine motor skills thus improving their handwriting.

Supplies: Legos, stackers, connecting cubes, and any other manipulative that the students can practice connecting, and breaking apart

Directions for the activity:

1. The teacher will place the manipulatives in the center of the table.
2. The students will be instructed to play with the items and create structures.
3. All manipulatives should be broken down and put back in the appropriate containers at the end of the center.

Writing Extensions for Center 2: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 Build a structure and tell a story about it.

3-5 Create an invention and tell its purpose.

Build a building and tell about the people inside.

6-8 Create step by step instructions to build your design.

Instruct the students to use complete sentences.

9-12 Colors of Lego represent parts of speech.

Create a sentence with proper structure.

Write a story to include all figures or items built.

☺Learning Center 3:

The students will practice forming the alphabet letters with Play-Doh.

Rationale: This is a fun alternative for students to learn and recognize the alphabet.

Supplies: Play-Doh of various colors and laminated alphabet worksheets

Directions for the activity:

1. Instruct the students to select a Play-Doh color and letter worksheet.
2. Students should roll the dough into a long cord shape.
3. Starting at the black dot on the letter, the student should trace the letter with the dough.
4. Students should complete both uppercase and lowercase letters.
5. Although it doesn't matter which letter the students begin with, they should be encouraged to form as many letters as possible.

Writing Extensions for Center 3: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 Roll the dough into letters to create students first name, using uppercase and lowercase when appropriate.

3-5 Create a character and write a story about it.

Illustrate vocabulary, rhyming and nonsense words.

6-8 Write about a childhood memory after playing with the Play-Doh.

9-12 Write a poem that reveals their associations with the specific letter and include their sensory and tactile experiences working with the dough.

Prewriting= Play with the dough to recall memories through smells, and tactile experiences.

Assessment of Literary Elements: Create a concrete representation of character conflict, theme, etc.

☺ **Learning Center 4:**

The students will retell nursery rhymes using felt boards and story manipulatives.

Rationale: This activity encourages story sequencing and individual creative voice.

Supplies: Teacher made felt boards, and velcro backed nursery rhyme cut-outs

Directions for the activity:

1. Supply each student with a felt board.
2. Place cut-outs in the middle of the center table.
3. Pair students with different abilities together.
4. Encourage students to take turns retelling the story to their assigned partners.

Writing Extensions for Center 4: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 One person can be the narrator and retell the story while the other group members act it out.

3-5 Combine characters from other stories to create a new story.

Draw out of the bag: character, plot, setting, and write a new story.

6-8 Create writing sequels- For example, telling the story from the spider's point of view or what injuries did Jack and Jill receive?

9-12 Characterization- Insert characters from literature into the nursery rhymes.

Make the nursery rhymes contemporary.

☺ **Learning Center 5:**

The students will practice identifying beginning, middle, and ending letter sounds in words.

Rationale: After learning individual letter sounds, the students need to practice blending the sounds together to create simple words.

Supplies: Laminated picture worksheets with Elkonin boxes and plastic alphabet letters

Directions for the activity:

1. Place worksheets and letters in the middle of the center table.
2. Instruct the students to select a worksheet and identify the picture.
3. After identifying the picture, the student should listen for the beginning sound and place the appropriate letter in the first box.
4. Repeat step 3 for the middle and ending sounds as well.
5. Ask students to check each others work.
6. Continue the activity using different worksheets as time will allow.

Writing Extensions for Center 5: (As charted by fellows and coaches during this demonstration activity)

K-2 The students will stand beside each other in a row of three and slightly bump each other shoulders to physically blend the letter sounds starting with beginning, middle, and ending sounds. The group will say the word together.

3-5 Partner work: One partner takes a letter from the word and you create a new word, or one partner makes a word and the other partner defines the word.

Spell spelling words

6-8 Draw a letter and work with alliteration skills.

9-12 Put prefixes, roots, suffixes in a box. Put the meanings of the words on cards.

Have students find combination of roots, prefixes, suffixes that make a word that means the word on the cards.

Make a secret word! Share words with the group and form a story.

Resources:

<http://drjean.org/>

Loggerhead Sea Turtle

Personal Narrative Lesson

Overview

After learning about the loggerhead sea turtle, students will construct a personal narrative. Sensory activities will be used to stimulate students' thinking and feeling for more descriptive writing. Students will create personal narratives from the sea turtles point of view that tells about their journey from egg to adulthood using correct writing skills.

Rationale

By listening to the plight of the loggerhead, thinking about the conflicts many turtles face, and drawing on students different intelligences, students will be able to build background knowledge to create better developed narratives.

To achieve my goals of writing as a tool for learning and as a means of enjoyment, I selected activities that would help them be aware of the subject matter.

These activities will provide students with experiences they can draw upon during the writing phase. There are opportunities to feel, think, and act like a sea turtle.

Learning Objective

The instructional objective for the narrative writing is to create a personal narrative from the view point of a sea turtle for an audience of peers. The students' motivation for writing is to entertain, while including factual information from their research on sea turtles. The piece is to include the literary techniques of 1st person narration, elaboration (details and synonyms), and dialogue, as well as the literary elements of characters, setting, plot, and conflict. The writing will help students know and apply science concepts that explain how living things function, adapt and change. Furthermore, it will demonstrate students' knowledge of how living things interact with each other and their environment. The assignments will help students develop their thinking and writing skills. Through the written assignments, the children will understand what is meant by author's purpose and audience.

Materials

Visual aid of a turtle

The book: *Into The Sea* by Brenda Z. Guiberson

Loggerhead Turtle passage

Ocean sounds CD

Maze worksheet

Narrative story frame worksheet

Synonym word file folder

Student writing materials

Writing rubric

Background

The teacher will provide this information in a persuasive story telling format.

- There are seven species of sea turtles in the world: loggerhead, green, Kemp's ridley, olive ridley, Australian flatback, Hawksbill, and leatherback.
- All sea turtles are listed as endangered or threatened except the Australian flatback.
- Sea turtles have adapted to life in a marine environment and have evolved flippers instead of legs.
- Sea turtles have large flat paddle like limbs that make them fast swimmers in the ocean, but very slow and clumsy on land.
- Unlike land turtles, sea turtle cannot hide in their shells
- They eat jellyfish, sponges, crabs, fish, and/or plants depending on the species.
- Length can range from about 2-8 feet and weight can range from 100-1800 pounds.
- Some species can live up to 70 years.
- Sea turtles lay about 100 eggs in deep holes they have dug in the sand.
- The eggs hatch in about 2 months.

- The hatchlings dig their way out and head instinctively to the water.
- There are many enemies for the sea turtle. The young turtles are prey to birds, crabs, and fish. The adult turtles have two enemies sharks and humans.

Activities/Procedures

1. Explain that all turtles are not the same. Explain there are 4 types of turtles: tortoises, aquatic, land and sea turtles. Present Murtle the Turtle to the class. Encourage visual observations. Make inferences about his life. Then ask students what they know about sea turtles. Correct misconceptions and give students background information from above in storytelling format. Appeal to the students (Interpersonal Intelligences) by explaining the plight of the sea turtle (turtle products, changing beaches, hunters, beach buggies, pollution, and fishing nets). **15 Minutes**
2. Students will read in pairs the short story *Into the Sea*. Afterward students will write in their journals describing their feelings (Intrapersonal Intelligence) or they may choose to write about the steps they would take to help the endangered sea turtle. Students that finish early may work on the turtle maze worksheet and/or draw a picture of the sea turtle (Visual Intelligence). Allow time for students to share their writings in small groups. **20 Minutes**
3. When all students have had time to complete their writing/sharing, the class will listen to ocean sound bytes and move like a sea turtle (Bodily Kinesthetic). **5 Minutes**
4. Have students read aloud the personal narrative from the Loggerhead turtle point of view in *A Tale of Two Turtles*. Identify story elements of character, setting, conflict, and resolution. **5 Minutes**
5. Give students the Sea Turtle Story Frame and ask them to complete the graphic aid to help them organize their thoughts for their own personal narrative. **10 Minutes**
6. Then ask students to construct a personal narrative from the point of a sea turtle (Verbal-Linguistic). Pass out the writing prompt, grading rubric, and synonym file folders. **10 Minutes**

Evaluation/Assessments

- Does the writing help students recognize audience and author's purpose?
- Does the story entertain?
- Does the piece include literary techniques: 1st person narration, elaboration (details and synonyms), and dialogue, as well as the literary elements of characters, setting, plot, and conflict?
- Is the writing organized sequentially?
- Does the writing address the writing prompt?
- Did the student follow the rubric?

Extensions

- Consider adaptation that would help the sea turtle survive by drawing adaptations for the sea turtle (Such as: talons like an eagle to gather food, teeth like a tiger to defend himself).
- Research 2 types of turtles and write a compare/contrast expository.
- Split class into 2 groups "for and against" sea turtle conservation for discussion. Then have students write persuasive paragraphs that defend their point of views.
- Write letters to the editor persuading beach visitors to make the beaches safer sea turtle hatchlings.

Sources

Strategies for Writers Zaner Bloser, Inc. 2008 writing conventions

<http://www.okaloosa.k12.fl.us/bluewater/seaturtle/graph.htm> lesson ideas

<http://octopus.gma.org/turtles/tale2.html> narrative

<http://www.tourdeturtles.megotta.com/TurtlePlayer.aspx> animated movements

Loggerhead turtle

I'm a loggerhead sea turtle. I'm one of the lucky ones.

I hatched with [120 brothers and sisters](#) on a warm June night a few years ago. I may be the only one still alive. We all hatched together from a nest our mother dug in the sand high up on a beach in Florida. At least we all got to hatch, nearly two months after our mother had left us there. Some nests get raided by poachers or raccoons or dogs. Even ants attack turtle nests.

I remember our race to the sea. We had already hatched a couple of nights before. We used this little hard knob on our heads to crack the [shell](#), an egg tooth. Mine fell off long ago. We were hiding under the sand until all of a sudden some of us started to dig for the surface. The excitement was contagious! Soon we were all squirming and wiggling our way out of the nest.

We were drawn to the light on the horizon, instinctively knowing that that was the direction to safety. But some of my brothers and sisters saw the lights of the hotels behind us and scrambled up the beach into the dunes. I shudder to think of what happened to them when the sun rose the next day.

I was too busy to worry about them at the time. Crabs, raccoons, and sea birds attacked from all sides. Some of my family fell into tire tracks on the beach. The ditches held them until the predators found them. I scuttled down the gentle slope to the sea as fast as my flippers would push me. Water! It was my only thought, my only chance.

A wave caught me and snatched me away from the sharp beak of a herring gull. I dove as deep as I could. I swam under a school of mackerel waiting for us just offshore. How did they know we were coming? I swam and swam. I only came to the surface for a quick breath and then I'd dive again, knowing my protection lay in the dark shadows of the sea.

My front [flippers](#) helped me glide through the water. My rear flippers steered my course. My shell is trim and streamlined, so it doesn't slow me down when I swim. I only regret that it's too small to let me pull my head and flippers inside it as I hear land turtles can. But the sea buoys me up, so I can grow much larger than any pond turtle can. I might reach 300 pounds some day.

That time is a long way away. I'm still young. I've found [refuge](#) in the deep blue Sargasso Sea, far out in the Atlantic Ocean. I live among the sargassum weed. Sometimes a small Portuguese man-of-war passes by, its beautiful blue sail pushed before the wind. It's such a tasty jellyfish, I hardly mind the welts its stingers leave all over my head. It makes a welcome change from eating seaweed.

Someday I hope to grow up and return to the beach where I was born to start my own family. Maybe I'll be the one in a thousand who makes it. Come look me up in about 25 years and see.

Sea Turtle Graphic Organizer

The Dangers The Sea Turtle Has As An Egg

Danger

Who Helped

How the Turtle Escaped

The Dangers The Sea Turtle Has As A Hatchling

Danger

Who Helped

How the Turtle Escaped

The Dangers The Sea Turtle Has As An Adult

Danger

Who Helped

How the Turtle Escaped

Sea Turtle Story Frame

Rising Actions/Plot

Problem 1:

Problem 2:

Character

Setting

Resolution/Ending

Beginning

Lead

Josh Robison – Revision Techniques

Overview: Students will practice an assortment of revision techniques designed to increase their skills as both writer and editor.

Rationale: Writing is an organic process and thus never truly finished. Almost all writing can be improved through revision. Students need to practice that philosophy in order to grow as both writer and learner, and they need specific skills pertaining to the practice of quality revision.

Learning Goals: As a result of this lesson, students will learn to see revision as a crucial element of the writing process, and they will demonstrate revision techniques suitable for individualized editing, peer editing, and teacher enhanced revision.

Materials: Students will need access to writing utensils, paper, and computers. The instructor will provide handouts and grouping tools.

Activities:

1. The instructor will ask students to visualize their hometown for a few moments.
2. Students will make a list of 8-12 “Selling Points” about their town with the assumption that someone wishes to purchase their entire hometown on E-Bay.
3. Once the list is finished, students will retrieve a packet of flower seeds from the instructor to serve as both a visual aid and a grouping strategy.
4. Students will log onto their computer and get into their “Flower Groups.”
5. Students will read examples of real estate advertisements, then create their own advertisement for their hometown.
6. Once complete, students will begin to revise their writing sample, beginning with individualized editing.

“Seat Techniques Checklist”

Have you read your writing aloud?

Have you read your writing sentence by sentence, backwards?

Have you edited your writing for spelling errors?

Have you edited your writing for punctuation errors?

Do all your sentences contain appropriate subject/verb agreement?

Are all verbs in the appropriate tense?

Have you implemented at least eight “selling points” for your hometown?

Does your advertisement contain contact information?

“Feet Techniques”

Students will move from writer to peer editor and read each advertisement in their group.

Students will comment on each advertisement in three ways:

1. An exclamatory sentence, in green bold, telling the writer what was liked the most about their advertisement.
2. An interrogative sentence, in blue italics, asking the writer a question about their advertisement.
3. A declarative/imperative sentence, in green, offering the writer a specific suggestion.

Student will return to their writing and read the peer editing responses, then walk away from the piece in order to look at it fresh at a later time.

Upon returning, students will re-read both their advertisement and the responses, then revise their advertisement again.

“Meet Techniques”

Students will meet with their “Teacher/Student.”

Students will move from writer to teacher, and again make comments on their “student’s” advertisement.

Students will return to their advertisement on the computer and revise again based on their “teacher’s” suggestions.

Printed, final copies will be turned into the instructor, who will publish the pieces in a Real Estate Brochure.

Assessment: Students will be assessed based on their involvement with each revision technique.

Extension: The class will discuss additional revision techniques for possible use in later demonstrations/lessons.

Sources:

Writing Project Fellows

“Pruning Too Early: The Thorny Issue of Grading Student Writing.” Stephanie Wilder*

“Revising Revision: How My Students Transformed Writer’s Workshops.” Jan Matsuoka*

Both essays can be found in Breakthroughs: Classroom Discoveries About Teaching Writing published by the National Writing Project, 2002

Lee Roll – Who Am I? *Create A New Adjective to Describe Yourself*

Rationale (subject area, concept, and target audience): This is an effective writing activity to use close to the beginning of the school year but after students have some knowledge of one another. The immediate audience of the essay is the instructor and the writer's classmates, but the essay could also be adapted as a response to composition requirements on college admission and/or housing applications. It is targeted for secondary English students, but could be modified for elementary, middle school, and college students.

Learning Objective: After students complete these activities, they will have a better understanding of themselves and their classmates. Students will have practice in using dictionaries and thesauruses; writing essays; using parts of speech; understanding denotation and connotation; and using concrete detail.

Time Required: one or two periods in the classroom followed by one or two periods in the computer lab.

Materials/Procedures:

“Bumper stickers”: construction paper or card stock cut into strips

Markers, colored pencils, crayons, etc.

Thesauruses and dictionaries

Paper and pencils or pens

Copies of “The Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll (available at www.poets.org)

Copies of Student Models 1 and 2

Computer

What to Do:

Part 1: Make a personal bumper sticker

Each student makes a “Who I Am” list of at least “a baker’s dozen” of values, activities, hobbies, ideas, and favorite things (foods, environments, songs, movies, etc.) that he/she considers important.

Students design and create a bumper sticker in which the letters of their name or their initials are constructed with drawings of the words included on the “Who I Am” list. Leave space on the bumper sticker to add the new adjective created in Part 2 as a predicate adjective.

Part 2: Create a new adjective to describe yourself with a little help from your friends

Students choose or are placed in groups of four or five. Talk about individual bumper stickers, elaborating with information, anecdotes, etc. Ask questions.

Group task: Make a list of at least five as-perfect-as-possible adjectives for each member of the group. Choose words that describe personality and physical traits. (Use positive words please!)

One way to make a list that is especially interesting to students is to provide them with Chinese birth year/personality trait charts available at no charge from the Center for Chinese Studies at the University of Michigan (1080 S. University, Ste. 3668, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1106; phone: 734.764.6308; fax: 734.764.5540). Students find their birth year (Year of the Dragon, 1988; Year of the Snake, 1989, etc.), read and discuss the personality traits associated with the year, then choose the five most appropriate words from the chart to describe each student.

Using dictionaries, group members research both familiar and unfamiliar words to verify that the definitions fit the person; then, using thesauruses, look up each of the chosen words to see if a synonym could be more fitting than the word they selected originally. (Students need to remember that “for the writer, there are no synonyms, only perfect words.” Also they need to remember that the thesaurus is both their best friend and their worst enemy—they need to know denotations and connotations of every word.)

Read “The Jabberwocky” by Lewis Carroll. Find the made-up adjectives and discuss common suffixes of adjectives.

Each group member uses his/her list of five to create a made-up “Jabberwocky-style” adjective from some of the syllables of the adjectives selected by the group. The new word should “sound” like the person. *Example:* quiet, contemplative, wholesome, bookish, charitable = charquitoomish

Part 3: Write an essay

ASSIGNMENT:

Some college applications and scholarships and many first semester Composition assignments present students with the prompt, “Tell us about yourself.”

After reading the student model, write an essay that tells about who you are by defining your made-up word. Use activities, hobbies, values, ideas, and favorite things symbolized on your bumper sticker as your support detail.

Concrete sensory details are necessary. For example, in the student model, Jessica writes that she is “hard to understand,” but that phrase doesn’t say enough; it is not concrete or sensory. By adding support details about clothing, driving, and eating, she offers specific images that paint a picture for the reader.

Use your made-up adjective as other parts of speech, attending to likely prefixes and suffixes. Notice how Jessica changed the suffixes of her adjective, *sipcof*, to make it into an adverb, *sipcofly*; a noun, *sicofer*; a verb, *sipcofin*.

Your essay should be about _____ words. Put the computer word count at the end of your paper.

Your paper is DUE _____

Make your essay great! Make it sing YOU!

STUDENT MODEL: essay by Jessica Baker, junior at Oakland High School

Sipcof by Jessica Baker

Sipcof. I am a person who is quite *sipcofing*. The type of person who walks ever so *sipcofly* down the hallway into the classroom. A true *sipcofer*.

That would be me. Jessica Baker. The creator and almighty inventor of the word *sipcof*. Why create a word you might ask. When I open the dictionary, I see all kinds of nouns, verbs, and adjectives, but none are for me. Coquettish? Yes, but not just that. Fiery? Yes, but there's so much more! Gossipy? I say more like stating the facts. *Sipcof*.

"Ah, I see! The *sip* from gossipy, the *co* from coquettish and the *f* from fiery! The combination of coquette, fiery, and gossipy! Genius!" No. Not at all. A *sipcofer* is not just a flirty, determined chatterbox ... It's me!

I am the type of girl who will watch a football game with my face painted half blue and half orange, guzzle a soda, and out-burp every guy in the room. I am the type of girl who can show up at the high school prom in a \$400 gown, nails done, hair in place, eyelashes painted, four-inch heels, ready to dazzle my classmates. I am the type of girl who will pig out on pizza and pop one day, and eat nothing but whole grain rice and herbal green tea the next. I will buy you a present for Halloween and St. Patrick's Day, but totally forget your birthday and Christmas.

Sound like a *sipcof*? Do you understand who a *sipcof* is? A *sipcof* is hard to understand. She would give anything to be married, but turn every prospect away. Spend hours doing her hair and makeup, only to end up wearing sweatpants. Speed like crazy, but turn-signal exactly 100 feet from the stop sign before pausing the vehicle for exactly 3.5 seconds. Drive with her knee, but turn with the hand-over-hand technique. The type who would order a triple whopper, biggie fries, and a large chocolate dip cone, with a *diet* coke.

A *sipcof* is not indecisive; she's just hard to process. What is she thinking? What is she going to wear to school today? What will she say next? Why is she doing the chicken dance in the middle of Wal*Mart?

Sipcofs are crazy. They do things on a whim, but things always, almost, turn out just right. I think today I will try out for cheerleading. And tomorrow, I will join the Future Farmers of America. I think today seems like a good day to sleep outside on the cold soft dirt. And tomorrow I think I will stay in a fancy Hilton Hotel suite. Why not carry my Louis Vuitton purse to my after-school job at McDonalds? And maybe today I will dye my hair platinum blonde, and pass the ACT with a 36. A *sipcof* is all about breaking stereotypes.

So you want to be a *sipcof*? You can try and try, but *sipcofs* are born, not made. If you think you would like to become a *sipcof*, I'd advise not trying. Make up your own word. Be your own person. Live your life how you want to, not necessarily how you think you should. Keep on *sipcofin* 'on!

Evaluation

Rubric: WORD CHOICE (Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory)

5 *Words convey the intended message in a precise, interesting, and natural way. The words are powerful and engaging.*

- A. Words are **specific** and **accurate**. It is easy to understand just what the writer means.
- B. **Striking words and phrases** often catch the reader's eye and linger in the reader's mind.
- C. Language and phrasing are **natural, effective, and appropriate** for the audience.
- D. **Lively verbs** add energy while **specific nouns** and **modifiers** add depth.
- E. Choices in language **enhance** the **meaning** and **clarify** understanding.
- F. **Precision** is obvious. The writer has taken care to put just the right word or phrase in just the right place.

3 *The language is functional, even if it lacks much energy. It is easy to figure out the writer's meaning on a general level.*

- A. Words are **adequate and correct in the general in a general sense**, and they support the meaning by not getting the way.
- B. Familiar **words and phrases communicate** but rarely capture the reader's imagination.
- C. **Attempts at colorful language** show a willingness to stretch and grow but sometimes reach beyond the audience (thesaurus overload!)
- D. Despite a **few successes**, the writing is marked by **passive verbs, everyday nouns, and mundane modifiers**.
- E. The words and phrases are **functional** with only **one or two fine moments**.
- F. The words may be **refined in a couple of places**, but the language looks more like **the first thing that popped into the writer's mind**.

1 *The writer demonstrates a limited vocabulary or has not searched for words to convey specific meaning.*

- A. Words are so **nonspecific** and **distracting** that only a **very limited meaning** comes through.
- B. Problems with language **leave the reader wondering**. Many of the **words just don't work** in this piece.

C. Audience has not been considered. **Language is used incorrectly** making the message secondary to the misfires with the words.

D. **Limited vocabulary** and/or **misused parts of speech** seriously impair understanding.

E. Words and phrases are so **unimaginative** and **lifeless** that they detract from the meaning.

F. **Jargon** or **clichés** distract or mislead. **Redundancy** may distract the reader.

Extension: Use the essay as one of a series of vignettes, similar to those in *A House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (New York: Vintage, 1991)..

See Dixon, Chris Jennings. *Lesson Plans for Teaching Writing*. Urbana: NCTE, 2007.

Lesson 5: “Using Specific Details in Narration”

Lesson 42: Lists websites for students to access to find their learning style

Sources:

Goldberg, Natalie. *Writing Down the Bones*. Boston: Shambhala, 1986.

Kristin Runyon - Text Reformulation

Overview: Students will demonstrate their comprehension of a text by reformulating, or rewriting, the text into a different format. This demonstration lesson

Rationale: According to Lesley Roessing, “it is important for [students] to return to a text [when finished] and interact with it to become skilled and reflective readers” (108). Text reformulation is a synthesis activity that requires students to “transform the text into a different format” (109). Text reformulation requires rereading and results in increased comprehension and utilization of inference and questioning techniques (109). Without realizing it, students are finding the main idea and making inferences of their independent texts automatically, while also analyzing and evaluating the newly created texts (Beers 162). Students are also more likely to complete a project and more successful when they are allowed to select their own project formats (Roessing 110).

Scope: These two activities will be taught on separate days early in the school year during a week of lessons on various text reformulations. The FUN Story and Found Poem are two of approximately five text reformulations that I will present to the students; the students will then choose from this catalog of text reformulations throughout the school year to either demonstrate their comprehension and analysis of independent reading or to synthesize various readings within a literary unit and to demonstrate comprehension of a literary period.

Learning Goals: 1B Stage H.5, 3B Stage H.5, 3B Stage J.3

Preparation and Materials

- Photocopy Micro Fiction short stories to use as sample readings; number the lines to use for citations
- Students need to provide a pen and paper.
- Teacher needs to provide a format for recording class-created responses.

Activities:

1. Define text reformulation and explain the purpose:

To students: Text reformulation is changing the form of a text from the way it was written—as a short story, poem, novel, chapter, movie—and rewriting it into a different form. A short story can be rewritten as a poem, but it can also be rewritten into a newspaper front page, a scrapbook, or a structured story. If you can rewrite a text into a new format by including the main details, omitting lesser ones, making connections to other texts, and focusing on a theme or lesson, then you will have used not only comprehension skills, but also inference skills, editing and revision skills, and synthesis skills.

2. Have students read the Micro Fiction short story “This Is How I Remember It” by Betsy Kemper. When everyone is finished, explain the FUN story format. Model reformulating/rewriting the Micro Fiction story into a FUN format. After creating the first two or three pairs, elicit student-created lines. When the FUN story is finished, have students brainstorm themes appropriate for the original story; choose one and write it in FUN format as the first or final line of the story.

Discuss with the class the pros and cons of writing/identifying the theme before and after writing the FUN story.

Have the students read a second Micro Fiction short story and reformulate it in to a FUN story individually or in small groups.

- **FUN Story—Fortunately/Unfortunately Story**
 - **Retell the story in pairs of lines. The lines should be “Fortunately, . . . ; unfortunately. . .” OR “Unfortunately, . . . ; fortunately, . . .”**
 - **Reformat the original story into chronological order and create cause and effect pairs using the FUN format.**
 - **The teacher may set a minimum number of pairs for the reformulation (for example, 10 pairs = 9 plot pairs plus the theme pair). You may require a certain number written with “fortunately” first or “unfortunately” first.**

3. After creating the FUN story, introduce the Found Poem format. Model reformulating/rewriting the same story into a Found Poem. After creating the first two or three lines, elicit student-found lines. Emphasize citing the found lines. Be sure to model the revising and editing process. Students seem to struggle with selecting and combining only phrases. I suggest choosing writing the first stanza or two with quoted sentences, then going back and editing the selected sentences into phrases and arranging the phrases poetically.

When the Found Poem is finished, have students look for a line or phrase in the story that represents the theme used in the FUN story. If a line cannot be found, then the students need to brainstorm a poetic line to represent the theme.

Have the students read a third Micro Fiction short story and reformulate it in to a Found Poem individually or in small groups. I would choose a third story so that the text is unfamiliar to the students, which allows them to practice creating the poem after a cold read.

- **Found Poem**

- **Retell the story by finding lines in the original text that convey the main details (characters and events) and theme. You will reorganize these lines, and add a few of your own if needed, into poem format. This format will rely on imagery and phrases rather than sentences. It does not need to rhyme or follow a rhythm.**
- **At the end of each line of poetry, you will need to cite the page (or line) number from the text.**
- **Handout a copy of “Found Poem Instructions” from ReadWriteThink. The teacher may modify these instructions as needed.**
-

Assignment: No assignment results directly from this activity. The purpose of the lesson is to teach two of the five+ activities in my Text Reformulation catalog. Students will then one activity from the catalog to complete future assignments, such as independent readings and synthesizing a literary unit.

Assessment: In the past, I have set a minimum number of lines required for a grade (10 pairs for a FUN Story and 20 lines with 15 of them found for the Found Poem). The grades were based on having the minimum number of lines AND recounting the story accurately.

Adaptations and Differentiation for Text Reformulations:

1. Instead of the “Fortunately. . . ; unfortunately,” format, students could use

- When. . . , then
- If. . . , then. . . , so
- Somebody Wanted But So (Beers 144-149)

You don’t have to teach each format, but you should discuss with the class how to choose from the different formats.

2. Instead of the Found Poem, students could use one of three biography poem formats (What I Lost, I Am, Bio-Poem) or a Shrink Poem format.

3. For students requiring more structure, use a graphic organizer such as a timeline, a plot map, or episode notes. (Jim Burke’s book Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom is an excellent resource!) Again emphasize that the student should not be including every detail but, instead, needs to choose the main events. You could assign a maximum number of events to be included (because I have had a student create a 10-foot long timeline). Also, create a place on the graphic organizer for the student to write the theme.

4. Other options for text reformulations:

- Children’s picture book
- Scrapbook
- Mind mapping (Daniels 60-66)
- Newspaper front page (Daniels 174-181)

5. Text reformulations are not limited to literature; students can prove their understanding of a chapter in a content-area textbook: a FUN Story about the Civil War; a Found poem about photosynthesis.

Resources:

Beers, Kylene. *When Kids Can't Read—What Teachers Can Do: A Guide for Teachers 6-12*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003. Print.

Burke, Jim. *Tools for Thought: Graphic Organizers for Your Classroom*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2002. Print.

Daniels, Harvey, Steven Zemelman, and Nancy Steinke. *Content-Area Writing: Every Teacher's Guide*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2007. Print.

“Empowering Readers.” *CTAP Region 4*. California Department of Education. 28 October 2008. Web. 5 May 2010. <<http://www.ctap4.net/projects/information-literacy/51-information-literacy/93-empowering-readers.html>>

“Found Poem Instructions.” *ReadWriteThink*. IRA/NCTE. 2009. Web. 22 June 2010. <<http://www.readwritethink.net/files/resources/printouts/foundpoem.pdf>>

Micro Fiction: An Anthology of Really Short Stories. Ed. Jerome Stern. New York: W. W. Norton, 1996. Print.

Roessing, Lesley. *The Write to Read: Response Journals that Increase Comprehension*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin, 2009. Print.

Screenplays for You. <http://sfy.ru/>

“Strategy Spotlight: Text Reformulation.” *Living Literacy I.8*. Newberry High School. March 2007. Web. 5 May 2010. <<http://www.newberry.k12.sc.us/nbhs/literacypage/Newsletter%20I,%208.pdf>>

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“This is How I Remember It” Found Poem

Created by EIWP SI 2010

Red berries

Joey popping

Mags licking and chewing

I don't

Smiles look bloody

Moms

Panic

Mine doesn't

Screams

Shakes

“Oh-oh-oh”

Yanked around the house

Medicine thick and purple

Bathroom

Vomit everywhere

Joey in the toilet

Red

Mags in the sink

Red

Me in the tub

Yellow

Corn muffins from lunch

Turn to my mother a for touch

I told you

This will teach you anyway

“This is How I Remember It” FUN Story

Created by EIWP SI 2010

Fortunately, the narrator ate corn muffins for lunch; unfortunately, his friends ate the red berries.

Unfortunately, the berries made their lips blood red; fortunately, the berries looked like Ju-Ju Bees.

Fortunately, the narrator didn't eat the berries; unfortunately, his mother didn't believe him.

Unfortunately, the mothers believe that the berries are poisonous; fortunately, the mothers saw the kids eating the berries.

Fortunately, the one of the mothers has syrup of Ipecac; unfortunately, all three children have to drink it. Fortunately, the medicine gets the poison out of their systems; unfortunately, the bathroom is covered in vomit.

Fortunately, Joey and Mags vomit the red poisonous berries; unfortunately, the narrator vomits his yellow corn muffins from lunch.

Fortunately, Joey and Mags are comforted by their mothers; unfortunately, the narrator's mom smokes a cigarette and says, “This will teach you a lesson.”

Unfortunately, life isn't always fair; fortunately, those are hard lessons we actually learn from.

Examples of ACE Writing

ACE Writing Assignment

- You will be given rubric to use as a guide, but you also need to attach it to your paragraph.
- Topics for the ACE paragraph are:
 - How the story exemplifies the literary period
 - How the story exemplifies one of the themes of American literature (American Dream/American Nightmare, Freedom, Frontier, Individuality, Journey [quester, place to go, reason to go, challenges, life lesson] Moral Struggle, Past vs. Present, Rebellion vs. Conformity, Rite of Passage/Initiation, Search for Identity)
 - Identify a theme other than one of the ten themes of Am. Lit.
 - Explain the significance of the title

By RD:

“Bernice Bobs Her Hair” best exemplifies the American Nightmare theme. “She’s absolutely hopeless! [. . .] Oh, I know what you’re going to say! So many people have told you how pretty and sweet she is, and how she can cook! What of it? She has a bum time. Men don’t like her.” This is when Bernice over hears Marjorie talking to Mrs. Harvey about how boring Bernice is. “[T]he barber swung her round to face the mirror, and she flinched at the full extent of the damage that had been wrought [. . .]. It was ugly as sin—she had known it would be ugly as sin.” This is when Bernice’s hair cut goes wrong, causing her to lose her new popularity. “Bending over she found one of the braids of Marjorie’s hair, flowed it u with her hand to the point nearest the head, and then holding it a little slack so that the sleeper would feel no pull, she reached down with the shears and severed it.” This is when Bernice gets her revenge on Marjorie, and Marjorie gets the nightmare of losing some of her beautiful hair. “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” reminds me of the book Revenge. In the book Revenge, Ashley gets a new stepsister who takes all her popularity. So Ashley gets her revenge by starting bad rumors about her stepsister, which forces her new father to file a divorce with her mother. Thus, Ashley’s stepsister and stepfather leave town. Bernice and Marjorie connect with to the real world because they show how cruel and jealous girls can be.

By BC:

“Bernice Bobs Her Hair best exemplifies the Search for Identity literary theme. Bernice goes to visit her cousin, Marjorie, and her visit doesn’t go as expected. Marjorie is a popular girl who isn’t afraid to speak her mind, while Bernice is more of a quiet, laid back type of person. Their personalities begin to clash when Bernice overhears Marjorie talking about how she just doesn’t know how to act socially. “She has a bum time. Men don’t like her” (5). Bernice confronts her cousin about this, and they agree that Marjorie will try to get her friends to like Bernice. “If you’ll tell me why your friends aren’t—aren’t interested in me, I’ll see if I can do what you want me to” (9). This is when Bernice tries to start searching for her identity. She does everything Marjorie tells her to do in order to gain friends and be liked. Marjorie requested many changes for Bernice. “I was considering whether we hadn’t bob your hair” (11). Bernice ponders this radical change and decides to go through with it in order to attract attention and to try to define who she is. This story relates to the series of books called The Clique because in both stories there are teenagers trying to become popular and at the same time be their own persons. “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” also ties into Modernism because there doesn’t always have to be a happy ending. These stories are real-life happenings that could occur. In this story, Bernice goes through many tribulations in a hope to find out who she is.

By LF:

I think the story “Bernice Bobs Her Hair” is an example of the literary theme search for identity. Bernice struggles to make a place for herself in a new town, and it comes down to her taking tips from her popular cousin Marjorie. Marjorie starts by telling her how to act, she says, “The more parts of yourself you can afford to forget the more charm you have.” She tells her men notice even a young woman’s eyebrows and hers are “black and lustrous” and need to be taken care of. The girls go as far as making a rumor that Bernice plans to bob her hair to gain her popularity. Bernice goes to a dance, and asks a popular boy, “Do you believe in bobbed hair?” so that the table she’s sitting at will give her attention. I think this book connects to the movie Clueless when an outcast is made popular by two rich girls for fun and ends up becoming more popular than them. The story also connects to the movie Cruel Intentions when an innocent girl is changed promiscuous by another girl in her new town.

Runyon’s Scoring Rubric for an ACE Response

	4 points	3 points	2 points	1 point
<p>A</p> <p>Answer the Question</p>	Restatement of the question with all parts answered and all answered correctly or accurately.	Restatement of the question with all parts answered. Answers are mostly correct or accurate.	Restatement of the question with all parts answered, but answers are partially correct or accurate.	Restatement of the question with some parts answered but answers are partially correct or accurate.
			OR	
			Restatement of the question with some parts answered, but the parts answered are mostly correct or accurate.	
<p>C</p> <p>Cite Evidence</p>	At least 3 appropriate or strong examples from the text are cited correctly.	Two (2) appropriate or strong examples from the text are cited correctly.	At least 2 appropriate examples from the text are included, but are cited loosely or inaccurately.	Only 1 appropriate example from the text is cited.
<p>E</p> <p>Expand</p>	At least 2 connections (text to text or text to world) are clearly related and connected.	One (1) connection (text to text or text to world) is clearly related and connected.	At least 2 connections are clearly related and connected, but all are personal (text to self)	Only 1 personal connection is clearly related or connected.

connections.

OR

Only 1 connection may be included, or other connections are personal (text to self).

At least 2 connections are made, but they are not clearly connected.

Rachel Stuart - “Using Dialogue to Improve Writing”

1. OVERVIEW: Using Dialogue to Improve Writing

2. RATIONALE: This activity is meant to encourage students to use different strategies in their writing, specifically incorporating dialogue when telling a story. Students ranging from elementary through college could benefit from this experience. This activity allows students to think outside the box while incorporating the use of dialogue.

3. LEARNING OBJECTIVE: After completing this activity, students will demonstrate the ability to use dialogue in their writing.

4. MATERIALS: For this activity the following materials will be needed:

**The Mystery of Harris Burdick* written by Chris VanAllsburg

* Paper

* Writing Utensils

* Use of chalkboard or whiteboard

* List of dialogue rules

5. ACTIVITIES/PROCEDURES:

A. The teacher will begin by asking what dialogue is. The teacher will call on students in the classroom to explain dialogue, adding any missing information as needed. The teacher will also ask what benefits using dialogue could have on students’ writing. The teacher will lead the class in a discussion, adding relevant material when needed.

B. The teacher will show a sentence on the board and ask the students what should be completed in order to make this sentence exhibit the correct use of dialogue. The students can come up to the board and add commas, quotation marks, capital letters, etc.

C. After reviewing the rules of dialogue, the teacher will introduce the book *The Mystery of Harris Burdick*, giving background information on the book. This information is located within the front cover of the book.

D. After peaking the students' interest, the teacher will show the students pictures from the book. The students will be asked to choose a picture and create a story about that picture while incorporating some form of dialogue.

E. After approximately 25-30 minutes, the students will work with a partner to share their stories and mark each other's lines of dialogue.

F. Volunteers will share their creative writing with the class, or students will nominate others' writings to be shared.

7. **EVALUATION:** Students will be assessed for the completion of the activity as well as using their class time wisely. Stories could also be collected and graded for having dialogue incorporated and then for the correct use of dialogue.

8. EXTENSION: An extension for this project could be that the students use this story as a first draft and meet with peer editing groups to improve the quality of writing. All of the class stories could be published into a book titled something like, *The Real Stories from Harris Burdick* or *Mattoon Middle School's Real Stories of Harris Burdick*.

9. SOURCES:

A. *Collaborating to Write Dialogue* from <http://www.nwp.org> by Janis Cramer.

B. *Comma Sense: A Fun-damental Guide to Punctuation* by Richard Lederer and John Shore.

Name: _____

Language Arts: Writing Dialogue

Directions:

Choose a picture(s) from the book *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*, and write a dialogue about what is happening in the picture. Remember that a dialogue is a conversation between two or more characters. You must have three characters with at least five lines of dialogue each (you will have 15 – 20 lines total). Each line of dialogue must be correctly punctuated. Follow the rules below.

DIALOGUE PUNCTUATION RULES:

1. Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation – a person’s exact words!!!

INCORRECT: My mother said that, “I should come home right after school today.”

CORRECT: My mother said, “Come home right after school today, sweetie.”

2. A direct quotation begins with a capital letter.

“Homework should be done at home,” I heard her mutter.

3. When a quoted sentence is divided into two parts by expressions such as *he said*, *she replied*, etc., the second part begins with a lowercase letter (unless some other rule requires a capital letter, such as a proper name).

“Get on the bus,” she yelled, “before it pulls away!”

“Have you,” she asked, “been working this summer?”

“Can you understand,” he questioned, “Raymond’s mode of thinking?”

4. If the second part of a broken quotation is a new sentence, it begins with a capital letter.

“Drive carefully,” he cautioned. “Speed is the cause of most accidents.”

5. A direct quotation is set off from the rest of the sentence by a comma.

Maggie exclaimed, “Life is like a box of chocolates.”

6. Commas and periods are ALWAYS placed INSIDE the closing quotation marks.

“Sit down,” the teacher said.

The teacher stated, “ Don’t cause any trouble while I’m gone.”

7. Question marks and exclamation points are placed INSIDE the closing quotation mark if they belong with the quotation.

“Are the players ready?” asked the referee.

“It’s impossible to see the road!” she exclaimed frantically.

8. When you write dialogue, **begin a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.**

“Have you heard the news about the new speed limit?” Sue asked as she looked at the newspaper.

“Is it true that it has been raised by ten miles an hour?” replied Jamie.

“I heard that it goes into effect December 16, 2007. People are so excited,” added Frederick. He pointed to something in the newspaper and asked, “Will you be sixteen by then, Sue?”

Sue grinned and shouted, “Yes, finally!”

“Me, too,” Frederick smiled back and turned to nudge Jamie who wouldn’t turn sixteen until the next summer.

Stephanie Gobczynski Uebinger - Lists of 10: Beginning Classroom Writing Demonstration

ACTIVITY

1. Overview

The activity is meant to help engage students in writing about what they know. This will, hopefully, serve to engage students in all types of writing: narrative, journaling, research, expository, and descriptive. By compiling lists of things they enjoy, students will avoid complaining by saying, “But what do I write about?!” or “I don’t know about anything!” while in the classroom. This activity gives them a place to write down topics and keep those topics in the classroom.

Students will be given specific prompts focusing on different ideas to write about. For example, students could write about:

- A. Favorite Movies
- B. Favorite Places
- C. Favorite Technology
- D. Favorite Television Shows
- E. Favorite Books
- F. Favorite Activities/ Hobbies
- G. Favorite Teams/Sports/ Athletes
- H. Favorite Foods
- I. Favorite Restaurants
- J. Favorite Stores to Shop In

2. Context

Lists of 10 is a lesson I plan to utilize at the beginning of the research paper. It gives kids a jumping off point to write about something they enjoy. Most of the time, I set up the research project as an essay about a “Modern Marvel.” That way, almost anything can become a research topic. Most kids get so afraid of the research aspect that they forget that they can be experts on topics as well.

3. Learning Goals

This lesson is designed to help students enhance their writing skills in descriptive, creative, and research writing. At the end of this lesson, students should be able to:

- A. generate lists to write about for future writing assignments
- B. be actively involved in the writing process
- C. turn the lists into potential essays for classroom or personal use

Illinois State Goals:

3. Use correct grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization and structure.

3.A.4 Use standard English to edit documents for clarity, subject/verb agreement, adverb and adjective agreement and verb tense; proofread for spelling, capitalization and punctuation; and ensure that documents are formatted in final form for submission and/or publication.

3. B. Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.

3.B.4a Produce documents that exhibit a range of writing techniques appropriate to purpose and audience, with clarity of focus, logic of organization, appropriate elaboration and support and overall coherence.

4. A. Listen effectively in formal and informal situations.

4.A.4a Apply listening skills as individuals and members of a group in a variety of settings (e.g., lectures, discussions, conversations, team projects, presentations, interviews).

4.A.4b Apply listening skills in practical settings (e.g., classroom note taking, interpersonal conflict situations, giving and receiving directions, evaluating persuasive messages).

4. Materials

Materials used:

- * pen or pencil
- * paper
- * white board for teacher to model activity (optional)

5. Activities/Procedures

- A. Students will be given a topic to write about at their desks for an increment of time (usually 1 -2 minutes).
- B. Students then pair up with another student (sometimes by row, t-shirt color, first letter of first name, etc.) to share their lists with one another (Sometimes, they want to sit and talk in their seats, but it is better to keep them up and moving)
- C. Stealing ideas and topics from one another is allowed. If someone has something written that interests another student, he or she is allowed to borrow it.
- D. Students will share their ideas for an increment of time (usually around 1 minute).
- E. The teacher counts down from five so that every student is at his or her desk by the time the teacher gets to zero.
- F. The process starts over again.
- G. By the time the activity is over, students have a myriad of topics at their disposal
- H. These topics can become formal or informal writing topics for the rest of the year.

6. Evaluation

Students will keep the paper(s) they write on in the classroom in a portfolio for easy access during the school year. Teacher will monitor student work around the classroom as the activity is going on.

7. Extension

As previously stated, students can turn these lists into more formal writing. Any types of writing can be included. There are many types of writing: narrative, expository, creative, research, descriptive, etc. It is up to the teacher to decide how to implement these writing responses in a specific classroom.

Other ideas:

* help isolate topic ideas

* computer research time

* library resource time

8. Resources

You can consult these resources to help with other classroom writing ideas.

Teaching the Classics in the Inclusive Classroom: Reader Response Activities to Engage All Learners by Katherine S. McKnight and Bradley P. Berlage M.A.T.

Teaching Writing in the Inclusive Classroom: Strategies and Skills for All Students by Roger Passman Ed.D. and Katherine S. McKnight

The Second City Guide to Improv in the Classroom: Using Improvisation to Teach Skills and Boost Learning (Jossey-Bass Teacher) by Katherine S. McKnight and Mary Scruggs

Dannette Williamson - From Real Books to Facebook

Overview:

Why fight the social networking sites your students would rather be on at home instead of doing the homework you assigned? Why not use them to your advantage? Bring the technology of the 21st century right into your classroom!

Rationale:

This assignment is used to assess a student's comprehension of a particular character from a novel or short story.

Learning Objectives:

- Students will further their understanding of characters by looking at them from a different angle.
- Students will be able to evaluate character relationships.
- Students will use available technology to produce a multimedia work.

Materials:

- Computers with access to Microsoft Publisher 2007
- Facebook Template
- Interactive White Board or Printer

Procedure:

1. Students will first need to save a blank copy of the template in their own document folder.
2. Once the document is saved, have the students find pictures of the character(s) they are creating the page for. (I always tell my students to copy and paste the URL of the website in which they found the pictures to a blank Word document, and hand it in separately). They will need to look for a profile picture, a photo album cover picture, and pictures of other characters to include in certain sections. Students need to save the pictures in their document folder as well. If students cannot find actual pictures of the characters, they need to look for pictures that would represent the character, and the character's personality.
3. Before students get started, go over in class how to set the font to Lucinda Sans Unicode, and start with an 8 or 9 point font, because it most resembles the font found on Facebook.
4. Remind them to make sure the have the correct words and links are blue like a hyperlink. Students must fill out every section of the page. Remind them that they are filling out the page based on facts they learned about the character throughout the novel/story. Students need to be as detailed and creative as possible.

5. Time allotted will vary depending on how you choose to approach the assignment. I usually give my students 2 class days to work on 2 Facebook pages.

6. When pages are complete, students can print them out, or present them to the rest of the class on an interactive whiteboard.

Extensions:

This lesson does not just have to be used for a character in a novel or short story. It can be used to assess student knowledge about an important person in particular field, or an important person.

For example:

- For Math: Students could create a Facebook page for an important person in the mathematics field.
- For Science: Students could create a Facebook page for a famous scientist.
- For Art: Students could create a Facebook page for an artist that has most influenced them.
- For Social Studies/History: Students could create a Facebook page for an important person in history such as a president, an inventor, an author, an influential person, etc.

Resources:

The web is filled with many sites about how Facebook and other social networking sites can enhance learning in your classroom. For more information, check out some of these websites.

This is the website that inspired me to use this activity in my classroom:

<http://historytech.wordpress.com/2010/02/05/tip-of-the-week-creating-a-blank-facebook-template/>

More about Facebook in the classroom:

<http://historytech.wordpress.com/2009/07/27/abe-lincoln-facebook-twitter-and-teaching-history/>

This website contains information about actually using Facebook in your classroom:

<http://org.elon.edu/catl/conference/documents/FacebookEducation.pdf>

Alison Yantis - Teaching the Ideas Trait Using Picture Books

Overview:

Students will begin learning about the Ideas trait and selecting a topic using David Wisniewski's *The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups*.

Rationale:

I begin with this lesson and follow most of Ruth Culham's *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3-6*. The first lesson focuses on selecting a topic for the Ideas trait by writing about everyday rules in an imaginative and unexpected way using David Wisniewski's *The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups*.

Materials:

The Secret Knowledge of Grown-Ups by David Wisniewski's

Paper

Pencil

Activity/Procedure:

1. Begin by brainstorming rules grown-ups have that the students must follow at home and at school. List them on the board for all students to see.
2. Allow the students to moan and groan as they discuss the real reasons Their parents, school officials, and even teachers want them to behave certain ways.
3. Announce that those reasons are not the whole truth; there are far more sinister reasons for these rules that grown-ups try to keep from you. However, the truth will be revealed in the book you are about to read.
4. Read the book aloud with passion and voice, pausing to show the pictures.
5. At the end of the book it says that hundreds of grown-up rules still remain. Challenge students to come up with their own "top-secret truth" to a rule following the format of the book. They may use a rule that was put up on the board or they may think of one on their own.
6. :Once students have finished, invite them to share their story with the class.

Evaluation:

A participation grade is given as well as a completion grade. Format must follow the book and explanation needs to tell a detailed story.

Extensions:

1. Have students type and print their stories and attach them to poster board. Decorate with pictures that depict the explanation.
2. For older grades: Instead of a rule, use an idiom. Talk about where the idiom originated and what it really means. Have the students create their own explanation behind the saying.

Sources:

Culham, Ruth. *6 + 1 Traits of Writing: The Complete Guide Grades 3-6*.

Jennifer Young - WTT (What the THESIS)

Overview:

Explain to students what a thesis does in any piece of writing to help not only prepare their readers of what is to be discussed but also to prepare themselves for what their “game plan” is for the writing. Students will then demonstrate how to write an effective thesis by rewriting vague statements.

Rationale:

Even though students are taught “main points of a paragraph”, many times they have trouble translating those ideas into “Thesis Statements.” All boils down to this, students have trouble understanding the idea of a thesis statement as well as actually formulating a thesis statement for any piece of writing. Throughout this lesson, students will be introduced to the idea of why thesis statements are needed, given the definition of a thesis, shown the lack of power using vague statements, shown the power of precise statements and given the chance to revise vague statements to demonstrate their understanding. As Adam Jortner states in “The Thesis Statement”, “An ideal thesis is not only a guide for the reader, it’s a guide for the writer.” (par.2) Students should be able to take away from the lesson that this one sentence will help them create a thought driven piece that readers will be able to follow.

Scope:

Going in to the 2010-2011 school year, I will be teaching an entire semester of writing at the junior level. I plan to use this lesson early on in the fall semester for students to fully understand what will be required of them for any writing that they will complete in the 2010-2011 school year.

Materials:

- Enough copies of “Vague Thesis statements” for classroom.
- Students provide pen or pencil
- Assigned groups of two or three (depending on the class)

Activity:

1. Begin lesson by asking if any student in the room knows what the word “Thesis” is or means.
2. Explain that today we will be learning about thesis statements and why they are important.
3. Students will be required to take notes from the PowerPoint presentation because they will use this information throughout the semester as well as in the assessment to follow.

4. Begin presentation.
5. Throughout the lesson, students will be asked to volunteer to read from the slides to be more active during the learning process.
6. After reaching the 7th slide, students will be split into groups of 2-3 to revise 10 thesis statements (15-20 minutes). This will be a time for students to ask any questions they have encounter and to see if they grasp the concept of thesis statements.
7. When students are complete with their revisions, as a class we will go through each sentence to see what groups have developed.
8. We will then return to the presentation to finish discussion of thesis statements (things to do and not to do).
9. Students will then return to their revised thesis statements and revise those statements again to follow the rules that have been added.

Extensions:

1. These same statements (choosing 3-4) can be used to guide students outlining process for a piece of writing.
2. These statements (3-4) can be used to help guide students through research online, (journal articles, websites, and newspapers) or as a guide for how to phrase or word actual searching.
3. These statements can be used to write a short paragraph to identify the importance of the precise wording.
4. These statements can be used as journaling to provoke thoughts about future topics.

Resources:

Colorado State University. "Thesis Statements." 2010. 21 July 2010.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/comp/rst/resource5.cfm> (website)

Jortner, Adam. "The Thesis Statement." *Literary Cavalcade* 55.6 (Mar 2003): 34. (Print)

Vague Thesis Statements

Directions: Below, there are 10 vague thesis statements. From the rules that you have learned, you need to revise each of these statements to be more precise. Reference your “Why so Serious” and “Make a Splash” note sections for any assistance.

1. My recent trip to St. Louis was really bad.
2. The movie *Twilight* seemed ridiculous.
3. You should treat people the same and not do things that favor one group over another.
4. The four children in my family have completely different personalities.
5. Child abuse is a terrible problem in our country.

Content Activities

Creative Writing

Mary Ellen O'Brien-Teaching Poetry

Overview: Poetry is an important literary genre. In this lesson I will be introducing several kinds of poetry including shape poems, acrostics, Haiku, quatrains, diamante, and free verse. This lesson is geared to a third grade classroom.

Rationale: Poetry can help children build literacy skills and motivate reluctant writers to shine writing shorter verse.

Learning Objectives: Students will demonstrate an understanding of poetry and will write several kinds of poems, from very simple to more difficult.

Materials: Handout, poem journal (to be constructed in class), paper, Internet access, Smart Board

Procedure: Introduce unit with a poem appealing to students. Many can be found on the internet. I am using “Homework, I Love You” by Kenn Nesbitt.

1. Writers beginning through advanced can succeed with SHAPE POEMS. In a shape poem the words of the poem are written in a specific shape.
 - A. Show examples with Smart Board
 - B. Write own poems
2. Young children appreciate poems put to songs.
 - A. Show examples on Smart Board
3. An ACROSTIC POEM uses the letters in a word to begin each line.
 - A. Show example on Smart Board
 - B. Write an Acrostic Poem using first name
4. HAIKU is a minimalist form of poetry. There are 17 or fewer syllables in the poem. It is composed of 3 lines with a 5-7-5 syllable pattern and when read aloud it can be completed in one breath.
 - A. Show examples on Smart Board
 - B. Write own Haiku poem
5. A QUATRAIN is a four line poem that rhymes. The most common rhyme schemes are ABAB, AABB and ABBA. If there is more than one stanza you could consider AABA, BBCB, CCDC, etc. Shakespeare used lots of quatrains in his poetry and plays. He mainly writes in SONNETS, which contain a combination of quatrains and rhyming couplets.

- A. Show examples
- B. Pick a rhyme scheme and start writing.

Meggyn Sytar - Candy Bar Wrap-Attack

Primary Subject Area: English/Language Arts

Grade Level: 5 – 8

Overview:

Students use online candy bar wrappers to create stories containing similes and/or metaphors about their school, teacher or other topics.

Approximate Duration: 2 fifty minute classes

Content Standards:

- Students write competently for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- Students communicate using standard English grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, and handwriting.
- Students locate, select, and synthesize information from a variety of texts, media, references, and technological sources to acquire and communicate knowledge.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- Mathematics : Data analysis, Probability, and Discrete Math.
 - In problem-solving investigations, students discover trends, formulate conjectures regarding cause-and-effect relationships, and demonstrate critical thinking skills in order to make informed decisions.
- Arts : Creative Expression
 - Students develop creative expression through the application of knowledge, ideas, communication skills, organization abilities and imagination.

Objectives:

- Construct sentences with metaphors or similes using candy bar wrappers.
- Create short poems or paragraphs.
- Work cooperatively in groups or independently.

Lesson Materials and Resources:

- Directions posted at each computer and/or handouts given.
- Network server-to save student work or flash drive to save work.
- Candy Crossword Puzzle for early finishers.

Technology Tools and Materials:

- Hardware: Computers
- Software: Microsoft Word
- Websites:
 - Candy Bar Wrappers
www.bradkent.com/wrappers/
 - Online Candy Crossword Puzzle
www.infoplease.com/xwords/kidscandy.html
 - Candy Name word search (printable)
www.debidawn.com/candyws.htm
 - Candy Bar Game
www.smm.org/sln/tf/c/crosssection/namethatbar.html

Other Background Information:

Students should be familiar with similes and metaphors to do this lesson.

They should also be familiar with the format of a paragraph or poem.
Students should be familiar with WORD and copying and pasting pictures.

Lesson Procedures:

1. Begin the lesson by having students fill in this blank:
My teacher is as sweet as _____.
Our teachers are as smart as _____.
The teacher will review similes and metaphors having students give examples of each. An example of each should be written on the board for reference.
2. Teacher will demonstrate how candy bar wrapper pictures can be found on the internet and saved to a disk.
<http://www.bradkent.com/wrappers/>
Teacher may also choose to have the wrappers already saved on a disk and demonstrate how to retrieve.
3. Students will brainstorm phrases that can be written using candy bar wrappers. Example: My father gave me a (Whatchamacallit) for my birthday. All our teachers are (Lifesavers) because of the help that they give us. (A list of candy bars is given in handouts. I find it helpful to give each child a list.)
Teacher can use a computer to show how to use WORD and insert the candy bar pictures.
4. Teacher will go over rubric with students so that all know what is expected of the group.
5. Teacher will let students preview 20-25 pictures on the internet or floppy of candy bar wrappers. (A written list is also helpful and is attached to this lesson).
6. Students will form groups of four to construct 3-5 sentences about their school or teacher using the candy bar names and pictures. Students should brainstorm for 5 minutes before moving to computers.
7. Students will turn in one completed copy within the time limit and also save a copy to disc. (20- 25 minutes)
8. Student work will be graded with a rubric and displayed for all to read.
9. Students can also work on a candy word search if finished earlier than other groups.
10. Students can play the candy bar game online, see link in technology resources.
<http://www.smm.org/sln/tf/c/crosssection/namethatbar.html>
11. Groups will share their completed paragraphs with the class.

Assessment Procedures:

Teacher Observation

Each group will complete a paragraph graded with the rubric provided.

Accommodations/Modifications:

If only one computer is available groups should rotate through center. Students who need additional help should be placed in groups with children that will assist or grouped together so that teacher can assist. Computer directions should be posted at each computer.

Reproducible Materials:

- Rubric to grade paragraphs
- Candy Bar Names
- Computer Directions
- Example of Student Work

Explorations and Extensions:

Students may research candy facts or puzzles using <http://www.google.com>

Students can further use the candy bar wrappers in math or science class to study the nutritional information provided at the candy site.

Students can graph the candy bar names used by all groups to find the most popular used.

(9-12) Students can create stories (possibly personal narratives or (topic-derived) to create a story or summaries.)

(K-4) students can use candy bar wrappers to write complete sentences to reinforce new skills.

Lesson Development Resources:

Candy Bar Wrappers <http://www.bradkent.com/wrappers/> ;Retrieved 2003

Writing Paragraphs, Webster University, Online Writing Center; Retrieved 2003
<http://www.webster.edu/acadaffairs/asp/wc/paragraphs.html>

Mary Williams - Who wants to be a Songwriter? (Lyric poetry)

Grade Level: 5 – 8

Overview: The students will develop an understanding of lyric poetry through music.

Rationale: Students will listen to and analyze lyrics to popular songs to identify the rhyming patterns, theme, and write their own lyric poem.

Goals and Objectives:

- The students will learn the definitions of the following words:
 - Lyric Poetry
 - Rhyme scheme
 - End Rhyme
 - Quatrain
 - Stanza
 - Theme
- The students will listen to lyrics of modern songs and identify the rhyming scheme and theme of the given song.
- The students will create a 2 stanza quatrain and write what the songwriter's message is.

Required Materials:

- Computer
- LCD projector
- Chalkboard or Smart board
- Downloaded songs and hard copies of the song lyrics for the following:
 - Another One Bites the Dust by Queen
 - Fat Bottom Girls by Queen
 - Yesterday by the Beatles
 - ABC by Michael Jackson
 - Old Time Rock and Roll by Seger
 - Life's Been Good to Me so Far by Joe Walsh
- Paper
- Writing Utensils

Activities/Procedures:

1. Introduce the lesson by asking the class to raise their hands if they like poetry. (Usually only half of the class will raise their hand).
2. Ask the class to raise their hand if they like music. (Usually everyone will raise their hand).
3. Tell the class they are going to learn about a special kind of poetry called, *Lyric Poetry*.

Ask, “Does anyone know what lyric poetry is?” After a student response define Lyric Poetry to the class: A poem that expresses the thoughts and feelings of the poet, or in other words, a song.

4. Hand out the lyrics to *Another One Bites the Dust*
5. Tell the class they are going to listen to the song and you want them to follow along reading the words.
6. Play the song. Once the song has ended tell the class they are going to analyze the lyrics to find the rhyming scheme (the pattern of rhyming words)
7. Have a student read the first line.
8. Ask the student what the last word in the line is. Tell the class to label that A
9. Have another student read the second line. Again identify the last word. Ask, “Does it rhyme with the last word in the first line?” No, so we label that line B
10. Again, ask another student to read the third line. Does the last word rhyme with the second line? No, but it rhymes with the first line. Therefore, we label that line A
11. The fourth line is read by a different student. They should notice it rhymes with the second line so we label that line B.
12. The fifth line does not rhyme with A or B so we label that line C.
13. Continue with the process until all stanzas are labeled.
14. Tell the class what they just identified is called end rhyme.
15. Also note to the class that the cluster of lines in each group is called a stanza.
16. Ask the class, “What is the theme, or message, the songwriter is telling.
17. Hand out the lyrics for *Fat Bottom Girls*.
18. Play the song and have the class label each line as the song is being played.
19. At the end of the song, orally discuss the rhyming pattern and theme.

Small Group Activity: Divide the class into 4 small groups. Assign each group one of the following songs.

- *Yesterday*
 - *ABC*
 - *Old Time Rock and Roll*
 - *Life’s Been Good to Me*
20. Give each group the lyrics to one of the above songs.

21. Have each group label the rhyming scheme and write on the bottom or back side of the sheet what the theme is.
22. Once each group is finished play the appropriate song for each group and have them identify to the class the rhyming scheme. *If time is an issue you may have each group only present 2 stanzas of the song.

Independent Practice: Who wants to be a Songwriter?

- Now the fun begins. You are assigned to create your own song. Your song must be a 2 stanza Quatrain.
- Ask, “What is a Quatrain?” A quatrain is a poem written in four, rhymed lines following a set pattern.
- Your song can go to the beat of a familiar or favorite song
- Your song can have the same beat as a nursery rhyme
- Most importantly: Your song needs to be original and you need to label the lines and write a short paragraph on the message the songwriters expressing.

Closure: Once the class is finished creating their song ask for volunteers to come up and present their songs. Discuss the themes and how the songs can be interpreted differently.

Related Activities:

1. Round Robin - Assign each student to a partner. Give each pair a handout with rhyming schemes labeled. The students take turns writing lines to create a lyric poem. They can do it to the beat of a favorite song and/or nursery rhyme.

2. Have the students select a favorite song of theirs and have them print the lyrics. It is usually a good idea to have the students give you a copy to preview. Have each student identify the ending rhyme pattern and write a paragraph on the theme.

3. Nice Net Activity – similar to Round Robin, but the class logs on to nicenet.org and creates a poem by having many students writing lines. Make sure you have the rhyme scheme labeled for them to follow.

4. Design an album cover that would best illustrate the theme of your quatrain.

<http://tlc.ousd.k12.ca.us/~jreese/projects/quatrain.htm>

5. Students examine the role music plays in influencing ideas and behaviors. They read and analyze **lyrics** of current songs that contain suggestions of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use, participate in a class discussion about the banning of **lyrics** that promote drug use, and identify ways to counter the effects of **lyrics** that condone tobacco, alcohol, and drug use.

<http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?display=lessons&grade=all&keywords=Lyrics&media=lesson&page=2>

6. Students analyze a song to determine the composer's point of view regarding the subject addressed in the song. They design and create an original visual aid that illustrates the theme of the song. Students identify

any social studies issues, events or person that is addressed in the song. They interpret the song **lyrics** and present their opinions and research information orally.

<http://www.lessonplanet.com/search?display=lessons&grade=all&keywords=Lyrics&media=lesson&page=7>

Bibliography:

http://poetry.suite101.com/article.cfm/lyric_poetry#ixzzOKWp6oyNR&C

http://www.tnellen.com/cybereng/lit_terms/index.html

Ruth-Anne Yang - Improving Your Writing With Plot Structure

Overview:

Understanding the format of plot to create a story that is interesting and creative.

Rationale:

A lot of my freshman students tend to write in a way that is very formulaic with no real excitement. This exercise helps them expand their ideas outside of what's comfortable for them and challenges them to evaluate their own work. Repetition in a creative way helps students to understand what they are learning. This activity has been successful in increasing student interest in creating stories that not only help them as writers but makes the stories more interesting for the readers.

Learning Objectives:

Evaluate written work for its effectiveness and make recommendations for its improvement.

Materials:

Notebook paper, writing utensil, projector, smartboard, plus/delta sheet

Activity/Procedure:

This is an activity where students will have already learned the parts of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). The students will review for this lesson these parts and then apply them in their writing as a group.

1. As a class, we will review the parts of plot on the board. Afterwards, we will discuss any novels that have great plots as examples for our own writing activity later on in this lesson. (Harry Potter, Twilight series, The Lightning Thief, etc)
2. Group the class into circles of four or five students. Each student should have a couple loose leaf sheets of paper and a writing utensil.
3. Each student will start writing an exposition to the beginning of a story. After 5-7 minutes, each student will rotate their stories in clockwise direction.

4. The next student will need to continue the story after reading what the previous student has written. The student will need to start writing a rising conflict. After 5-7 minutes, the students will continue to rotate like so until all parts of plot is finally completed. The writer will initial next to the paragraph they have written.
5. After the students are done, each student will need to take out their plus/delta sheet to evaluate each story as a group. The pluses will be anything the group feels was great. The delta sheet will be anything that needs to be changed.
6. The class will then gather as a whole and evaluate the classes writing and create one large plus/delta chart to evaluate what was good and what needs improvement.

Evaluation:

Participation during discussion time will be graded on the number of times they have participated compared to their peers. I usually collect the papers and grade them on the original and the revised version. Typically, if I decide to use this activity for an official paper, I'll count it for about 50 points.

Extensions:

- You can have the students revise and rewrite the papers. They can type them up to create a book they can illustrate.
- The students can pick the best one in each group and present them to the class through the use of a photo essay. The students will need to take pictures to illustrate each story's progression. They can either upload then through moviemaker or power point in the order of events. They will then use the story to narrate the slideshow of photos.

Sources: (helpful sites to use for extension)

Instructions for movie maker:

<http://desktopvideo.about.com/od/desktopediting/ss/mmphotomontage.htm>

Blank book store:

<http://www.triggermemorysystem.com/BlankBooks.html>

Food & Nutrition

Donna Denault - Using Recipes

Grade Level: 9

Subject: Food & Nutrition I

Overview and Purpose:

This lesson will be taught at the beginning of the school year and after safety and sanitation has been thoroughly reviewed. Since reading and writing recipes is a fundamental skill of the food service industry as well as a practice used in all home food preparation, students will continue to practice appropriate use of recipes throughout the semester

Education Standards

- National Family and Consumer Science Goal FCS 9.3.5
- Illinois State Writing Goals 3.C.4a

Objectives:

- Students will practice sequencing in recipes.
- Students will evaluate recipes for various formatting.
- Students will construct a well-written recipe.
- Students will utilize a recipe in the creation of a food product.

Materials Needed:

- PPT and projector for viewing
- Variety of recipes in differing formats
- Pencil/pen
- Graphic organizer for writing a recipe
- Recipe for vegetable wraps
- One, 8-inch, whole-wheat tortilla per student
- ¼ ripe avocado per student

- 1 T. cream cheese per student
- ¼ cup spinach per student
- ¼ cup shredded spinach per student
- Measuring cups, one set per lab team
- Frosting spatula or table knife, one per lab
- Cutting board, one per lab team
- Chef's knife, one per lab team
- Hand wash sink and soap
- Sanitizer solution
- Plates, napkins, etc. for setting a cover
- Product evaluation sheets
- Food service gloves, one pair per student
- Lab plan sheets, 1 per lab

Procedure:

1. Introduce lesson by asking students to write in their “Food for Thought” journals their reply to the following prompt: Why do you think chefs need standardized recipes?
2. Ask students to share their journal entries.
3. Define standardized - to remove variations and irregularities in something and make all types or examples of it the same.
4. Review sequencing in writing on PPT slide.
5. Ask students to form groups and handout different recipe for examination of format, and then to share with the whole class what they noticed concerning sequencing, i.e. numbering and words like before, first, next, then, finally
6. Use PPT slide to discuss order in which recipes are written, emphasize list of ingredients first and then, step-by-step directions.
7. Handout graphic organizers and demonstrate how to use them.
8. Ask students to follow directions to create their own sandwich recipe, and collect for a grade.
9. Handout recipe for California Vegetable Wrap and lab plan sheets.
10. Discuss recipe and ask groups to plan their lab, show their plan before they begin, and then, begin food lab activity.
11. Prepare food, eat, and clean up lab.

Extensions:

- Design a restaurant menu for a sandwich shop.
- Write a review for a sandwich and submit it to a food editor in the local paper.
- Create a recipe book.

- Write a recipe for a non-reader.
- Write a conversion recipe using ingredients for multiple servings and/or for use in foreign countries.
- Write a script for a food show.
- Create a sandwich tale based on the children's program, *Veggie Tales*.

Resources:

Kowtaluk, Helen, and Alice Orphanos Kopan. *Food for Today*. 9th ed. New York: New York, 2006.

Print

<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/cooking-with-words-creating-1018.html>

Name: _____ Date _____ Period _____

Procedural Writing Graphic Organizer: Writing Recipes

Brainstorm possible ideas for creating your own sandwich. Talk about what you would like to make, what you will need to make it, the steps you will use to prepare your sandwich, and how you think your sandwich will turn out. When you have finished brainstorming, write your ideas on this organizer to help you plan your recipe.

Title:

Purpose:

Ingredients:

Steps:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Add more steps as needed:

Conclusion:

Math

Patty Hawkins - Exploring Math Concepts through Writing

Patty's Demonstration – will begin with a “Joke of the Day!”

1. **Overview:** Students will deeply explore a mathematical concept and turn it into an expressive piece of writing. This project could be a way to introduce a topic or concept or to delve more deeply into a topic or concept. This could also be used to review an idea if it has been a while since students have used it.

According to Nagin and the National Writing Project, in *Because Writing Matters Improving Student Writing in Our Schools*, “Expressive writing is a means of thinking through a problem (52).” Also, the preservation of knowledge is aided by writing (52). Both being such important facets for mathematical learning.

2. **Rationale:** This activity will explore a mathematical concept of choice, and could benefit elementary students through college students, at any level of mathematics. In addition to the teacher, the target audience could be peers as well as students who are “mathematically younger.”

3. **Learning Objective:** Students will demonstrate an understanding of their chosen math concept and genre of their choice.

4. **Materials:** Students can use their text book, computer/internet/scanner, magazines, and any additional resources they can find, as long as they cite sources when needed.

According to Nagin and the National Writing Project, in *Because Writing Matters Improving Student Writing in Our Schools*, today writing is done in numerous technological forms such as e-mail, internet, fax, etc. requiring different materials than in the past (5). Mathematics has the same type of technological tools and advances that changes the face of learning. Tools such as graphing utilities, scientific calculators, the internet, and e-mail have changed the way we can tackle math in the classroom and in the work force. Students can look at many more examples in the same time that they could look at only a few before the days of technology. Also, examples can be studied much more thoroughly and with much more precision than they could in the days of handwritten work.

5. **Activities/Procedures:**

A. Look at sample titled “Quartic Functions.” Go through the sample as if the audience has not covered quartic functions in much detail. (5 minutes)

B. As a group brainstorm possible ideas for topics/concepts (this will in no way be an exclusive list): e.g. 4, pi (endless possibilities), polynomial functions (if you like roller coasters), fractions, etc. I will handout candy as a reward for ideas. (5 minutes)

C. Choose the math concept you would like to write about whether it is part of our list or not. Individually brainstorm for 9 to 13 ideas or details you want to include in your writing. (10 minutes)

D. Share your list with the person beside you and brainstorm together for additional ideas. When finished, sign each other’s paper. (7 minutes)

E. Organize your list of ideas.(3 minutes)

According to Maxwell, in *Writing Across the Curriculum*, steps B through E are examples of “level 1 writing,” where students brainstorm, organize, and merely get some thoughts down on paper to get the writing process going (43). Maxwell feels that students should be given numerous opportunities to work through these types of processes, since this is when students are thinking critically and developing ideas to use in their writing (43).

“Level 2 writing” follows where students get more formal and work through numerous drafts, pushing toward “level 3 writing,” which results in a final draft. Where, according to Maxwell, the teacher will be looking at both content and form, for correctness and neatness (45).

F. With music playing in the background, choose a genre of choice, and write an explanation of your concept for an audience who does not understand it. You might write about the concepts’ beauty, flow, relevance, mathematical meaning, etc. Be creative! (20 minutes)

G. Find or create a visual (or visuals) that identify the math concept chosen and creatively incorporate it into your written expression. (5 minutes)

H. Please share your creations. (5 minutes)

6. **Evaluation:** Feedback on the activity. Suggestions made for improvement or ideas for other similar activities.

Simple rubric for classroom grading: (The rubric will likely evolve after time and with use.)

_____/10 Contains 9 – 13 ideas/details

_____/10 Ideas/details are properly explained and supported in genre of choice

_____/10 Creativity

_____/10 Creatively incorporates a related visual or visuals

_____/20 Brainstorming paper with your 9 – 13 ideas/details and suggestions from a peer, including his/her signature

Possibly...

_____/0 Bonus (0 to 6 points) for demoing to a “mathematically younger audience,” which would be evaluated by the cooperating teacher (requiring an additional rubric)

_____/60 Total points

Students will be given the rubric up front, along with written directions for the project, and time will be allowed for questions about the project and/or the rubric.

7. **Extension:** Write a more formal paper, including (possibly additional) research into the concept, demoing the project to peers, or demoing to a “mathematically younger” audience. Topics could be limited to a certain chunk of mathematical knowledge (e.g. polynomial functions, polygons, number systems, real/imaginary numbers, etc.) Compare/contrast could be done with some concepts (e.g. rational/irrational numbers, pi and 22/7, 3 and -3, etc.)

Sources:

1. Maxwell, Rhoda J. Writing Across the Curriculum. Allyn and Bacon, 1996.

2. National Writing Project, and Nagin, Carl. Because Writing Matters Improving Student Writing in Our Schools. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2006.

Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.

~Victor Borge

Joke of the Day!

A team of engineers were required to measure the height of a flag pole. They only had a measuring tape, and were getting quite frustrated trying to keep the tape along the pole. It kept falling down, etc. A mathematician comes along, finds out their problem, and proceeds to remove the pole from the ground and measure it easily.

When he leaves, one engineer says to the other: "Just like a mathematician! We need to know the height, and he gives us the length!"

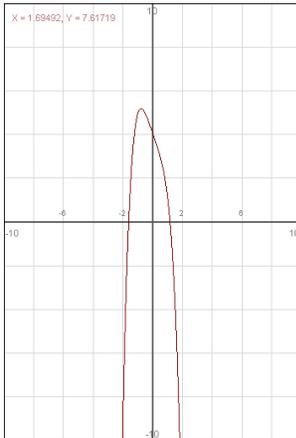
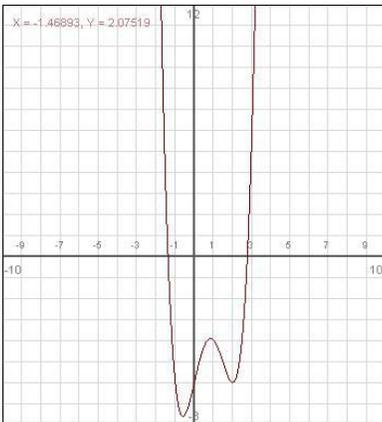
Another possible demo...what could students write about?

<http://www.quotegarden.com/laughter.html>

<http://www.math.utah.edu/~cherk/mathjokes.html#topic1>

Hawkins' Philosophy: There is great benefit in looking at the same problem or concept in numerous ways...because more than likely at least one method will click with every student, and if it "clicks" it is more easily recalled. Easier recall will tremendously benefit lifetime problem solving and even the dreaded standardized tests...there are no "method police" at test sites. Whatever it takes for EACH STUDENT to be successful is what is important!

Quartic Functions



$$x^4 - 3x^3 + 4x - 6$$

Look at those quartics

$$-x^4 - 2x + 4$$

Kristyn says, "Smokin' hot chicks"

Curvy and voluptuous

They all begin with a fourth degree equation

That can have one to four additional terms

However, no more are required, resulting in an extreme flattening of the curves

Shape determined by their equations

Width varies depending on coefficients and signs

Height is infinite

When the leading coefficient is positive the quartic may look like a "W"

Falling, then rising, and

Falling then rising again, from left to right

Negative leading coefficients may result in an "M" shape

From left to right, they will rise and fall

And rise and fall

Local minimums and/or maximums are present

Depending on their equation and resulting direction

Going on forever at the beginning and the end

A Y-intercept is represented by the constant

X-intercepts can be found by solving

Of which none are required

Solutions are REAL only when $y = 0$

Otherwise solutions are imaginary

HMMMMMMM... If solutions are imaginary do they REALLY exist?

Science

Sarah Pratte - The Scientific Method, *Mythbusting* and Beyond

Grade Level: 7-8

Subject: Science and Literature **ACTIVITY**

Prepared by: Sarah Pratte

Overview and Purpose:

This high interest lesson would be taught at the beginning of the school year to help review the scientific method, it can then be incorporated into the classroom when the topic aligns with the curriculum throughout the rest of the year.

Educational Standards:

- Illinois State Science Goals 11.A.3a-11.A.3g
 - Illinois State Writing Goals 3.A.3, 3.B.3a and 3.B.3b
-

Objectives:

- Students will learn/review the scientific method.
 - Students will draft a laboratory report using the provided worksheet.
 - Students will extend the science lesson/topic into a written language arts activity.
-

Materials Needed:

- Scientific method overview
 - *Mythbusters* DVD
 - DVD player and TV or LCD projector
 - Student worksheets
-

Procedure:

1. Review scientific method with students.
2. Handout worksheet and play selected *Mythbusters* segment.
3. Students will fill in the worksheet as they watch the video. Instructor may stop the video to allow for group discussion or completion of a portion of the worksheet.
4. After the video, bring the ideas from the students together and set-up a "master" lab report with the class.
5. Students then will work in pairs to complete one of the Language Arts extension activities or another extension activity approved by the teacher.

Cross-Curricular Extension Activities:

Students can expand this lesson in Language Arts by:

Developing it into a fiction story

Writing a screen play for another episode of their choosing

Make a story board of an episode

Write a journal entry about the myth busted

Write a comedy sketch about episode

Create a graphic novel

Compose a song/rap/poem

Write a letter explaining a myth to bust and submit to Mythbusters online

(<http://dsc.discovery.com/fansites/mythbusters/talk/talk.html>)

Write a persuasive essay on who is funnier, Jamie or Adam?

Make a movie about the episode using Windows Movie Maker

MYTHBUSTERS

1. Explain the myth to be busted:

2. What was the *question*?

3. What was their initial *hypothesis*?

4. How did they *test the question*?

Adam and Jamie set up experiments to test the myth. Describe the experiments and the controls, the factors they did not allow to affect their experimental results.

Steps of the experiment:

-
-
-
-
-
-
-
-

Controls in the experiment:

-
-
-

5. What was their *analysis* and *conclusion*: _____

6. Was the myth busted or confirmed? _____

7. What safety precautions did they use in their experiments? _____

Worksheet adapted from:

<http://www.teacherweb.com/AR/LakesideHighSchool/Physics/ap5.stm>

<http://teachingphysics.wordpress.com/2008/05/31/mythbusters-the-scientific-method/>

Lab Report Template

Title:

** a brief, concise, yet descriptive title*

Statement of the Problem:

** What question(s) are you trying to answer?*

** Include any preliminary observations or background information about the subject*



Hypothesis:

** Write a possible solution for the problem.*

** Make sure this possible solution is a complete sentence.*

** Make sure the statement is testable.*

Materials:

** Make a list of ALL items used in the lab.*

Procedure:

** Write a paragraph (complete sentences) which explains what you did in the lab.*

** Your procedure should be written so that anyone else could repeat the experiment.*

Results (Data):

** This section should include any data tables, observations, or additional notes you make during the lab.*

** You may attach a separate sheet(s) if necessary.*

** All tables, graphs and charts should be labeled appropriately*

Conclusions:

** Accept or reject your hypothesis.*

** EXPLAIN why you accepted or rejected your hypothesis using data from the lab.*

** Include a summary of the data - averages, highest, lowest..etc to help the reader understand your results*

** List one thing you learned and describe how it applies to a real-life situation.*

** Discuss possible errors that could have occurred in the collection of the data (experimental errors)*

<http://www.biologycorner.com/worksheets/labreport.html>

Lab Report Rubric

	(4 pts)	(3 pts)	(2 pts)	(1 pt)	(0)
Introduction	1. Includes the question to be answered by the lab 2. states hypothesis that is based on research and/or sound reasoning 3. title is relevant. 4. Hypothesis (prediction) is testable.	One of the "excellent" conditions is not met	Two of the "excellent" conditions is not met	Three of the "excellent" conditions is not met	
Methods			A description or step-by-step list of how the experiment was performed	Description unclear, couldn't be repeated	
Results (data)	Results and data are clearly recorded, organized so it is easy for the reader to see trends. All appropriate labels are included	Results are clear and labeled, trends are not obvious,	Results are unclear, missing labels, trends are not obvious at all	Results are present, though too disorganized or poorly recorded to make sense of	
Analysis	The data and observations are analyzed accurately, trends are noted, enough data was taken to establish conclusion	Analysis somewhat lacking in insight, enough data, though additional data would be more powerful	Analysis lacking in insight, not enough data was gathered to establish trends, OR analysis does not follow data	Analysis poor, not enough data, inaccurate analysis	
Conclusions	1. Summarizes the essential data used to draw conclusions 2. Conclusions follow data	One of the "excellent" conditions is	Two of the "excellent" conditions is not	Three of the "excellent" conditions is not	

Lab Report

	(not wild guesses or leaps of logic), 3. Discusses applications of experiment ("real world" connections) 4. Hypothesis is rejected or accepted based on the data.	not met	met	met	
Format			Neat, organized with headings, few spelling/grammar errors	Somewhat lacking in organization, multiple spelling/grammar errors, not neat	

http://www.biologycorner.com/worksheets/labreport_rubric.html

Title:

Statement of the Problem:

Hypothesis:

Materials:

Procedure:

Results/Data:

Conclusions:

Special Needs Activity

Cassie McMillan - Title: Writing Through the Use of Boggle

Lesson Objective: To provide a chance for exploration and hands-on learning for students with special needs through the use of a game called Boggle.

Rational: Students with learning disabilities, as well as, other students struggle to find focus at times. The purpose of this activity is to help get them focused and interested in writing and not to look at it as just another boring assignment. This activity will help students with word recognition, word and sentence formation. It will also help with word validation either through other students or the dictionary/dictionary.com. It will also help them develop, organize and apply their words into a written piece.

Learning Objective: After completing the lesson students will write a creative writing piece using their found words.

Supplies:

Boggle game

Writing Utensil

Paper

Write/Left Story for the instructor

Dictionaries/computers for questionable words

Activities/Procedure:

- A. Explanation of how to play the game Boggle.
- B. In groups we will play 3-4 games depending on time and how much the kids are struggling to find words. During 1 of the games each student will come up with 1 nonsense word to put into a nonsense word pool.
- C. After playing each game the students will compare words (the real words) that were found within their groups. (This also checks to make sure that words are spelled correctly, real and appropriate! If there are questionable words students can use the dictionary or dictionary.com)
- D. After all games are played, students will return to their individual desks and write sentences using their words in them. (They can use more than 1 of their words in a sentence but no more than 3.) Their goal is to write good sentences with some style and flare to them.
- E. After each student is done with their individual sentences, the teacher will read the Write/Left story.
- F. At the end of the Write/Left story, each student should have a new set of sentences then it is their job to put those sentences into a creative writing story that makes sense.
- G. Upon completing their writing piece, each student will then pick a nonsense word to define and to write into a sentence, to be shared with the class when everyone is finished.

Evaluation:

Each student will read their piece to the class.

Check for vocabulary development and usage.

Check for correct sentence structure.

Check for following directions.

Could even have each student grade the activity on a scale of 1 to 5 (1-being not liked or 5-being really liked) then have them tell why they liked it or disliked it.

Lessons

Creative Writing

Amber Laquet - Creative Writing through Mysteries:

1. Overview:

Using mysteries to teach creative writing

2. Rationale: (subject area, concept, and audience)

This activity is used to teach students creative writing by using elements found in short mystery stories. By using the elements found in a mystery story, the students will develop their own individual mystery stories. It is to be used in an 8th grade reading/ language arts class during a mystery unit in which the students have been reading works by Agatha Christie (And Then There Were None), Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (Sherlock Holmes mystery—“The Speckled Band”), and Edgar Allan Poe—“The Black Cat” and “The Tell-Tale Heart”. The students will use the mystery stories as a jumping point to explore their creativity in writing within a loose format with which they can explore.

3. Learning Objectives:

After understanding the plot elements of a mystery such as suspense, mood, tone (etc.), the students will be able to compose their own two-minute mystery using the criteria afore mentioned. The students will show their understanding of components of a mystery by written expression.

4. Materials

❖ Two-minute mysteries book

(If mystery book is unavailable—several websites have two-minute mysteries or “Who-done-its” available for free.

❖ Narrative Rubric

❖ Extension Activities

❖ Previously read short stories to be read with unit:

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s “The Speckled Band”

Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Black Cat” and “The Tell-Tale Heart”

Agatha Christie’s And Then There Were None

5. Activities/ Procedures

This activity will occur after the students have already been exposed to the key components of mystery and suspense.

- a. Students will listen to a two-minute mystery read to them out loud by the teacher.
- b. Students will write down any ideas that they have as to the solution of the mystery.
- c. The students will get into groups and try to decide what the best solution is and why
- d. The groups will give their solutions and how they received them.
- e. The teacher will reveal the correct solution to the mystery.
- f. The teacher will then go over some of the clues to the mystery, showing how key clues were given away that could foreshadow the solution.
- g. The teacher will then have the students stay in their groups and use key questions to determine what make up parts of a mystery such as tone, setting, mood etc...
- h. They will come up with a mystery and give examples as to what makes it a mystery and how the key components are explained.
- i. The students will share their ideas of what makes a good mystery with the teacher adding any that the students may miss.
- j. The teacher will pass out cards from the game “Clue”
- k. Each student will receive either a suspect, weapon, or location
- l. The students may get into groups or may sit individually to write on the topic they received (if in groups, all characters, weapons, and locations must be present in story)
- m. The students will have a few minutes at the end to share their mysteries and see if the students can find out “Who Done It”.
- n. Extension assignments such as the RAFT project, as well as alternate assignments for students with disabilities, are available.
- o. The teacher will wrap up with alternate writing projects such as the RAFT mystery project.

6. Evaluation:

Teacher will evaluate writing with a rubric. Rubric is attached. This rubric can be modified to use with any narrative.

7. **Extension:**

Students will complete a project following the RAFT criteria set up by the teacher. The RAFT criteria are as follows: Role, Audience, Format, and Task. An example from an Anne Frank unit is attached.

- ❖ K-4: Listening skills for younger grades using mystery unit—listening for clues
- ❖ High School: Students can come up with more advanced creative writing, such as taking the characters from a mystery story, and transforming them into a comedy or different genre.
- ❖ For any age—Have students sit in a circle. One student will leave the room. This person will become the “detective”. One person from the circle will be chosen as the “culprit”. All members of the group will make up an alibi for the night of the crime. After the detective reenters the room, he or she will be told to get alibis from all of the members in the circle. Each suspect will reveal one at a time their alibis. Each will go twice. The culprit will be told to change their alibi, even slightly. After everyone reveals their alibis twice, the detective will need to make a decision on which suspect to arrest.

8. **Sources: (Helpful sites to use with “Mystery Unit”)**

<http://www.squidoo.com/minutemysteries>

[http://www.squidoo.com/fiveminutemysteries - module3433222](http://www.squidoo.com/fiveminutemysteries-module3433222) (use for Dinner theater mystery)

<http://www.mysterydigest.com/audio-mysteries/one-minute-audio-mysteries/>

<http://www.nhbungalow.com/class/mystery05/tr.html>

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=796

http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/j/Jan%20IngredientsMystery.pdf

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson865/guide.pdf

http://www.readwritethink.org/lessons/lesson_view.asp?id=865

Activity Page Questions: <http://teacher.scholastic.com>



Elements of a Mystery

Be sure to include the following elements of a mystery in your short story:

When cooking up a mystery, authors use this tasty recipe.

Directions: Check all of the ingredients found in the mystery you read.

CHARACTERS:

Suspects: Characters believed to have possibly committed the crime

Detective: Character trying to solve the mystery

Witnesses: Characters who saw the crime being committed

SETTING:

This is the location where the mystery takes place.

PLOT:

When reading a mystery, the story usually includes one of the following:

A problem that needs to be solved

An event that cannot be explained

A secret

Something that is lost or missing

A crime that has been committed

CLUES:

Clues are hints that can help the reader and the detective solve the mystery. They can be things people say or do, or objects that are found that provide important information.

(Check the box if the mystery you read had clues.)

RED HERRINGS:

These are distractions or false clues that may lead the reader or the detective off track. Red herrings often make it more difficult to solve a mystery. *(Check the box if the mystery you read had a red herring.)*

RECIPE FOR A MYSTERY:

Most mysteries are set up the same way. The structure of a mystery usually looks like this:

Beginning: Characters are introduced and the reader learns about the problem

Middle: Detectives work to solve the mystery by interviewing suspects and gathering clues

End: The mystery is solved

1

¹ *worksheet found from the

http://www2.scholastic.com/content/collateral_resources/pdf/j/Jan%20IngredientsMystery.pdf
website

MYSTERY ELEMENTS WRITING GUIDE

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MYSTERY GRAPHIC ORGANIZER.

Characters:

Setting:

Plot:

Clues:

Distractions:

Structure:

- Who will the characters be? Who are the suspects? Who is trying to solve the mystery?
- What do the characters look like?
- What do the characters do? What are their motives?
- Who has an alibi? Who doesn't?
- Where will the mystery take place?
- What is the problem, crime, or puzzle of the mystery? Where will it be introduced?
- What evidence will the investigator discover?
- How is the mystery solved?
- What are the clues to help the sleuth and reader solve the mystery?
- For each event, is there a clue?
- Do the clues help the reader predict the solution?
- What things will lead the investigator off the path?
- Do we learn about the mystery in the introduction? What characters do we meet here?
- What happens in the middle of the story? What clues are shared with the reader and the investigator?
- Does the conclusion reveal the answer to the mystery?

Introductory Paragraph Interest Catcher	10 Catches the reader's interest and is pertinent to the topic	8 Catches the readers interest or is pertinent to the topic	6 Interest is attempted but fails to relate to the topic	4 Interest is minimal and lacks relevance	0 No Interest Catcher is present
Characters	10 Characters are identified well in the first paragraph	8 Characters are identified but lack development	6 Characters are briefly identified	4 Characters are hinted in the introductory paragraph	0 No characters are identified
Setting	10 Setting is well identified in details	8 Setting is identified but lacks development	6 Setting is briefly identified	4 Setting is hinted in the introductory paragraph	0 No setting is identified
States main events	10 Main events are completely identified	8 Main events are identified but lack development	6 Main events are identified but are unclear	4 Some of the main events are identified	0 Event or person is not identified
Body Paragraph Focus	10 Event is clear and maintained throughout the paper, purpose is set clearly, reactions are effective	8 Minor errors are present	6 Some errors are present	4 Many errors are present	0 No focus is present

Elaboration	10 Episodes are developed, uses multiple strategies (points of view, reactions, dialogue, etc.), significant depth shown	8 Minor errors are present	6 Some errors are present	4 Many errors are present	0 Elaboration is insufficient
Interesting Words	5 Many adjectives and adverbs are added to add details and descriptions	4 Some adjectives and adverbs are used to add details and descriptions to create and image	3 Few adjectives and adverbs are present	2 Adjectives and Adverbs are sparsely used	0 No adjectives or adverbs are used
Plot	10 Contains a well developed plot including a conflict, rising action, climax and a resolution	8 Contains a plot with all the elements but lacks development	6 Contains a plot with minor errors in structure	4 Plot is present but lacks key parts	0 No plot is present
Voice	5 The essay includes 1 well developed staccato sentence and	3 The staccato and metaphor sentences are attempted	1 One or more of the staccato and/or metaphors are missing	0 There are no extended metaphors in the body paragraphs	

	2 extended metaphors				
Closing Paragraph	10 Describes the significance of the event and provides a well developed closing	8 Describes the significance of the event and provides an closing	6 Some significance is present in the closing paragraph	4 Closing is present but lacks significance	0 No Closing is present
Overall Effectiveness	10 Paper is well-developed, meaningful, and contains few spelling or grammar errors	8 Paper is well-developed but may lack meaningfulness or contain spelling and grammar errors	6 Paper lacks development or meaningfulness and contains errors in grammar and spelling	4 Paper lacks development, meaningfulness, and contains errors in grammar and spelling	0 Paper is either not present or unacceptable

Total /100

“Mystery”

Role	Audience	Format	Task
Newspaper Writer	Citizens in the community	Front page editorial for local newspaper	Inform the people about a crime that has just been committed in the area. Give details on any clues in the scene of the crime
Movie Critique	Potential viewers of mystery thrillers	Movie Critique addressed to the class	Watch a mystery “thriller” approved by the teacher. Give a movie critique using elements from the mystery genre. Rate the movie in “Star” format. 5 stars being the best and 1 star being the worst. Be able to defend your critique to a classroom of students.
Radio mystery show host	Devoted listeners to WHODUNIT Radio	Recorded audio broadcast	Record a mystery story using audio props, sound effects, and distinguishable voices for characters. Mystery should be at least 3 minutes in length when read.
Culprit of the Crime	Readers	You decide (Ex. Diary, Journal, Newspaper articles, letter to the Government, etc...)	Explain why you committed the crime/ or why you have been unjustly accused and deserve a pardon. Written document must be at least a page in length. Content must have some relevance to the story.

Rubric: RAFT Project

Name: _____ Hour: _____ Date: _____

Description/ Creativity	10	8	6	4
	Uses descriptive elements in project. Elaborates on topic with details. Explains key concepts.	Minor errors in descriptive elements, elaboration, and key concepts.	Some errors in descriptive elements, elaboration, and key concepts.	Many errors in descriptive elements, elaboration, and key concepts.
Genre	10	8	6	4
	All facts used in project are accurate to the genre. At least 4 facts are integrated into project.	Uses 2-3 facts to add detail. Facts must be accurate to genre.	Uses 1-2 facts to add detail. Facts must be accurate to genre.	Uses some facts to add detail but facts are unclear or use incorrect genre.
Supported/ Length	10	8	6	4
	Project is appropriate length for task. All components are present.	Minor errors in appropriate length and components.	Some errors in appropriate length and components.	Many errors in appropriate length and components.
Audience Addressed	10	8	6	4
	Audience is appropriate for project and is consistent throughout project.	Minor errors in audience being appropriate and consistent throughout the project.	Some errors in audience being appropriate and consistent throughout the project.	Many errors in audience being appropriate and consistent throughout the project.

Overall Task /Role Completed	<p style="text-align: center;">10</p> <p>Task is completed and contains correct length, historical accuracy, audience, is detailed and creative.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p>Task contains minor errors in length, historical accuracy, audience, detail, or creativity.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>Task contains some errors in length, historical accuracy, audience, detail, or creativity.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>Task is incomplete and missing many components in length, historical accuracy, audience, detail, and creativity.</p>
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English

Janet Kracht - "In the News"

Demonstration Agenda

1. Explain Assignment
2. Explain Material – handouts for each section
3. Model the procedure on Publisher
4. Share student work
5. Group work time
6. Sharing of group projects
7. Wishes and Stars

Part 1 – Purpose: Writing-Literature Connection

Creating A Newsletter for a book using Publisher

The purpose of this project is to have students give a book review by identifying the elements of literature then using those elements as the basis for varied writing styles. Not to just reuse information to evaluate a book in the summary format, but to create something unique. Completion of this project requires students to comprehend, analyze, evaluate, and apply those thoughts using varied points of view for a diverse range of audiences.

Part 2 – Steps of Instruction After Completion of Assigned Reading

Using Newspapers to:

2. Select Newsletter Name – student’s name should be included as one of the editors
3. Identify parts of a newspaper by use of the index
4. Discuss purpose and required elements for each section

Discuss Project Requirements

1. **News Section** – 3 news articles

- * Students need to identify situations in book that can be rewritten as news articles
- * Requires the identification of the 5 W's – changing audience
- * Changing audience and purpose by writing as an informative piece

2. **Lifestyles** – 2 articles

A. Summary of the sequel

- * Use the element of literature to look beyond this novel to predict the future
- * Require students to apply, analyze using elements of literature

B. Biography of Author

- * Highlight author's achievements, family, etc.
- * Informal research and compellation of facts

3. **Editorial Section** – book critique

- * Use reader's response format to evaluate and support opinions

4. **Advertisements** – at least 3

- * Review propaganda techniques
- * Must be related to reading material in some way

5. **Optional Bonus Features** – try to relate to reading

- * Puzzles – cut and paste or create: Suduko, Crossword, Word search (puzzlemaker.com)
- * Comics – cut and paste or create
- * Sports – article or up-date
- * Obituary

6. Must include

- * Index
- * Graphics

Part 3 – Materials

- 1 Assigned reading material
2. Newspapers
5. Review worksheets for:
 - a. Project requirements
 - b. Elements of literature
 - c. Explanation of different writing styles
 - d. Propaganda
6. Computers with Publisher and Internet access

Part 4 – Evaluation

1. Checklist for meeting required elements
2. For composition
3. Specified writing style comments

Part 5 – Learning Objectives

Students will:

- * Apply reading strategies to improve understanding and fluency.
- * Comprehend a broad range of reading materials.
- * Demonstrate how literary elements and techniques are used to convey meaning.
- * Read and interpret a variety of literary works

- * Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.
- * Write in required genres.
- * Write for specified audiences.
- Use technology to enhance communication

Part 6 – Notes

Can be used for:

1. Response to literature
2. Persuasive writing
3. Cross-Curricular projects
4. Individual Evaluation
5. Book study groups
6. Multi-book project by placing 3 or 4 students who have read different books by the same author/genre/theme together
7. Writing groups
8. In place of a unit evaluation
9. Other

This is definitely a Publish & Post project!

Part 7 – Feedback

News Article

News articles focus on the important facts of the situation. The answer to the questions: who, what, when, where, why, and how should be easily recognizable in this piece of writing. It is presented with an objective voice in a matter of fact manner. Use these worksheets to help organize you article.

5 W's & H Worksheet

Event #_:

WHO is the event about?

WHAT happened?

WHERE did it happen?

WHEN did it happen?

WHY did it happen?

HOW did it happen?

Event # _:

WHO is the event about?

WHAT happened?

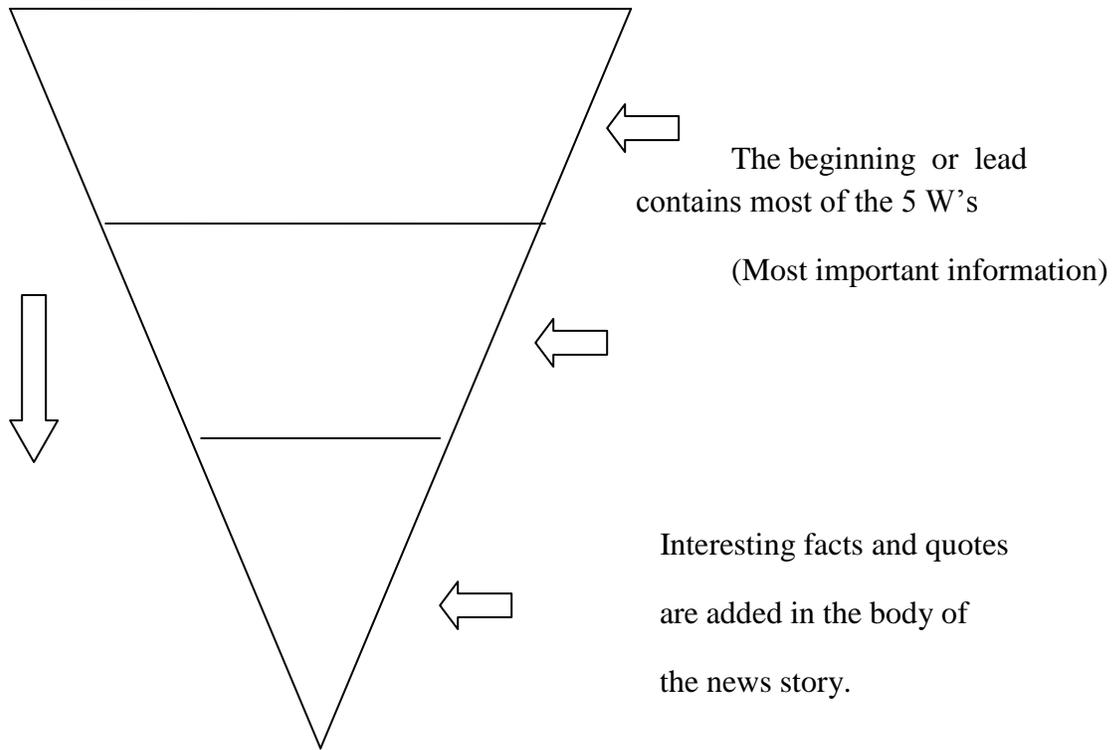
WHERE did it happen?

WHEN did it happen?

WHY did it happen?

HOW did it happen?

News stories are usually written using the inverted pyramid style of writing. In this style, the most important information is found in the beginning or lead of the story. This includes most of the 5 W's (Who, What, Where, When, Why). Information such as supporting details and quotes are added in order of importance with the least important information being added at the end.



The least important details
are added at the end or
the bottom of the story.

There are 2 required articles for the Lifestyle section of your newsletter. The first is the sequel to the book you read. The second is a short biographical sketch of the author.

Sequel – The Book Blurb

The sequel to the book must include the following literary elements.

1. Setting – time and place, when and where the story occurs
2. Character – Introduce me to the main characters – Use the elements of characterization we studied as a guide.
3. Conflict – Start developing the main conflict of the story. The premise of the story is based on this important or central problem.
4. Plot – Get the reader interested in the story – this is the teaser – just enough to wet their appetite for the rest of the story.
5. Set the mood – what do you want the reader feeling as they read?

This is a creative writing assignment. It is important to remember that it is the next step in the story of the main characters. You will need to use your skills for predicting and applying what happened in the original story to make the sequel work.

Author’s Biographical Sketch

Feature the author of your book by discussion their:

1. Life
2. Accomplishments
3. Other published books
4. Their favorite genre
5. Personal life
6. Picture
7. Reason for writing – Why they write

This is to be written in paragraph form as an informative piece of writing. You must like the way they write help me to find out why – Get me to read their books, also.

The Editorial Section

Your assignment for the editorial section is to complete a book critique. Use your reader's response format.

Introductory Paragraph

Introduce the theme and one issue.

Include a scene from the story

Make sure you state the purpose for the editorial

Body Paragraphs

Include something directly from the story

State reason for your opinion

Explain

Give personal connection to help strengthen the argument. May be from

Personal experience, another book or show, something that has

happened in society – a real world link

Closing

Repeat opinion – refer to supporting examples – emphasize the why or why not in your recommendation of this story.

Thoughts to ponder while writing:

1. Theme
2. What did you learn while reading
3. Problems
4. If real how could society be affected
5. Solutions
6. Believable situations
7. Did the author suck you into the story
8. Could you relate to the characters in some way
9. Was the story one that worked
10. Were you pleased with the storyline/ending? How would you change it?

Remember!

1. Get the facts right.

Your review won't be taken seriously if you don't get your facts straight. Before you begin writing a review, make a list of the correct title, author, and specific details you remember.

2. Read critically

Usually you read a book for fun or entertainment. But since you are doing a review you will need to closer attention. How does it make you feel, can you visualize the scenes, does the story make sense?

3. Quickly write some opinions.

As you are experiencing what you are reviewing, keep your notebook and daily journaling handy. Write some quick opinions about what you are reading. When you have finished the reading, brainstorm some additional opinions. Look over all the opinions you wrote. Choose 2 that you think are the strongest or most important. Each of these opinions should make up a paragraph in the review.

4. Write a summary

A review always contains a short summary. A summary tells the plot of the story.

5. Write a strong opening

A good review needs a great opening. The opening paragraph of reviews contains something specific from the book. Don't give your opinion in the opening paragraph. Use the opening to grab the reader's attention.

6. Make a recommendation

An important part of the review is when you tell your reader how you feel about what you've read. One paragraph of your review should contain a recommendation from you about why someone should or shouldn't read this book. You need to give reasons and support them for your recommendation.

Final Novel Project – “In the News”

Create a Newsletter

Project Requirements:

Select Newsletter Name – student’s name should be included as one of the editors

News Section – 3 news articles

- * Identify situations in book that can be rewritten as news articles
- * Requires the identification of the 5 W’s – changing audience
- * Change audience – this writing should be an informative piece

Lifestyles – 2 articles

A. Summary of the sequel

- * Use the elements of literature to look beyond this novel to predict the future
- * This is a creative writing assignment

B. Biography of Author

- * Highlight author’s achievements, family, etc.
- * Informal research and compellation of facts, cite sources if possible

Editorial Section – book critique

- * Use reader’s response format to evaluate and support opinions

Advertisements – at least 3

- * Review propaganda techniques
- * Must be related to reading material in some way

Optional Bonus Features – try to relate to reading

- * Puzzles – cut and paste or create: Suduko, Crossword, Word search (puzzlemaker.com)
- * Comics – cut and paste or create
- * Sports – article or up-date
- *Obituary

Must include

- * Index
- * Graphics

Evaluation

Checklist for meeting required elements

For composition

Specified writing style comments

“In the News”

Demonstration Adaptations

**please note that many of the suggestions could be used at any level.*

General Uses

Presentation for board members

For interdisciplinary units

General education writing

Cross-Curricular with team teaching partners

Weekly or monthly newsletters to parents

College Level

Methods & Teaching Composition

Lit or integrated language arts

High School

Independent project

Small Group

Large group – divide class into departments with criteria.

Each department has an editor

Work is brought together & published as a class newspaper

Freshmen or Introduction to journalism

AR replacement

Way to facilitate Lit circles

Interdisciplinary approach with America Studies,

a page for each groups area

Read a novel like Grapes of Wrath

History – Context

Math – Economics

Science – Dust Bowl

Arts – Murk/Photography

Literature – similar approach

Freshmen – use an intro to news writing with fiction

To teach propaganda techniques

Alternative to traditional essay

With a literature story from text

Sophomores - To Kill A Mockingbird final project

Book Tasting – final project instead of journaling

Freshmen: end of the short story project plus extension

Fall of the House of Usher review

In place of notes for short stories

Way to get book reviews for “Monday Reading Days”

Modify and shorten the assignments

Middle School

Synopsis of Science/content area articles

Obituaries in Astronomy

Creating Ads to explain early science technology

Classroom newsletter where all kids must submit an article, comic, ad

In place of a book talk

Incorporate into journal writing

To inform parents on standards addressed and

Activities

For project on mystery unit

As a unit by breaking it into smaller pieces

Elementary School

Write book reviews

Relate experiences that they have encountered

*With smartboard – draw picture or Kidpics and insert their pics
and word*

Review Science and Social Studies lesson

Research topic: Indians, Holidays

Pick favorite AR book to add interest for next year's class

*Use in differentiation groups to review stories and think deeper into
the story*

Students take turns writing newsletters to increase parents' interest

With a class read aloud book

Incorporate the news article format into the language arts class

Create advertisements

In a cooperative learning project with stories and activities

Parent/Child involvement – create with staff helper to introduce child

Group Projects to complete after reading books

Rebecca Miller - MSNBC Week in Pictures

Materials

Website: <http://www.msnbc.msn.com>

For this activity the students will need to bring pencil and paper. We will use the internet and the television or SmartBoard. MSNBC Week in Pictures handout will be distributed to the students.

LESSON DETAILS:

Target Audience - Subject Area

This activity can be used in any core subject 6th - 12th grade.

Objective

The purpose of this lesson is to increase public speaking skills, apply previous knowledge and logic to support opinions, to persuade other students to make a logical decision, and to express their ideas in a written form. The students chose the best picture of the week based on personal preference. The students will form groups or stand alone to form their arguments to persuade others their picture is best. The students will speak to persuade other students to join their group using logic and facts to support their statements. Through the debate, students will have an opportunity to change their mind if convinced that another picture is worthy of the vote. The students will write a persuasive essay on the picture of their choice and provide support for the decision they make.

Instruction

I will share with the students that MSNBC displays a certain number of pictures each week on their website from various places and activities going on around the world. The website is informative because it allows the students the opportunity to witness the events that affect our world. I will log on to MSNBC Week in Pictures and discuss the weekly pictures posted. During the discussion, the students will write their thoughts on the handout about each picture. After the pictures are discussed, the students will divide into groups or stand alone on the picture of their choice. Using the notes they have taken, the students will have five minutes to prepare a speech for debate purposes. The speech must answer questions such as: "Why is this picture the best of all?"; "Why is this picture important to you?"; "What emotions are portrayed in the picture?"; "If I was there...."; and, "Why should someone be persuaded to change groups?" Students will use logic and any background knowledge to convince their

audience to join their group. It is important that the students support their statements. Vague statements are not allowed. After the debate is closed, students are allowed to change groups if persuaded. After the debate, the students will refer to their handout. The students will write a persuasive essay for the picture they liked the best or the least providing support. The essay must be four full paragraphs including an opening with a strong thesis, two body paragraphs convincing the reader why their picture is the best or the worst, and a closing paragraph restating their ideas.

Conclusion

After the debate, we vote online. If we have a tie, we ask the principal to make the final decision after listening to the students' summarized speeches. The students' papers are due at the end of the week.

Teacher Evaluation

I will reflect upon the procedures and techniques I used for this lesson.

- What conditions contributed to the success or failure of this lesson?
- How did I assure the high quality of this lesson?
- How did I promote higher order thinking during this lesson?
- How did I enable diverse students to achieve mastery of the objective/s?
- What alternative strategies do I have at hand for diverse learners, special needs students including the gifted, second language students?
- How will I use this lesson to connect to tomorrow's curriculum?

Resources

MSNBC Website located at <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/3842331/>.

Persuasive Essay Handout

MSNBC Week in Pictures

Picture	Pros/Like	Cons/Dislike
#1		
#2		
#3		
#4		

#5		
#6		
#7		
#8		
#9		

#10		
#11		
#12		
#13		

MSNBC Week In Pictures Debate

Using your notes, prepare a speech for debate purposes. The speech must answer questions such as:

"Why is this picture the best of all?"

"Why is this picture important to you?"

"What emotions are portrayed in the picture?"

"If I was there...."

"Why should someone be persuaded to change groups?"

Students **MUST** use logic and any background knowledge to convince the audience to join their group. It is important students support their statements. Vague statements are not allowed.

Extension:

Write a summary of the picture you liked the best or the least providing support. The summary must be four full paragraphs including an opening with a strong thesis, two body paragraphs convincing the reader why their picture is the best or the worst, and a closing paragraph restating their ideas.

The main aim of persuasive essay is to show that your argument is true. It attempts to convince the reader that your point of view is more legitimate than others. Once you have developed an argument, you should back it up with available evidence and examples.

The following steps will facilitate the process:

- You should express clearly and convincingly why you have chosen this position on the subject.
- Study your prospective audience. Try to find out whether your audience will agree with the argument, whether it accepts or disapproves of your position.
- All arguments in persuasive essay should be backed up with evidence.
- Plan your essay. Try to design your essay by figuring out the order in which you will present your evidence.

<http://www.bestessaytips.com>

Patti Murphy - We're Off to See the Wizard

Overview:

Students will do various types of writing activities as they complete a literary unit of study around *The Wizard of Oz* by L. Frank Baum in the 7th grade reading classroom.

Rationale:

My 7th grade students read *The Wizard of Oz* in reading class near the end of the year. Many of the students are familiar with the story from watching the movie, but very few have read the book. Often considered one of the first American fairy tales, it is a part of American culture.

The three activities shared in this demonstration are used at various times throughout our study of *The Wizard of Oz* and demonstrate three different types of writing for differing purposes.

State Standards:

State Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes.

3.B. Compose well-organized and coherent writing for specific purposes and audiences.

3.C. Communicate ideas in writing to accomplish a variety of purposes.

Scope:

This unit is taught near the end of the school year but can be done at any time.

Materials:

- *The Wizard of Oz* books
- Directions for completion of the Character Wishes paragraph(s)
- Directions for completion of the ABC Summary and associated rubric
- Directions for completing the R.A.F.T. activity and associated rubric

Activities/Procedures

1. After reading through the section of *The Wizard of Oz* where Dorothy has met the Scarecrow, Tin Woodman, and Lion, students are asked to consider which trait they would most desire (heart, brains, courage, home). They are asked to rank each trait according to importance. Then they write a paragraph giving supporting reasons for their decisions. Upon completion of the paragraphs, students will be asked to assemble with others who chose the same trait as most important and share their reasons. Each group will share their reasons with the class.
2. ABC Summary – After completion of the book, students will be asked to create a summary of the story using an ABC format. We will demonstrate what this would look like using the fairy tale, *Cinderella*. Using student input, we will generate an ABC story that might begin as follows:

A long time ago in a far away land a young girl lived with her stepmother and two step sisters.

Because she was a beautiful girl, and her step sisters were rather plain, they treated her badly.

Cinderella was the girl's name.

Day and night Cinderella was given chores to do.

Even though she was treated badly, Cinderella was a happy, kind young girl.

Upon completion of the model story, students may work in small groups or alone to create their own ABC summary.

3. We will review what happens to Dorothy's companions after she returns to Kansas. The Tin Woodman becomes the ruler of the Winkies, the Scarecrow becomes the ruler of the Emerald City, and the Lion becomes the King of the forest. The King of the winged monkeys is given the Golden Cap which ensures that they will never again be ruled by anyone else.

Students will then be asked to complete a R.A.F.T. writing assignment. They will choose one of the above mentioned characters and will complete a friendly letter to Dorothy from that character's perspective which informs her of how their lives have changed, what is going well or not so well, what they wish for, how they have changed, etc. Students will be given the parameters of the R.A.F.T. and be given time to complete the writing. This will require using information that they learned about these characters and the lands they will rule as well as some imagination.

Assessments:

1. Character wishes paragraphs will be collected and given a grade for completion. Completion will consist of following directions and writing arguments supporting their choice in paragraph form. Partial completion results in partial credit.
2. ABC Summary rubric is attached.
3. R.A.F.T rubric is attached.

Extensions:

1. Upon completion of the book, students are given time to complete Final Activities which focus on literary elements of characters, plot, theme, irony, and perspective. They are also given activities of their choice to complete.
2. There are many writing possibilities throughout the book such as:
 - a. writing about friendship and what the diversity of friends can bring to a friendship
 - b. creating answers for which students have to write questions (The answer is ...)
 - c. keeping dialectical journals during reading
 - d. comparing and contrasting the book with the 1939 movie version
 - e. comparing different movie versions, such as the 1939 version and *The Wiz* or the Muppets version.
3. Students can research and write about the author and original illustrator, the Oz series of books, movie trivia and myths, or other topics of interest.
4. Complete an analysis of how Dorothy's experience follows the archetypal hero's journey and how it compares to that of Luke Skywalker in *Star Wars: A New Hope*. Older students could explore specific archetypes and determine which characters fit which archetypes.
5. In conjunction with other subject areas (requirements would vary depending on age of students):
 - Social studies – Create an Oz land of your own. Develop a map, form of government, motto, flag, national anthem, citizenry, businesses, etc.
 - Science – Create flora and fauna for your Oz land. What is their appearance, diet, characteristics, habitats, etc. What would the climate be like for your Oz land?

Math – Create a system of currency for your land and a budget. What governmental programs would you have (military, education, medicine, space research, transportation, etc.) and plan a budget accordingly. Will you tax your citizens? If so, explain for what and how much.

6. For older students, there are resources on line for possible political meanings. Some think it was a Populist fable for the late 1800s with the Scarecrow representing farmers, the Tin Woodsman representing the industrial workers and so on. This can be researched and discussed in a history framework.(http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/magazine/7933175.stm) is one such site. There are others found just by searching for political implications of The Wizard of Oz.
7. For older students, the Dark Side of Oz syncs up the lyrics to Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon* with the 1939 movie. Specific directions are found on <http://www.everwonder.com/david/wizardofoz/>. Be aware of the lyrics before advising your students to try this.
8. Older students may also make a comparison to *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Odyssey*.
9. For younger students graphic organizers can be used to illustrate the differences and similarities of the book and the movie, pictures could be created to illustrate major characters and events in the book, or students could role play important situations of the book, or use puppets to recreate the story.
10. Groups of students can create a board game with a Wizard of Oz theme. Questions must be written that pertain to the book and movie and the design of the board must reflect the story in some way. Rules and directions must be clearly written.

Resources:

Web sites for quotes from book and movie:

(<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/movies/wizard-of-oz.htm>)

(http://www.litquotes.com/quote_title_resp.php?TName=The%20Wonderful%20Wizard%20of%20Oz)

Web sites for info comparing it to *Star Wars*:

(<http://www.geocities.com/Athens/1085/story.html>)

(<http://virtual.clemson.edu/groups/dial/oz/femoztax.html>)

Great site for character comparisons of *Wizard of Oz* and *Star Wars*, the roles they play, etc.

(<http://storymind.com/dramatica/archive/pdf/6.pdf>)

Wizard of Oz unit presentation by Diane Schindel, from which I got several initial ideas

<http://www.teachwithmovies.org> – sample learning guide to *The Wizard of Oz* (contains ideas for discussion questions for children ages 5 and up)

Culhan, Ruth & Amanda Wheeler. *Writing to Prompts in the Trait-Based Classroom: Literature Response*. Scholastic, 2003

R.A.F.T. Activity

Role: Tin Woodman, Cowardly Lion, Scarecrow, King of the Winged Monkeys (choose one)

Audience: Dorothy

Format: friendly letter

Topic: update of events in the character's life

Strong Verb: inform

You are one of Dorothy's friends (choose one from the above list) from the Land of Oz. Your life has changed a lot since your adventure with Dorothy. You have some joys and some concerns.

Write a friendly letter to Dorothy. Inform her of what your life is like now, how you have changed from when you journeyed to the Emerald City, what you hope for, and other information she should know.

(Role)

(format)

(audience)

(Topic)

R.A.F.T. Thinking Sheet

1. Role

What do I know about this role?

What special language might a person in this role use? _____

2. Audience

What do I know about this audience? _____

What information does this audience need to know?

What voice would be most appropriate for this audience?

3. Format

What do I know about this format?

How are ideas typically organized in this format?

4. Topic

What do I know about this topic?

What details should I provide for my audience?

What questions should I answer for my audience?

Where can I go for more information if I need it?

R.A.F.T. Evaluation

3

2

1

R.A.F.T. thinking sheet is completed.	R.A.F.T. thinking sheet is nearly completed.	R.A.F.T. thinking sheet is only partially completed.
R.A.F.T. assignment is completed and follows all directions.	R.A.F.T. assignment is completed but does not follow all directions.	R.A.F.T. assignment is incomplete and does not follow all directions.
Facts and details are appropriate and accurate for the role and audience.	Facts and details are somewhat appropriate and accurate for the role and audience.	Facts and details are somewhat inaccurate or not appropriate for the role and audience.
Imagined information seems reasonable.	Imagined information is somewhat reasonable.	Imagined information is not reasonable.
Format is done correctly.	Format is done somewhat correctly.	Format is not correct.

Total points _____

Sarah Wendt - Third Grade Writing Program

Overview:

This demonstration will explain the writing process I will be using with my third grade class. This demonstration will show where students begin their year and the procedure to helping them become the best writers they can be. The demonstration will walk one through the first day in Mrs. Wendt's Third Grade Writing, to preparation for the ISAT test, and finishing out the year perfecting student's writing skills, in preparation for fourth grade.

Rationale:

This activity will help student create and identify a pattern to the writing process. Students will have a better understanding of where to start once they have a writing topic.

Learning Goals:

1. Students will become more confident in the writing process.
2. Students will have a better understanding of what is expected of them when they write.
3. Students will learn to combine tasks to make the writing process quicker for testing situations.
4. Students will be able to appropriately support their details with related information.

Preparation:

The teacher will gather all of the correct copies and supplies students will need. They will pass them out as the students need them in the school year. Preparation will show in the Process as the year progresses.

Materials:

Folder	My Writing Growth	Poster of Writing Outline (2)
Pencils	Putting Your Ideas in Order	Glossary of Happy Endings / Good Beginnings
Markers	Writing Outline	Weasel Words
Loose-leaf	\$100 Words	Rubric

Activities/Procedures:

Beginning of the School Year

1. Students will be given a Folder. They will keep their handouts, and past writings in this folder.
 - a. Students can look back at mistakes they have made and how to fix them
 - b. In the folder students will find their My Writing Growth sheet
 - i. They can write themselves notes about changes they made and how it helped them
 - c. Students can also look back to get ideas on how to start writing
2. Students will receive the “Putting Your Ideas in Order” as one of their first lessons
 - a. The teacher will walk students through the paper and talk about all the “tips” and why they are important.
 - b. During lesson teacher might show one of her bad writings & students will fix it using the sheet
3. Talking about transition words
 - a. Teacher describe what a transition word is & why it is important
 - b. Again using teachers writing to show poor transitions & changing it with student help
4. Practicing the outline
 - a. Practice a few outlines as a class
 - b. Students will practice the outline for a few weeks
 - i. This teaches them the format to use for writing
 - ii. Helps with confidence with the outline & when it is taken away

Demonstrate doing an outline together – 30 minutes

1. Topic: Summer is a great time of year

Day 1 – 30 minutes

1. Student will receive a topic to focus on that morning (written on the board when they enter) or the week before.
2. Students will receive the Writing Outline to complete. Based on Four-Block but has been adapted.
 - a. outline focus on information, not on sentence structure or spelling.
 - b. do not have to do everything in order, however it is recommended. (This helps them adjust to the times they may not have the outline available.)
 - c. Students will fill out the Hook Sentence.
 - i. Purpose is to gain your readers attention.
 - ii. An exclamation, question, or a fact/quote that relates to the topic.
 - iii. See the Glossary of Good Beginnings/Happy Endings
 - d. Students will fill out the Topic Sentences.
 - i. Students will state the topic in sentence format.
 - e. Students will fill out the Combo Sentence.
 - i. Students choose the First and Second Details and combine them in a sentence format with “and” between them.
 - ii. The student will also write these details on the First and Second Detail lines.
 - f. Under the students First and Second Detail students will write some Supporting Details.
 - i. The amount will change throughout the year. This will allow for students to build their ability.
 - g. Students will then complete the Connecting Phrase.
 - i. This phrase should start wrapping up the topic or drawing a conclusion.
 - h. Students will then complete the Combo Sentence.
 - i. Like the beginning Combo Sentence, this should include the First and Second Details.
 - ii. This Combo Sentence should be stated slightly different than the first Combo Sentence.

Day 2 – 30 minutes

1. Students finalize any parts of Writing Outline.
 - a. Include: filling in parts did not complete or anything want to change or “edit.”
2. students have partners sign their paper.
 - a. show the teacher that someone else thinks completed everything correctly.
 - b. Teacher set partners, group of 3 varying ability levels
 - c. To assist groups the teacher will have students with a rubric
 - d. The teacher will set up the partners at the beginning of the year. The teacher will try to create groups with varying ability levels. Groups will contain 3 students.
 - i. This guarantees that students have really looked over the other students’ work.

Show us your Writing Outline! - 30 minutes

1. Topic: Reasons to write or Reasons I like to write
2. Show sample outline on poster

Day 3 – 30 minutes

1. Students will take their outline and turn them into paragraphs, on a sheet of loose-leaf.
 - a. The page is marked to separate the paragraphs so students know when to start a new one.
 - b. The page also had “INDENT” typed in to remind students to indent at the beginning of the paragraph.
2. Students will complete their writing and check on their own for any mistakes they may have made.
 - a. All important information is included, spelling, punctuation...
 - b. Students will also have their partners sign off on their rough draft.
3. The teacher will then sign off on the rough draft.
 - a. Using the same rubric as the students

Day 4 – 30 minutes

1. Once the teacher has approved the students rough draft they may write their final copy.

- a. The final copy will be written in cursive after students start to become comfortable
2. Incentives to complete your final draft
 - a. Type your essay
 - b. Hang it up for everyone to see
 - c. Illustrate your essay
 - d. Help another student
 - e. Fun writing options – put story to an illustration, partner write, journal...
 - f. Can change depending on your class each year

Later in the School Year

1. Students are giving the list of Weasel Words not to use, Thesaurus, and the list of \$100 Words.
 - a. Weasel Words:
 - b. This helps students become more interesting writers.
2. Glossary of Good Beginnings and Glossary of Happy Ending
 - a. List of ways to make writing more interesting
 - b. example of each
 - c. Teacher give students options to choose from for each writing
3. Preparing for ISAT
 - a. Students will receive the Writing Outline without the words.
 - b. This will prepare them to write without the “Safety Net” of the outline.
 - c. Closer to ISAT time students will not receive the outline at all and will use a plain piece of loose-leaf.

Are you smarter than a Third Grader? - Challenge Yourself – filler time

1. Topic: Reasons to attend the EIWP Writing Project at E.I.U.
2. Remember to consider: your rubric, readers interest, supporting your ideas, mechanics, and weasel words

Assessment:

Third Grade Writing Rubric

Extensions:

Since this is an overall view at our writing curriculum for the school year, there is not a way to extend individual activities. Activities are added and dropped during the year, due to need. For the purposes of this writing class participants will create extension activities which I will later distribute to the class.

Sources:

1. Gould, Evan Jay & Judith S. Four Square : The Total Writing Classroom
2. Gould, Evan Jay & Judith S. Four Square : Writing Method
3. Hostmeyer, Phyllis. Building Student Writing Rubrics. Through ROE#3. December 5, 2008
4. <http://www.liberty.k12.ga.us/jwalts/Writing%20rubrics%203.htm>

My Writing Growth

Topic I am working on	Mistake I noticed	How I grew as a writer

Miscellaneous

Angel Baumann - Technology Grant Proposal

1. Proposal Summary

Technology has become an excellent tool to increase students' participation and interaction. In their daily lives, students are interacting more and more with different hi-tech gadgets, from e-mail accounts to cell phones, from computer games to iPods. In order to get their attention teachers also need to update their learning tools. Additionally, the use of technology allows teachers and students to better grasp concepts, ideas, practices, and activities.

In the process of acquiring a second language, technology gives students the opportunity to enhance their understanding of words, grammar points, and cultures in a more precise way, because it involves them in hands-on activities like matching, finding words, and looking at real pictures, creating authentic scenarios . There are many instruments that can be used and there are different forms of using them, but I have used and would like to have available in my classroom a LCD projector, a SmartBoard, speakers, and a Chalkboard (Air-Liner).

2. Introduction of the Organization

I recently became a Spanish teacher at Charleston High School in Charleston, Illinois. I taught Spanish for five years at Mattoon High School. During those years I experienced a change in my teaching that affected my students' interest in learning a foreign language. Instead of asking students to translate words, or to repeat them, students would look at a picture big enough for everyone to see and they would tell me the word, describe the picture or give me a sentence using that object. Through these few years as a teacher I found technology, or the other way around, technology found me.

As a Spanish teacher, I have experienced how the use of technological tools increases students' achievement, because they are motivated to practice, to do as they learn, so they find learning a second language fun. Also technology saves time by allowing teachers to prepare material and examples that will appear with a click of the mouse. It provides more time for practice and assessing what students are learning as they work on activities. Instead of spending countless hours preparing posters, games, or writing activities that could be fun, using technology keeps me from drawing, coloring, cutting and gluing, or creating jeopardy games with envelopes. I can create, update, and transform the same material according to each chapter by using technology.

Using technology also saves space; a classroom with less clutter provides a suitable learning environment. In the long run, this will also save money, because the expenses for classroom materials (posters, crayons, markers, chalk, etc) will be lower.

When I started using technology in my classroom, I became better prepared for the school day, because even though technology makes learning fun and facilitates instruction, it does not come magically. It requires preparation. It becomes more than "open your books on page 10 and tell me what you think or learn from that."

Your foundation has continually helped teachers in the district make a difference in students' learning by implementing technology in their classrooms. I know that learning a foreign language is similar to learning a math concept. Foreign language students must also learn the structure and formulas, and students deserve to be taught at a high level of interest in this and any other content area.

3. Proposal Budget

Here are the four items I would like to have:

LCD projector (Liquid Crystal Display) projector.

Portrays any information or picture from a computer to a screen or a SmartBoard. All students in the classroom are able to participate in a discussion by getting the same information at the same time.

(Includes cables and mount equipment) \$ 830.00

Speakers portable speakers \$ 215.00

SmartBoard Interactive white board.

A white board that can be used as a computer screen, whatever you can do at the computer you can do at the board, where your finger becomes the computer mouse and keyboard.

\$1400.00

CPS Chalkboard This functions as a wireless mouse, with the capability of writing on the board from anywhere in the classroom. This helps to monitor Students use of the Smartboard, and also allows teacher to move around the classroom to keep track of students engagement.

\$ 350.00

Shipping and handling \$ 75.00

TOTAL **\$2870.00**

3. Problem Statement

At Charleston Middle School students are put in different technology-friendly settings. They work with Power Point presentations. Thanks to your foundation, students have hands-on experiences learning science, and they work with several Internet-based programs. As they come to the high school, students should enhance their experience with material and equipment at their level of interest. I know that some teachers have already started this process at Charleston High School, and I would love to be part of that.

4. Project Objectives

One of my goals as a Spanish teacher is to motivate students to learn the language and increase their appreciation for other cultures. I want to use more time practicing a concepts with fun activities rather than asking students to write words that have no real meaning for them. Technology makes these goals attainable.

I also want to provide an appropriate learning environment. Students should have a clean environment with no extra visual aids on top of cabinets, or poster games around the room. They should enjoy a safe environment “cordless” from the use of overhead projectors in the middle of the room. They should benefit from a fun environment with activities that challenge their knowledge and that provide the teacher with immediate feedback. Technology brings all this together.

5. Assessment

Students will fill out a survey at the end of each semester about different activities they encountered using technology. They will also write a paragraph about the class format and their ideas on how to improve it; or if they did not see any difference at all using technology.

6. Future funding

This project does not require future funding. The High School will take care of the biannual bulb replacement in the LCD projector.

Rachel Stuart – Letter to Parents

August 14, 2008

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Welcome to Team 8A! We are extremely excited to work with both you and your student during this upcoming school year. In order to better assist your student, we have a favor to ask of you. Since no one knows your child better than you do, we are seeking your words of wisdom in regard to your child.

What is your student like at home? What subject does he/she like? Which subject poses the most difficulty for your child? How does he/she learn best? What are his/her interests? Can we do something specific to help him/her in our classrooms? What other information would you like us to know about your child?

Please take a few minutes to write a letter to us that best describes your student. This will allow us to help your child throughout the school year. You may write just a few short sentences, or feel free to write as much as you like. We have asked that the students return this letter to Mrs. Stuart by Friday, August 22. If you could also include contact information such as email this would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks for taking the time to introduce your child to our team. We will work together to make this school year a success. If you have any questions or concerns, please call or email us right away. The school number is 238-5800. We look forward to working with you and your child this year.

Sincerely,

Team 8A

Steve Conlon sconliniu@mattoon.k12.il.us

Michelle Crary crarym@mattoon.k12.il.us

Rachel Stuart stuartra@mattoon.k12.il.us

Rachel Stuart - Writing Project Summer Chronology

Are you as Smart as a National Writing Project Participant?

Chronology

By:

Rachel Stuart

QUESTION #1

Every morning we begin by spending time in reflection and writing whatever comes to mind. This time is known as.....

ANSWER TO QUESTION #1

SACRED WRITING

QUESTION #2

Following sacred writing on Monday, Christy showed a fabulous power point where she recapped Thursday's event. This daily activity is called.....

ANSWER TO QUESTION #2

CHRONOLOGY

QUESTION #3

After Christy's chronology, the writing groups got together to work on.....

ANSWER TO QUESTION #3

GROUP PROJECT

QUESTION #4

Yesterday, we had a lesson using pictures from the book *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick*. We used dialogue as a strategy to improve our writing. This lesson was a

ANSWER TO QUESTION #4

DEMONSTRATION

QUESTION #5

After a lesson demonstration, all members of the class take time to express their feelings about the lesson. We call this process

ANSWER TO QUESTION #5

STARS & WISHES

QUESTION #6

After the demonstration on dialogue we had a few questions on the grammar rules so we

ANSWER TO QUESTION #6

CALLED THE GRAMMAR HELP HOTLINE

QUESTION #7

We then proceeded to discuss our upcoming celebration. Robin asked that we give her a list of people so that she could send

ANSWER TO QUESTION #7

INVITATIONS

QUESTION #8

With a little time left before our lunch break, we got back into our to on writing, projects, etc.

ANSWER TO QUESTION #8

GROUPS

QUESTION #9

At 12:00 we decided to either having a working..... or on our own.

ANSWER TO QUESTION #9

QUESTION #10

After lunch, we picked a book of our choice and began.....

ANSWER TO QUESTION #10

READING ALSO KNOWN AS A READ ALOUD OR READ AROUND

QUESTION #11

After the read around we had time for a or time to talk about anything interesting that we read.

ANSWER TO QUESTION #11

DISCUSSION

QUESTION #12

After our read around and discussion, amazed us with a hands-on, fun, and creative way to get the students up and moving.

ANSWER TO QUESTION #12

REBEKAH

QUESTION #13

ANSWER TO QUESTION #13

QUESTION #14

After our travel escapades, we wrote a piece about our experiences., one of our fearless leaders, shared her insight about Coleman Hall and the professors located within this building.

ANSWER TO QUESTION #14

CAROL

QUESTION #15

MC and Robin reminded us that we would meet at Coleman Hall on Tuesday before leaving for a writing crawl in the

ANSWER TO QUESTION #15

CEMENTARY

QUESTION #16

On Monday, our delicious snack was & brought by Vicki.

ANSWER TO QUESTION #16

POPCORN & PEANUTS

WE ARE AS SMART AS A NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT PARTICIPANT

Creative Writings

Sue Fuller - The Canvas

"I'm sorry" she carved into the canvas
with a shard of broken glass

For what is she sorry? I wonder when I find it
It could be that she called that boy again,
the one who is too old for her

It might be that she was mean to a friend
and wants to make amends

Maybe she smart-mouthed her mother
as 13-year-olds tend to do

She repeats Van Gogh's story

An artist full of pain and mystery

While I wonder about her apology

and consider that I may never comprehend its meaning

What I really struggle to understand is

Why must her arm be the canvas?

Patty Hawkins - Changin' Tides

He enjoys true leisure who has time to improve his soul's estate.

Henry David Thoreau

http://www.quotationspage.com/quotes/Henry_David_Thoreau/1

Relaxed, towel draped over my chaise
Feelin' fine, sittin' in the warm sun
Beads of perspiration slowly movin' down my entire body
Mind energized and spirit enthusiastic

Acquirin' immense pleasure in readin' and writin'
Just me and my thoughts – merged with Thoreau, LaHaye,

Jenkins, and the news of the day
...Other thoughts creepin' in...
Keepin' busy – WOW! – understatement of the year

Need to depart to a place where...
I will not be as happy as I am now
A place where the wind is quiet and
Where beads of perspiration will more quickly move down my entire body

All this domesticity – NOT my favorite obsession
YUK! Dishes on the counter, along with food crumbs and

beautiful shapes of water rings
Circles, rectangular shapes with curved edges, blobs that look like tiny pools
But, I must...

Dig in and remove the dirty dishes from the counter,
Place them in the dishwasher, and
At that moment 'lysol' away the germs, muck, and crumbs
From the counter

However, for now it's just me and my pencil n' paper
Sometimes they are my best friends
Waitin'...
No talkin' back

They place no demands on me for my time or attention
Patiently restin' there and
Waitin' for me
Like minutemen, they are ready to go on a moment's notice

Writin' is comfortin', like a soft, warm blanket on a cool, fall day
Also, cleansin' – riddin' me of frustrations, stress, and weariness
I must continue
To write

Christy Hild - TJ MAXX: There is a strategy.

FOREWORD

In this little treasure of a book, I will offer you a glimpse into the world of bargain hunting and rock-bottom, rock-on G.S. (Insider's Lingo: Good Stuff.) My sister and I have been perfecting these techniques for years – decades, really, but I don't want to brag – of shopping excursions. We are professional deal hunters, in every sense of the word. We make it our business to scour Goodwill racks and Target clearance bins the world over in the hopes of sharing money-saving strategies to honest, hard-working trendsetters such as you. (We realize many of you trendsters also happen to be broke, but we like to emphasize the *positive!*, so we label our type: *More Creative and Stylish Than Resources Currently Allow.*)

The first concept you must understand and accept is there are different rules for each shopping venue. Just as one would not behave in a McDonald's the same way he or she would act at The Four Seasons, you cannot assume the shopping experience at Marshall's can be executed with the same strategies as The Salvation Army Store. That being said, in this first essay we will closely examine the rules and guidelines for shopping one of our favorite destinations for deals: TJ MAXX. We will call this lesson:

-

TJ MAXX: There is a strategy.

-

RULE ONE: The Cart

Plainly, you must never touch a cart until you have located and secured the first bargain. Touching a cart when you first enter the store would be similar to an Olympic sprinter taking the starter's gun and shooting himself in the foot immediately before the race. This cart-touching jinx is a serious rule to which the serious shopper must adhere; otherwise, you might as well exit now and proceed directly to Bloomingdales.

RULE TWO: The Bathroom

I think it is the excitement caused by anticipating the unlimited bargain potential of TJ MAXX, because each time we enter, Mandy must immediately proceed to the dirty public restrooms available to customers. Likely, this call of nature will occur within the first twenty seconds after entering, but occasionally, we will get all the way through the purse section before

her stench starts clearing the aisles. This is good for more than just superstition, ladies. In fact, it gets that bitch away from the Clearance-Priced Coach bag you were both eyeing.

If you do not have a sister possessing the same intestinal skill as mine, I would suggest investing in some fart spray. This will create the same aisle-clearing

effect, therefore leaving you to sort through Spode China without that annoying bargain-shopping-POSER peering over your shoulder.

RULE THREE: The Order

As tempting as it may be to proceed directly to the _____ (fill in the blank according to need) Section, STOP YOURSELF. We have found many mistakes made by less experienced shoppers occur within this guideline. In ignoring this rule, you are basically forfeiting deals that will be stolen out from under your noses by more dedicated shoppers. You DO NOT want that to happen. (It gets ugly at check-out.) SOOOOO, Always, always (repeat after me) ALWAYS follow this pattern:

Perimeter, then Interior = SUPERIOR! (Repeat....Good.)

Now that you have the rule down (and I suggest continued practice), here's what we mean. You must work the perimeter of the store first. In the majority of TJs, that means you start in the purses, work your way through lingerie, to shoes, (even though it's tempting, DO NOT skip directly to the clearance shoes), continuing your journey through baby and children, leading directly to home goods, to men's, then gift sets, and finally the cash wrap end caps, which will lead you back to the starting point.

Only then are you allowed to begin scouring the women's and junior's departments (and I use that term loosely – it has too much of a Nordstrom's ring), aisle by aisle. (Again, please repeat those key lines: AISLE by AISLE.) Will you skip ahead of your sister who seems entirely too interested in the cashmere argyle vest for July? NO! Will you think to yourself, *Oh, I don't need any professional attire, so I'm going to prance on over to the cute sundresses in the Junior's department?* NO! You are a soldier who has been trained for duty, and YOU. WILL. BROWSE. EVERY. AISLE.

Now, if this seems too much for you, I suggest you come back when your finances are a bit tighter. You clearly have extraneous income to squander, so why dedicate yourself to such a process? Leave it for the little people and stroll down to Macys, why don't you? Now, little people, read on:

RULE FOUR: Think GIFTS!

Of *course* you don't need a size 12 *BCBG Girls* Python-Patterned 4" Stacked Stiletto...But wouldn't it be an *amazing* gift for your friend's cousin, Bertha? This commendable thought process is the mindset of the true bargain shopper. Always get the good deal and MAKE it work for someone!

This policy is extremely handy when you get to that delightful little aisle we call Invitation Nation. A girl can only have so many note cards (my sister and I have both far exceeded our limits), but they make *PERFECT* gifts for: hostesses, brides, new moms, neighbors, college grads, creepy cousins, and that-girl-you-don't-really-like-but-have-to-kiss-up-to-at-work-in-order-to-use-the-good-copy-machine!

RULE FIVE: "You Can Always Return It..."

If you are hemming and hawing about a particular purchase with the age-old, "Should I?" or "Shouldn't I?" dilemma, let us solve your problem: YOU SHOULD. TJ MAXX remains a beacon of light in the fog of customer service decline surrounding us in modern society. You can basically return anything, with or without a receipt, as long as you have the tag. (And even THEN on occasion, a cool shop girl will feel your regret in purchasing those splatter-painted jeans you thought were SO on-trend and return them without a tag.) My point, people? Get it. There is no limit on the amount of time you can keep it, and TJ's tags haven't changed in years. They'll take it back if you change your mind. Heck, they'll take it back when you're ready to redecorate your house and the item no longer fits your décor. And as shoppers of OLE YORE always say, " 'Tis much better to have a messy closet full of "maybes" than 'tis suffer shopper's remorse." (Okay, we made that up.)

RULE SIX: The Good/Bad Dilemma

There is nothing quite like a dressing room full of potential. (Well, in this case you can only bring in six items at a time – TJ's only downfall, but we're in talks with corporate to fix this nagging characteristic.) All those deals waiting to be had! All those opportunities to improve your wardrobe, and in doing so, your place in the world!

We know, we've been there: You can just picture yourself telling funny jokes at the company Christmas party in that sassy satin skirt while sipping martinis and hobnobbing with retail-price shoppers. Or that angora cardigan – you just know it will catch the eye of John the ka-trillionaire president, who will whisk you away on a yacht to Belize, make you his wife, and

catapult you beyond retail to custom-made!!!

Then you start trying the stuff on, and you look more like your frumpy Great Aunt Barb.

While it's annoying when none of your hopefuls fit, be sure to keep in mind all the money you are saving. (Which is always the thrifty-trendsetter's goal.) Then fall back to Rule #4: THINK GIFTS! If it looks like shit on you AND there isn't anyone you could possibly buy it for, walk away. Walk *quickly* away.

The sooner you acknowledge there is GOOD found in the BAD of the dressing rooms, the happier your experience at TJ MAXX will be. This happiness results in more frequent visits to the store, which naturally creates euphoria upon finding the perfect bargains, clearly a direct cause of a happy life. And that is the stuff dreams are made of.

RULE SEVEN: (The Final & Most Important Rule) Partner Communication

-

There are many reasons why having a partner like my sister is crucial in shopping TJ. Most important to our duo's success, however, is the fact that she is a good shopping communicator. Let me describe her qualities in this arena, and then go immediately to your newspaper's classifieds and design a Want Ad for Someone Like Her:

-

- She tells me if something I like is hideous. This was especially important in The Case of The Furry Cow Vest I Had To Have. Hindsight is twenty-twenty, I realize, because in my memory it now looks like a cow suit without a head or appendages. Why did I love it, you dare ask?!? Cut me some slack, people, even fashion gods have occasional missteps. At the time, I looked in the mirror and swore Madonna in that "Music" video was staring back at me. (Hel-looo, Gorgeous!)
- She grunts at appropriate intervals. This makes me think she is indeed listening to my woeful tale of inter-office bickering or brilliant intervention plan for my crazy neighbor. I don't take advantage of this quality by quizzing her, ala "What did I say last?!?!?!?", because sometimes, we just need the *appearance* of someone who cares.
- She at least pretends to look at every item that earns an, "OHHH!!! LOOK-IT!" (Thrifty-Trendsetter Translation: "Oh my, dahhhh-ling! You simply *must* take a look at this precious prize.") Note: If Mandy starts to falter here, I throw a fit. Then she corrects. (It's simple behavior modification, friends, but that's a later article.)
- She's WICKED fun, laughs to the point of peeing her pants (this typically results in the purchase of new jeans), and will try anything on for a double dare!

Well, ladies, I hate to disappoint, but that's it for now. There are obviously many more rules and tips we could offer for this store alone, but there is simply no sense in overwhelming fledglings. You have more than enough to get started on your journey, so take these policies and fly! Fly to your nearest TJ MAXX, my sweet sale-priced Sallies, for it's never, *ever* the same place twice!

About the Authors:

Mandy Wiley is a nurse-anesthetist resident apparently living above her means in Plainfield, Illinois. Your first impression of her would be that of a high-class society dame; she is always dressed to the nines, with to-die-for shoes and handbags. (In reality, she is a nose-picking rug rat who gets good deals at Filene’s Basement and Off-Saks.) Upon entering her house for the first time, visitors often exclaim, “My goodness! Your mansion is decorated so beautifully! Who did you have do it?” She stifles her snort-laugh and replies, “She’s exclusive.” (In reality, we spent hours picking through every TJ MAXX, Home Goods, Pier One, Pottery Barn, and Goodwill in a fifty-square mile radius, selecting the perfect accents, not to mention fifty-two furniture outlets and auctions in North Carolina – THE destination for bargain furniture.)

Christy Hild is a writer and teacher who prides herself on her walk-through closet. (In case you weren’t aware, it’s one step above the walk-in.) Although it is color-code-crammed with the latest styles in clothing, accessories, and shoes, she smirks inwardly at the knowledge of its low, low combined price. In fact, she hasn’t paid more than \$7 for a shirt since 1995. Her home is an eclectic page out of Williams & Sonoma, but not one object was purchased there. Instead, she paired with that sister of hers and collected only the best of the best from Estate Sales (a.k.a, scavenging through remains of the wealthy-but-deceased), minimum wage furniture builders (did I mention the importance of North Carolina?), and Craigslist. Adoring fans flock to her palace of cheap, and whisper in hushed tones about her certain “credit-card debt.” She inwardly laughs at such absurdity! Goodwill doesn’t accept credit cards, you ninnies!

Together, these girls form an unstoppable force when entering a store. Much of the time, shopkeepers often look dazed when the duo leaves, as if their stores had been robbed. In the legal sense of the word, they were. These shopping starlets are not afraid of getting on their hands and knees to dig through the very last bin of rejected makeup mixed with necklaces. Nor are they intimidated by the “Sticker Price,” as experience has taught them only rookies pay attention to such nonsense.



Vicki S. Martinez - Bottled Pop, Bottled Water, Bottled Groundhog?

July 9, 2008

Dear Ms. DeGeneres:

I love to drink Diet Pepsi, water and sometimes even those flavored waters. But it always seems that when I am really thirsty, I am out and about and need to get a drink from a vending machine. My dilemma, when I'm done is what to do with the bottle? I usually throw them away, or if someone is recycling, I will give them my bottle. Nowadays, we you're told that reusing our plastic bottles may cause a chemical breakdown. So I shouldn't reuse them for another drink. But after what I saw on Saturday, July 5, 2008, I feel it is my duty to tell everyone to recycle their plastic bottles or at least dispose of them properly. Here's what happened.....

On this day I was taking pictures at a friend's family reunion. When we in the midst of eating, when a truck stopped outside of my friend's house. A man jumped out of the truck and was running feverishly around in the middle of the road. Everyone at the reunion was gathered in the garage and saw the man. I believe at the time they thought he was a lost relative that had just shown up late.

Well, with further investigation we could see that the man in the road was trying to help an animal. The site of this animal was very disturbing. It was a groundhog that had a plastic 20 oz. plastic Coke bottle stuck onto his head. The spout part of the bottle had apparently been removed for some reason. You could tell by the dirtiness of the bottle that it had been stuck on his head for some time.

This strange man, animal lifesaver, tried very hard to reach this animal and pull the bottle off. He grabbed the bottle trying to release the animal, but to no avail. This bottle was on there tightly. The groundhog was very distraught as it tried to claw and scratch this brave man.

Another man, Chad Davidson, from the reunion group ran to get a blanket to cover the animal with in order to help. While Chad covered the animal, and this "hero" stranger pulled and pulled to get this bottle off. After what seemed like 2 minutes (I'm sure it wasn't), the bottle released, the animal was let go. **HE WAS FREE!**

This groundhog ran around scared to death. Suddenly it stopped to stare at the crowd that had formed around to watch in dismay. The look on the groundhog's face was a look of **thanks**. He then ran away with what looked like a smile on his face.

I am sharing this story with you, Ms. DeGeneres, because people need to help save our world, ourselves and animals. These plastic bottles need to be recycled. People need to step up

and become aware of what can happen to others.

This experience made a huge impact on me. I now look at plastic water, pop, and juice bottles differently. This was one innocent animal that just wanted food, or even a drink. I never dreamed that this could happen from a plastic bottle. The groundhog almost died because some human threw the bottle down carelessly and didn't think about the repercussion of their actions. I know this affected me and I want to be proactive. As Student Council Sponsor at Jefferson Elementary in Charleston, IL, I want to tell this story to my 2008-09 Student Council and begin a school wide plastic bottle recycling program.

I am hoping that you will share this story and picture with your audience. Maybe, just maybe, the millions that watch your show will be affected and share the same viewpoint as mine. This was very disturbing to witness and I would like to keep other animals from going through the same torture that this groundhog went through. I sincerely appreciate your time and anticipate a response from you.

Sincerely,

A concerned mother, teacher and lover of animals

Vicki S. Martinez



Julie McGowan - Walnut Point

It began like every other day with the annoying alarm clock buzzing that wonderful sound it makes just as I make it to REM sleep waves. I roll over with great effort – 5:00 am – “no, it can’t be already!” I think to myself as I slam my hand down on the 10 minute snooze button. Seconds later I hear that wonderful sound again, slam the snooze, but then realized I didn’t get last night’s writing assignment finished and up I come out of bed in one giant sloop, feet on the floor.

I grabbed my robe as I gently encouraged my little dog to head to the front door for her early morning potty break. She stumbles her way back in with the hairs on her back standing straight up showing me (all ten pounds of her) who’s the boss. I grab a can of diet Coke and head for the computer.

As I read through my assignment trying to find the exact spot where I’d wearily stopped the night before, I pondered how to begin again. I noticed I wasn’t as far behind as I thought I was. It seems late night dates with the computer often make for poor judgment. Yeah, I was excited! I hurriedly typed in the rest of the paper and checked for correction, then with a big sigh of relief, clicked the print button..... Yes, click the ok button.
.....Then.....nothing! It made the sound like it normally does but - nothing. Oh, wait here comes the papers! As I look with the hopefulness of actually not being rushed for *at least this one morning*, wrong again! Yes, it was printing-printing a bunch of crappy little alien signs that had no resemblance to my paper that needed to be submitted first thing this morning! Frantically, I shoved more paper in, mumbling a few curse words (like that always helps!) and clicked the print and ok button once again. Same alien markings!!! Now what am I going to do?

After telling myself to relax, and relax, and THINK, my light bulb popped on. I would run in to Booth Library and use one of their printers. The only question was, could I do it fast enough and still be at our Walnut Point destination on time? I called Booth Library and find out they open at 8:00 am. I just might be able to pull this off with help. Frantically, I called Heather (who would be my new best friend if this worked!) She answered in her ever-so-calm voice and I told her my situation at about the rate of 90 mph. Just hearing her calm and reassuring voice not only helped to slow my pulsing heart rate, but slowed the flailing arms that I had no use for at all. I told her my plan and asked if she wanted to ride together. She had an even better idea. I would email my things to be printed and she would print them on her printer and give them to me when she picked me up. After more confusion on my part about how to get my mail to her, everything finally worked out and we met at about 9:00 am to head to Walnut Point. We were supposed to be there at 9:00 am, but I had made a call to Robin and explained the situation and she was very understanding. We arrived about 9:25 am. As we trudged to the damp shelter where everyone sat I couldn’t help to notice the beautiful green foliage on the trees and plants. The water was calm and serene as if it were glazed glass except with an occasional ripple from underwater life.

Everyone seemed glad to see us (we were probably holding up the show) but I felt guilty for making us both late because of **my** stupid printer.

It turned out to be one of the best days ever! We did our regular routine minus demonstrations, wrote in our journals, worked on our group project, ate lunch, and had a very relaxing afternoon (I'm sure it's safe to say we all needed that)! Then the best part of the afternoon. Just as we were getting ready to leave, we got to meet the sweet little Daniel St.John. (Daniel is our co-directors two-year-old son.) He is such a handsome little man. He is sure to break many hearts.

Heather and I had an enjoyable commute to Walnut Point. We had a chance to get better acquainted which was really nice especially since we had so much in common: teaching, kids, NWP class. As we got to town I thanked Heather again for being my "lifesaver" and we said our goodbyes. As she drove off I realized Heather is one of those good people that makes you feel lucky that they're a part of your life.

Heather Moore-Hinton - How Shelbi Nicole Hinton Began

It all began on March 27, 1993, Brian and Heather became the Hinton Family. We wanted to be married for about a year before started to think about having a family. I read that a woman should be off of birth control for about six months before she even tries to conceive. In September I decided that it was time for me to discontinue the use of my birth control pills. Then by March we would be ready to begin our family. Well, things worked out a little quicker than we had planned.

We had just returned from a family Thanksgiving trip to Branson, Missouri with the maternal side of the family. Our next stop was to your dad's family to celebrate the holiday. My period was three days late. Until you were conceived my periods came every month at the same time like clockwork. I couldn't stand it. I had to take a pregnancy test. I wanted to know if I was pregnant. Your aunt Tracey was already pregnant and I wanted to share in the joy. We stopped at Kmart in Decatur to buy a pregnancy test. Our next thought was where on earth we would perform the test. Well, there was Hardees. Their restroom was as good as any. While I was in the restroom waiting your dad nervously went to get a drink and to purchase your first stuffed animal a stuffed polar bear that they were selling at Hardees. On Sunday November 26, 1993, two blue lines appeared on the stick that I had just gone to the bathroom on. I looked at the stick then at the box then at the stick and the box again, yip, I was pregnant. I just stared with shock. Wow, I wanted this but, it was way sooner than I had expected. I had only been off of the birth control pill for two months. I had just transferred to Eastern Illinois University and I was only 21 years old.

In my head I quickly began trying to figure my due date. What was the formula? Was it add seven days and subtract three months or was it subtract then add? Think I told myself. When was the first day of my last period? If I figured correctly you should be born around July 21, 1994.

On July 26, 1994, I went to the hospital for a routine doctor visit and ultra sound to make sure that you had turned into position for delivery. The doctors wanted to ensure that you were in the right position for delivery. Not thinking that you were already a week late and that I wanted to meet you I went home to patiently await your arrival. When I got home, I took a shower and decided to lounge in front of Oprah. The phone rang and it was a nurse from the obstetrics floor asking why I was not at the hospital. I explained that I had no idea that I was supposed to be at the hospital. Her response was that we needed to report to the hospital immediately! Your dad and I looked at each with puzzled looks, quickly gathered our bags that had been prepared for weeks, your car seat and left the house as a couple to return as a family.

Upon our arrival at the hospital we were bombarded with people giving orders, throwing forms and asking lots of questions. Then I was ordered to change into this gown with nothing

else on. Well, you know my feeling of no underwear, ugghhhh. I was then ordered to bed like a child. This was not a good feeling. At that time the hospital did not have the beautiful birthing suites that Abbi and Ben were born in. There were two separate rooms that were used for birthing mothers. One was called labor room. It is the room that we were in during the contraction phase of your birth. The other room is called the delivery room. That is where the baby was actually delivered. Both were very sterile and not homey at all. This made things very stressful because you know that I don't like to be given orders and to be confined in one place. The orders continued. At one point one of the nurses came in ordered me to turn off the lights radio and go to bed. You know that I have become much wiser since you were born. I now look at everything from the standpoint of a consumer. If I am paying for it I am the customer and the customer is always right.

We waited and waited for you. After 28 of changing positions, lying there while I was poked, prodded, stuffed with a wick of Cervigel (I will explain what this is later), and forced contractions from the Pitocin they decided that you were never going to come. Your heart rate began to drop so it was suggested that a Cesarean Section be performed.

At 7:33 pm the most beautiful baby girl was born. She weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 19 ½ inches long. She had coal black hair, porcelain white skin, and looked like an Eskimo baby. I was in shock.

Originally, your name was supposed to be Alyssa Shelbi. Your grandma was so excited that she only heard the Shelbi part. Since Shelbi was your great-great grandfather's name Grandma Teri told Great-Grandpa Johnson that we were going to name you Shelbi. He was so honored. After all of that I did not have the heart to tell them that Shelbi was going to be your middle name. Hence, you became Shelbi Nicole Hinton. According to your birthday keepsake the name Shelbi is from the Anglo-Saxon, and "means sheltered town." Another source translates it as "estate on the edge."

After I was all sewn up with the permanent scar that ruined my bikini body (just kidding), I went to the recovery room. I sat up and noticed that I could not feel my legs. Then I picked up my foot and dropped it. It was the most bizarre moment regaining the feelings in my body as my epidural wore off. The nurse came running to my bedside and forced me to lie back down.

Finally, they took me back to my room where all of our family and friends were waiting for you to make your grand entrance. In you came in the standard hospital issued double t-shirt. One t-shirt was on the top of your body and your other on the bottom of your body. You were wrapped in two receiving blankets and had a little pink hat on your head. The first thing that I did was change you into one of your new outfits and wrap you in the one of the new pink blankets that I had brought with us. When everyone left I sat alone in my room with this little person making plans and wondering what kind of person she would become.

We were released from the hospital on Friday and stopped at McDonalds to get lunch on our way home. You were driven home in the bright red Grand Am. When we arrived at home we walked through the red door of our little blue house into your bunny decorated room. Molly the dog served as your welcoming committee. Things were hectic that day but, we settled in well.

On your first night home we decided that we wanted to celebrate the Bagel Festival with our bagel baby. Two days post c-section I was proudly pushing your Graco stroller down Broadway. My lemon shakeup was sloshing around in the drink holder on top of your stroller. People stopped to admire you. You had so much hair that people assumed that you were a boy which upset me. The funny thing is that you were wearing pink. After we left the Bagel Festival I demanded that your dad take me to Wal-Mart. I was going to buy pink hair bows and spent \$22.00 on hair accessories for a two day old infant. I must have been insane. First, I tried the bows with velcro on them. You had so much hair that they would not stay in place in your hair. After several trial and error attempts of making the bows stay in I came up with a plan. I hot glued the little velcro bows onto little elastic hair bands. Then I made a little pony tail on top of your head. That is the “head horn” that would define you until you were six years old.

When you were about three and a half you began begging for a baby sister. Until that time your dad and I were content with having only one child. You would cry and cry for a sibling. Finally, on your fourth birth day you made a birthday wish that you would become a big sister. At that time your dad and I began to consider having another child. One month lead to six months and a year later you still did not have a baby sister. We finally decided to seek medical assistance. No one could figure out why we could not conceive. We had to keep temperature charts and run tests. All of which were inconclusive.

Next we tried the wonder drug Clomid that was supposed to help us get pregnant. With this drug the chances of a multiple birth was increase dramatically. We began with the lowest dosage the first two months. The doses increased in months three and four and five with no success. After five months of no success the doctors were ready to move on to the next step. I wanted to give it one more attempt. Our friend Lori had a prescription for Clomid that she was not going to use because she was already pregnant. I took the “hot Clomid,” and waited for the results.

In the mean time I was referred to Dr. Gratkins, a Infertility Specialists in Champaign. He looked at all of my records and could not figure out why I was not pregnant. He wanted to schedule exploratory surgery after my next period. I was supposed to call their office when I began my next cycle. I never had to call them because on my 28th birthday my period never came. On Valentine’s Day I was able to give you the good news that you were going to have a baby sister that would arrive just in time for Christmas. It was a bitter sweet day and a sad day. Your grandma Nancy had a second heart attack that week that resulted in her bypass surgery. Later that month Dr. Gratkin’s office called me wanting to schedule my surgery. I advised them that it was not necessary because I was already pregnant.

Being pregnant the second time around was much different. I was a little older and had more responsibilities. I was working on my Masters Degree in Gerontology. On November 20, 2000, a frigid late fall day you became a big sister. Daddy was so excited to go home and get you from school so that you could meet Abbi Brienne Hinton. You were such a proud big sister. The smile on your face the first time that you held her was priceless. I remember when you first told your classmates in Mrs. Reel's first grade class that you had a new sister. She said that you smiled all day. Eighteen months later we were all given another surprise. We found out that we were going to have another addition to our family. After all of the difficulty that we had getting Abbi here, Ben was welcomed as a surprise blessing to our family. On February 11, 2003, Benjamin Scott Hinton was born. As Hannah Montana says, "We got the best of both worlds."

My Leo baby is developing into a young woman. It is said that Leo children like to have authority and are natural leaders. They are outgoing, warm, cheerful and like to be the center of attention. They are very generous and tend to be dramatic. This could not describe you any better. We are so proud of you and honored that God chose us to be your earthly parents. You make us so proud every day. I hope you enjoy reading the story of how you came to be. Happy birthday my beautiful young woman!

All my Love,

Mom

Monica Moreschi - Vito

This is the story of a young man named Vitaliono, Vito to his friends, and dad to me. At the tender age of 16 he graduated from school and yearned for something more exciting to do with his young life. He thought there had to be more than playing soccer and catching frogs with his brothers along the Italian country side. One day a friend of the family came to his father Mario and said, "I could use some reliable boys to come work in my restaurant in Kentucky. Would any of your sons be interested?" Vito jumped on this opportunity. Though his mother, Lidia, was hesitant Vito managed to convince her with those big brown eyes and promises that he would be safe. This daring young man was on his way to the United States.

Now Vito came with no fears, no hesitation and absolutely no use of the English language! He was given a crash course and sent out into dining room. He knew just enough to help him do his job as a waiter. The good thing was that the all of kitchen staff were Italian too, so they could read what he attempted to write on the tickets. As the months went by he learned more and more English every day. Even learning what an old woman really wanted when she asked for a "cork screw". Although the accent was thick, Vito could now speak English.

After 2 years the now 18 year old Vito had to return to Italy much to the joy of his overly protective mother. In Italy every man from has to serve in a branch of the armed forces and they had finally caught up to Vito. It was now his time to "be all that he could be". He chose to enlist in the Navy and once again had to leave the comfort of his family. He was in the Navy for 2 years and was based in several different towns. Although none of his ships ever left the harbor, he looked awfully cute in his sailor's uniform.

Once he was free to do as he wished once again, this 22 year old man made the decision to move back to the states. Again he returned to the restaurant business. This time his adventure brought him to the fascinating state of Illinois, which would be his stomping grounds for the majority of his later life. Not much to do in this lovely state but as fate would have it did bring him to his soul mate. A young 18 year old girl named Karen walked into his restaurant one day. Her long dark hair and beautiful brown eyes reminded him of the woman from back home. Her brilliant smile mesmerized him. Unfortunately, she was to go on a date with another man. But strapping suave Vito would put a stop to that. She never met that other man and Vito and Karen never left each other for the next 31 years.

The happy young couple was married and soon had a baby on the way. Life was good. Vito took another job that paid more money. He now had a family to provide for. Painting radio towers was now his career of choice but not a choice that he liked. Not only was it dangerous but it kept him out of town for weeks at a time. This made Vito sad and lonely, and he wanted to be there for his now very pregnant young wife. When he missed the birth of his first born son, Mark, Vito knew he had to quite the job he now had. Besides, the restaurant business was still calling to him, and it was something he really enjoyed. "13 towns in that first year," Vito would later say. That was his record. Moving to small towns, opening a restaurant, and selling it for a profit is what Vito would do. He was really good at that! But then here comes child number two. His one and only darling little princess (that's me) and he decides to settle down for a bit in Macomb, Illinois.

But Vito, the ever wondering gypsy, didn't last there for long. He craved to move on looking for that next little town to stake his claim. Thank goodness Karen was a fantastic woman and agreed to follow him wherever he went. Two more towns and then a 3rd child was born. Another baby boy, this time named Mathew. One more town and restaurant but tragedy happens here. A fire destroys their business and home, which was a cozy little apartment above. His family must now move again, this time not by Vito's choice. But luckily in the last few years, Vito had convinced his family to join him in America. His mother, father, two brothers and their families all lived in another small town in Illinois. They too owned their own restaurant. Vito, his wife and his 3 young children now joined the rest of the Moreschi clan in Streator, Illinois. Vito kept his family there until they were able to get back on their feet. When the right time came they moved yet again...but wait what is this? To Indiana? Not Illinois?! What a big change!

A year or so later things were going good. Vito actually had two restaurants in this town. But again he heard the sound on the wind. "Vito! Come back to Illinois! Move on Vito." And move he did. Dragging his family to a small rural community called Paris. No not France, that's right, Illinois! But after a few years he could feel that itch coming again. By this time Mark, Monica, and Mathew were all in school and had made lots of friends. So when Vito mentioned it to Karen this time she finally said, "No, Vito. This is home."

And Paris is where they all stayed. Vito ventured out with other restaurants. Savoia's popped up in small surrounding towns like an epidemic; Marshall, Tuscola, Danville, Westville, etc. Open and sold again when he got bored. But Paris always had a special spot in Vito's heart. He always came back. In fact, he has opened a Savoia's in 5 different buildings in Paris.

Then at the age of 48, Vito was in for the shock of his life. After being a family of 5 for 12 years, there would soon be a new member in the Moreschi family. At 39, Karen gave birth to another baby boy named Michael. This energetic young boy was an interesting addition to the family. The family loved him with all of their heart. Thank goodness Karen had three other children to help her. She got tired a lot quicker at this age.

The years flew by. Vito watched his children grow. He began to lose his hair looking more and more like his father. The older children finished school and moved out but they all lived close by. Their family was still strong and always kept in touch. Karen and Vito still loved each other very much and continued to be happy until her death in 2004.

Vito may have lost his soul mate but he has his loving family to see him through the hard times. In fact his family has grown. His oldest son, Mark got married to Tricia and they have two beautiful daughters named Emma and Isabella. Vito is a very proud grandpa. At times he wishes his wife could have met Isabella, the newest addition to the Moreschi family. Then he leans over to Monica and says, "I know she can see her. Right?" Vito has come a long way from his young life in Italy but oh what a trip it has been.

Vicki Pierce - Part of A Storyteller's Story

I don't really know much about my grandpa. I know his ancestor, Joseph Stephens, left England and deserted the British army at some point during the War of 1812. Since that isn't the illustrious beginning that most folks like to claim for their family, Grandpa liked to say our family in the Americas went all the way back to the Mayflower. He said we had an ancestor who started the trip over with the pilgrims, but during that horrible storm that cracked the main mast of the ship, this fella decided to cast his lot with the sea. He jumped ship and started swimming in the direction he hoped was the right one. According to Grandpa's story, when the Mayflower finally dropped anchor and sent a scouting crew of pilgrims ashore, there was this ancestor of ours, sitting in front of a roaring fire inside a cozy log cabin, smoking his pipe and reading the evening newspaper while his Native American wife cooked his dinner. For me, it was the newspaper that gave it away.

I know that my grandpa's dad, John, married when he was forty and his wife, Susanner, was twenty-one. The couple had nine children, two daughters who died in infancy and seven sons who were the vexation of their father, he being too set in his ways to adapt to their shenanigans. Those boys had the run of their pop's eighty-eight acres and the surrounding hills, woods, and hollers. In spite of their father's resignation to their rambunctiousness, or perhaps because of their mother's best efforts, those boys grew up to be landowners and law-abiding citizens themselves.

My grandpa, son number five, bought fifty acres of choice Illinois farmland across the road from 160 acres of woods called "The Lost Hunderd n Sixty." Grandpa maintained that it was misnamed, as it had been right there in the same spot for as long as he could remember. "I've been lost out in it a time or two, though," he would add, and then chuckle his deep, throaty chuckle that he vocalized sometimes for a drawn out effect. Even now, just thinking about him, I hear that chuckle and find myself falling into his long, slow, easy-flowing style of storytelling, for Grandpa was a storyteller.

Oh, he was many other things besides storyteller—farmer, carpenter, preacher, historian, furniture maker, plumber, mechanic, and on and on—the way men of a simpler time had to be, but it was his storytelling that truly enchanted people. Grandpa would, from time to time, send a story in the form of a letter-to-the-editor to the local newspaper. "Pop's got another story in the paper," my dad would say, as he read the evening paper. The paper would then be passed around until everyone in the family had read it. Even through his writing, I could detect the slow storytelling drawl and the build to the punch line—for there was always a punch line—that were Grandpa's trademark. No pun or twist of fate was beneath him, and he was often the object of his own ridicule.

Because of Grandpa's contributions to the local paper, Ray Elliott, a local journalist, used Grandpa as a source in his research for his master's thesis—something about folk stories. Elliott had some kind of "expert" reference books that allowed him to categorize folk stories according to their subject matter, style, outcome, relationships of characters, and other scientific-sounding criteria. Thinking the reading public would be interested in his research, Elliott published part of it in the paper. Personally, I found the article rather boring as the author listed the references to his expert books to support his ideas, and I would rather have read Grandpa's stories, but since I was only twelve or so at the time, that was to be expected. What I did take an interest in was that,

although he cited several neatly fit Grandpa's stories. I could have spared him the trouble of the research, since I knew Grandpa would not/could not be categorized.

As delightful as Grandpa's stories are, I find even more delight in the stories I have about him. His mind was always churning on some idea or other and would spit it out at the oddest times for others to chew on. One of my favorite stories to tell goes like this: My grandpa and my dad used to give each other haircuts. Dad had gotten a set of hair clippers and attachments with Top Value stamps he had been saving from the local Krogers. I don't know how long it took him to save those stamps, but he could now save a fortune on haircuts—for the whole family!

One late spring Saturday morning when I was about ten, Dad and I were at my grandparents' farm getting the garden ready for the upcoming planting season. Dad had brought along the clippers, for Grandpa had called the night before to say he needed shorn. Leave it to Grandpa to use farming terminology. He wouldn't just say he needed a haircut.

After our work in the garden was done, I stood in the kitchen watching my dad cut Grandpa's hair. I was watching from behind my Grandpa because he had his shirt off and at that tender age I felt a little bit uncomfortable seeing my Grandpa's manboobs and white belly. Dad skillfully went about shaving Grandpa's head—to the skin. It was impressive to watch my Dad's technique; he basically had none—just shave a spot and move on, shave a spot and move on.

references to the different sources, Elliott could not find a category into which he could

Grandpa and Dad were chatting about planting and the predictions for a wet summer and on and on, when Grandpa started in about hair. He said that one of his other twenty-six grandchildren had picked up head lice, "hitchhikers" he called them, and the mother was frantic. "I told her I don't see what all the fuss was about. I told her just shave his head—like you're a-doin' mine—and they'd have nothing to hold onto." That seemed a bit drastic to me, but Grandpa couldn't see what a social disaster that kind of treatment would have been in the sixties—nineteen sixties, that is.

"Say, Pop, do ya want me ta shave yer back," Dad asked.

"Well, I was shore long overdue for a spring shearin'. Yeah, go ahead. It'll make it a bit cooler." Grandpa's back needed to be shaved; it was hairier than his head had been! "Do you suppose that's proof that man descended from the apes? Maybe I'm not done descending," he quipped, then chuckled his familiar chuckle. I've often pondered Grandpa's question.

I was so very lucky to have been exposed to Grandpa's stories. Even better, though, was that my dad continued Grandpa's storytelling at our house. We'd be sitting at the kitchen table having a bite of supper, and Dad would start in about his day. It was never just a dull recitation of the day's events, for he had listened to Grandpa's stories often enough to pick up the slow, characteristic drawl and the build to the punch line. Even a trip to the hardware store to buy a pound of nails sounded like an experience not to be missed when Dad told about it.

As I think about the hardships of life in the last century, I've often wondered how many of Grandpa's stories—and Dad's—were embellished for storytelling purposes. By comparison, my live just doesn't seem as exciting. —But sometimes, when I'm relating an event to an audience, I slip into a rural Illinois dialect, hear a voice familiar, yet not quite my own, and find myself building to a punch line. Maybe some things are genetic and some things are learned. Maybe some things are both. Maybe some day I'll be a storyteller.

Josh Robison - "Theme Meals on the Way Out?"

According to a recent poll, a full sixty percent of the Reynolds' household are "sick and/or tired" of the daily theme meal offered up by Mrs. Reynolds. For the last nineteen years Mrs. Reynolds has served her family's evening meals based on what day of the week it is. Saturdays, for example, are known as "Sandwich Saturdays," because the evening meal always consists of some kind of sandwich. Tuesdays are dubbed "Teriyaki Tuesdays" because the meal generally consists of Teriyaki chicken, or, at the very least, some kind of Chinese food. Other days enjoy their own similarly alliterated title.

"When I first began this pattern two decades ago," Mrs. Reynolds explains, "a full one hundred percent of the people in my home agreed that the daily theme meal was a perfect way to enjoy food. After I was married, that figure dropped all the way down to fifty percent. Regardless, we continued to plug along, and within a half decade, when the next poll was taken, my numbers had jumped up to sixty-seven percent. Hey, when two thirds of your voting bloc likes what you're doing, you keep doing it, right?"

Trouble began, however, the very next year with the arrival of Ryan Reynolds, the family's lactose-intolerant son.

"Our numbers dropped, I'll be honest." Mrs. Reynolds explains. "We were back down to fifty percent. Ryan's allergy really put a wrench in the proverbial meal-planning machine. 'Wisconsin Wednesdays,' which, you know, tended to have a lot of cheese in them, were gone. 'Sundae Sundays,' obviously, out the window. 'Fruity Fridays' survived, but that meal was so controversial to begin with, particularly with my husband, that we just kind of lost our steam."

For a number of years, the Reynolds' home was in a state of culinary turmoil, a supper civil war played out in the kitchen between Mr. Reynolds and Ryan on one side of the table and Mrs. Reynolds and her daughter Megan, who claims to "want to grow up to be just like Mommy" on the other. Knowing that a house divided against itself could not stand, or, at the very least, eat in peace, Mrs. Reynolds, according to her husband, decided on a new strategy: covert operations.

"She replaced her birth control pills with Tic-Tacs. Yeah, she really did that." Mr. Reynolds remarks. "Threw the suckers away and just started popping mints every morning like it was totally normal. Few months later, hey, guess what? We're having another kid. Zero population growth, my ass."

When asked how a college-educated individual with almost perfect visual capacity could mistake a heavily advertised mint with oral contraceptives, Mr. Reynolds declined to comment, then walked to the kitchen and made himself a turkey sandwich.

"Told ya' the Tic-Tac story, did he?" Mrs. Reynolds continues, smiling deviously. "Yeah, well, what can I say? Politics is a tricky business. But guess what? My numbers went up, so, in the end, I think it was all worth it. And it, er . . . , I mean, *he's* a tax write off, anyway. Win-win, you know what I mean?" As long as their tax write off, a little guy named Todd who just adores all kinds of trucks but is still unable to distinguish between the colors red and orange,

could not eat solid foods, Mrs. Reynolds' strategy seemed to work. Tragedy struck, however, after his very first "Meatloaf Monday."

"Oh yeah, I remember that night!" Ryan Reynolds explains. "Talk about gross! I bet they went through seven diapers! I just went over to Jason's house and played *Guitar Hero* until, like, midnight. They didn't even know I was gone."

Theme Nights never truly recovered, and, as this latest poll suggests, they may be on their way out entirely.

"They want pizza." Mrs. Reynolds laments. "They want lasagna and roast beef and bratwurst, for heaven's sake! Words that just don't match up! There's no *Ponday* in the week! There's no *Luesday*! How I am supposed to keep things in order around here without alliteration?"

Mr. Reynolds, for his part, is reacting to these recent developments with cautious optimism. "I'm happy, yeah. We're happy, the boys and I, and I think Megan is coming around, too. But I know my wife. She's a fighter. She's a schemer. I'm keeping my fingers crossed. And I'm also having a vasectomy next Meatloaf, er, next Monday, which should help."

As of press time, Mrs. Reynolds was still contemplating her options, but advisors continue to press her to simply "make those lazy asses get their own damn supper, geez."

Lee Roll - Memoir Piece

I live on 9th Street in the house with the belly-button door knob. Every other house I know has a regular door knob on the side, but our door knob is right in the middle of the front door like a big round belly button. One block north of my house is 8th Street, the street the library is on. Ninth isn't paved, but 8th is. Both streets end in grassy places that are mowed once or twice during the summer but mostly are tangled up with wild blackberries and some stinging nettles and thistles from Canada. I'm learning the names of plants. I know Queen Anne's Lace—it grows in the grassy places at the end of the block, too—and bracken fern and vinca. I'm also learning the names of lots of trees.

Beyond the grassy places is nothing but air. Most streets in my town end like this because we're on an island and there's no place to go except down to the water. The neighborhood kids call the grassy places, "empty lots." Both streets drop straight down hundreds of feet to railroad tracks. Below the railroad tracks is the beach where green waves are like smooth muscles that roll over sharp rocks and pieces of driftwood that make splinters when you rub on them too hard. It's a skinny beach even at low tide.

We kids say 8th Street is made of "cement," and it will be a long time before I know the difference between cement and concrete. We can bounce a ball straight up and down on 8th Street, ride bikes and draw hopscotch squares with colored chalk. On 8th Street when we fall, our knees look like someone dragged a sharp-tooth comb over the skin and our owies and booboos are clean and red. On 9th Street balls bounce every which way off rocks and ruts, and our scabs are icky and black with gravel and we cry because it takes a lot of soap and water and that red stuff like fingernail polish with the really big word name ... mer cur o ... chrome ... before our moms say we'll be okay.

Eighth is wide, like what I think a boulevard might be before I know what a boulevard is. And wide branched trees are planted on strips of vinca, the kind with blue flowers, and ivy between the sidewalks and the street. The trees are calendar trees, green for June and yellow orange for October. They are trees with good shadows like in books about how to make good photos with the right kinds of shadows. Sometimes their roots hump up the sidewalk and crack the cement.

The 8th Street houses are big—two stories with picture windows that look out over Guemes Channel, which is always dark green, and my mom says it's a mile across to Guemes Island. Some of the houses remind me of the wheelhouses on the tops of ships where the captain is ... the houses even have bridges like on the ships so the people can see the water. I'm learning about the parts of a ship from a book I checked out at the library. There are lots of ships and fishing boats and tug boats on Guemes Channel. A view of the water is really important in my town. If your house can see the water, it's worth a lot of money. My house is on the small side and I have to share a bedroom, but we can see the water, not as well as the people on 8th Street, but we can see it. People on 8th Street are richer than people who live on 9th Street.

Depending on how you look at things, Louie Dorbolo's house is the last house on 8th Street, next to the empty lot, but some people would say it's the first house. To me, it's the last.

Louie is the neighborhood bully. He's what my mom says is "ornery," which has an *r* in it that some people say and some people don't.

We have to pass Louie's house to get to the library. I start holding my breath a long time before we get there and I count the steps, but I won't hold my mom's hand. *Step on a crack, break my mother's back*, is what I think about. I jump over cracks, on purpose, and I hold my breath even though sometimes I think I'm going to turn purple and burst open. Finally we get past his house and I can let out all my air.

We walk a few more blocks and we're almost to Bobo's house. Will he be swinging out on the tire, wibbly-wobbling out from the dark tree in his yard? Wearing a diaper and shorts? The baby blue shorts with the two big buttons at the waist for suspenders ... but Bobo doesn't have suspenders. I like some books in the kids' section at the library. They're about triplets—two boys and a girl. They are blue-eyed tow heads. The boys wear blue shorts with two big buttons just like Bobo's. The girl, of course, wears a skirt but it doesn't have buttons. Her blouse does, though. The kids are always in a "predicament," a word I think is pretty funny when I'm six.

Mom says Bobo's in big trouble. He slammed the door to the greenhouse and broke all the glass. I wonder what it means, "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones." Someday Bobo will have to go to Woodland Park Zoo where they know what to do with gorillas. But do they know what to do with grown-up gorillas who were raised like little boys?

I remember that once we played ring-around-the-rosy and Bobo scratched me with his fingernail. By accident. His fingernail was yellow and dirty, like an old man's fingernail, an old man who works on old cars in a dirty garage with dirty windows and just a little light coming in like a cone. And spider webs ... but no spiders anymore. Just dusty old webs.

I don't see Bobo anywhere.

We keep walking. Past Janie Brazas's house. Past the old hotel that now is just tumble-down brick. No roof, not really even any walls, just piles of broken brick with bushes and trees growing up through the boards that used to be the first floor. Once I found a giant diamond under one of the boards. It was as big as a head of lettuce. It was blue green, and see-through. My dad says it isn't a diamond, not even close. He says it's only melted window glass from when the hotel burned down. But I decided to keep it on my dresser on a lace doily for a long time, just in case dad doesn't know what he's talking about. My mom likes to dye lace doilies in tea or marigold flowers. And sometimes in red roses. Once she used a doily to make a collar for my dress. She sewed the dress on her sewing machine. The collar was pink from beet juice.

We're getting close to the library. It's a Carnegie library, and mom says there are more than 2000 Carnegie libraries, maybe even 3000. A man from Scotland, like Jimmy who helped raise her, gave lots of money to build libraries all over the world, but especially in the United States and mostly just in countries that speak English. She says Mr. Carnegie liked big doors and really big staircases up to the big doors. Mr. Carnegie also used really big words. She says Mr. Carnegie says that big stairs mean that a person is "elevated by learning." He also liked lampposts and they mean "enlightenment." My mom is a teacher and she says I can use big words just like Mr. Carnegie. She is not a reading teacher, but she's an art teacher who reads.

Our library has two lampposts in front of it. The globes on the lamppost are like white milk glass. I know they're like milk glass because my mom has a collection, she has a milk glass hen with a lid for keeping butter in and a vase and a candy dish and some other dishes, but the hen is my favorite so I remember it best. The library has a huge staircase and huge front doors. There are four cement sitting-down places on the sides of the stairs. If the sitting-down places were in front of art museums, I'm pretty sure there would be lions on them.

The whole library is cement, just like 8th Street, and with grass and trees, it takes up a whole block ... almost. Sometimes I like to sit on the top and dangle my legs over the side and spit on a penny and drop it to the sidewalk that goes to the children's library in the basement. Some little kid would love to find a penny.

The steps down to the children's library are outside on the side of the building and are always in the shade because there are lots of big chestnut trees all over that part of the block. I don't like the stairs much. They're always wet and cold and mossy. Not really slippery or anything, just dark. Maybe that's why I drop pennies. Because they're bright. The stairs don't get swept much so leaves and sticks make little nests in the corners of the steps. There's a light on the wall over the stairs, but it's dirty and spider webby.

The door into the kids' library is heavy. Steel. Like an army door because it's a gray-green color with a push bar. Too heavy for kids to push. Kids need their mommies to help them open doors.

The library smells funny. Like furniture polish and old ladies and moth wings. When I'm six, I'm happy in the library. I look at pictures and ask my mom what the words say. I can check out six books at a time when I'm six.

The books I like are on the side of the library away from the stairs, the side where the sun sets, the warm side where lots of light comes in, even when it's cloudy, through the tall windows. It's funny to look up at the windows and see the flower garden above my head, but that's what happens in a basement. On nice days when it's not raining, the sun comes in like a shiny arrow and points to the books I like. I look for the books about the triplets. There are lots of different books because the triplets have lots of different predicaments. Sometimes they do bad things and they learn a lesson and they never do that bad thing again.

I think the triplets are Swedish because they are tow heads. My Grandma Isaacson says I'm Swedish and she says someday I'll go to Sweden and eat seven desserts because that's what Swedish people do. Sometimes she takes me to Runeberg, which is a meeting, to see all the Swedish people who live in my town. I'm scared of all the old people who pat me on the head and talk half in English and half in Swedish and say what a big girl I am. My grandma's friends are there, but they call each other Mr. and Mrs. even though they're best friends and they sit together every afternoon and drink coffee and eat *skorpa* with sugar and cinnamon crusts and cookies made of ginger with white frosting. The triplets have friends, but they call them by their first names. The triplet's names rhyme.

When I'm six, I really, really love the library. And when I'm seven, I love the library even more than when I was six.

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When I'm eight, I don't need my mom to take me to the library anymore. I can go by myself. I walk down the block from 9th Street to the empty lot on 8th Street. I'm almost to Louie's house and I'm holding my breath. When I'm eight, I can check out eight books, so I have eight books to return. They aren't very heavy. Only one of the books is about the triplets. I'm too big to read about the triplets, they're for little kids, but sometimes I check one out anyway. The triplets had a tea party outside under a tree on a blue and white checkered tablecloth with a real china teapot and real china teacups with saucers. One of the boys, I forget which one, broke a cup and he told his mom the puppy did it.

I can see some boys come up the hill from Louie's backyard. His backyard is steep. They are older boys, some of them are twelve. They are the kind of boys who put salt on slugs and tweeze them up with two twigs and stick them in girls' faces. I heard that once they fried ants with a magnifying glass and put them in Jill Brown's little sister's mouth and yelled, "Nola eats mouse turds, Nola eats mouse turds." "Turds" is a bad word.

I walk a little faster, but pretty soon, I can feel that the boys are right behind me. I try not to turn around and look but, before I know what's happened, they are making a circle around me and they are saying bad things, things I can't tell anybody. I can't walk away because they are too close to me and they're big. They have fingernails that look like they've been digging for potato bugs and fish worms. Louie is there and some boys whose names I don't know. They say I have to go to their fort or they'll put dog poop in my hair. But they don't say "poop."

I don't have a choice, I don't. They're pushing me down the hill, but I don't fall. I keep holding my library books and I keep biting the inside of my cheek. At the bottom of the hill, they have a fort. It's by Himalaya berry vines taller than Louie's dad's carport. The vines are thick and they're black and they have thorns and I think of Brer Rabbit and the briar patch. And I keep trying to say, "lippity-clippity, clippity-lippity" like they say in the story and I think how Brer Rabbit says he's going to bust the Tar-baby wide open.

The trees are too tall to see the water but I can hear the beach and I think the tide is coming in. The fort is sawhorses and bent-up plywood and tarps and tree branches. An old smelly army blanket is hanging from the limbs and the boys say it's the door. "In," they say and push me under the blanket and push me down with their worm-digging hands.

It's dark inside. The boys must have pulled all the grass up because the floor is dirt. There are rocks in a circle and the boys sit on them. And I'm in the middle. I'm still holding my library books, all eight of them.

"Are you scared?" one boy says. "You should be."

Another boy comes close. I can't see his whole face altogether, just parts of it. I won't let myself see all of him at once, I'm too afraid. And he wiggles his tongue at me and I see his teeth and they are red like cherry Kool-Aid. He has freckles. A thing like dandelion fluff is in his hair. I put my head down and cover my face with the books. They're not heavy. I tell myself to be a bird and tuck my head into my wing and go to sleep. I can smell the boys. Like dirt and something sour.

Louie says, "You're staying right here until you take your panties off."

Another boy says, "C'mon, girlie, we got something to show you." And he makes a sucky noise.

And somebody says, "You're too stuck-up, that's what's wrong with you. You think you're too good to talk to us" just like Brer Rabbit says to the Tar-baby that Brer Fox made for a trick.

I smell their breath and feel warm air around them. But I'm cold. Shivering. And I try to say "lippity-clippity" and I try to think of the triplets. Someone pokes me with a stick. My eyes are burning and I squeeze them shut.

"You don't go nowhere until you take off your pants."

From down the block, I can hear a car coming.

"Hey, I think it's my mom," says one boy. "Hurry, she said she'd bring home ice cream bars."

"Don't you dare move," Louie says.

The boys crawl out of the fort and I can hear them run up the hill and go away. I sit for a minute or two, listening. Nothing. I can hear the beach and I can hear a car go by, but I can't hear the boys. I push the blanket away and peek out.

"Get your goddam head back inside before I ..." His face is just an inch from mine. I can't see his whole face, only his mouth. I don't know his name or what block he lives on.

I pull the blanket closed and grab the books to my chest and curl up as tight as I can. I suck on the skin at the bottom of my pointer finger. "Clippity-lippity. Lippity-clippity," I say inside my head. "Be a bird, be a bird. Be a ..."

I wait. For a long time. Listening in the dark. Finally I hear voices again. But I don't know whose voice is whose. I can't think where these boys live, on what block. I've seen them before, but, except for Louie, I don't know their names.

They are laughing and then I hear a sound like scratching and swishing. They're unzipping their pants and they're laughing louder and louder and one is saying, "On target!"

Ready ... set ...” Hot pee is making a noise like sizzling on sticks, I can smell it. “Bull’s eye!” someone is yelling and pee is soaking through the door-blanket.

That’s gotta be a record. Beat that distance, morons!”

They’re zipping their pants back up and they’re going back up the hill. I can hear them pushing each other and laughing.

I put the books on my lap and put my head on the books and put my hands over my ears until I can’t hear them anymore.

I wait for a long time, a really long time, and I keep my head on the books. I try to think of big words and spell them. “Predicament.” “ Enlightenment.” I remember that Mr. Carnegie said, “Let there be light.” Even with my hands over my ears, I can hear a dog bark and I can hear cars go by. Sometimes I think the car is pulling a boat trailer because I can hear loose chains. I try to hear if the tide is coming in.

Finally I take my hands away from my ears and I sit up. I touch the door-blanket. It’s wet and it smells and I feel like I’m going to have a stomach ache. I peek out. There’s no one there. It must be late afternoon, that’s how the light seems. I can see, sort of, into the next door neighbor’s yard. There’s a clothesline, one of those that’s a circle like the spokes of an umbrella. There are clothes on the line, clean clothes stuck on the line with clothespins.

I crawl out into the light but it’s really not light but shade and just a little bit of light. I’m holding the books tight, climbing up the hill, stepping onto the sidewalk. Bill Long is mowing his grass and is waving at me. He’s a doctor, rich people live on 8th Street. I wave, sort of, back.

I walk by the empty lot and I see that someone left a lawn mower there, but there’s no one around. At the end of the block, I can see my house. I see the big rhododendron bush and birds pecking away on the lawn and our dog Skipper asleep on the front porch. I see our front door with the belly-button door knob in the middle. I don’t hold my books so tight against my chest any more and I start to cry. But just a little.

Mini-Writing Crawl to Ballenger Library

July 8, 2008

Lee Roll

Rebekah K. Volk - Thirsting Righteousness

Two **p**illars of righteousness,

Upholding their life's diligence.

Two **s**tandards of conviction,

Sustaining a commitment of **t**reasure.

Two columns of **v**erisimilitude,

Penetrated **o**nly by trust.

Endurance beyond reason and

Model **i**nstruction.

Repayment—**n**o—but reciprocating,

Consecrated indebtedness.

Core sincerity to mission,

Thirsting for the **K**ingdom.

Rebekah K. Volk - Mom and Dad

Training us to work, teaching us to love

Fulfilling their vocation:

Dad's hammer and nails—Measure twice, cut once—Mom's tap, tap,
tap of the typewriter—Lifelong learning

Nourishing safety and cultivating warmth.

Tough days scarcely putting food on the table, But we didn't
know through the smiles and laughter—the special memories.

Following footprints in the garden; telling stories about Grandpa;
sharing prayers by bedside; and living selfless sacrifice.