

Introduction to the Writing Workshop: Lesson Plans

Skills/Strategies/Instructional Procedures

This unit will provide students with instruction in and practice with the following skills and strategies:

Standards

- 8-4.1 Organize written works using prewriting techniques, discussions, **graphic organizers**, models, and outlines.
- 8-4.2 Use complete sentences in a variety of types (including simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex).
- 8-4.3 Create multiple-paragraph compositions that include a **central idea** with supporting details and use appropriate transitions between paragraphs.
- 8-4.4 Use grammatical conventions of written **Standard American English**, including the reinforcement of conventions previously taught. (See *Instructional Appendix: Composite Writing Matrix.*)
- 8-4.5 **Revise** writing to improve clarity, **tone**, **voice**, content, and the development of ideas. (See *Instructional Appendix: Composite Writing Matrix.*)
- 8-4.6 **Edit** for the correct use of written **Standard American English**, including ellipses and parentheses. (See *Instructional Appendix: Composite Writing Matrix.*)
- 8-4.7 Spell correctly using **Standard American English**.
- 8-5.2 Create narratives (for example, memoirs) that communicate the significance of particular personal relationships.
- 8-5.3 Create descriptions for use in other modes of written works (for example, narrative, **expository**, and persuasive).

Lesson 1: First thoughts about writing

Essential Questions

What do I know about myself as a writer?

Procedure/Assessment

- 1 Starter: "Writing is..." – finish for 5 sentences
- 2 Quotes about writing
 - 2.1 The quotes
 - 2.1.1 Writing became such a process of discovery that I couldn't wait to get to work in the morning: I wanted to know what I was going to say.
~Sharon O'Brien
 - 2.1.2 "We do not write in order to be understood; we write in order to understand." Cecil Day Lewis
 - 2.1.3 "I'm not a very good writer, but I'm an excellent rewriter." ~James Michener
 - 2.1.4 "The wastebasket is a writer's best friend." ~Isaac Bashevis Singer
 - 2.1.5 "Easy reading is hard writing." ~Nathaniel Hawthorne
 - 2.1.6 "A writer is someone who can make a riddle out of an answer." ~Karl Kraus
 - 2.1.7 "Words - so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them." ~Nathaniel Hawthorne
 - 2.1.8 "Writing is easy: All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." ~Gene Fowler
 - 2.1.9 "Every writer I know has trouble writing." ~Joseph Heller
 - 2.1.10 "When something can be read without effort, great effort has gone into its writing." ~Enrique Jardiel Poncela
 - 2.1.11 "Writing is a struggle against silence." ~Carlos Fuentes
 - 2.1.12 "You write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what's burning inside you. And we edit to let the fire show through the smoke."
~Arthur Polotnik
 - 2.1.13 "How vain it is to sit down to write when you have not stood up to live." ~Henry David Thoreau
 - 2.1.14 "Write your first draft with your heart. Re-write with your head."
~From the movie Finding Forrester
 - 2.1.15 "A writer is somebody for whom writing is more difficult than it is for other people." ~Thomas Mann

- 2.1.16 "Writing is a way of talking without being interrupted." ~Jules Renard
 - 2.1.17 "I do not like to write - I like to have written." ~Gloria Steinem
 - 2.1.18 "Writing is a product of silence." ~Carrie Latet
 - 2.1.19 "There is nothing to writing. All you do is sit down at a typewriter and bleed." Ernest Hemingway
 - 2.1.20 "I have never started a poem yet whose end I knew. Writing a poem is discovering." Robert Frost
 - 2.1.21 "Good writing is like a windowpane." George Orwell
 - 2.1.22 "Factoring in millions of people when I'm writing a song is not a good idea. I don't ever do it." Taylor Swift
 - 2.1.23 "Writing, to me, is simply thinking through my fingers." Isaac Asimov
- 2.2 Students in pairs discuss selected quotes (one per pair). What about writing is this person saying? Share with class.
- 2.3 Debrief as class: stress that writing *is* difficult, but not impossible. (Informal teacher observational assessment)
- 3 In-class writing: What I know about writing. What's easy? What's hard? How do I view myself as a writer?

Homework

Finish in-class writing.

Lesson 2: Getting Ideas

Essential Question

What are some sources of ideas for writing?

Procedure

- 1 Starter: Discuss with partner: Would you like an English class in which you had virtually complete freedom in deciding what to write about? Why or why not?
- 2 Introduction to the workshop format
 - 2.1 Sometimes separate, sometimes part of unit
 - 2.2 Mini-lessons
 - 2.3 One-on-one work
 - 2.4 Today's mini-lesson: getting ideas
- 3 Getting ideas
 - 3.1 Expert inventory
 - 3.2 T-Chart (time permitting)

Homework

Add three items to expert inventory

Lesson 3: Prewriting

Essential Question

What are some methods of prewriting?

Procedure

- 1 Starter: What are methods of pre-writing you know of?
- 2 Review
 - 2.1 Brainstorming
 - 2.2 Free-writing
 - 2.3 Clustering
- 3 Practice
 - 3.1 Choose a topic from expert inventory
 - 3.2 Choose one form of prewriting

Homework

Two other forms of prewriting for two other topics.