

WRITER'S RESPONSE NOTEBOOK

8th Grade Language Arts Department 2012-2013

OVERVIEW

Every day, you will respond to a daily prompt in your writer's response notebook. The majority of prompts contain writing strategies and examples from the book *Write Like This* by Kelly Gallagher.

The goal of these daily activities is to develop real-world writers.



EXPRESSIVE AND REFLECTIVE WRITING

o Expressive Writing-

Personal writing where the writer shares thoughts, ideas, feelings, and questions about his or her experiences. The writer tells the reader how he or she feels.

o Reflective Writing-

Although personal, reflective writing moves beyond recounting an experience and into an exploration of how the particular experience has shaped the writer.

SIX-WORD MEMOIR

Directions:

 Write your life's story in only six words.



Examples:

- All things considered, I'm doing well.
- Escaped my mother. Trapped by girlfriend.
- So the water's deep. Man up.

TWITTER MEMOIR

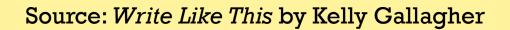


Directions:

Write your personal memoir (life's story) in 140 characters or less. The length of this piece is approximately 30-40 words. You may include punctuation (commas, periods, colons, etc) as a part of this total. Please do not include spaces, however.

Examples:

She chased raccoons. She bit a bee. She raced me in the pool. She jumped out a window. She stood by my side. She was more than a dog; she was my friend. I miss her.





Making Inferences-A

Everyday after work Paul took his muddy boots off on the steps of the front porch. Alice would have a fit if the boots made it so far as the welcome mat. He then took off his dusty overalls and threw them into a plastic garbage bag; Alice left a new garbage bag tied to the porch railing for him every morning. On his way in the house, he dropped the garbage bag off at the washing machine and went straight up stairs to the shower as he was instructed. He would eat dinner with her after he was "presentable," as Alice had often said.

QUESTIONS:

- 1. What type of job does Paul work? How do you know this?
- 2. Describe Alice. What textual support can you provide?
- 3. What relationship do Paul and Alice have? Why do you feel this way?

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AN ORDINARY LIFE

Directions:

In this book, the author describes her life in an encyclopedic format. Over the course of two to three days, you will create your personal encyclopedia beginning with "A" and ending with "Z".

Examples:

Anxious, Things That Make Me

Vending Machines. I have to double-, triple-check. Okay, it's A5 for the Bugles, right? Is that right? I don't want to read the codes wrong and end up with the Flaming Hot Cheetos. But then, what a relief when the Bugles come tumbling down. Yes! I knew it was A5!

Sources: Write Like This by Kelly Gallagher. Reprint from Encyclopedia of an Ordinary life by Amy Krouse Rosenthal.

MAKING INFERENCES-B

"Tommy!" Mom called out as she walked in the front door. "Tommy" she continued shouting, "I sure could use some help with these groceries." There was still no reply. Mom walked into the kitchen to put the grocery bags down on the counter when she noticed shattered glass from the picture window all over the living room floor and a baseball not far from there. "You're in big trouble Tommy!" Mom yelled to herself as she realized that Tommy's shoes were gone.

Questions:

- 1. What happened to the window? How do you know this?
- 2. Why did Tommy leave? What textual support can you provide?

FAVORITE MISTAKES-DAY ONE

Directions:

Listen to the song "My Favorite Mistake" by Sheryl Crow. Reflect on its meaning. Think about a mistake that you have made which has eventually provided you with a learning experience. Create and complete a chart similar to what you see on the right.

Examples:

What was my favorite mistake?

Getting into a fight with Phillip Encley in the 7th Grade

Expression

What details do I call surrounding that mistake (before/during/after)?

Reflection

Looking back at the event, have I learned from the experience?

- •Phillip elbowed me during a lunchtime basketball game
- •Challenged him to after school for a fight
- Got beat up

•It brought me down

•Taught me humility

FAVORITE MISTAKES-DAY TWO

Directions:

Step 2: Complete your chart from day one if necessary

Step 3: Read the essay
"A Mistake that Should
Last a Lifetime". Using
this essay as a guide,
create a first draft of
your Favorite Mistake.

Gallagher's Example:

"A Mistake that Should Last a Lifetime" by Jessanne Collins

(See Handout)

THE BUCKET LIST

Directions:

Create a bucket list of about ten goals that you would like to achieve within your lifetime. Explain one in detail.



Gallagher's Example:

To do: Become involved in a political movement

Tour: See every stadium

Musicians I need to See: U2, Bob Dylan

Travel: Mt. Rushmore, Montana, Yellowstone, Rio de Janiero, Costa Rico, Moscow

Learn: Play guitar, Spanish

Dare to: Skydive, Parasail,

Segway

MAKING INFERENCES-C

Ruby sat on the couch holding the letter. There was something thrilling and, at the same time, terrifying about the letter. Taking a deep, thoughtful breath, Ruby read the letter yet again, reassuring herself that, at least in one person's eyes, she did have what it takes to reach her goals. After all these years of waiting and summoning her courage, scrimping and saving, was she finally going to take the opportunity she had been denied those many years ago? Ruby tucked the letter back into the envelope. No, today wasn't the day to tell Max. She had to wait until just the right moment; a good day when Max was full of smiles and hope and good humor.

Questions:

- Why does the letter mean so much to Ruby? What textual support can you provide?
- 2. Why doesn't Ruby tell Max about the letter? What textual support can you provide?

SENTENCE STARTERS

Directions:

Step 1: Create five detailed sentences using the sentence starter:

"I appreciate _____ because ____

Step 2: Select your favorite sentence and expand.

Gallagher's Example:

I appreciate <u>quiet</u> because <u>I rarely</u> <u>experience it.</u>

I appreciate <u>writers</u> because <u>it is risky to share your thinking.</u>

I appreciate <u>people who</u>
<u>are mechanically</u>
<u>inclined</u> because <u>I am</u>
not.

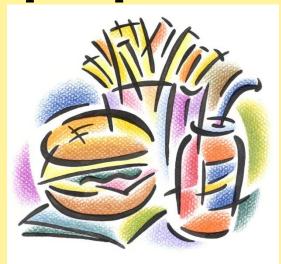
WHAT MY CHILDHOOD TASTED LIKE

Directions:

Step 1: List all of the foods of your childhood.

Step 2: Select the most delicious from your list (that also has the best story attached to it)

Step 3: Explain



Gallagher's Example:

Waffles---always gooey--made by my dad

Cottage Cheese

Grapes

My grandmother's pies

Slurpees

Cap'n Crunch Cereal

Warm jelly donuts

Candy: Lemonheads, Chick-O-Sticks, and Necco Wafers

Burgers at the beach

CHILDHOOD GAMES

Directions:

Step 1: List all of your favorite childhood games.

Step 2: From your list, select a game that taught you something beyond the game itself.

Step 3: Write a response that expresses and reflects upon your favorite game.

Gallagher's Examples:

- Ding dong ditch
- Army
- Hide and Seek
- Monopoly
- Sorry
- Chutes and Ladders
- Mr. Potato Head
- Battleship
- Operation
- Concentrations
- Connect Four
- o G.I. Joe
- Checkers
- Tag



Making Inferences-D

Kyle ran into his house and slammed the door behind him. He paused with his back to the wall and tried to catch his breath. The puppy in his coat struggled to get out. Kyle looked out the window worriedly, but he saw that nobody was coming. Then he let the puppy out of his jacket. The puppy yelped while Kyle took the collar off of him. He threw the collar in an old soup can in the trash, carefully flipping over the can. The dog looked around nervously.

Questions:

- 1. Why is Kyle out of breath? How do you know this?
- 2. Why is the puppy nervous?
- 3. Why does Kyle put the collar in a soup can?

A HARD MOMENT

Directions:

Step 1: Create a list of hard moments of your life.

Step 2: Select a hard moment that taught you something about life or yourself. Write about it.



Gallagher's Examples:

Breaking up with a girlfriend

Intentionally ending a friendship

Holding my dog of thirteen years as the veterinarian put her down.

Getting lost in Disneyland

Getting my first "F"

Leaving my home country

Discovering my mother was reading my private emails

A FAMILY PHOTO

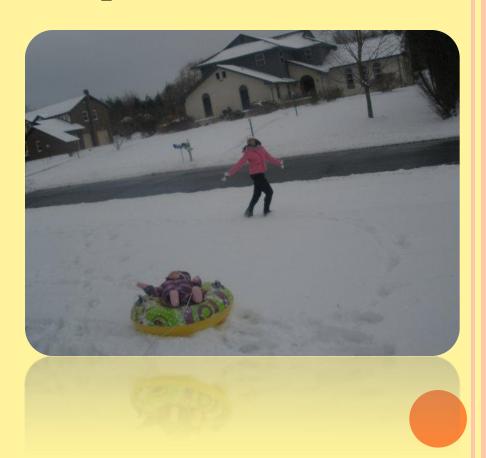
Directions:

Step 1: Think about your favorite photo. You may bring in a copy and attach it to your response.

Step 2:

Explain/describe/refl ect upon why this image is so significant to you.

Examples:



A TREASURED OBJECT

Directions:

Examples:

Step 1: Reflect upon/bring in your treasured object.

Step 2:

Explain/describe/refl ect upon why this treasured object is so significant to you.

MAKING INFERENCES-E

Kelvin was waiting in front of the corner store at 3:56. His muscles were tense and he was sweating a bit more than usual. The other kids gathered in front of the little storefront were much more relaxed, even playful. They joked back and forth lightly to each other but for Kelvin, time slowed. 3:57. Don't worry, Kelvin. He ain't even 'gonna show up." Kelvin hoped that he wouldn't. A black four-door Camry with tinted windows pulled up and parked across the street. Kelvin gulped. 3:58. A group of teenagers piled out of the car. James was in the front. "Hi-ya, Kelvin. Glad you could make it," James said. Kelvin felt smaller.

Questions:

- 1. Why is Kelvin waiting at the corner store?
- 2. How do you know this?
- 3. Are James and Kelvin friends?
- 4. What textual support can you provided.
- 5. Why is Kelvin so nervous?



Directions:

Step 1: Create your own top ten list. Some examples include:

Favorite foods, student excuses for not completing homework assignments, best albums of all time, etc.

Step 2:

Explain/describe/reflect upon the top ten list in its entirety or select one item from the list and expand.

Gallagher's Examples:

Cereals: Cheerios, Corn Flakes, Product 19, Shredded Wheat, Rice Chex, Total, Special K, Honey Nut Cheerios, Life, Honey Bunches of Oats with Almonds

Television Shows: Cheers,
M*A*S*H, PeeWee's
Playhouse, The Larry
Sanders Show, Leave it to
Beaver, Curb Your
Enthusiasm, The Office, All
in the Family, The
Sopranos, The Wire

SO WHAT?

Directions:

Step 1: Recall an incident in your life where you faced an obstacle, yet moved beyond it.

Step 2: Step 2:

Explain/describe/reflect upon why or how moving beyond the obstacle is so significant to you.

Gallagher's Examples:

You broke your arm. So What? You moved. So What?



INFORM AND EXPLAIN

Writer's Response Notebook-Section 2

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES



- In the past year, I have written to these people, organizations, and companies:
 - My homeowner's association (HOA) regarding an overgrown tree.
 - My boss explaining what I accomplished during preplanning.
 - My cousins describing my summer vacation and a picture of my daughter that I included in the note
 - Letters of recommendation for my students

My Favorite Words

Directions:

Step 1: List your favorite words.
Respond to the majority of the following prompts:

- Words that make me laugh
- Words that make me cry
- Words I have trouble pronouncing
- Words I have trouble spelling
- Words I will never forget
- Words of wisdom
- Words that hurt
- Words that my parents say that drive me crazy
- Words that teachers should use less often
- Words that motivated me
- Words that I wish I hadn't said

Seymour's Examples: Words that make Mrs. Seymour...

Smile-Hearing the word "Mama"

Cringe-Hearing the question "Why?" and people tapping me on my shoulder

Laugh-Sassafras, Jazz Fingers, Got 'Em,

Have a hard time pronouncing- conscientiously, drawing

Have a hard time spelling-commercial (I cannot explain why)

Hurt-the word "hate"

Crazy-The words "Lax", when people pronounce "mature" or "immature" stressing the "t"

Having a hard time remembering the definition-conspicuously, inconspicuously





Directions:

Step 1: Consider meaningful events that you have witnessed in your life. Explain what you have seen.

Gallagher's Examples:

- A suspect chased and tackled by police officers
- A cat give birth to six kittens
- A presidential motorcade
- A red tide at the beach

DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Directions:

Step 1: Think about someone you have misjudges and explain the error in your initial judgment. Consider friends, enemies. boyfriends, girlfriends, employers, classmates, etc

Gallagher's Example:

"One day after school I was driving home when I spotted a menacing-looking teenager strolling down the sidewalk. He had 'the look' (shaved head, baggy pants, crooked Raiders baseball cap, hoodie sweatshirt) and the walk that seemed to say 'Don't %*#@ with me. Stay clear.' Looking at him, my first thought was, 'Gangster. This kid is heading down the wrong path.' Imagine my surprise a moment later when he turned and looked at me, and I realized that this 'gangster' was Dennis, one of my best students of all time. Dennis is hard working, respectful, intelligent—and about as far away from being a gangster as one could possibly be. I sat at the red light ashamed that I had made such a kneejerk, stereotypical judgment, and since that day I have made a conscious effort not to prejudge people, especially teenagers, by their looks."

SOMETIMES YOU CAN JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Directions:

Step 1: Sometimes, you can learn something about others by observing them. Think about a revealing object of yours that describes a part of your personality.

Step 2: Complete the sentence below

Explain how your _____ reveal(s) who you are.

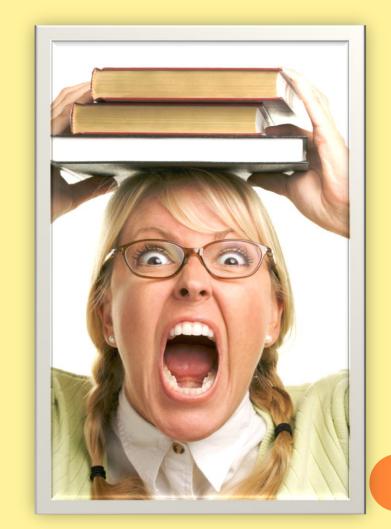
Possible revealing items:

Cell phone skateboard

Backpack purse

Makeup shoes

ITunes playlist favorite movies



UNWRITTEN RULES

Directions:

Create
unwritten
rules found in
your life.

Unwritten Richards Middle School Rules

- Don't ask a teacher his or her age or weight.
- 2. Do not call an adult by their first name.
- Be respectful and polite to school support staff (cafeteria workers, custodians)
- 4. Don't speak to Mrs. Seymour until she has had her morning cup of coffee.



How to Survive

Directions:

Step 1: Complete the sentence below. The list below is a suggestion of possible topics.

How to survive a _____.

- a day at Disney World
- hurricane
- breakup

Step 2: Explain in detail your methods of survival.

Gallagher's Example:

How to survive a day at Disneyland.

- Go in the off-season
- Arrive early. Line up before the park opens.
- When the park opens, head immediately to the most popular rides. Try to ride these rides first.
- If you get to an attraction and it has a huge line, come back during the parade or during the fireworks show. Line thin out during these times.
- If you want to go on a ride with a long line, consider the Fast Pass option. This will save you time standing in line.
- Do not buy food in Tomorrowland.