

Writing-Reading Workshop Syllabus

Fifth Grade---Mrs. Farfan

2009-2010

Writing-Reading Workshop Goals:

- To write as much and as well as you can
- For you to become skilled, passionate, habitual, critical readers (Atwell, 2007).

Workshop Objectives:

For you to read and write freely and daily

For you to experience different reading and writing genres

For you to learn about writing crafts and conventions and practice them

For you to attempt to be published

For you to learn about various reading strategies and skills, and practice them

For you to appreciate both classic and contemporary literature

For you to become a lifelong reader

Workshop Structure:

❖ Most workshops will begin with the guided reading part of the workshop which may look like:

- Teacher conducting a short (3-5 min.) mini-lesson on a reading strategy or topic
- Teacher reading aloud from a whole-class novel and modeling the new reading strategy
- Students following along in novels and participating in new and prior reading strategies
- Class discussion and comprehension activities based on the whole-class novel
- Students giving a book talk to class

❖ A transition will be made into the guided writing part of the workshop which may look like:

- Teacher conducting a short (3-5 min.) mini-lesson on a writing craft, genre, or convention
- Students taking notes and discussing or practicing the new knowledge
- Teacher and students engaged in a vocabulary study
- Teacher and students engaged in a spelling study
- Teacher and students sharing their writing in an author's chair

❖ A last transition will be made into the independent writing which may look like:

- Students writing independently
- Students conferring with each other about their writing
- Students conferring with the teacher about their writing

Important Elements/Requirements of Writing-Reading Workshop:

1. **Atmosphere:** The Writing-Reading Workshop is quiet and productive. Writing and reading require much thinking and I will insist on silence so writers may think well. Talking is only acceptable during peer conferences (at specific locations), during Book Talks or Author's Chair, or when I am conferring with a student.
2. **Choice:** You will develop the topics for many of your writing projects. I want you to write with passion about what you know and care about, for reasons you believe in. You will also choose your own books to read independently.
3. **Reading/Writing Conferences:** I will try to meet with each of you as often as I can. Individual conferences may last anywhere from one minute to ten minutes. I will either listen to you read your writing or read it to myself. I will help you with content, style, structure: information, organization, language, reflection, purpose, leads, and conclusion. I will also listen to you read, ask you questions about your reading experience, and help you become a more proficient reader.
4. **Peer Conferences:** Two or three spaces will be designated for you to confer with a peer. To initiate a peer conference, the writer tells what he or she needs. You will use peer-response forms attached to clipboards. Peer writing conferences are about content/information only: you don't edit each other's writing.
5. **Mini-lessons:** Mini-lessons grow from my observations of what you don't know or will need to know to produce excellent writing. Reading mini-lessons are intended to help you become a more proficient and fluent reader, and to heighten your reading experience by showing you how to better interact with your book. Most mini-lessons in the beginning of the year will be procedural, as you get the hang of the workshop routines. Most mini-lessons are presented on overhead transparencies/projector or easel pads, so that the information is visual, oral, and invites you to participate. You will take notes in your Writing- Reading Handbook during these mini-lessons.
6. **Writing Handbooks:** You will receive a Writing-Reading Handbook that is an important tool for our workshops. It must be kept in good condition, up-to-date, and be with you at every Writing Workshop.

Writing Grade

❖ **Class Work: 70%**

- A. **Writing in Class---** You will have plenty of time to write in class. The quiet atmosphere will allow you to think, plan, and write. You may attempt any genre on any topic of your choice, unless otherwise instructed. I am in the classroom to help you as you write, so don't be afraid to share concerns or ideas with me. I can't tell you what to write, but I can help you with the "how-to".
- A. **Genre Studies---** During each novel unit of study I will present one main writing genre that we will study in depth and you will practice. Sometimes I will ask you to bring this piece of

writing to completion for a grade, and other times the practice experience will be enough. In addition to the main genre study, you will write using other genres as requested, or just because you want to try them out!

- B. **Spelling**--- For first semester, your spelling word list will be words that you commonly spell wrong in your everyday writing. I will help you identify these words as we review and edit your writing, and you will add them to your personal spelling list. Each week you will choose five of these words from your Personal Spelling List and practice spelling them correctly with a partner. Your partner will test you over these words on Thursday. The words you spell successfully, you get to cross off your Personal Spelling List and write them on your Mastered Spelling Word List! If you spell those words wrong again, guess where they go?
- C. **Completed Pieces of Writing**-- You will be required to bring one piece of writing to completion (from brainstorming to final draft) during every unit of study (4-6 weeks) for a grade. While not every piece of writing that you do will be taken through to completion, I'm sure you will be able to bring more than one piece of writing to completion. Completed pieces of writing will be filed in your "*Permanent Writing*" folder in the classroom. These pieces of writing will be used in a mid-year and end-of-the-year assessment of your progress as a writer.

❖ **Assessment: 30%**

Each Thursday you will receive a spelling test (as indicated above). In addition, you will be required to bring one piece of writing to completion (from brainstorming to final draft) during every unit of study (4-6 weeks) for an assessment grade. Completed pieces of writing will be filed in your "*Permanent Writing*" folder in the classroom. These pieces of writing will be used in a mid-year and end-of-the-year assessment of your progress as a writer.

Reading Grade

❖ **Daily Work: 70%**

- A. **Letter-Essays**--- You will write a letter-essay to me every other week. It is called a letter-essay because it is written in a friendly letter format, yet it will likely take on some aspects of an essay. In this two page letter-essay, you will write to me about the book that you are currently reading. Some of you may complete a book in two weeks, others may not. I don't want you to worry about this, as each one of you will have your own personal reading goals. Remember, the goal is to make reading a habit and to be passionate about it!
- B. **Vocabulary**---Each week you will complete a vocabulary lesson in your Wordly Wise Book 5 vocabulary book. We will work on these lessons together in class, you'll review them at home throughout the week, and complete a vocabulary test each Friday.
- C. **Reading Logs**--- Each week you will read for 30 minutes at home from Monday through Thursday, and hand in your completed Reading Log on Friday. You must read the same book that you are reading at home during independent reading time. This will help you keep better track of the books that you complete, and will also help you do a thorough job on your

letter-essays. If you focus on finishing one book at a time, you might be surprised at how many you actually read in one school year!

❖ **Assessment: 30%**

Each Friday you will receive a vocabulary test on the usage and meaning of the 15 words from your Wordly Wise lesson. You will also receive quizzes and tests on the novel units of study throughout the year

Grade Scale:

100%-90%	A
89%-80%	B
79%-70%	C
69%-60%	D
59%-50%	F

I am here to help you succeed in every way possible. As long as you are faithful and consistent in meeting the requirements stated above, and working to become the best reader you possibly can, you will find my Writing-Reading Workshop not only easy, but enjoyable!