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## ABSTRACT

This anthology presents materials associated with the five-week summer session of the South Mississippi Writing Project, 1986. The anthology begins with a position statement on teaching writing, and curriculum vitae of staff and teacher consultants followed by lists of group and committee members and a calendar of events in the session. Summaries of 17 presentations (on such topics as writing persuasive brochures, prewriting, letter writing, humor, peer evaluation, comparison and contrast, journalism, tall tales, cohesion and revision, author's point of view, and prewriting techniques) and samples of participants' writing form the major part of the anthology. (RS)

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# TALES from Tall Pines



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TALES FROM TALL PINES

An Anthology

David H. Roberts and Jeanne Lebow, Editors

The South Mississippi Writing Project  
Affiliate of the National Writing Project

1986 SUMMER INSTITUTE  
for  
PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS

June 16 - July 17, 1986

Director

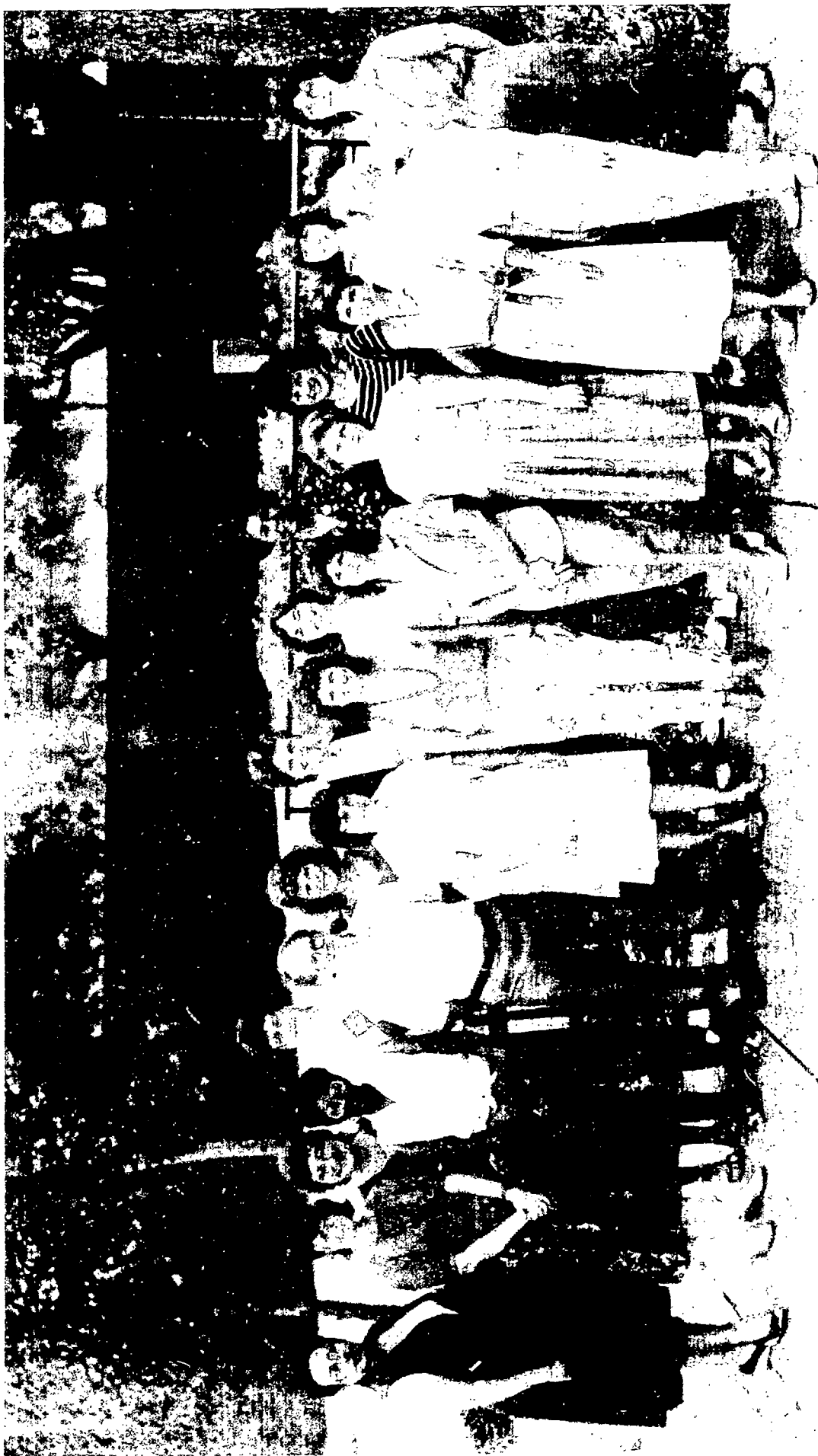
Dr. David Roberts

Assistant Director

Jeanne Lebow

Sponsored by:

Mississippi Power Foundation  
Pine Belt Consortium of Schools  
Phil Hardin Foundation  
National Writing Project  
University of Southern Mississippi



### The South Mississippi Writing Project, 1986

Left to right: Verna Miller, Jeanne Lebow — Associate Director, Beth Havid, Bette Ford, Claudine Sonnier, Dr. David Roberts — Director, Karen Fuller, Hilda Wade, Senita Walker, Debbie Rigby, Robin Dowdy, Bettee Boyd, Helen Nicholson, Beverly Casteel, Lois Rodgers, Jane Whorton, Julia Carson, Phyllis Downey, Mary Peddicord.

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# Position Statement on Teaching Writing

by

the 1986 Teacher/Consultants

of the

South Mississippi Writing Project

## Introduction

Writing, a developmental process which continues throughout life, is integral to literacy. Thus, we encourage school board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and the general public to insure that writing is given appropriate emphasis in the curriculum, beginning in kindergarten. This emphasis offers students a powerful tool for learning and an increased opportunity to attain academic excellence. Since writing is important for full participation in a democratic society, we--teacher/consultants of the South Mississippi Writing Project--offer the following statement:

### I. Writing Across the Curriculum

All classes, regardless of subject area, can enhance the development of the student writer by providing opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. Here students recognize the writing process as a learning experience, while they

explore and express their own feelings, knowledge, and interests through writing. Through peer evaluation, students learn from the writing and responses of their classmates.

Writing in all subjects prepares students for fulfilling roles in society. As students write, whether responding to laboratory experiments, historical events, economic theories, or personal experiences, they correlate knowledge and skills acquired in different subjects. For example, they may draw parallels between events in a literary work and actual events in history. Through such correlation of learning, students gain a broader perspective of the world around them.

Students who write think because writing requires more than memorized responses. Through analyzing, creating, and solving problems, students discover themselves as well as their environment.

Finally, writing prepares students to communicate fluently on various personal, social, and occupational levels. Clearly, then, writing across the curriculum helps schools reach the ultimate goal of education: to develop literate, productive, and insightful citizens.

## II. Teachers of Writing

Teachers of writing include all teachers who recognize writing as a method of learning and who seek

to incorporate writing into the learning process. They focus on the content the student proposes to share and encourage the creation of a form appropriate for the writer's intended audience and purpose. Successful teachers of writing are writers who have experienced the complex processes of prewriting, writing, and revision. Teacher training is best accomplished through a series of small, voluntary writing workshops. Three writing projects currently operating in the state--those at the University of Southern Mississippi, Mississippi State University, and Delta State University--were established to provide ideal resource persons for training teachers to teach writing effectively.

### III. The Need for Administrative Support

The effectiveness of writing across the curriculum depends upon support from all levels of administration, especially superintendents and school board members. Since writing is effective in all subject areas and at all grade levels, it is important that educators endorse writing as a way to improve learning.

The Teacher/Consultants of the 1986 South Mississippi Writing Project hope this statement will assist Mississippi educators in guiding students toward academic excellence through writing.

1986 South Mississippi Writing Project participants:

Forrest County Agricultural High School

Claudine Sonnier

Forrest County School District

Bettee Boyd                      Senita Walker

Debbie Rigby                      Jane Whorton

Hattiesburg Municipal Separate School District

Robin Dowdy                      Verna Miller

Phyllis Downey                      Helen Nicholson

Bette Ford                      Lois Rodgers

Natchez-Adams County Special Municipal Separate School  
District

Beverly Casteel

Pearl River Junior College

Julia Carson                      Mary Peddicord

Petal Municipal Separate School District

Beth Havard                      Hilda Wade

University of Southern Mississippi

Karen Fuller--graduate student



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The pages that fill this book represent many hours of work by seventeen dedicated, professional Mississippi teachers who met together four days a week for five weeks in the first Summer Institute of the South Mississippi Writing Project. Each teacher was limited to five pages of writing to be included in this anthology, so what writing appears here was selected from the best that each of these teachers produced during the five weeks. Each teacher wrote more than one hundred pages of original prose and poetry during the five weeks, so only about 5 percent of the total writing production appears here.

The South Mississippi Writing Project is funded by the Mississippi Power Foundation, the National Writing Project, the Phil Hardin Foundation, the University of Southern Mississippi, and the four school districts in Forrest County; without the generous funding the South Mississippi Writing Project would not exist. This first Summer Institute didn't just happen. It is the result of two years of planning and hard work by Mike Walters, Kay Jenkins, Tom Lowery, and Gordon Walker, forward-thinking administrators from the four Forrest County school districts. We look forward to continuing to work with them as these teachers, the first Teacher/Consultants of the South Mississippi Writing Project, conduct staff development in the teaching of writing in schools all over the area, and as we work toward the 1987 Summer Institute.

The Summer Institute would have not succeeded without the help and the energy, insight, and dedication of Jeanne Lebow. We are all grateful for her involvement in the profession. Many speakers took time to share their expertise with us: Gail Bracey, William Greenway, Nathan McKie, Maureen Ryan, Jim Siders, and Donald Murray, who volunteered for a telephone interview from his New Hampshire home. His words, wisdom, and enthusiasm inspired all of us toward better teaching.

Those seventeen teachers decided to write a position statement on the teaching of writing and not only to include it in this anthology, but to deliver it to their superintendents and their school boards, and to have it sent to all of the school boards in Mississippi, hoping to increase the emphasis on writing in all Mississippi schools. It is an excellent statement, written entirely by the 1986 Teacher/Consultants, calling for the teaching of writing in all grades and all subjects in all Mississippi schools. Furthermore, their statement promotes a view of reality that sees writing as a mode of thinking and as a central element in a free society. I've never read a better position statement on writing, and I applaud the teachers' desire to make their statement a public document.

DHR

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I. STAFF AND TEACHER CONSULTANTS

a

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Associate Professor of English  
and Director of Composition  
University of Southern Mississippi

Teaching Experience:

Associate Professor of English, University of Southern Mississippi, three years; additional experience: eight years college English teaching and three years teaching English in grades 6 through 12.

Academic Background:

B. A., Lander College  
M. A., University of South Carolina  
Ph.D., Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Professional Organizations:

National Council of Teachers of English; Conference on College Composition and Communication; NCTE Research Assembly; Conference of Chairpersons of Secondary School English Departments; SLATE; Mississippi Council of Teachers of English; Southeastern Writing Center Association (President); Executive Committee, National Writing Center Association; Steering Committee, Mississippi Writing/Thinking Project

Honors and Awards

Research Award, National University Continuing Education Association, 1985  
Exemplary Media Use Award, Bluefield State College, 1982  
Outstanding College News Bureau, Baptist Public Relations Association, 1978  
First Bluefield College Honorary Alumnus, 1978  
First Linguist appointed career missionary, Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1973  
First prize, Student-Faculty Essay Contest, Lander College, 1970  
Charter Member, Blue Key National Honor Society, Lander College, 1970

Publications

First Lessons in Bemba, Baptist Mission of Zambia  
First Lessons in Chichewa, Baptist Mission of Malawi  
Selected Papers from the 1984 and 1985 SWCA Conferences, Appalachian State University Press.

Articles in Journal of Research and Development in Education, Crosscut, The Language of Poems, Review '70, The Southern Baptist Educator, Writers on Writing, Volume 2, SWCA Newsletter, NCTE Journal, Proceedings of the Language Association of East Africa, Bluefield College Press, The Writing Center: Re-Affirming, Re-Assessing, Re-Evaluating, Notes on Translation.

Jeanne Lebow, Associate Director

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Teaching Experience:

Graduate Teaching Assistant, University of Southern Mississippi, two years; Instructor, Memphis State University, two years; Instructor in drama and English, Falling Creek Junior High School, Richmond, Virginia, two years; Instructor in English, Park View Junior High School, South Hill, Virginia, two years

Academic Background:

A.B., College of William and Mary (English)  
M.A., Hollins College (Liberal Studies)  
Ph.D., in progress, University of Southern Mississippi  
(English--Creative Writing)

Professional Organizations:

The National Council of Teachers of English, Conference on College Composition and Communication, Modern Language Association, South Atlantic Modern Language Association, South Central Modern Language Association, Mississippi Philological Association

Honors and Awards:

Finalist, Nimrod's 1985 Pablo Neruda Prize for Poetry; Winner, Georgia State Poetry Society's 1983 National Award; Phi Kappa Phi Honorary

Publications and Presentations:

Poems in Sun Dog, New Virginia Review, Memphis State Review, South Florida Poetry Review, Dickinson Review, Cotton Boll / the atlanta review, Piedmont Literary Review, Product, Caesura, Odessa Poetry Review, Poets On: Barriers, The Reach of Song: Book 4, Arete: The Journal of Sport Literature, Salome: A Chicago Dance Magazine, Artemis

Articles forthcoming in books from Florida State Press and Negative Capability Press; a dozen presentations and readings at national and regional conferences

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Advanced Placement  
English, Grades 8-12  
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Teaching Experience:

Thames Junior High, Hattiesburg, Instructor - 1 year  
Hattiesburg Preparatory School, Instructor - 8 years  
North Forrest High School, Instructor - 7 years

Academic Background:

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National Council of Teachers of English  
Phi Kappa Phi

Honors and Awards:

Honor Graduate, USM - 1969  
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Pearl River College  
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Freshman  
Composition  
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Writing

Teaching Experience:

Pearl River College, Instructor - 4 years  
Runnelstown High, English teacher - 1 year  
Parkersburg South High, English teacher - 1/2 year  
Social Circle Schools, English teacher - 1/2 year  
Matt Wilson Jr. High, English teacher - 5 years  
Tift County Adult Education, Reading teacher - 2 years

Academic Background:

B.S. - English Education  
M.Ed. - English Education  
Ed.S. - English (in progress)

Professional Organizations and Activities:

Southeastern Conference on English in the Two-Year College  
National Council of Teachers of English  
Mississippi Council of Teachers of English  
Pearl River Junior College Faculty Association  
Kappa Kappa Kappa

Honors and Awards:

Broad Leaf Writers' Conference Working Scholarship, 1985  
Honorable Mention - Caddo Literary Contest, 1985

Publications:

"The Effect of Presentation Order of Examples and  
Nonexamples on Undergraduates' Acquisition of a  
Social Studies Concept," with Warren McKinney and  
Mary Jane Ford. Journal of Social Studies Research,  
8, Spring 1984.

Poems (have appeared or will soon appear in these journals)  
Zone 3  
Piedmont Literary Review  
The Blue Ox Review

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2820 Roselawn Drive  
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South Natchez-Adams High  
School

Teaching Experience:

Instructor of English, grades 9 and 12, South Natchez  
High School, two years  
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Mississippi State University, three years

Academic Background:

A.A., Education, Wood Junior College, 1979  
B.S., Secondary Education, Mississippi State University, 1981  
M.A., English, Mississippi State University, 1984

Professional Organizations:

National Council of Teachers of English  
Phi Kappa Phi  
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1808 Third Terrace  
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Grade 6

Teaching Experience:

Elementary Education Teacher - 12 years  
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Academic Background:

B.S. - Elementary Education USM  
B.S. - Library Science USM  
M.A. - Special Education Auburn  
M.A. - Early Childhood UM

Professional Organizations and Activities:

Phi Delta Kappa  
Delta Kappa Gamma  
Council Exceptional Children  
Mississippi Association: Children Under Six

Honors and Awards:

Outstanding Contribution to the Youth of Alabama  
Teacher of the Year  
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Publications:

Sunday School Literature: Grades One to Six  
Presbyterian Church of America

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Special  
Education  
Grades 1-6

Teaching Experience:

Kindergarten, 3 years  
First grade, 6 years, Hattiesburg City Schools  
Special Education, 14 years, Hattiesburg City Schools  
William Carey College, Adjunct faculty, 12 years

Academic Background:

Undergraduate work, University of Arizona, Elementary Ed.  
B.S., University of Southern Mississippi, Elementary Ed.  
M.S., University of Southern Mississippi, Special Ed.  
Doctoral work, University of Southern Miss., Special Ed.

Professional Organizations and Activities:

Association for Children and Adults with Learning Dis-  
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English  
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Teaching Experience:

Stone High School, Wiggins, Mississippi - 10 years  
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Alcorn A & M College  
University of Southern Mississippi - B.S., English

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Teaching Experience:

Okeechobee Junior High School  
Okeechobee, Florida

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Lumberton Line Consolidated School  
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Academic Background:

B.S.-- English Education  
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Professional Organizations

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Academic Background

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National Council of Teachers of English  
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Orleans Parish School System	1 year
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Forrest County Agricultural High School	2 1/2 years
Houston Independent School District	2 years
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Academic Background:

B.S.	Southern University Baton Rouge, LA	Elementary Education/ Special Education-- Mentally Retarded
M.S.	University of Southern Mississippi	Reading
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Mississippi Association of Educators  
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B.A. - English    Tougaloo S.C. College  
M.S. - English and  
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Professional Organizations and Activities:

National Education Association  
National Council of Teachers of English

Honors and Awards:

Teacher of the Month, Nattiesburg Public Schools

Publications:

"A Survey of the Effects of High School Foreign Language Study and the Use of a Primary English Instructional Method on the Academic Success of Students Enrolled in Freshman English Courses at a Selected Senior College," Field Study for the Specialist degree-William Carey College.



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Teaching Experience:

Jones Junior High School, Laurel, MS	2 years
Rowan Center, Hattiesburg, MS	1 year
University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS (Instructor)	1 year
Pearl River Junior College, Poplarville, MS (Dept. Chair & Instructor)	9 years

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Anderson College	A.A.	1969
Clemson University	B.A.	1971
University of Southern Mississippi	M.S.	1972
University of Southern Mississippi	Ph.D.	1980

Professional Organizations and Activities:

Phi Delta Kappa  
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Southern Humanities Conference

Honors and Awards:

Graduate Fellow, University of Southern Mississippi,  
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English and  
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South Forrest Attendance Center - 4 years

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Professional Organizations and Activities:

National Educator's Association  
Mississippi Association of Educators  
Forrest County Association of Educators (President, 1985)  
National Council of Teachers of English

Honors and Awards:

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Professional Organizations and Activities:

Mississippi Association of Educators  
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Star Teacher, 1974, 1983, 1984, 1985  
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Forrest County Agricultural High School - 11 years

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B.S. - Foods and Nutrition, Louisiana State University

Ed.S. - Home Economics Education, University of Southern  
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Publications:

Monetary and Nutritional Contribution of Government Surplus Foods  
to a Junior-Senior High School Lunch Program. Unpublished Masters  
Thesis, Louisiana State University, 1962.

A Survey of the Literature Related to Food Color Additives with  
Implications for Teaching Nutrition. Unpublished Specialist in  
Education Thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 1976.

"Holistic Education in Home Economics Education," in Methods and  
Techniques of Holistic Education, Isadore L. Sonnier, Ed., Charles  
C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois, 1985.

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Senita Walker

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Teaching Experience:

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South Forrest Att. Center	Librarian	2 years

Academic Background:

B.A. English Education	MS College
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Ed. S Educational Media	University of Southern MS

Educational Organizations and Activities:

Sigma Tau Delta  
Phi Delta Kappa  
Delta Kappa Gamma  
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Honors and Awards:

Library Institute, Mississippi State University, 1969  
Past president Region VII, MS Assoc. of Media Educators

Jane Whorton

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English  
and  
Reading

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Oak Grove Junior - Senior High School - 1 year  
North Little Rock, Arkansas

Ridgeroad Junior High School  
North Little Rock, Arkansas - 3 years

Hattiesburg Preparatory School  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi - 1 year

William Carey College  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi - 2 years

Pearl River Junior College  
Poplarville, Mississippi - 1 year (part-time)

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Brooklyn, Mississippi - 2 years

Academic Background:

B.A. - English - University of Arkansas  
M.Ed. - Reading - University of Florida  
Graduate Studies - English - University of  
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Professional Organizations and Activities:

Mississippi Association of Educators  
National Education Association

## II. GROUPS AND COMMITTEES



## RESPONSE GROUPS

Response Groups met regularly to read, discuss, and edit each other's writing. The response groups recommended to the fellows which of their writings was publishable. Finished drafts were read daily.

### Group I:

Robin Dowdy, leader  
Julia Carson  
Debbie Rigby  
Hilda Wade

### Group II:

Senita Walker, leader  
Karen Fuller  
Beverly Casteel  
Lois Rodgers  
Jane Whorton

### Group III:

Beth Havard, leader  
Bettee Boyd  
Phyllis Downey  
Verna Miller

### Group IV:

Helen Nicholson, leader  
Bette Ford  
Mary Peddicord  
Claudine Sonnier

## COMMITTEES

### Snack

Phyllis Downey  
Bette Ford

Claudine Sonnier  
Hilda Wade

### Anthology

Bettee Boyd  
Julia Carson  
Beverly Casteel  
Karen Fuller

Verna Miller  
Lois Rodgers  
Senita Walker

### Potluck

Robin Dowdy  
Mary Peddicord

Debbie Rigby

### Log

Beth Havard  
Helen Nicholson

Jane Whorton

## STUDY GROUPS

Study groups were formed to allow fellows an in-depth look at topics of their choice. The study topics were selected from a list of subjects pertinent to the field of composition and rhetoric. Study groups read and discussed current research in their chosen topics. Fellows were given the opportunity to change study groups periodically so that several topics could be examined.

### Composing

Bettee Boyd  
Verna Miller  
Hilda Wade

Senita Walker  
Jane Whorton

### Journal Writing

Julia Carson  
Beverly Casteel  
Robin Dowdy

Debbie Rigby  
Claudine Sonnier

### Psycholinguistics

Karen Fuller  
Beth Havard

### Style

Phyllis Downey  
Bette Ford  
Helen Nicholson

Lois Rodgers  
Mary Peddicord

III. CALENDAR

THE SOUTH MISSISSIPPI WRITING PROJECT, 1986

		Monday, June 16	Tuesday, June 17	Wednesday, June 18	Thursday, June 19
9:00-9:30	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting
9:30-10:45	Committees formed Explanation of presentations	Writing Process	Presentation: Karen Fuller	Presentation: Janie Peddicord	
11:00-12:15	Response group demonstrations	Journal-keeping	Presentation: Robin Dowdy	Presentation: Senita Walker	
1:30-4:00	Response groups	Response groups	D. Roberts: Grammar & Usage	Maureen Ryan: Sexism in Language	
6:00				Potluck: Home of Robin Dowdy	
		Monday, June 23	Tuesday, June 24	Wednesday, June 25	Thursday, June 26
9:00-9:15	Freewriting: "Weekend Activities"	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting

	Monday, June 23	Tuesday, June 24	Wednesday, June 25	Thursday, June 26
9:15-9:30	Lois Rodgers: "Misplaced Priorities" Claudine Sonnier: "Birth of a New Perspective"	Jane Whorton: "The Ultimate Luxury"	Janie Peddicord: "Memories of the Chinguapin" Beverly Casteel: "A Lasting Influence" Senita Walker: "Gifts of Diamonds"	Julia Carson: "Pine Trees" Karen Fuller: essay on car wrecks Bette Ford: "The Real Authority in My Classrooms--My Students"
9:30-10:45	Presentation: Julia Carson	Committee Reports	James Siders: MS Teacher Assessment Instrument	Nathan Mackie: Writing Workshop-Computers
11:00-12:15	Welcome by Dr. Sam Hauer Study Groups	Presentation: Beth Havard	James Siders: MS Teacher Assessment Instrument	Nathan Mackie: Writing Workshop-Computers
1:30-4:00	Response groups	Study groups	Response groups	Response groups
6:00				Barbecue-home of Lois Rodgers
	Monday, June 30	Tuesday, July 1	Wednesday, July 2	Thursday, July 3
9:00-9:15	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting

Monday, June 30		Tuesday, July 1		Wednesday, July 2		Thursday, July 3	
9:15-9:30	Robin Dowdy: "Shannon" Debbie Rigby: "Great Expectations"	Helen Nicholson: "Peace"	Phyllis Downey: "Alvin"	Hilda Wade: "My Aunt"			
9:30-10:45	Presentation: Bette Ford	Presentation: Verna Miller	Work on including writing in AIM	Presentation: Claudine Sonnier			
11:00-12:15	Committee Meetings Announcements	Group luncheon at Bonanza	Work on including writing in AIM	Presentation: Beverly Casteel			
1:30-4:00	Response groups	D. Roberts: T- Unit & Syntactic Response groups	Gail Bracey: "Wri- ting Across the Curriculum" J. Lebow: Position Paper	Response groups Work on policy statement			
Monday, July 7		Tuesday, July 8		Wednesday, July 9		Thursday, July 10	
9:00-9:15	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting
9:15-9:30	Verna Miller: "A Camping We Will Go"	Bettee Boyd: "Marianne-My Sib- ling, My friend"	D. Roberts: "Pro- cedure in Holistic Scoring"	Senita Walker: "Cotton Picking"			

Monday, July 7		Tuesday, July 8		Wednesday, July 9		Thursday, July 10	
9:30-11:00	Presentation: Bette Boyd	Presentation: Helen Nicholson	D. Roberts: "Pro- cedure in Holistic Scoring"	Presentation: Hilda Wade			
11:00-12:15	Committees	Presentation: Phyllis Downey	Guided practice in holistic scoring	Presentation: Debbie Rigby			
1:30-4:00	Response groups	Response groups	Taped interview with Donald Murray Discussion of posi- tion paper	Response groups Editing committee meets			
6:30				Potluck: Home of Jane Whorton			
Monday, July 14		Tuesday, July 15		Wednesday, July 16		Thursday, July 17	
9:00-9:15	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	Freewriting	
9:15-9:30	Helen Nicholson: "Love & Tragedy"	Jane Peddicord: "What's in a Name" Lois Rodgers: "Best & Worst Moments"	Claudine Sonnier: "Uncle Roy" Jane Whorton: "The Old House" Beverly Casteel: "Beavers, Berries, Blonde-Headed Boys, & Best Friends"	Bette Ford: "Wel- come Changes" Robin Dowdy: "Ecclesiastes 3" Helen Nicholson: "Who Says You Can't?"			

	Monday, July 14	Tuesday, July 15	Wednesday, July 16	Thursday, July 17
9:30-11:00	Wm. Greenway: Poetry Workshop	Presentation: Jane Whorton	Jeanne Lebow: Publication guides	Ramifications of position paper
11:00-	Wm. Greenway: Poetry Workshop	Lunch at Bonanza	Presentation: Julia Carson	Staff development plans
1:30-4:00	Position paper revision	Response groups	Evaluation of Summer	Lunch at Janie's Final Words VAYAN CON DIOS!



#### IV. SUMMARIES OF PRESENTATIONS

CREATING A MYTHBACKGROUND

Students in all grades generally enjoy reading myths. I expand the concept of myths into a writing activity with my seventh grade classes, which they greatly enjoy. We read several myths and discuss the main characters and settings in them. Then students are allowed to write their own myths. This can be done individually or in small groups. It can be begun in class and finished at home, or it can be extended as classwork over several days.

A very unstructured format works best for me. Students use their own imagination or borrow as much as they need to from classical mythology. I am available only as needed to answer questions or offer suggestions. I do not interfere with the students' writing process, and I answer most of their questions with, "Anything goes!" This absence of rigid stipulations encourages creativity and good writing. Flaws in the writing are eliminated later.

This allows mythology to be internalized in each student. They not only read about myth as observers, but they create and put themselves into myths by writing. Through this writing activity, mythology "comes to life" for them.

Results are apparent. High-ability students produce myths that are as good as the traditional myths we read in our textbook. Even average- or low-ability students genuinely enjoy the writing; they create something that they are interested in. Most students are eager to read their finished product to the class.

This activity is most flexible; it can be used anytime throughout the school year, at any grade level, and in different curriculum areas. If mythology is part of the curriculum, it can be added in after the readings. If mythology is not required, this can be a wonderful enrichment activity. Lower grades could write a short description of a picture of a god or a paragraph retelling a myth viewed on a filmstrip. Upper grades could create an entire mythical world full of imaginary characters, and they could work on a "continuing saga"-type of writing on which they periodically add details and chapters throughout the school year. This activity can be plugged into a history class when it is studying the ancient Greek civilization. This activity can be stretched in numerous ways.

### STEPS IN MY PRESENTATION

1. Briefly go over the handout "REFRESHER NOTES ON GREEK MYTHS" (attached); to remind everyone of what myths are.
  2. Call on workshop participants to read a paragraph each aloud of "THE STORY OF ZEUS, KING OF THE GODS" (attached.) This is an example of a myth.
  3. Ask volunteers to share their favorite myth aloud.
  4. Assign groups; have each group appoint its own writer. Allow 30 minutes for each group to produce one myth.
  5. Answer questions during and after the writing process.
  6. Have volunteers read their myths aloud. Collect them.
- 

### RESPONSES FROM WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS ABOUT MY PRESENTATION:

#### PRAISE

- It was fun to hear myths which others had written.
- I liked the part of the presentation that encouraged us not to follow rigid rules for how to do it. I felt that encouragement to create made doing the assignment easier. I didn't feel I was breaking any rules.
- Versatility and wide interest range.
- It involved everyone. Creativity (group) is great.
- This provided for use of imagination and brainstorming. Because of its flexibility, it could be adapted to many classroom situations and levels.
- The handouts were excellent.
- I like the idea of group work. Too few things I do involve groups.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT OR EXPANSION

- I think another thing to do would be to produce a collection of the myths at the lower level and perhaps the best as the grades get higher.
- I would have liked you to include Roman and Norse mythology. I think comparing myths from these major sources would be interesting. It might also be interesting to compare the myths of various Indian tribes.
- I think this concept could be presented through animal and nature myths such as "How the Rabbit Lost His Tail." This would work better for me with young children because we wouldn't need all the background explanation.
- We could use the same procedure to create an allegory, a beast fable, or some other type of writing also.

#### UNANSWERED QUESTIONS

- How will students or parents react to some situations presented in some myths treating violence, religion, sex, etc.? What, if anything, do you usually do, just choose "safe" myths?

## "REFRESHER" NOTES ON GREEK MYTHS

--The ancient Greeks invented myths to explain happenings in nature, account for why man is like he is, or to merely entertain.

--The main characters of myths are gods and goddesses, semi-divine beings, human heroes with superhuman powers, half-animal-half-man creatures, and animals.

--Some myths show the gods in a comic, irreverent, even unfavorable light. The Greeks saw their gods as whole beings possessing both good and bad traits.

--These 12 major gods lived on Mount Olympus:

1. Zeus--king of the gods
2. Hera--Zeus's wife
3. Poseidon--god of the sea; Zeus's brother
4. Hades--god of the underworld; Zeus's brother
5. Aphrodite--goddess of love and beauty
6. Apollo--god of the sun, poetry, music, prophecy, and healing
7. Athene--goddess of wisdom, weaving and other household arts, and warfare
8. Demeter--goddess of the crops
9. Hermes--messenger of the gods; also guides souls to the underworld
10. Artemis--goddess of the hunt
11. Ares--god of war
12. Hephaestus--god of fire

--The lesser gods lived on earth, in the sea, and in the underworld.

--Sometimes the gods fell in love with humans. The children from these unions could be either human or immortal.

--These are some of the creatures found in mythology:

- \*\*the Minotaur--part man and part bull; it ate sacrificial victims
- \*\*Pan--half human and half goat; he was not dangerous, just mischievous
- \*\*Cyclops--a race of one-eyed giant that ate humans
- \*\*Gorgons--three sister monsters who had snakes for hair and faces so horrible that anyone who looked at them was turned to stone  
(Medusa was the most famous sister.)
- \*\*Amazons--a race of warlike giant women who fought men in battle

These are short synopses of classic myths:

1. The sun's passage across the sky was explained in the story of Apollo, who drove his shining chariot from the east to the west through the heavens each day.
2. The stories of Poseidon, god of the sea, accounted for violent storms at sea and strange sea creatures.
3. Lightning is explained as Zeus's throwing thunderbolts to the earth in a fit of rage.

THE SECRET TO CREATING A MYTH IS TO USE YOUR IMAGINATION!

## THE STORY OF ZEUS, KING OF THE GODS

Cronos, father of the gods, who gave his name to time, married his sister Rhea, goddess of earth. Now, Cronos had become king of the gods by killing his father, Oranos, the First One. The dying Oranos had prophesied, saying, "You murder me now and steal my throne--but one of your own sons will dethrone you, for crime begets crime."

So Cronos was very careful. One by one, he swallowed his children as they were born. First three daughters--Hestia, Demeter, and Hera; then two sons--Hades and Poseidon. One by one, he swallowed them all. Rhea was furious. She was determined that he should not eat her next child who she felt sure would be a son. When her time came, she crept down the slope of Olympus to a dark place to have her baby. It was a son, and she named him Zeus. She hung a golden cradle from the branches of an olive tree and put him to sleep there. Then she went back to the top of the mountain. She took a rock and wrapped it in swaddling clothes and held it to her breast, humming a lullaby. Cronos came snorting and bellowing out of his great bed, snatched the bundle from her and swallowed it, clothes and all.

Rhea stole down the mountainside to the swinging golden cradle and took her son down into the fields. She gave him to a shepherd family to raise, promising that their sheep would never be eaten by wolves.

Here Zeus grew to be a beautiful young boy, and Cronos, his father, knew nothing about him. Finally, however, Rhea became lonely for him and brought him back to the court of the gods, introducing him to Cronos as the new cupbearer. Cronos was pleased because the boy was beautiful.

One night Rhea and Zeus prepared a special drink. They mixed mustard and salt with the nectar. Next morning, after a mighty swallow, Cronos vomited up first a stone, and then Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon--who, being gods, were still undigested, still alive. They thanked Zeus and immediately chose him to be their leader.

Then a mighty battle raged. Cronos was joined by the Titans, his half-brothers, huge, twisted, dark creatures taller than trees, whom he kept pent up in the mountains until there was fighting to be done. They attacked the young gods furiously. But Zeus had allies too. He had gone to darker caverns--caves under caves under caves, deep in the mountainside--formed by the first bubbles of the cooling earth. Here Cronos thousands of centuries before (a short time in the life of a god) had pent up other monsters, the one-eyed

Cyclopes and the Hundred-handed Ones. Zeus unshackled these ugly cousins and led them against the Titans.

There was a great rushing and tumult in the skies. The people on earth heard mighty thunder and saw mountains shatter. The earth quaked and tidal waves rolled as the gods fought. The Titans were tall as trees, and old Cronos was a crafty leader. He attacked fiercely, driving the young gods before him. But Zeus had laid a trap. Halfway up the slope of Olympus, he whistled for his cousins, the Hundred-handed Ones, who had been lying in ambush. They took up huge boulders, a hundred each, and hurled them downhill at the Titans. The Titans thought the mountain itself was falling on them. They broke ranks and fled.

The young goat-god Pan was shouting with joy. Later he said that it was his shout that made the Titans flee. That is where we get the word "panic."

Now the young gods climbed to Olympus, took over the castle, and Zeus became their king. No one knows what happened to Cronos and his Titans. But sometimes mountains still explode in fire and the earth still quakes, and no one knows exactly why.

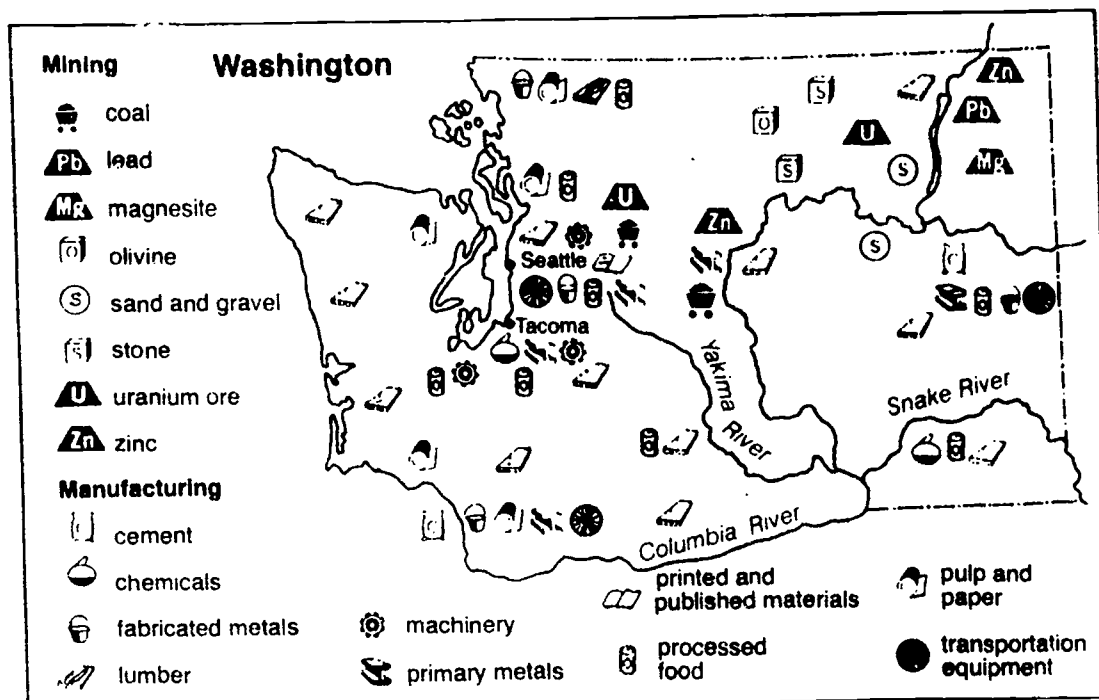
Robin Dowdy

## WRITING PERSUASIVE BROCHURES

Writing across the curriculum is a process of communicating in all fields the knowledge which the student has mastered. Thus, writing a brochure to encourage industry to move into your area may be used in Social Studies and Economic classes. My presentation was *MAPS CAN SHOW NATURAL RESOURCES*, and I used the states of Washington and Texas as examples. I began my demonstration as follows:

1. Pass out copies of maps of Washington and Texas
2. Color the border: blue/water; green/land boundaries
3. Read the material and answer the questions
4. Check the answers as a group
5. Brainstorm by adding other facts concerning states
6. Cluster by using information from brainstorming ideas and using map keys on the handouts
7. Pass out the following materials in manilla envelopes  
construction paper of various colors  
scissors  
glue  
travel folders
8. Have students write positive comments focusing on the advantages of living in either Washington or Texas and geared toward inviting industry into the state.
9. Each student, using materials at hand, creates a "pictorial essay" in brochure/pamphlet form
10. At the conclusion of the session, students show their product and read their persuasive comments.

Emphasis is placed on originality, elaboration, fluency and creativity.



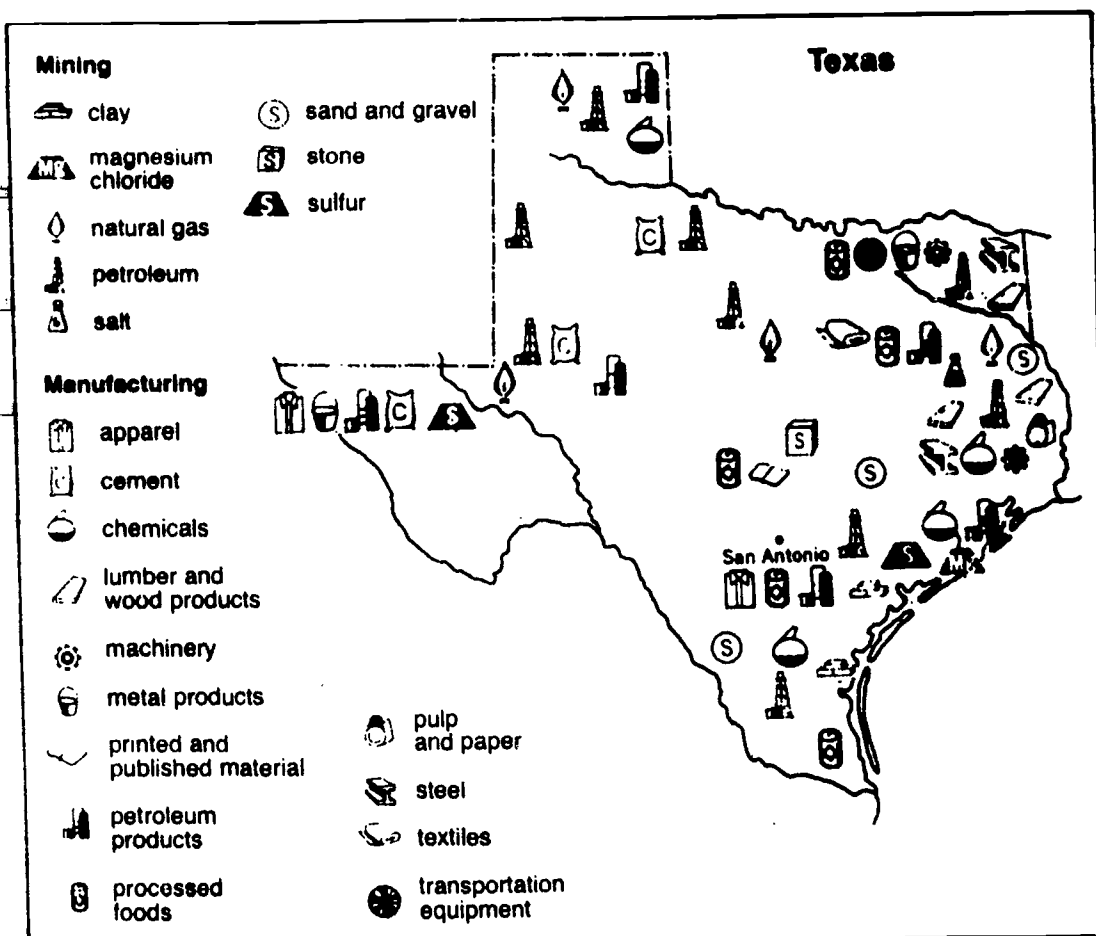
## Maps Can Show Natural Resources

Raw materials are found in every state in the United States. These materials are resources for people to use in many ways. Sometimes natural resources can be used in their raw form. At other times these raw materials are used in the manufacturing of products. Mined raw materials are among a state's most valuable resources.

These maps show where mining and manufacturing occur in Washington and Texas. These states trade important resources in the form of materials and manufactured goods. Some states like Texas and Washington trade even though they are many miles apart. An important part of reading these two maps is understanding how mining and manufacturing are related.

- Look at the maps. Put T before those answers that are true and F before those answers that are false.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Products mined in both states include coal, stone, and salt.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Pulp and paper, cement, and processed foods are manufactured in both states.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Natural gas and petroleum are important natural resources from Texas.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Uranium ore and zinc are mined in Texas.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ Most of the manufacturing in Washington is done near the Seattle-Tacoma area.





2. Both Texas and Washington produce lumber, pulp and paper, and printed material.

Which state has more lumber? Texas Washington

Which state has more pulp and paper mills? Texas Washington

How many printing plants are there in each state? 4 1 2

3. Study both maps and think about the possible trading between these two states. People in Washington need heat for their homes and factories. Name two products from Texas that could be shipped to them.

People in Texas need a valuable ore to run an atomic reactor. Name the ore. \_\_\_\_\_ The people in Washington grow apples and the people in Texas grow tomatoes. Using the key, find the words that tell how these foods would be exchanged. \_\_\_\_\_

## COMMENTS ON PRESENTATIONS

The brochure approach can be applied to literary, home living, etc. Variety of materials allow such individualism of interest among student projects.

Hands-on activities which help the student learn with fun!

An effective way to combine visual and written material. The idea that one must draw from many sources to get a unified whole is an excellent way to teach research.

Ideal for teaching synthesis in a research unit.

Interesting way for a chance to manipulate material so that students can see different arrangements and logical order. Another proof that you don't have to stick to the textbook.

A blend of writing, reading and artistic skills brought together into one activity. The combination of several vital skills is a strong point in this presentation.

An excellent way to introduce research on the elementary level. The hands-on approach made the map skills come alive.

## CLUSTERING: A PREWRITING TECHNIQUE

The writing process comprises three recursive stages: prewriting, writing, and rewriting. The prewriting stage of the process is seen as highly important by rhetoricians. In *WRITING WITH A PURPOSE*, James M. McCrimmon devotes the first four chapters to prewriting. Ross Winterowd states in *THE CONTEMPORARY WRITER* that "before actual composition begins, there is always a period of getting ready, and this period can be a few moments, a few hours, days, weeks, or even years" (p. 2). Elizabeth Cowan in *WRITING* says that "a good creating period will make the next two stages . . . much easier, faster, and more productive" (p. 4).

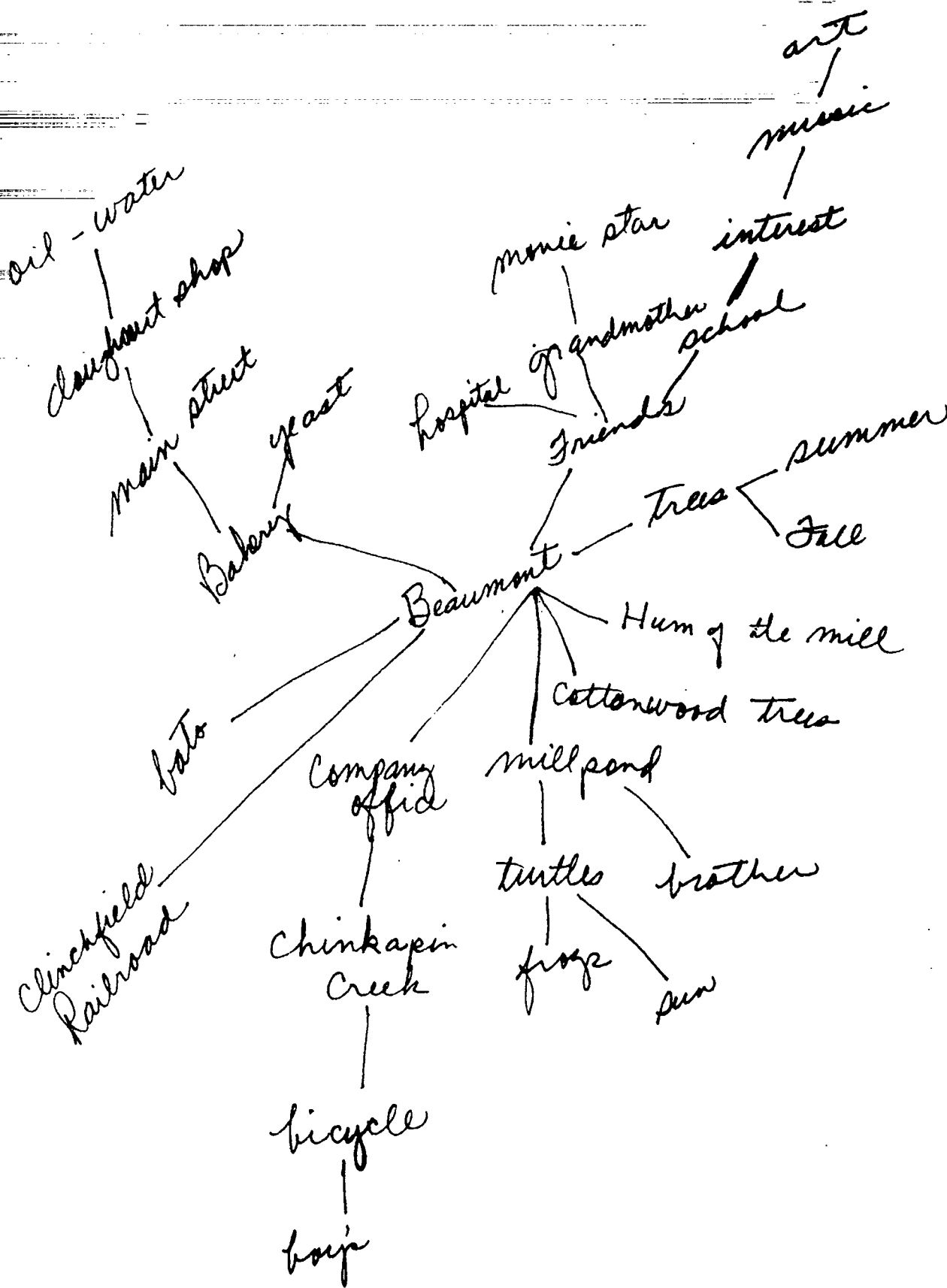
In order to get students started many prewriting methods are used, including journal writing, freewriting, free-association (which includes brainstorming, mapping, and clustering), looping, cubing, and others. Some writers prefer some methods over others. It is important that we experiment with all the invention activities in order to find out what works best for us.

Clustering is similar to brainstorming and mapping in that all three begin with a word or phrase which suggests another word or phrase. The initial word, or idea, is circled in the middle of a page, and the individual or group writes down other words or phrases associated with the circled word. This method encourages ideas, emotions, and memories to flow without regard for any particular order. Once the associations are on paper, the writer can group them loosely and begin to write.

Clustering as a method for generating ideas may be used at all grade levels and for all modes of discourse. To demonstrate how the technique works with elementary school children, a word or phrase concerning a recent field trip may be used as a stimulus to get the students' memories to produce feelings and ideas they associate with the event. Once the ideas are exhausted, they may then begin to arrange the material in some order, requiring them to engage in higher-level thinking. When the organization is completed, the students may write about their experience using any or all of the details generated.

Clustering works in generating ideas when writing about a piece of literature. If students are to write about theme, for instance, a key word may be used to activate the students' ideas about the piece: coincidence in *A TALE OF TWO CITIES*, betrayal in F. Scott Fitzgerald's work, etc.

To illustrate how the technique is used in a piece of writing, a cluster follows which was used in writing an essay, "Memories of the Chinquapin," which appears in this anthology. Another illustration shows how the technique may be used in introducing students to poetry writing. Images clustered about a personal experience may be shaped into poetic form. Haiku is a good place to start in poetry writing because it requires so little. A few images strategically placed produce the essentials demanded by the form. An illustration of Haiku also follows.

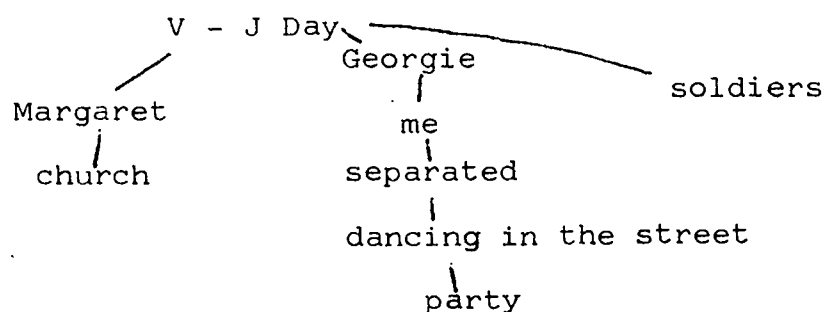


## Haiku

Makes a statement  
Paints a picture  
Provides a moment of illumination

Three lines

- 1 - five syllables
- 2 - seven syllables
- 3 - five syllables



V - J Day

I'll always recall  
Dancing in the street that day;  
I was only twelve.

Margaret went to church  
To thank God for deliv'rance;  
I danced in the street.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Senita Walker

## LETTER WRITING WITH A PURPOSE

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

My presentation demonstrated ways I have used to encourage children to write both friendly and business letters. Friendly letters were written to the author of a book, and business letters were written to order free or inexpensive material. The replies the children received for their letters served as incentive to write the letters and as reinforcement for their effort.

As a school librarian, I do not make assignments, so the ideas I presented were either done voluntarily by children or in conjunction with an assignment made by a classroom teacher. The pleasure of having children ask for help with their letters has been mine. Motivation was not grades but was internal in nature.

Letters to an author is a method of adding interest to a book report which a child has been assigned and of providing information about the author which is unavailable from biographical sources. I help the child choose the book that he wishes to read and encourage the reading of outstanding children's books. The child chooses a specific question which he would like answered, gives the author the date of his report, and writes the letter. I help find the address and give advice on the appropriate form for the letter.

Students have written business letters both to get information for reports and to order free items. I provided reference assistance in finding sources for free items and guidance in the actual writing of the letters. Students have shared with me things which they received in reply to their letters.

I used a poster showing a letter that I had received from Lynd Ward, author of THE BIGGEST BEAR, and pictures that I took when I met Mr. Ward, and shared my love of children's literature with my audience. Participants were given copies of letters children had written, a sample form letter, books containing addresses of free or inexpensive items, and a bibliography of sources of free items.

Participants divided into groups of four and wrote a friendly letter to the author of their choice and a business letter to order a free or inexpensive item. Some of the participants chose to develop a form letter to use in their school. One group decided to write a letter to Donald Murrey, the author of one of our texts, and ask for advice on implementing writing into our curriculum. Dr. Murrey responded with a telephone call which was taped and played for the class.

#### HANDOUTS

##### Child's Letter to Author

305 Lynnwood Circle  
Hattiesburg, MS  
June 10, 1986

Dear Mr. Alexander,

I am writing to you to ask you some questions about your series THE CHRONICALS OF PRIDIAN. I have read all of that series except for THE BLACK CAULDRON. I have looked in bookfairs, bookstores, and libraries, but I have not been able to get hold of a copy. I really love your books!

The storyline is interesting and exciting. Your characters are very believable and make the story more interesting. When you read one of your books you feel as if it is happening then and there.

Here are my questions. (1) Are you going to write anymore series like your last one? (2) Could I have your autograph? (3) What gave you the idea of Pridian?

My name is James Gordon Walker, Jr., but you can call me Jimmy. I loved the movie THE BLACK CAULDRON by Disney. I am twelve years of age. I hope you will write back.

P. S. Keep up the good work!

Your fan,

*Jimmy*

James Gordon Walker Jr.  
(Jimmy)



### Sources of Addresses of Authors

Commire, Anne. SOMETHING ABOUT THE AUTHOR. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research, 1983.

CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS. Detroit, Michigan: Gale Research, 1981.

WHO'S WHO IN AMERICA. Chicago: Marquis Who's Who Inc.

### Sources of Addresses of Publishers

CHILDREN'S CATALOG. New York: H. W. Wilson.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL CATALOG. New York: H. W. Wilson.

SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CATALOG. New York: H. W. Wilson.

### Sources of Free or Inexpensive Items

Coordinator, Utilization and Support Services, MS ETV,  
P. O. Box 1101, Jackson, MS 39215-1101.

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO FREE FILMS. Randolph, Wisconsin:  
Educators Progress Service, Inc., 1983.

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO FREE FILMSTRIPS. Randolph,  
Wisconsin: Educator's Progress Service, Inc., 1983.

EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO FREE SCIENCE MATERIALS. Randolph,  
Wisconsin: Educator's Progress Service, Inc., 1983.

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS GUIDE TO FREE CURRICULUM MATERIALS.  
Randolph, Wisconsin: Educators Progress Service, Inc.,  
1983.

Jorpeland, Elaine and Whittlemore, Ilsa. THE FREEBIES  
BOOK: HUNDREDS OF THINGS YOU CAN GET FREE (OR ALMOST)  
FREE. New York: Holt, Rinehart  
and Winston, 1980.

Lansky, Bruce, ed. FREE STUFF FOR KIDS. Deephaven,  
Minneapolis: Meadowbrook Creations, 1984.

Mississippi Library Commission. REEL TO REEL, THE  
MISSISSIPPI LIBRARY COMMISSION AUDIOVISUAL NEWSLETTER.

MS OUTDOORS, Box 451, Jackson, MS 39205-0451.

Smallwood, Carol. EXCEPTIONAL FREE LIBRARY RESOURCE  
MATERIALS. Littleton, Colorado: Libraries  
Unlimited, Inc., 1984.

WORLD ALMANAC AND BOOK OF FACTS. New York: Newspaper  
Enterprise Association, 1986.

Form Letter Developed by Institute

[LETTERHEAD GOES HERE]

[DATE]

[INSIDE ADDRESS]

Dear Educational Materials Coordinator:

Would you please send me the following materials to use with my classes on the dates given below?

I teach \_\_\_\_\_ and would find these materials most helpful. Thank you for providing this service to schools.

Sincerely,

[TEACHER NAME]  
[POSITION]

Letter to an Author Written During Institute

308 Hillendale Drive  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401  
June 19, 1986

Dear Mr. Murray,

We are participants in the 1986 Summer Institute of the South Mississippi Writing Project directed by David Roberts and Jean Lebow. Write to Learn, which is one of our required texts, is proving to be very helpful and useful to us not only for its content but the style as well. We have found the working process revealed in the "Grandmother" piece to be especially effective.

As teachers, we would appreciate hearing any suggestions you might have concerning how we might initiate changes in the approach to writing in Mississippi. We are bound by a statewide instructional management plan which squelches creativity and discourages writing.

If it is possible for you to respond to this issue by July 11th, we could share your ideas with our fellows in the institute.

Sincerely,

*Bettee Boyd*  
*Beverly Casteel*  
*Jane Whorton*  
Bettee Boyd  
Beverly Casteel  
Jane Whorton

Participant's Letter to Author

711 Magnolia Avenue  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401  
July 7, 1986

Dear Miss Welty,

It is a most deserving tribute to you for the city of Jackson to name a library in your honor, Congratulations.

I teach American literature at Blair High School here in Hattiesburg and enjoy your short stories and your novels. My favorite short story is "A Worn Path" because my home town is Natchez. Our family home is one block over from the street, St. Catherine, on which Phoenix enters Natchez in the story.

Quite often when I teach "A Visit of Charity," the students want to know why Marian hid the apple to eat after she left the home. I promised the students I would try to find out if that situation in the story has special significance. I hope that you will help answer their question.

I plan to share your response with other teachers who, along with me, are involved in a South Mississippi Writing Project this summer at the University of Southern Mississippi.

I shall be grateful for any reply from you.

Sincerely,

*Helen B. Nicholson*  
Helen B. Nicholson

Julia Carson

### A Writing Profile for Secondary and College Students

My presentation demonstrates how to use a writing profile questionnaire with students to help them become more aware of their own writing process and the writing processes of others. After students do the questionnaire, an open discussion of their responses can help to dispel myths about writing that may discourage them from doing their best. This questionnaire was developed by Lil Brannon, Melinda Knight, and Vara Neverow-Turk, and was taken from their book Writers Writing. This presentation emphasizes that writing is not a product so much as a process.

1. First ask students to answer the questions on the questionnaire. You may want to shorten the assignment by asking students to answer only certain questions.
2. Ask students to get into groups and compare and contrast their answers.
3. After group work, conduct a large group discussion, listing on the board what each learned about their similarities and differences.
4. Tie it all together by discussing the myths about writing handout.

## WRITING PROFILE

This is a set of questions that will enable you to construct your profile as a writer. There are no wrong answers; the right ones are simply your perceptions of yourself as a writer. You may be tempted to answer each one as fully as possible. Or you may want to leave out certain information that seems trivial to you, yet even the smallest detail is helpful in understanding the way you write.

Answer one numbered question from each category by writing down as much information as you can. By answering carefully, you'll discover what you do when you write.

### WRITING PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Category I

1. What sorts of writing do you do most often? Least often? Why? List all the kinds of writing you do. What kind do you enjoy most? When writing for class, would you rather have the teacher give you the subject or would you rather find one yourself? Why?
2. How do you start a piece of writing? How do you find out what you want to say?
3. Where do you prefer to be when you're writing? (For example, do you have a favorite chair or a particular spot in the library? Do you write best at night or early in the morning?) What materials do you use when you write? (For example, do you prefer yellow legal pads and a ball point pen?)

#### Category II

1. How do you feel about your writing?
2. What is the hardest part of writing for you? The easiest?
3. What experiences have affected your learning how to write? Did someone show you or tell you how to write? If so, what were you told? Do you do what you were told? If no one ever taught you how to write, how did you learn?

### Category III

1. Do you write more than one draft of a piece of writing? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What does the concept of revising mean to you?
3. Are you willing to read your writing to other people? Who do you read it to? Do you ever read a piece of your writing to anyone before it's finished? Do you reread your writing? If so, what do you reread it for?
4. How do you know when a piece of writing is finished? Do you worry about not being able to finish a piece of writing?
5. What do you think the characteristics of "good" writing are? Is your writing "good" writing? Why or why not?

Brannon, Lil, Melinda Knight, and Vara Neverow-Turk.  
Writers Writing. Montclair, NJ: Boynton/Cook Pub.,  
Inc., 1982.

## STUDENT SAMPLE

### Category I

1. Right now, the writings I do most often are essays in school. What I do least often, and what I would really enjoy doing, is recreational writing. I believe the reason for this is that most of my time is spent doing school work. The type of writing I enjoy doing the most is a humorous short story.

As to the subject, I would rather find the subject to write about on my own. I find that it's more comfortable for me to find my own subject matter. This way, if I decide that my topic is not developing, I am free to change it.

2. The way I begin writing is just to write. I usually write whatever comes into my head.

3. I prefer to write in my kitchen with the T.V. on. That way I can grab a snack if I feel a slump coming on. I usually prefer a clean sheet of white paper and a bold black pen.

### Category II

1. I usually feel good about my writing, if I have enough time to write.

2. The hardest part of writing for me is to find an interesting topic to write about. The easiest part is to write my finished copy, after my rough draft is written.

3. No one really sat down and taught me how to write. It just seems to come natural. Coming back to college has opened my eyes to something I enjoy doing.

### Category III

1. Yes, I usually write more than one draft because I always seem to have changes to make. I suppose I'm just hard on myself, when it comes to criticizing.

2. Revising, to me, means taking your rough draft and changing your ideas around until you are satisfied with your piece.

3. I am usually not willing to have my writing read to other people, unless I am really confident about it. As for



reading it to someone before it's finished, I would never do that. I am not good at receiving criticism.

Yes, I reread my writing for grammatical errors.

4. I know when a piece is finished by a feeling I get. I can't explain it, but it's sort of a satisfied feeling.

5. "Good" writing is when a piece is written so well that your reader cannot put it down.

No, I do not feel I am that good yet.

Barbel Dune

#### MYTHS ABOUT WRITING

1. Good writing results from a flash of inspiration.
2. Good writers know exactly what they want to say before they begin.
3. Good writers begin with an outline and expand it into sentences.
4. Good writers always have a thesis statement and begin each paragraph with a topic sentence.
5. Good writers have in their heads a set of models from which they choose a particular form.
6. Good writers know what their readers need to know.
7. Good writers never show their writing to anyone else until it's finished.
8. Good writers find writing easy.
9. Good writers don't procrastinate.
10. Good writers never have to revise.

(taken from Writers Writing)

## WRITING HUMOR

Writing humor is fun for any grade level because everyone has a story to tell. This exercise is most effective with many examples and very few guidelines or restrictions. It is a great confidence builder because of the positive student reaction to the writing of other students.

### Procedure:

1. Guided prewriting: Ask the students to write for five minutes about "The funniest thing(s) that happened to me (that I noticed) this week was (were). . . "
2. Student samples: Read winning humorous essays from writing contest aloud.
3. Short discussion: Hyperbole (conscious exaggeration) and outlandishness as two elements of humor.
4. Professional samples: Read Erma Bombeck article and then play excerpt from Lewis Grizzard tape.
5. Hand out additional samples of humorous writing from the news paper and Robert L. Steed for the students to read when they have time.
6. Ask students to write something funny.
7. Ask for volunteers to read their writing out loud.

The rest areas along the highways in Alabama are really neat. As a life-long Mississippian, my concept of a rest area is a rusty old trash can on the side of the road, so you can imagine my wonder at our eastern neighbor's <sup>sophisticated</sup> facilities. With vending machines, telephones, video games, and clean rest rooms with doors, these roadside havens could pass for national parks here at home. There's even a little golf-cart-type vehicle with a polychromatic fringed top on hand for a scenic riding tour about the immaculately landscaped grounds.

Now as you can plainly see, this dramatic beginning of my Easter trip was already more excitement than a simple country girl ought to be exposed to before marriage and childbirth. After that royal reception, it was time to continue our journey. Destination: Eastaboga, Alabama. Perhaps a little background information on this village-that-time-forgot might be helpful. The name means "poisoned water," its population is less than 500 (unless you count cattle at which point it becomes a blooming metropolis), and the nearest semblance of civilization is Anniston, a town that rose to fame during the civil rights movement when its citizens thoroughly trashed a bus full of freedom fighters.

My first glimpse of our weekend paradise has even now a dream-like quality about it. After many miles of serene travel in an Iacocca-designed family

vehicle, the pleasant pastoral scene was rudely violated: towering obscenely in the distance was a large canary yellow structure bearing bold, colorful advertisements boasting of "towels, t-shirts, and M-60's." In five foot high neon letters the name Papa Joe gaily blinked a welcome to all.—just another in the Southwide chain of year round fire work stores run by lunatics who should by no means be allowed near explosives. The wonderfully endearing bourgeois family who served as my travelling companions urged me to notice the side of the store as we passed. By doing so, one easily discovered that the absurdly humongous building sported a false front—the actual store was no bigger than a half-dozen Port-O-Johns all lined up.

However, our trip wasn't all glamour and excitement. Rest and relaxation awaited us at Grandma's house. The kids and I unwound from the trip by lazing on the front porch sipping slowly on long, cool glasses of... yes—you guessed it—lemonade! Ooooo, its all too trite. From the porch swing we could see the neighbors across the road—an impressive Spanish—style estate resembling a huge Taco Bell! <sup>with a 4 car garage.</sup> It seems, however, that the inhabitants are a wee bit redusive—their sprawling hacienda was lovingly built backwards, facing the woods rather than the road. This strange arrangement is purported to have been designed to further

saw off their, the only pool in the lake.

After the first of many hearty meals to come, we rounded off the day with a rousing game of "count-the-cars-that-pass-by" (by ruling out trucks of any sort the challenge was increased ten-fold.) I was defeated unfairly as my devious friend had the home-field advantage and knew there were more gold colored cars than station wagons.

Next morn, we "younguns" set out on an expedition, or quest, if you will. With picnic basket in hand, we began our journey to Old Lonesome, a large, pale blue lump on the horizon. For my companions, the trail was a much traversed one, but for me it was a totally new experience.

Between us and the beloved semi-mountain lay a Christmas tree farm, millions of soybeans, and approximately six miles of cow-trodden pastures. Here I soon discovered another one of Mother Nature's treacherous facades - just as the thirst ravaged man in the desert sees a false oasis, so too, does the meadow lie. Those lush green expanses are but odorous dung fields up close, the crossing of which requires finely honed skills in evasion lest one discover the trauma of a manure trap. However, I did develop a deep personal admiration for the dirt. This is no docile yankee soil, this fiery red,

cellen-spawning Rebel on it has a life of its own. It embeds itself into the fiber of clothing with an intensity incomparable - defiantly wreaking vengeance on those who propose to tread upon it.

For what seemed like millenia, we tramped over hill and dale, until, in an effort to escape the scorching sun, not to mention that large, ravenous farm dog that picked up our trail, our little party "took to the woods." This leg of our journey was relatively uneventful except for an incident that resulted in my having convulsions and a near psychological breakdown. It was nothing really - we were forced to cross a big, mucky cow creek on a rickety old log (this was enough to set me ill at ease as I cannot swim and have a personal aversion to brown slime) and during the crossing I heard something slither in the depths below. As a severe herptophobic-one who loathes reptilian-type creatures - this resulted in mild panic. My friends eventually managed to peel my petrified body from the fungus-ridden bridge and we continued.

Upon emergence from the forest, it seemed that we had tripped off some sort of alarm designed to warn of any intruding presence. The obnoxious noise was traced to a bellowing cow who apparently was not at all happy about our visit. We found

ourselves facing a thrice divided pasture: to our right were the mama and baby cows, to the extreme left was the empty field we were aiming for, and, alas, before us were several tons of irritated beef staring malevolently at us in that stupid way that only cows can.

We eventually opted to try our luck in the female's section. Our progress was monitored closely by a seven-strong, male commando unit on our left. As they lowed and twitched their yellow ear tags I vehemently thanked God for \*John Glidden. Soon we were clinging to the tops of nearby trees as the lumbering beige mother cows decided that they didn't like us either. It suddenly occurred to me that being eaten by rabid cattle is not a glamorous way to die. There might yet be the pitiful emaciated bodies of four American youth hanging from apple trees in Castatoga if it hadn't been lunchtime for the insipid animals. We were fortunately forgotten in favor of some scrumptious-looking hay at the other end of the field. We saw our break and ran wildly for the far haven of the third field.

After clearing the barbed wire in flying leaps, we found ourselves at the foot of the hill to which we aspired. It was an uphill climb through denim-eating briars that would maliciously lie in wait



only to ambush one jeans as we passed. We  
recently observed the local tradition of not looking  
back until reaching the top. Oh, how I longed for my camera.

The scene was unbearably quaint as the  
Alabama countryside stretched before us with winding  
streams, farmhouses, and a white church steeple in  
the distance pointing to the blueness above. The warm  
wind that blew into our young exultant faces was  
heavy-laden with the earthy scent of meadow muffs  
as we sat down to eat our lunch under an old  
pecan tree. An inner warmth slowly cooed over us  
and we began to act like those insufferable brats  
on Little House on the Prairie. I even shared my melted  
candy bar which is a major character discrepancy.  
With full tummies and aching limbs, we all napped  
amongst the daisys and looked pretty darn cute,  
I'm sure if only I'd had my camera.

I had further cause for desiring photographic  
equipment on the trip back. As we crossed one of  
many barbed wire fences we saw a truly remarkable  
thing: a rebellious cricket had apparently defied the  
indifference of the universe in one moment of vio-  
lent ecstasy - the poor insect committed suicide by  
means of a kamikazee dive onto one of the deadly  
barbed spikes. In contrast with this scene of death  
and destruction, we later happened upon an old  
mill and cotton gin beside which ran a rippling brook.



(at this point I would have sold my pet bird for a camera).

Luckily we ran into an old family friend who was returning from the fields in his hay-filled and quite manly white Ford Bronco. "Fuzz" (this nickname stems from an unfortunate eyebrow abnormality) graciously offered us a ride home. I vaguely remember singing "She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain" and chewing on a straw of hay as I fully succumbed to the cultural demands of the hayride.

I'm sure that in later life this whole affair will come out into the open and probably be published in the National Enquirer, but for now let's let this be our little secret, eh?

Time in next time when I tell of our experience that Saturday night. We played with a Ouija board in a candle-lit and ~~storm~~<sup>spider-</sup> filled storm cellar and became at one with our subconscious.

## STIMULATING STYLE CONSCIOUSNESS

How can teachers help their students to transform dull, lifeless works into living, breathing papers? The answer is to stimulate style consciousness by helping the students' awareness of the important elements of style: diction, purpose, point of view, tone, and syntax.

To begin a lesson on style, I distribute copies of a creative piece, depicting style as the writer's personality on paper. Thus the paper describes and defines the important aspects of style. After reading the description on style, I ask the students to respond to these questions: do we always use the same style, what usually stimulates a change in style, what plays the most important part in fostering a new style, and what kind of atmosphere is necessary for developing style consciousness?

The next step in creating a recognition of style requires that students analyze other students' papers for the positive aspects of style. After looking at the papers in groups, the response groups report to the class the most important stylistic features in the papers. The process of having students examine other students' papers for style should be repeated many times throughout the year.

After reviewing the essential elements of style, students should be asked to compose their own poems or papers, which reflect their understanding of style.

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## RESPONSES TO PRESENTATION

"The presentation had many strong points, but particularly the stress on style diction."  
Bette Ford

"One thing to take back to the classroom--a beautiful handout with a unique, easy-to-understand way of defining style for students."  
Bette Boyd

"This forced me to think about style, perhaps for the first time. I don't analyze my own or anyone else's style, so I learned a great deal from this."  
Karen Fuller

"Take back--a much better understanding of what style is, with some specific examples."  
Phyllis Downey

"I will use the idea of reading each others' work and telling the class what I liked about it."  
Claudine Sonnier

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## STIMULATING STYLE CONSCIOUSNESS

Hello, let me introduce myself. My name is Style, and since I am attempting to project a unisex identity, I did not limit my possibilities by choosing a first name. Although I consider myself both versatile and agreeable, some people don't like me. They say I'm too abstract and ambiguous to even discuss. Comments like these really crush my feelings, making me feel compelled to explain my identity. Obviously, nobody wants to be a faceless person in the crowd, and neither do I.

The best way to characterize my identity is to explain that I am your personality on paper. Since no two personalities are exactly alike, perhaps, I can assume that I am also special and that no two styles are exactly alike. Now I don't want to sound pompous, but I am pleased with my unique status.

Since your personality has many facets, or faces, I too am composed of several faces, which create a whole being. One of the most important parts of my personality is my purpose. This part of me influences all the other parts of my personality. After developing my purpose, I select a tone, or voice, and begin to assess the needs of my audience. My next focus is to pick my point of view. If I wish for my approach to be personal, I choose a first person point of view. On the other hand, if I want to be more objective and detached, I select the third person point of view.

Another significant aspect of my personality is my diction, or word choice. Through my diction, I can transform my personality. When I conjure sensory images, I allow you to participate in my experiences. Other times, I become poetic and speak to your soul through metaphorical language or symbolism. During these times, I manipulate language, and you can sense my essence through different levels of meaning.

Another aspect of my personality is the use of specific details. These descriptive details are especially important when I make them more personal. A famous writer, Mr. Donald Murray comments, "You must be able to select the statistic, the quotation, the descriptive detail, the anecdote at the moment of writing that will help you understand the subject you are exploring through writing...." In fact, as my specific details become more personal, my meaning becomes more universal.

The last facet of my personality is syntax, which is the arrangement of the words of a sentence in their proper forms and relations. This is really the way my words and sentences fit together to form a whole unit of thought. You might want to view me from the types of sentences which make up my parts: simple sentences, compound sentences, or complex sentences. Occasionally, I use the fragment for effect. Therefore, if I demonstrate a variety of sentence types, my personality appears more mature. If I use fragments and simple sentences, I am probably in a more juvenile or developmental stage. After my personality becomes more mature, I develop an awareness of sentence strategies. For example, the loose sentence has a subject and a verb, followed by a string of details. In this sentence, the writer continues adding details to the end.

Now the loose sentence is the cousin to the periodic sentence, but they are quite different. A sense of suspense is at work in the periodic sentence. His technique is to hold back all the important meaning until the end of the sentence. Also, they have another cousin who is balanced or parallel in his form.

After much self-analysis, I have discovered that I am quite complex, and, perhaps, style is a minute word to describe a personality which is so comprehensive. Reflecting on this, I realize that I am as varied as the races, cultures, and creeds which people the universe.

So if you would like for your students to become acquainted with me, try a few of these suggestions. First, have your students to read their papers aloud and then comment on their diction, details, purpose, point of view, tone, or syntax. Find a few of these traits which the students have used well and discuss the ways that they have uniquely used style. Remember to continue this process before and after they write. Since Rome wasn't built in a day, style will not develop with one writing attempt. So, be patient and reinforce those important elements of my personality--don't forget that style needs stimulation!

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## USING PEER EVALUATION IN ESSAY REVISION

Having students assess the writing of other students has brought favorable results in my twelfth-grade English classes. One such activity, which I call "Composition Workshop," climaxes our writing lessons for the school year. Scheduled near the close of the year, the workshop provides a means of reviewing various composition skills addressed across the year. Its chief value, however, is that it gives each student in a class the opportunity to profit from the knowledge and skills of every other student in that class.

Teams of four or five students evaluate their classmates' personal essays and make suggestions for revisions. Each team offers expertise in a different writing skill. My students enjoy being experts, and I enjoy conducting such a productive activity.

The activity proceeds as follows:

1. Reviewing relevant terms -  
personal essay, introduction, conclusion,  
expansion, unity, coherence, style
2. Selecting essay topics
3. Assigning student identification numbers
4. Writing first drafts
5. Making copies of first draft  
(enough for each member of one team below)
6. Dividing class into evaluation teams -  
introduction, expansion, style/grammar/mechanics,  
unity, coherence, conclusion \*
7. Rearranging desks to construct evaluation  
centers around the room
8. Passing papers in clockwise order from one  
evaluation center to another until evaluation  
process is complete
9. Revising essays
10. Submitting revised essays for teacher evaluation

\* Team members receive handouts pertinent to their area of evaluation.

# ESSAY EVALUATION

Marking Guide: ✓ (Yes) X (No)

1st Evaluation

## INTRODUCTION

- X Clear presentation of thesis
- X Proportionate to body
- X Appealing to reader

Comments: it has nothing to do with the different worlds you talk about in the body of essay.

## EXPANSION

- ✓ Sufficient details to support thesis
- ✓ Adequate development of details

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

## STYLE/GRAMMAR/MECHANICS

- ✓ Appropriate tone
- ✓ Standard usage
- X Effective sentences
- X Adequate punctuation

Comments: Find out when to use semicolon; watch run-ons.

## UNITY

- ✓ All ideas in a given paragraph relevant to thesis of that paragraph
- ✓ All paragraphs relevant to thesis of essay

Comments: Work on it!

## COHERENCE

- X Effective linking expressions
- ✓ Consistent point of view
- X Orderly and logical arrangement

Comments: Leave Frontier Land ideas together.

## CONCLUSION

- X Smooth - not abrupt
- ✓ Consistent with development of essay

Comments: Try to summarize main points.

25  
Smith, Ken

ESSAY EVALUATION

Introduction

A

Expansion

B

Expand second pt. How could you  
"spot a miser from a mile away"?

Unity

A

Coherence

A

Style/Gram/Mech

C

(?) thought out

Begin new pt at "on the way to our  
final destination..." (p. 3). Work on commas  
sentences  
development  
spelling, &  
neatness

Conclusion

A

COMPOSITE SCORE

(B+)

COMMENTS

Good narration  
Effective conclusion

## COMPOSITION: BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS

## EFFECTIVE BEGINNINGS

1. A statement of purpose or point of view  
This should not be a mechanical statement ("In this paper, I am going to...."), but a natural and appealing introduction.
2. A definition - but only if one is necessary
3. An interesting fact - one that leads naturally into topic
4. A vivid illustration
5. A reference to a personal experience

## INEFFECTIVE BEGINNINGS

1. An apology
2. Overstating the obvious
3. A vague generalization

## EFFECTIVE ENDINGS

1. A climax
2. A suggestion for action
3. A summary or clincher

## INEFFECTIVE ENDINGS

1. An apology
2. An exception or qualifying remark
3. An afterthought or new idea



## WHO WEARS IT?

Teachers are encouraged to motivate students to expand their writings. Many students may find it difficult to write on an assigned topic. Mike Rose has researched the topic Writer's Block: The Cognitive Dimension and found various reasons why students have difficulty writing.

"You don't know what it is to stay a whole day with your head in your hands trying to squeeze your unfortunate brain so as to find a word," wrote Flaubert.

Writer's block is not simply a matter of discomfort and missed deadlines; sustained experiences of writer's block may influence career choices. The phenomenon is experienced by writers in business and by professional writers, as well as by students.

Rose defines writer's block as "an inability to begin or continue writing for reasons other than a lack of skill or commitment," which is measured by "passage of time with limited functional/productive involvement in the writing task."

Rose delineates many cognitive errors that cause block blocking-such as inflexible or conflicting composing rules and planning strategies-as well as the practices and strategies that promote effective composition.

The strategy being presented is designed to stimulate students to expand their writings.

### Procedure:

1. Collect as many different or same kind of hats needed
2. Distribute the hats-one to each student
3. List on the chalkboard the behavior of one person who would wear one of the hats (baseball cap)
4. Distribute the worksheet
5. Discuss the worksheet with the class
6. Ask the class, individually or grouped, to work on worksheet
7. Write a story, real or imaginary, from worksheet
8. Share your work with the group/class

### Skills Involved:

1. Research
2. Classifying Data
3. Grammar
4. Main Idea/Detail Sentences
5. Compare and Contrast
6. Reference Skills
7. Analysis

Way to Use Descriptor Technique:

1. Class Interviews
2. Poetry Writing
3. Writing Short Stories
4. Role Play
5. Book Reports
6. Letter Writing

Response from members of the South Mississippi Writing Project:

"I can't wait to use this technique in my Junior High classroom - students will love it." Karen Fuller

"I bet even college students would enjoy this presentation. It's a great way to begin short story writing!"  
Julia Carson

"I loved the concrete use of the hats; real objects certainly grab attention and free creativity. The Chart of Descriptors is well thought-out and useful. I liked that form of brainstorming."

Phyllis Downey

"This activity allows the students to use their own imagination. They should feel relaxed enough that they would be able to write easily." Jane Whorton

"This presentation was excellent for generating ideas to write about. Learning should be fun."

Dr. Mary Peddicord

"The interest generated for topics about the hats was excellent and everyone was involved."

Heleen Nicholson

"The strongest part of the presentation was that it made the writer feel-you said it-less inhibited about writing."

Bette Ford

Mike Rose, *Writers's Block: The Cognitive Dimension*  
(Illinois:Southern Illinois University Press, 1984).

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## DESCRIPTORS

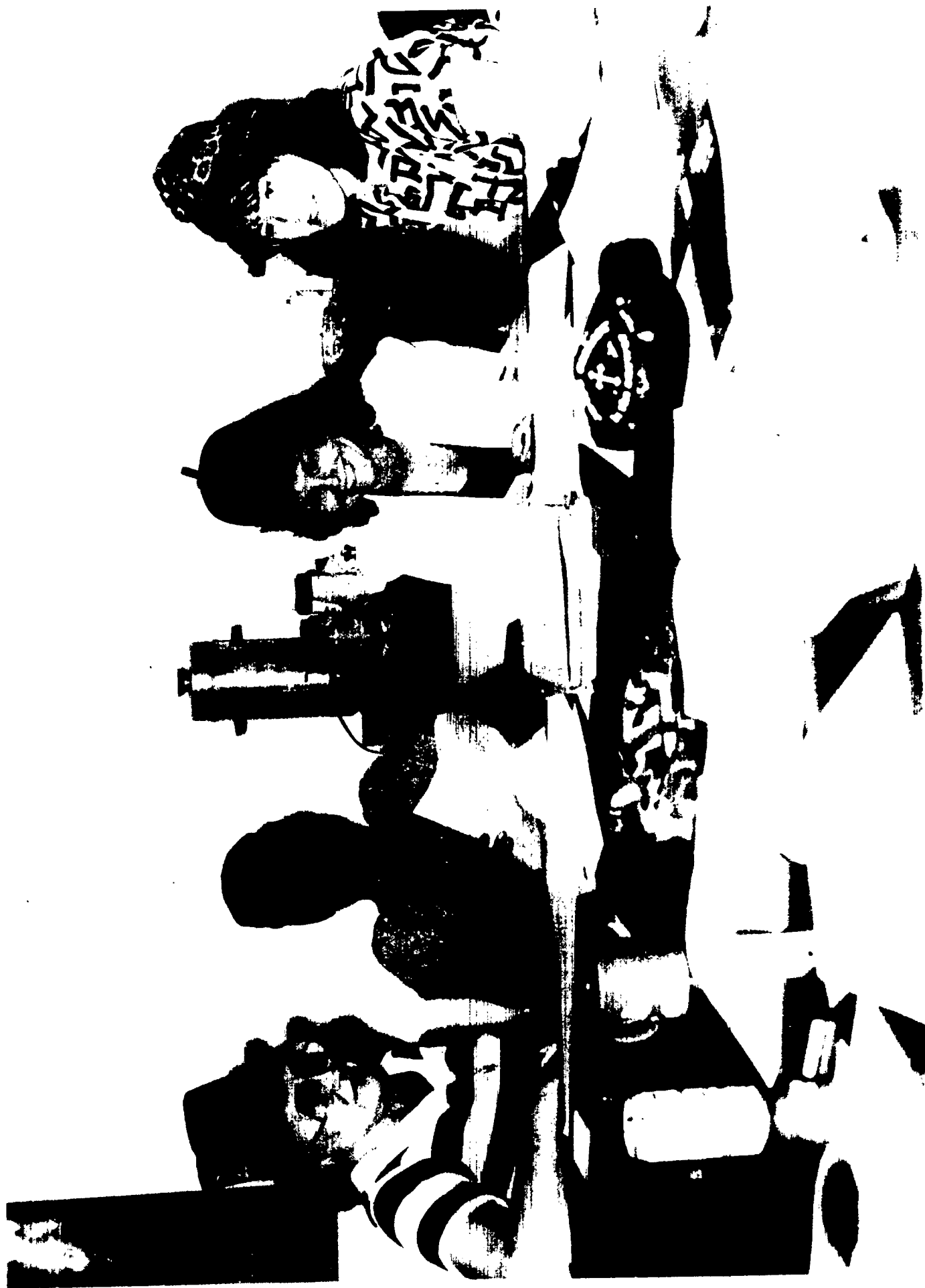
Kind of Hat	Setting	List words to describe each.	Possible Topics
	Event	Person Wearing Hat	Purpose of Hat



Left to right: David Roberts, Karen Fuller, Mary Peddicord, Phyllis Downey, and Lois Rodgers 92

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Left to right: Beth Havard, Bette Ford, Debbie Rigby, and Julia Carson



### Writing About Marriage Customs

The student who writes discovers more about marriage customs, his world, and himself. In writing, students combine experiences, thoughts, feelings, and knowledge into meaning which he may share with the reader. Since language is a tool of seeing and understanding, the student becomes a part of what he is writing.

In order to make writing an exciting and integral part of Family Living Class, I divide the class into groups of three and use the following procedure:

1. Assign material to be read on ways of obtaining a wife.
2. Ask students to
  - a. Brainstorm.
  - b. Write a persuasive paper on one way of obtaining a wife.
  - c. Design a poster in support of the paper.
  - d. Report to the class as a group by reading paper and explaining poster.

The students then regroup and do the following:

1. Write a letter to the person on the left explaining the ways of obtaining a wife.
2. Hand the letter to the person on the left.
3. Pull names from a box to determine which five students read the letter they received.

This is a teaching method which can be used at any grade level.



## The Best Way To Get A Wife Is By Capture

Are you a red-blooded American Rambo? Then live the macho life to the fullest. Obtain your wife by capture.

There is precedence for capture. Look at the cave men, the tribe of Benjamin in the Bible, King Arthur's knights, the Plains Indians, and even L'il Abner.

And capture is the easiest and cheapest way to obtain a bride. You can avoid the costly "bride-prices" and can keep your cows, horses, shells, coconuts, diamond rings, feathers, lumber and firewood, beer, and money for yourself. Also, you can avoid long engagements, elaborate wedding plans, and paying lawyers for pre-nuptual agreements. In addition, you can avoid haggling with middle greedy men, noseey match-makers, parents, and indecisive brides.

Advantages to you include keeping American more beautiful by capturing young, attractive virgins, staying fit, enjoying the excitement of the chase, having a good excuse for minor wars. If you capture a wife, you can make life easier for yourself and earlier wives. Your new wife will be your slave and will bring no mother-in-law problems.

For the no deposit, no return marriage - remember, capture your wife.

Dear Susan,

Men get wives through mutual selection, arrangement, purchase, or capture. Each way has a long history and distinct advantages. I suppose it could be said that wives can be secured just about any way a person can think of.

If a man can't afford to buy a wife, maybe he can capture her. If he doesn't believe in slavery, maybe he could arrange to find a wife by computer search. The old-fashioned American way is mutual selection.

It's all pretty neat.

Your friend,

Bob

Dear Bette,

You wouldn't believe what we did in Family Living today! Did you know that Mrs. Sonnier actually discusses SEX and marriage in her class? You should really take this course next year!

We talked about different types of marriages. Did you know that even today some people still buy their wives? Some people even arrange for their children to get married. Love is never an issue!

This is really a fun class. Why don't you get your schedule changed?

Love,

Beverly

### Writing in Family Living Class

1. Keeps everyone on task
2. Reinforces learning
3. Helps students learn about themselves
4. Promotes group understanding
5. Makes learning fun
6. Raises self esteem
  - a. fewer discipline problems
  - b. better grades
  - c. fewer absences
  - d. overcome shyness

### Students Write in Family Living Class

1. Keeping a journal
2. Keeping a class log
3. Group writing and later, individual writing to understand subject matter
4. Essay tests
5. Writing papers on attitudes, values, fears, and dreams
6. Research papers
7. Summary letters at the end of class

## COMPARISON AND CONTRAST FOR DISCOVERY

One method of development which I am required to have my students write each year is comparison/contrast. The following assignment not only fulfills the requirement, it teaches critical thinking, a primary objective of any English teacher.

After my ninth-graders completed an extensive study of Romeo and Juliet, which includes reading the play, answering study questions, memorizing passages, taking tests, and viewing the 1968 film, I showed the 1962 film West Side Story. Before viewing the film, I gave a handout, instructing them to fill out the appropriate questions as they viewed the movie. After the film, I lead a class discussion in which we thoroughly analyzed all of the parallel details in the two works, using the worksheet as a starting point. This discussion allowed them to talk about all of those minute details, but they were forbidden to rehash them in the paper. After this discussion, they were to use what they had studied previously about fate and destiny and to decide if the young lovers in West Side Story and Romeo and Juliet were similarly "star-crossed." Their papers could support either the pro or the con side of the issue as long as they were fully developed. This assignment forces students to move to a deeper level of critical thinking because they must analyze the themes of the two works. They cannot simply retell the plots, pointing out similarities and differences.

For the class presentation, I handed out pictures of cars; each set had two pictures, one of a new late-model vehicle and the other of an old, run-down, often incomplete vehicle. They were to brainstorm the similarities and differences in the two and then write a paper describing the owners of the cars. The brainstorming allowed them to discuss minute details, but the assignment forced deeper critical thinking. They were forbidden to rehash the details, but they could mention certain ones to support a point.

This assignment could very easily be adapted to other grade levels and subject matters. To introduce comparison-contrast, elementary teachers could use the cars, pets, or almost any object. Secondary content teachers could have students think and write about parallel historical figures, battles, or events or scientific experiments and concepts. English teachers could have students analyze the effect on meaning made by differences between a novel and its movie.

English 1--Worksheet Romeo and Juliet/West Side Story

Answer each of the following questions as you view the film.

1. Identify the counter parts in West Side Story to these characters in Romeo and Juliet.

1. Juliet-
2. Romeo-
3. Benvolio-
4. Mercutio-
5. Paris-
6. Nurse-
7. Friar-
8. Prince of Verona-
9. Capulets-
10. Montagues-
11. What is the approximate length of the courtship in WSS?
11. How long has the animosity between the two groups in WSS been going on? What is it about?

IV. We have discussed at length the role of fate or destiny in R&J. Consider the role of fate in WSS. Would the story have ended the same regardless of the circumstances? Be prepared to explain why or why not.

V. Are the young people in WSS "star-crossed?" Refer to your study sheets which explain the meaning behind the words star-crossed. Be prepared to defend your answer.

## Student Sample

Crudeness certainly meets class in the Petal High School parking lot. The most obvious signalsof this contrast are the 1950 black Ford truck with its dented fenders and scratched paint which proudly rests beside the 1986 sleek, tan and brown Voyager van. Stepping out sluggishly out of his black ford truck is Hank Bodene, tall with straggly yellow uncombed hair. He is wearing overalls faintly accented by the smell of his father's hogpen. He is accompanied by his "woman," Sally Sue. Parked on the side of Hank is Sly Simpson, who arrogantly climbs down from his Voyager van, dressed in the latest preppie fashoins. Sly is followed by Rosalind, who is smoothing out her Polo sweater, trying to conceal the fact that she and Sly recently had a romantic interlude in the back of the van.

## JOURNALISM IN THE CLASSROOM

### Introduction:

A journalistic approach to writing has many advantages. The techniques described in this presentation are applicable to many subject areas at any time of the year. With some modification, this approach can be used on any grade level. It introduces students to the newspaper and helps to develop an understanding and perhaps a better appreciation of journalism. Most importantly, it provides the writing teacher with a method to utilize a wide variety of creative and mechanical writing skills while lending itself to the three basic stages of writing: prewriting, writing, and revision. The journalistic approach allows students more choices of topic, style, and mode of writing while encouraging independent research on topics of interest. Finally, it allows students to publish their writing in a permanent finished product which can be kept and displayed.

### Classroom procedure:

#### Prewriting:

1. Brainstorm all the parts of a newspaper the students can recall from memory
2. Bring in samples of small town to large city newspapers, distribute among the students, and add to brainstorm
3. Establish working definitions of the types of writing found and the purpose of each
4. Cluster the brainstorm, run off copies and distribute to students
5. Brainstorm the important aspects or events of the work to be used (novel, story, event in history, era in history, chapter in science, etc.)
6. Match brainstorm aspects to types of writing
7. Allow students to sign up for writing projects
8. Set deadline for first draft

#### Writing:

1. Write first draft
2. Research if necessary

#### Revision:

1. Use peer editing and teacher conferencing as needed
2. Students revise as needed and turn in second draft
3. Revise if needed

When the writing is judged acceptable, the student may begin on the next articles until all articles are completed.

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## Brainstorm

### News Stories: (Political Cartoons)

Local

State

World

### Obituaries:

Local

World

Calendar/Bulletin Board

Church News

Community News (Names and Faces)

Editorials and Letters to Editor

### Society:

Engagements/Weddings

Feature articles on people and places

Women's Section

Weather

### Sports:

Local

World

### Entertainment:

Horoscope

Comics/cartoons

Puzzles/word jumbles

Ann Landers

Police Report

### Advertisements:

Classified

Display

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## Classroom demonstration:

As part of the classroom demonstration, the students were given a copy of "The Three Little Pigs" which was read aloud. Students were split into four groups and assigned one of the following four articles to write from the story: obituaries, police reports, letter to editor, letter and response to Ann Landers.

## Student samples:

### Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I want to finally put an end to the miscarriage of justice which history has perpetuated because of its horrendous depiction of the wolf in the story of "The Three Little Pigs."

As any intelligent, concerned citizen can see, the wolf never intended to be involved in the crime of "pigamy." Orphaned at birth, the poor wolf had been slung from stick to brick. He had neither friends nor a warm hearth to his name.

Although he is accused of being gruff, he only wanted to make friends with the pigs. This desire appeared in his willingness to share apples, turnips, and fun at the fair with the pigs. Poor little wolf only wanted someone to ride the ferris wheel and share a candied apple with him.

And what did he get in return for his kindness, his interest in other animals, and his generosity? He was literally boiled alive and eaten by cannibal pig number three.

Therefore I suggest that you lovers of fairy tales as well as you fair minded citizens take a stand in support of the wolf - boil your present copies of "The Three Little Pigs" and rewrite the story showing the wolf as the hero.

Sincerely,  
(Student's name)

### Police Report

Missing Pig Report - July 7, 1986

Forrest County Sheriff Gene Walters and his deputies are continuing to search for the two swine brothers who were reported missing by their brother Oscar. It is believed that the two missing pigs might have been blown away with their houses when an apparent tornado touched down. Any information on the two hundred pound, red haired, flat-nosed, and curly tailed brothers should be reported to sheriff Walters immediately.

Responses to Presentation:

- "... emphasizes writing for varied purposes and the significance of publication"
- "... requires complete synthesis of the reading material to carry out the assignment"
- "... utilizes differnt tones and purposes because of the different levels of audience"
- "... an excellent assignment for different ages and subjects"
- "... an excellent opportunity to use group work"
- "... allows student writers to use many points of view"
- "... can be used in parts to fit the individual teacher's needs"

Helen B. Nicholson

## Levels of Meaning as a Bridge between Composition and Literature

The purpose of this unit is to encourage students to make inferences (read between the lines) about a work of literature that will stimulate them to create their own writing. In order for this unit to be effectively taught, students need to be familiar with metaphorical language. We usually review terms(list attached) as a part of the introduction to the unit.

Once students are familiar with the terms, literal and figurative meanings are studied. A good source for inferences is Patrick Hartwell's Open to Language. Nursery rhymes are also good to use for understanding levels of meaning.

After some practice sessions and activities on literal and figurative meanings, a literary selection is provided for the students to read. The teacher may read aloud, select a student to read aloud, let different students read aloud, or let all students read silently.

As soon as the reading is finished, students are asked to write a brief, literal meaning of the selection. Students read what they have written to the class and afterwards discuss the literal meaning.

Students are then given a worksheet that requires a listing and an interpreting of symbols from the literary selection they read. This activity should help students begin to infer figurative meanings. When most students feel comfortable with their lists, they may then begin to select questions to answer from a handout (sample attached).

Students usually read, list symbols, and prewrite in one class period. They hand in the prewriting to the teacher. The next class period the papers (ungraded) are returned to the students for revision and peer evaluation. The next class period the students write the final copy.

The final writing activity requires the students to write a paper that has levels of meaning. The teacher may list some suggested topics on the board(tooth fairy, Easter bunny, getting drivers license, children growing up and leaving home,etc.).

This writing activity may be used in social studies and family living classes.

## Levels of Meaning

### Useful Terms

Allegory is a symbolic narrative, one in which the elements systematically represent things (often abstracts) beyond themselves.

Allusion is a reference in a story to something outside it, something with which the author expects the reader to be familiar. Allusions enrich a story by forcing us to be active rather than passive readers.

Ambiguity is something--an action, an expression--about which the author is equivocal or which he leaves in doubt so that we cannot be sure what to make of it.

Didactic is a work inclined to moralize or to preach.

Irony is the disparity between the narrator's tone and his or her subject, between what a character sees and what the reader knows, or between the characters' intentions and the perverse outcome of their action. Such discrepancies can be humorous, or cynical.

Satire is the attempt to criticize and correct weaknesses, folly, or vice by holding them up to ridicule.

Style is a characteristic form discernible in an author's diction and arrangement of words, sentences, and ideas.

Symbol is an image or object that represents something other, often broader and more important than itself. A dove, for example, can symbolize peace; the ring, marriage or unity; a cross, Christianity.

Tone is the writer's attitude towards his or her material, characters, or audience, revealed in a variety of ways including imagery, vocabulary, humor, etc.

Make a list of symbols you recognize and interpret them.

Answer any two of the following statements.

1. Explain why "Saved from Sin" is or is not an allegory.
2. Discuss the irony in "Saved from Sin" and explain why it is or is not effectively used in the story.
3. Discuss the preacher, Auntie Reed, Westley, and Langston as symbols in "Saved from Sin."
4. Interpret the last paragraph of "Saved from Sin."
5. Write a figurative level of meaning of "Saved from Sin" and use examples from the work to support your work.

## INVENTIONS: GADGETS

Students' imagination can be fostered if they are encouraged to allow it to flow freely. Even when using instructional materials that seem rigid and unimaginative, opportunities for creativity can be found.

After a discussion of inventors and inventions made by others, I ask my students to "invent" something that fills a need for them. To help the creative process, examples of gadgets are shown and the whole group brainstorms possibilities.

When ideas have been generated, the second phase is to have the students write about their inventions. They are offered many choices of form: they may describe their invention; they may explain how it works; they may write a newspaper account telling about the invention; or they may choose to design an advertisement for radio, television, or magazine.

The students are then encouraged to read their compositions to the class. Some also wish to draw illustrations, or to make posters.

This activity can be correlated with a variety of topics and used at many levels. My use of it developed from a reading selection, but I believe it also fits well with the study of inventions in history; with focus on the biographies of famous inventors; with discussion of the impact of an invention upon society; with futuristics; and with the study of machines in science.

Younger children might draw posters of their inventions with written captions; older students will write more detailed descriptions. The various forms of writing could be more fully developed for advanced students, as with a study of persuasive writing, for example.

Copies of the handout used in the presentation and of some examples of the compositions by members of the SMWP follow.

### Inventions: Gadgets

This writing activity grew out of a reading selection about Henry Ford, inventions, and manufacturing. Some of the ideas and definitions included in this reading material follow:

1. Inventing is getting an idea and making something for the first time.
2. Manufacturing is making many copies of an invention so all the people who want one can buy it.
3. A "good" invention is one that people want; it is helpful.
4. A "bad" invention is one that is useless and/or harmful to people.
5. A flower or a rock is not an invention; it occurs naturally.

After completing the reading assignment, my young students were asked to "invent" something, make it, and share their inventions with the class.

Some of the children's ideas were:

1. A homework machine--you put the assignment in the top and the finished work comes out at the bottom.
2. A bed that makes itself.
3. An automatic mowing machine that needs no pushing or guidance.
4. A garbage can that says "Thank you" when it is used.
5. A "maid" machine that cleans the child's room, picks up toys, and hangs up clothes.
6. Robots of all kinds, to do all sorts of tasks.



WHATEVER YOU WISH: SELF-HYPNOSIS TAPES WHICH BRING DREAMS TO  
LIFE

Do you suffer from psychosis?  
Try our video tapes on self-hypnosis.  
Just plug in your video machine  
And life will become a beautiful scene.

Does your wife refuse to cook?  
Try self-hypnosis and she'll look  
Like Julia Childs  
In just a little while.

Does your husband drive you crazy  
Because he's so darn lazy?  
Just position him in front of our video tape  
And you'll have to beat him away from the rake.

Do you want to forget about your worries?  
Plug in the "Whatever You Wish" self-hypnosis machine  
And sail through life  
Without ever having to hurry.

Lois Rodgers

HATTIESBURG TEACHER INVENTS REVOLUTIONARY ESSAY GRADER

Bette Ford, an English teacher at Blair High School in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, recently patented a new computer--one that grades student essays on individual bases, complete with suggestions for revisions. Called "Writer Perfect," the computer makes a positive comment about each essay, even when, in fact, it is a maze of illegible run-together sentences. Personal Writer also gives clear guidelines for improvement, such as "revise each sentence in your paper as follows." It addresses each student by name, and it even gives grades and smiling faces. Speaking of smiling faces, the inventor Ford smiles as she informs reporters of her approaching retirement, thanks to the millions she's netting from her new machine.

Bette Ford

## TEEN-AGE SHUT-OFF

Every home with a teen-ager needs Teen-Age Shut-Off. This quarter-sized computer attaches to your teen-ager's pillow. When your teen-ager has been breathing slowly and rhythmically, as in a deep sleep, for five minutes, the computer will be programmed to automatically turn off various items in the room, such as lights, radio, TV, and/or tape player.

Hilda Wade

## ROOM MONITOR

A room monitor is a device placed by the entrance of each door. A complete listing of each task to be done in the room is entered on the voice monitor.

1. Make the bed, hang up clothes, dust and clean off desk, pick up trash, sweep floor, clean rug.
2. If a parent wants a task to be completed before the child leaves the room, turn on the device and select items to be completed.
3. The device is activated when the door closes.
4. The door will not open until the selected tasks are completed. The lights will cut off if you try to leave without completing the task.
5. The room is sensed by electronic wiring.

Verna Miller

ROOM MONITOR	
Select one or all of the tasks	
to do	done
<input type="radio"/> make the bed	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> hang up clothes	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> dust and clean desk	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> pick up trash	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> clean the rug	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> store all books	<input type="radio"/>
All tasks completed--door opens <input type="checkbox"/>	
Tasks not completed <input type="checkbox"/>	

Hilda Wade

## PUBLISHING TALL TURKEY TALES

**Introduction:** Tall Turkey Tales is the November segment of a monthly bulletin board for creative writing. I began to use the idea of a monthly bulletin board in my classroom to generate interest in creative writing and to use as an excellent publishing device. Before beginning this activity, we read and discuss a tall tale, such as a Paul Bunyan story.

**Background Information:** A tall tale is a story in which the truth is stretched for a humorous effect. The tall tale is a unique story form and was believed to be started in the 1800's by the pioneers who used this way of storytelling to entertain one another.

**Age Groups:** Any elementary grade may use this idea; however, the idea may be applied to upper grades by allowing the students to design their own symbol on which to place their writing about that particular holiday or season.

**Procedure:**

1. Discuss the tall tale starters on the handout.
2. From the handout, choose a starter and complete it on a scrap piece of paper.
3. Read your completed version to a friend and make any revisions or corrections on the rough draft.
4. Write your completed version on a turkey cutout. Then decorate and cut your turkey.
5. Read aloud your version to the group/class.
6. Place the completed turkey cutout on the bulletin board or in a class booklet.

**Suggested Materials:**

MacMillan Instant Activities Program  
Shape-a-Story (Fearon)  
Shape-a-Poem (Fearon)

### Additional Suggestions for Other Months:

1. Sept. - Football Cutout (My Favorite Team)
2. Oct. - Pumpkin Cutout (A Funny Halloween Story)
3. Dec. - Star Cutout (My Favorite Christmas)
4. Jan. - Scroll from white paper (My Resolutions)
5. Feb. - Valentine Cutout (Something Nice)
6. Mar. - Easter Basket Cutout (My Favorite Easter)
7. Apr. - Raindrop Cutout (If I were a Raindrop)
8. May - Fish Cutout (A Fishy Story)

### More Publishing Ideas:

Make a book using wallpaper, cardboard, poster paper, cloth, contact paper, or construction paper for the cover.

Make a special booklet for Christmas, Mother's Day, or Father's Day. This booklet may include messages, poems, or stories you've written or pictures you've drawn.

Write a person's biography after interviewing him/her.

Write a television program. Put it on a roll in a television made from a box. Instead, you may want to present the program live.

Make a newspaper or magazine.

Write a play. Make the costumes or puppets for the characters. Design and build the set.

Record or videotape a play, skit, or reading you've written. Play it for the class.

Send your writing for publication in a newspaper or magazine.

## TALL TALE STARTERS

Tom Turkey was a big turkey. Now, I don't mean an ordinary big turkey. No, sir! I mean an extraordinary, gigantic big turkey. In fact, Tom Turkey was so big that . . .

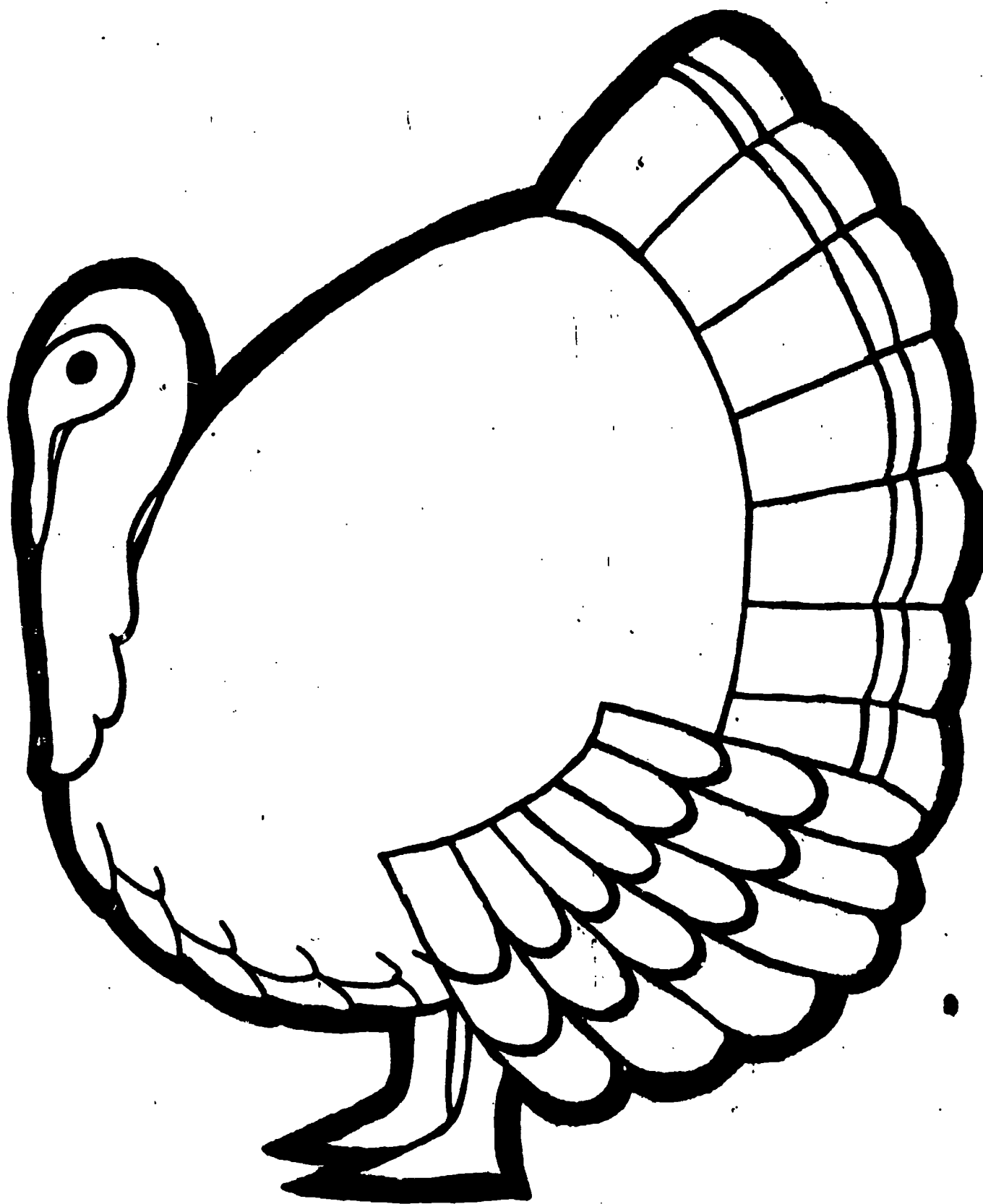
Terrence Turkey's hearing was so keen that he could hear a flea sneeze at forty paces. Now, that means he could hear just about everything that was said or done anywhere in the barnyard. As you might imagine, this unusual ability caused some problems for Terrence. In fact, I remember the day when . . .

There was no doubt about it! Tabitha Turkey was an unusually pretty turkey. I mean there are ugly turkeys and ordinary looking turkeys and good looking turkeys and then there was Tabitha. Pretty. That was the only word to describe her. In fact, she was so pretty that . . .

As turkeys go, Terrell Turkey was slow. He just couldn't seem to do anything any faster than a snail's pace. He ate slowly, he thought slowly, and he walked slowly. In fact, Terrell was so slow that when he crossed the road, it took him two days to reach the other side. Now, this caused Terrell some problems. In fact, I remember one day when Terrell . . .

Tanya Turkey was absolutely tiny. Her mother was worried. Her father was worried. Even her grandparents and her aunts and uncles were worried. Tanya had been eating as much as she could at each and every meal for as long as she could remember, but she was still tiny. In fact, she was so tiny that the other turkeys were always stepping on her and bumping into her because they could scarcely see her, and when she turned sideways, she would practically disappear. Now one day . . .

Tony Turkey was strong, so strong that he could lick any turkey in the yard and lift anything around. In fact, he was so strong that no one knew exactly how strong he was. They were afraid to ask and couldn't think of any safe way to measure. One day, however, circumstances put Tony's strength to the test. It was a warm, sunny day and . . .



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121



Tall turkey  
tales

TOM Turkey was  
so big that one  
day he picked me  
up and put me on  
a cloud and I

said, "let me  
down and  
he did."

## Cohesion and Revision in Paragraphs of Contrast

My presentation demonstrated a technique to teach students to use coordinators to join sentences effectively. I began to stress the importance of writing coherently last year when students were unable to contrast the speaking voice and the singing voice on a mid-term music exam. The four steps of writing suggested in the Silver Burdett textbook were used to teach this skill.

Making contrasts sharpens thinking skills and powers of observation. Finding differences, whether in school subjects or in daily living, is an important skill. A paragraph of contrast tells about the differences between objects, persons, places, animals, or ideas.

Although this activity is used with sixth grade students, it can easily be stretched to meet the needs of any grade level. For example, in first grade students could look at pictures and make sentences telling the differences observed. In science, a student might be asked to tell how amphibians and reptiles are different. Agriculture students could be asked to write a paragraph contrasting different breeds of cattle. The possibilities are endless.

- Procedure:
1. Brainstorm a list of pairs of things to write about. Both things should belong to the same category.
  2. Choose a pair from the list and list as many differences as you can think of on a chart.
  3. When this is completed, pass out practice sheet for students to combine sentences using coordinators (connecting words).
  4. Have volunteers read revisions aloud. Students should notice that even though all sentences are combined differently, the meaning does not change.
  5. Students now break into groups. The groups brainstorm topics, choose one, and make a chart listing differences.
  6. Using this chart, students write a paragraph of contrast taking care to use connecting words to join sentences.
  7. Each group then reads aloud the paragraph to the class.

If there are students in class who cannot list differences, provide pictures of things that are vastly different. Another alternative is to bring in objects that can be placed on a student's desk so differences can be seen. A wind-up alarm clock and a quartz watch can easily be contrasted.



## COHESION AND REVISION IN PARAGRAPHS OF CONTRAST

### PREWRITING

- Brainstorm about pairs of things to write about. Both things need to belong in the same category.
- After choosing a topic, list as many differences as you can in a chart.

### WRITING

- Let your readers know in the first sentence what you have chosen to contrast. (Topic sentence)
- Use the chart to write supporting sentences to illustrate the differences.
- Use connecting words and phrases to help introduce supporting sentences that explain differences.
- Some suggested coordinators: although, however, besides, on the other hand, even though, in contrast.

### REVISING

- Read the first draft aloud to your group. Then allow the members to make suggestions about how you could improve your paragraph.
- Use this checklist to revise:
  - \*\*Does my paragraph have a topic sentence that states the main idea?
  - \*\*Did I write supporting sentences that give more information about the topic sentence?
  - \*\*Did I contrast two things by telling about their differences?
  - \*\*Did I use connecting words to introduce supporting sentences?
  - \*\*Did I combine short sentences that repeat similar ideas?

### PUBLISHING

- Rewrite your paragraph only if you are going to publish it.
- Follow these guides:
  - \*\*Is the first word of the paragraph indented?
  - \*\*Does each sentence begin with a capital letter and end with the correct punctuation?
  - \*\*Is each word spelled correctly?
  - \*\*If hand-written, have I used my best handwriting?
- Find pictures that illustrate the two things you contrasted. (Optional)

Materials used:

- Silver Burdett English-Grade 6

English  
Practice

Healer  
12.12

### Prewriting sample

Summer	Winter
Hot	Cold
Short sleeve	long sleeve
Airconditioner	no air conditioner
Swimming	no swimming
no heater	heater
no snow & ice	snow & ice
leaves on trees	no leaves on trees

### Writing sample (before revision)

Do you know the difference  
between summer and winter?  
During the winter people  
use heaters to heat their houses.  
However, people use air conditioning  
in the summer to cool their  
houses. There are leaves on the  
trees in the summer. Even  
though, there aren't leaves  
on those some trees in the  
winter. It is so hot in  
the summer that people have  
to go to the creek on the other hand,

Sample of one student's revised paper.  
This one is ready for publication.

English  
Paragraphs

Kristi B.

12-17-85

There are several differences between flutes and drums. For instance, a flute one holds on the side, but a drum sits in front of a person. A flute is played by the finger keys, but a drum is played by a pair of drumsticks. A drum makes sound by beating the sticks on the pad. However, a flute makes sound by blowing air over it.

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A paragraph of contrast tells the differences between objects. Read the sample paragraph below. Then rewrite the sample to improve it by combining sentences where necessary. Be sure to use connecting words to introduce supporting sentences.

Observe hamsters and gerbils carefully. You will notice differences in their appearance. You will see that their movements are different. The coats of hamsters are fluffy and vary more in color and markings. The coats of gerbils are smooth. Hamsters have short, stubby tails. They are barely visible. Gerbils' tails are long and hairy. Gerbils have two oversized back legs. They use them to leap and jump. Hamsters climb, creep, and crawl on four legs.

---

Connecting words: although, however, besides, on the other hand, even though, in contrast

---

By observing hamsters and gerbils carefully, you will notice differences in their appearance and in their movements. Hamsters' coats are fluffy and vary in color and markings; however, gerbils' coats are smooth. Hamsters have short, stubby tails which are barely visible; in contrast, Gerbils' tails are long and hairy. Gerbils have two oversized back legs which they use to leap and jump, whereas, hamsters climb, creep, and crawl on four legs.

## VARYING AUTHOR'S POINT OF VIEW

### Introduction

This writing activity focuses on the significance of an author's choice of point of view in telling a story. I have used this format with junior high reading students, but it could be adapted for any grade level.

To introduce this exercise I remind the students that a writer may choose one of three perspectives from which to tell a story. If the narrator or person telling the story is a character in the action, the story is told from the first-person point of view. In this case, the reader is told only what that character sees, knows, and feels. On the other hand, the narrator may describe the action as if observing it from outside the circle of action. This third-person narrator may reflect an omniscient point of view in that the actions and thoughts of all the characters are related to the reader. A third-person limited point of view, however, restricts the reader to the knowledge of only one or a few characters. An example of each method of narration is cited from among the stories read previously by the class.

### Explanation of Activity

Each student is asked to choose one of three designated short stories which have been read and discussed earlier by the entire class. After rereading the story, the student is to rewrite the narrative as if it were told by a specific character. In each case, the new version will reflect a change in point of view from the original text.

A short model story in third-person limited point of view is read aloud to the class. The teacher demonstrates a shift in point of view by reading a revised version of the story as it might be told by the principal character.

Students may be grouped according to story choices for brainstorming concerning the thoughts and feelings of the new narrator at various points in the story. Dialogue may be taken directly from the original text, but all other writing should be in the student writer's own words.

\*Volunteers are asked to read their final drafts to the class. Students enjoy discussing the various interpretations of the characters' actions as described in their versions.

Demonstration Model

Participants in the institute were divided into four groups of four or five people. Each person was given a copy of a brief narrative. After reading the story, each group was asked to rewrite the story from the point of view of one of the four characters. The four versions were read aloud to the entire group.

Attached are student samples retelling "The Moon Child from Wolfe Creek" by Jesse Stuart and "Moment of Protest" by Kathleen Ann Sullivan.

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STUDENT SAMPLE

Moment of Protest

I was on my way to town on a day that was as hot as they come. The soil was already dried and grass burnt. My mother had sent me to the store for some things she needed.

As I walked I looked back down the hill and could see all the old shacks that looked just alike to any outsider, but I could pick ours out. Our house had once had a coat of white paint with a glass window in the front.

After looking and resting for a while, I hurried on over the hill to town. The store was on the other side of town. Whenever I went to town I never knew whether to walk in the road or on the sidewalk. I always realized how faded my dress and hat were and that I didn't have any shoes.

As I walked I saw a house with eight or ten glass windows. The grass was still green because it was watered by a sprinkler. I sure wanted to wash myself in it. A dog started barking so I went on.

Ten hot minutes later, I was in the air-conditioned store. I felt I could have stayed all night. I knew Mother needed her bread, sausage and lettuce. I sure hoped I had enough money. The bill came to 72¢. I gave the man three quarters and my change was 3¢.

As I turned to go, I saw the display for frozen chocolate and vanilla bars. Only 15¢! I had three cents. That ice cream seemed to scream for me to take it. My hand reached in the freezer and grabbed one. Just as I got it, a customer came in and saw me. I went to the door and ran and ran.

I knew I was wrong but I just kept going until I had passed the house with all the glass windows. When I finally got on the hot dirt road, I stopped and sat on a rock. At last I could eat that cool ice cream. It was partly melted, but I unwrapped it slowly. To my horror, it fell off the stick into the dusty ground. All I could do as my mother hollered for me was to sit and stare at that soft melting blob.

Student Sample

"The Moon Child from Wolfe Creek"

I was walking with my friends on day to school, but I never made it. I got scared. I didn't like school.

I ran up the mountain that overlooked the school. I sat on a stump so I could see the school. I wondered what went on in a school. Everyone told Pa I would learn to read and write and this would be good. But I had no idea what this reading and writing thing was. I asked my pa and he didn't seem to know either, but everyone who did, said it was good, so he thought that's what I should learn to go do. He never had learned about this reading and writing thing. Why he thought I should go do it, I couldn't figure out?

I told him if he went and saw how to do it then he could teach me. He said only kids went to this school and did this reading and writing thing.

Well, this didn't make any sense to me. He knew more than any of these people



and had taught me all he knew about hunting, fishing, trapping, why things were and weren't, when to do this or that. So why did this seem so important to him? I couldn't figure this school thing.

Each day I watched from above them. Each day I would get closer they seem to be enjoying themselves, then back inside they would go.

I kept wanting to go see inside but I was scared to. I had never been scared before but I always knew before what to expect.

Then one day I looked inside. It wasn't much different from a house, so I went inside. The teacher who seemed to boss everyone made them all look at him instead of me. This made me feel better. This school thing may not be so bad after all.

Julia Carson

## A SMORGASBORD OF PREWRITING TECHNIQUES

The purpose of this presentation is to show students that there are a variety of prewriting techniques available to help them start their writing process. The four techniques I use to introduce writing skills are free writing, mapping, listing and formal outlining.

1. First explain each technique to the class.
2. Put the students in groups and assign a prewriting technique and a writing topic. (I asked students to write about their writing process.)
3. Let them prewrite and respond to one another for fifteen to twenty minutes.
4. Next have them write their papers individually.
5. In the days to come you should have students try the other techniques. Otherwise, students will tend to use only one technique.
6. After students have tried the various techniques, conduct a class discussion on which technique they liked best and why. The students will not get writers' block as often if they know several ways to get started and are allowed to choose the one they prefer for future assignments.

## STUDENT SAMPLES

I was in the formal outlining prewriting group. I liked the group assignment. I could write better by talking with a group, and it's easier for me to write from an outline.

I was in the mapping group. I very much like the strategy group I was assigned because the mapping technique was similar to brainstorming. We shared different ideas on our strategies for essay writing. I do believe I would use the same techniques next time.

I was in the listing group, and yes, I liked this strategy I was assigned. I liked it because it was an easy and simple way to help myself remember the different things I wanted to add in my essay. I will probably use the same strategy the next time, even if given a choice, because it is now familiar to me.

I was in the formal outline group. No, I really did not like making them. I know how to do one, but it has never helped me. I feel like I have these set plans I must go by. This makes me uncomfortable. I can not write as well if I have to follow this plan. Many times I add things or rearrange things as I write and I usually do not end up following my outline. I do not think I will use this method again. I am more comfortable and able to write better if I list things. I then write and arrange them as I feel they need to be.

I was in the free writing group. To me this strategy is a lot easier and saves time. Instead of having to do all those other steps you can go straight into you paper. I would prefer to use this strategy all the time. When I write about a certain subject, I think about all the things I know about that subject, and then I start writing down my thoughts on paper.

V. GUEST SPEAKERS

## GUEST SPEAKER

Gail Bracey

P.O. Box 128  
Morgantown, Mississippi 39484

Teaching Assistant,  
English Department,  
University of Southern Mississippi

### Teaching Experience:

Teaching Assistant, USM, two years

### Academic Background:

B.A., Journalism

### Professional Organizations:

Modern Language Association  
Mississippi Press Writers

### Honors and Awards:

Teaching Assistantship  
Best Feature Writer  
Lambda Iota Tau

### Publications:

Writer for The Columbian Progress

### Summary of Presentation:

Writing Across the Curriculum has swiftly spread across the nation in the past few years as educators have come to recognize writing as a means of learning and that the more students write, the better they write. Programs implemented are based on two models: Contagion or requirement; many programs are a combination of the two. Contagion means that writing is diffused throughout the curriculum; requirement means that certain classes have been singled out for a writing component.

GUEST SPEAKER

Nathan McKie

112 Oklahoma Drive  
Clinton, Mississippi 39056

Computer Marketing Director,  
Mississippi School Supply  
Company, Jackson,  
Mississippi

Academic Background:

B.B.A., University of Mississippi  
M.B.A., Delta State University

Summary of Presentation:

A demonstration of The Writing Workshop, a microcomputer program for improving writing skills by Milliken Publishing Company. It includes prewriting, word processing, and postwriting. Postwriting activities include spelling and mechanics check programs.

Letter to an Author Written During Institute

308 Hillendale Drive  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401  
June 19, 1986

Dear Mr. Murray,

We are participants in the 1986 Summer Institute of the South Mississippi Writing Project directed by David Roberts and Jean Lebow. Write to Learn, which is one of our required texts, is proving to be very helpful and useful to us not only for its content but the style as well. We have found the working process revealed in the "Grandmother" piece to be especially effective.

As teachers, we would appreciate hearing any suggestions you might have concerning how we might initiate changes in the approach to writing in Mississippi. We are bound by a statewide instructional management plan which squelches creativity and discourages writing.

If it is possible for you to respond to this issue by July 11th, we could share your ideas with our fellows in the institute.

Sincerely,

*Bette Boyd*  
*Beverly Casteel*  
*Jane Whorton*

Bette Boyd  
Beverly Casteel  
Jane Whorton

## GUEST SPEAKER

Donald Murray, author of Write to Learn and A Writer Teaches Writing, responded to the June 19 letter with a phone conversation on July 8. He specifically addressed the questions in the letter and made recommendations such as: involve parents and administrators in writing, create school-level writing networks, and experiment with writing. He also reiterated the idea of no absolute right or wrong in writing, and he stressed conferencing with students, letting them do the talking. Professor Murray gave useful advice on how to teach in spite of instructional management plans, basic skills tests, and other restrictions. The recorded conversation was shared with the class July 9.



## GUEST SPEAKER

Maureen Ryan

2612 B4 McLelland Street  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39356

Associate Professor of  
English, University of  
Southern Mississippi

### Teaching Experience:

Assistant Professor, USM, three years  
Teaching Assistant, Temple University, seven years

### Academic Background:

B.A., Penn State University, 1975  
M.A., Temple University, 1979  
Ph.D., Temple University, 1983

### Professional Organizations:

Modern Language Association  
Southern Association of the Modern Language Association  
Conference on College Communication and Composition  
National Council of Teachers of English  
Thomas Wolfe Society

### Honors and Awards:

T.U. Fellowship, 1981  
Robertson Prize for "Lillian Hellman's Little Spaces," 1979

### Publications:

Spinsters and Orphans Last: The Fiction of Jean Stafford;  
forthcoming, LSU Press  
"Stopping Places: Bobbie Ann Mason's Short Stories"  
in Women Writers of the Contemporary South, 1984

### Summary of Presentation:

A discussion of the ways in which the English language  
stereotypes and often denigrates women; a consideration  
of the ways in which women use language differently  
from men.

## GUEST SPEAKER

James A. Siders

14 University Place  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401

Assistant Dean, College  
of Education and Psychology,  
University of Southern  
Mississippi

### Teaching Experience:

Professor, USM, seven years  
Assistant Professor, Arkansas State University, seven years  
Work Adjustment Specialist, Four County Joint  
Vocational School, Archbold, Ohio, one year  
Instructor and Counselor, Wood County Board of  
Mental Retardation, two years

### Academic Background:

B.S., Bowling Green University, 1974  
M. Ed., Bowling Green University, 1976  
Ed.D., University of Florida, 1979

### Professional Organizations:

Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development  
Council for Exceptional Children  
Mid-South Educational Research Association

### Publications:

Articles in various journals, including Lifelong Learning, Journal for Research in Mathematics Education, Education, and others. Also several grants and convention presentations.

### Summary of Presentation:

The Mississippi Teacher Assessment Instrument (MTAI) was presented. This system is comprised of three scales: Teaching Planning and Materials, Position Scales, and Interpersonal Skills. The presentation focused on application of the MTAI for provisional evaluation and performance appraisal of career teachers.

## GUEST SPEAKER

William Greenway.

300 B S. 31st Avenue  
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401

Visiting Professor of  
English, University of  
Southern Mississippi

### Teaching Experience:

Ten years at college level

### Academic Experience:

Ph.D., Tulane University

### Professional Organizations:

Modern Language Association  
National Writer's Union

### Honors and Awards:

American Academy of Poets Prize, 1975

### Publications:

Pressure Under Grace, Breitenbush Books, 1982  
Where We've Been, Breitenbush Books, 1987

### Summary of Presentation:

"How to Teach Poetry Writing": a lecture on the teaching of  
"How to Teach Poetry Writing": a lecture on the teaching  
of poetry writing using models of contemporary poetry to  
investigate various poetic forms and themes. The class  
was then asked to write poems using the techniques we  
discussed. The poems were then discussed by the class  
in a workshop session.

VI. PARTICIPANTS' WRITING

MARY ANN, MY FRIEND

She was not always my friend, Mary Ann. The nearly three years gap which separated us seemed a wide span that I could never bridge with friendship; much less with love. I can remember well not even liking her and certainly always being jealous of her. From the time we were small, growing up in the same house, playing in the same yard, going to the same school, Mary Ann was the smart one, the pretty one, the one who always knew everything before I did and never asked my stupid questions. She always thought I should have to wait until I was the same age as she had been when allowed to do things as though it weren't proper for me to enjoy privileges earlier than she had. For years, when my turn finally came, nothing that I did or had seemed nearly as exciting or glamorous as it was when Mary Ann first accomplished it. No, I couldn't say she was my friend, Mary Ann.

So I really can't tell you just when it was that I finally realized I loved her and was proud that Mary Ann was my sister and my friend. To this very day, we are still nothing alike. When I think about it, I guess it could have happened at so many times over the years. May be it was when she asked me to be maid of honor in her wedding instead of asking her best friend. Or one time just after she married and I was in the hospital in another town, she brought me her wedding lingerie to wear to cheer me up. Maybe it happened just after my first child Amber was born. Elisha's job took us to Vicksburg when I had never been away from home before, and because I was lonely, Mary Ann let me take her young son Richard to stay with me during the week while Elisha was at work. Perhaps it was because she encouraged me to go to college even though she never went herself, or because she was always so proud of my grades and ready to type a last-minute paper to help me out. It might have been when I realized that although she could do the things I couldn't do, like cook and sew, her jellies and jams would always fill my cabinets, and Amber would always have the prettiest dance outfit or homecoming dress to be found anywhere. She even made the dress I wore to Amber's wedding. And it might have been the fact that my children were always welcome at her house any time I needed to travel with Elisha, and it was Mary Ann who traded then eight-year-old Richard to me for my five-month-old son Trevor during her only week of vacation so that we could travel with Elisha. Or if I had anywhere to go, she always lent me her very best clothes even if she had not worn them herself.

Now that I think about it, it might have happened when she cooked Trevor's first deer and cleaned up the mess where he was initiated as a hunter - or the countless other times she fed him and cleaned up after him without complaint when he returned tired and dirty from hunting, fishing, or riding his three wheeler. Maybe it happened as she shared her two children's love with me and never protested when it seemed they might love me best, as all children will do their favorite aunt. And while I have not always agreed with every decision she has made in raising her own family, Mary Ann is the one I would want to finish raising my own children if anything happened to prevent Elisha and me from doing so.

So it's true that I really can't say for sure just when I finally realized for the first time that Mary Ann was my friend. In looking back, I now see that I have used the word "always" so often in describing the way I feel about her, it must mean that Mary Ann was always my friend, and I just didn't realize it.

Julia Carson

## Pine Trees

I came to recognize my love of pine trees after spending a year in the North, where hardwood trees and firs are more common and, almost anyone would agree, more beautiful. The hardwoods were gold and red in the fall; the firs seemed to grow in perfect green symmetry all year long. But since I was homesick for the South, I imagined those pine trees, with their spindly and often unbalanced appearance, to be the most beautiful trees in the world.

I confess. I am a lover of pine trees, the kind of trees that are seen behind fast-food restaurants, along roadways, and in almost every yard in the South, the kind no one seems to take much notice of--that is, unless one's business is lumbering, and mine is not.

When I think of the South, I think of pines, some leaning over toward others, gangly and common. The trees seem to fill out a flat landscape, and though they are easily uprooted by summer storms, they grow quickly, replacing new trees for those lost, generation after generation. There is a sameness about pines that I like, that I have come to expect.

Some of my fondest memories of childhood are associated with pine trees. My mom liked to paint, not houses (although she has done a few rooms within our house before). What I mean is that she painted on canvas, with oils. She was quite an artist actually.

We used to go to the park on afternoons after I returned from school. We would sit at the foot of a pine tree, and the two of us would draw. Mine were done with smudgy lead pencils on yellow paper. Hers were on canvas, done with oils. Her pines were beautiful. She had a way of making those precise green needles spray out into soft, fuzzy hazes among pink and white clouds. I especially liked a view of pine trees she did while lying flat on her back, looking up at the branches outlined against the sky.

At school, pine trees were an important part of my life. One of the teachers saw one of my pine tree drawings, and after that I was commissioned to do Santas at Christmas and bunnies at Easter for bulletin boards. It gave me a lot of pride to have my artwork displayed for everyone to see. It

made me sort of a class celebrity. I was very shy, and children I did not know would gather near my desk and ask if they could have one of my drawings.

During recess we played among pines. My friends used the needles to sew large, decorative stitches into dogwood leaves. We plaited the green straw into laurels for our heads. We gathered the brown straw into banks to mark walls of our playhouses.

The cones were pretty important, too. I'll never forget those Thanksgiving turkeys we made from red and orange construction paper, a paper head emerging from the tip, a fanned tail of paper feathers positioned at the base of the cone. These turkeys were the centerpiece of our table on Thanksgiving Day, and although not much was said about them, just seeing them in the center of the table was a signal to me that they met my mom's approval.

Later on, when I was in high school I had nearly forgotten about the pine trees. I remember the class president my senior year wrote a song about a pine seed (called a wing), which he sang before the student body. I had a crush on him for a long time, but I remember liking him even more after he sang the song. I thought anyone who would notice a pine seed and could find some special significance to it must be pretty thoughtful. (He was thoughtful. Unfortunately, he thought about and married the head cheerleader.)

Now that I am older and have developed allergies, I am forced to think of pine trees in another way. One morning as spring arrives, I go out and there is a lot of green-gold stuff everywhere--on the garage floor, the car hood, the cat's fur. I have no pine trees in my yard, but the pollen floats in from nearby wooded lots. I sneeze, my throat gets scratchy, and my eyes turn red. My contacts take a two month vacation in their saline solution case because I can't wear them.

At times like these I have to remind myself to think good thoughts about pine trees. I remind myself the South is where I chose to be, and I pretend that pollen is magical gold dust that will bring me good luck all summer long. I look out across an open field, and those pine trees in the distance seem to shimmer in the sunshine as quickly as the wink of an eye, and I catch myself letting out a deep sigh.



Beverly Casteel

## SKELETONS IN THE CLOSET

Everyone seems to have something in his past that he is not proud of. Whether it is a drunken brawl, secret love affair, or speeding ticket, it is rare to meet someone who will disclose everything about his life. Sometimes, however, it is best for the person to ease his mind and talk about that secret. After seven years of marriage, I have decided to come out of the closet. It is hard for me to force myself to type the word on paper, but I know it is time for my true confession. I married a Yankee.

You are shocked. Amazed. Stunned. I can imagine your whispers as you read this. "She seems so sweet." "I just can't believe it." "Isn't there a no-fault divorce law in Mississippi?"

You must have many questions. I can give you some of the answers. Yes, I was born and raised in the South. Yes, I am a true Southern belle. I love magnolia blossoms, boiled peanuts, and hoop skirts. I do confess, however, that mint juleps don't interest me much; neither does cotton-picking or catfish-farming. How could I marry the man? I do love him, even with this severe character fault. How did it happen: How do I cope with the fact that my husband is--different?

These questions are somewhat complicated, but I will attempt to justify myself. I began to realize early in our marriage that something was wrong when he wouldn't eat black-eyed peas or fried "okree." I became more suspicious when it became necessary to translate some things I had said to him. What did I mean that he was having a rigor? He was insulted and incensed; he thought I meant that he was dying, I guess. And did I really believe that his brother was "makin' a preacher." To him, that just was not physically possible.

The plot thickened when I visited my mother-in-law's house. She did not even own a black iron skillet. While still trying to recover from this shock, I discovered that she only used store-bought canned vegetables and never put up anything.

The turning point came, however, when we were sitting in their living room one Sunday afternoon. My father-in-law mentioned that he had received some family papers from his mother. He had not looked at them, and, knowing

my interest in family history, suggested that we get them out. Among the papers was an order for a tombstone for his great-grandfather from the Veterans Administration. In clear, black typewritten ink, the words jumped out at me: "rode with General Sherman on his Great March to the Sea."

You can imagine shock and disillusionment. Could this man whom I loved and married be a descendent of a Yankee officer? It took me weeks and weeks to get over this shock, and years before I could admit it to anyone.

Now I can say that, for the most part, I have come to grips with the terrible secret in my family. Sometimes, however, something will happen that will force the secret to surface. When I moved to Natchez, for example, I was not sure if the city fathers would let us in. On touring an antebellum home, I hung my head in shame as the hostess pointed out the marks on the hardwood floors left by Union horses. I smiled a brave smile, but said nothing as friends searched a Confederate monument behind the home Rosalie for names of their ancestors. I doubt I will be accepted in the Daughters of the Confederacy, and I most certainly will not be welcome in the Natchez Garden Club. Even now, every time the Delta Queen docks or Pilgrimage begins, my sense of pride is dampened by this blot on the family record that I have pushed into the deep, dark recesses of my subconscious.

SHIRLEY

Shirley. Shirley belongs to me. I will be teaching her this year. I will make an impact and change her life. But enough of Shirley. First, let's talk about Mattie and Nan.

I never taught Mattie or Nan. They were winy, blond, athletic sisters who were foster children of the Hennys. The Hennys were an elderly couple who were custodians at the local Pentacostal Church. Educationally, I only saw Mattie or Nan when it was recess, and they were managing to control their peers on the far side of the playground where the upper grades played nearer the road. At other times, I might catch a smile from them, as we passed in lines going in and out of the cafeteria, and sometimes I saw them when school was over, and they had experienced a bad day. As children are prone to think, the girls would come by and try to persuade me to teach their grade; as if changing teachers would change all their problems in their world.

I heard bits and pieces about the girls all year. Nan couldn't go into Walmarks out on the by-pass near their foster home. She had been caught too many times shoplifting. Mattie loved animals and would react to any she saw with unrequited love. Stunned, I saw her horribly scratched face where she had claimed territorial rights by climbing a fence to pet a mother dog's sightless pups. The mother dog said No! Teachers talked too... About how they never had school supplies, how the girls had two dresses, no socks, or heavy coats for the winter winds in Kansas. The girls talked about supper, which, night after night, consisted of the apples they picked from a tree...and morning after morning, apples for breakfast. No wonder they smiled waiting in the cafeteria line at noon.

We knew that the folks over in the county seat at the Welfare Office sent money each month... and we knew it wasn't much, but we couldn't see any material evidence. We'd hear rumors, this and that,

and discuss it and shake our heads. The girls had drunk the two bottles of grape juice in the basement refrigerator before Sunday School and folks had to run open the corner store for more Communion "wine." Sometime during Christmas holidays, Mattie was banned from the Mall. They had found her with an 88¢ pair of ear-rings, a Lonetta Lynn tape, and a perfume tester bottle. What any sixth grade girl would have wanted for Christmas that year.

In April, we had a false summer start, and the cold winds became almost balmy. Mattie had had enough. It was warm enough to run away. She did. Evidence showed where she had broken into two homes near the school. From one, she had taken a pillow and the bananas in the fruit bowl on the kitchen table. In the other, she had taken a canned pop - leaving the other five encased in their plastic neck-lace, a box of Friskies, and a small white kitten to go with the cat food. She kept being spotted off and on all day, but she managed to elude the police and other searchers. Sitting in my lighted room by an open window, I stayed at school that night with the hall door unlocked and with the hall light on. The wind changed from balmy back to blustery Kansas, and I was hoping Mattie would change her mind and come by the school. She didn't. They found her asleep under the Interstate in a culvert. The kitten had the pillow and half the box of Friskies at her disposal. The banana peels and empty coke can lay nearby. Mattie was sent to the Reformatory. I sent her unsealed letters and cards. Summer came and went. School time rolled around again, and Mattie outgrew me and her answers ceased. A few years later she came by the high school and asked me about Shirley and volunteered to come live with me. At the time, I was going through a divorce I didn't want and trying to help some aged nine to nineteen whom I did want; so, I declined Mattie's offer to become my daughter.

At the other end of the county, a Grandmother came in carrying a load of groceries and saw her first grade granddaughter, Shirley, standing at the kitchen sink crying and trying to wash blood from her panties. The grocery shopper's own retarded sixteen year old son was standing nude in the kitchen yelling at his young niece to "Hurry UP!!". Fortunately, the grandmother took the frail, blond child to the emergency room. Police were called. Shirley had been raped by her retarded uncle. Those Welfare folks at that end of the county remembered the Herrys. Shirley came to live with them. The following Monday she came to my room at school. I had Shirley. She belonged to me. She didn't have any school supplies, on any socks; but she was one up on Mattie and Nan. Shirley had a sweater. And, Shirley would always shudder in that sweater - not a shake - not quivering - just a quick little

shudder would run through her body. Shirley was special education material. But, the Welfare folks were 'way up there in that end of the county, the Hennys were at work clearing the Pentacostal Church at this end of the county, and nothing could be accomplished until the two got together and signed an I.E.P., a legal document called an Individulaized Education Plan. Still, Shirley shuddered... in the red pair of blue jeans one week and the blue over-alls the next week. The outfits alternated from week to week, but Shirley's shuddering stayed.

Shirley had never met Mattie and Nan. Never! But, I began hearing from Shirley the same tales that Mattie and Nan would occassionally let slip from their own, more mature, lips. We had that feeling come over us again, the bad vibrations, just something I couldn't really name. Like sleeping in the bathtub for wetting the bed; locked out of the rural farmhouse all night because of a bad grade; Shirley said her bruised buttocks were caused by falling off her (imaginary) bike; the Henny's said it was from falling down the stairs at Pennys. Nothing seemed to come together.

I learned to be sneaky. I had Shirley over for the weekend, and Hilda, a school psychologist, who played flute beside me in the Tulsa Symphony Onchestra gave her the Stanford -\*Revised. Shirley had an I.Q. of 73. I located her real Dad. He had not made contact with her in over five years. Shirley's Dad lived out from Joplin, Missouri, down a dirt road with no modern conveniences in sight. Only two coon hounds were in sight. I didn't stay long.

By April I had had it!! With my Principal's blessings and misgivings and the assistant superintendent's (my neighbor) chagrin, I took the Hennys to court for child abuse. Shirley's Dad came to town to testify that Shirley didn't shudder when he had her. He is a planner.. that Mar, so he brought his thirteen year old bride along to honeymoon when the case was closed. The Pentacostal Paston said Mattie and Nan were bad seeds, and the Church had never been kept so clean since its inception in 1937. The Hennys were keeping the Church spotless, and their own lives, too. I could only produce words spoken by Mattie and Nan - words repeated by Shirley...although Shirley had never seen Mattie and Nan. But, Mattie and Nan's words were scratched from the records. The court recorded that Shirley had an I.Q. of 73, and I had never seen any of the atrocities with my own eyes. Our Judicial system is such that the Hennys were innocent until I could prove them guilty. I couldn't. They were scott free. I might as well have made the whole thing up. I lost! But, did I? The retarded uncle was put in an institution, the Hennys were taken off the Foster Parents roll by the Welfare folks up at that end of the county, and Shirley moved back in with her Grandmother. I moved too. Mother had a stroke and I came south to be with her. Does Shirley still shudder? I don't know. I hope not. I do know that now, I can sleep.

ECCLESIASTES THREE:

THE WORLD KNOWS THE TIME OF BEING BORN.

IT HAPPENS EVERY DAY.

IT ALSO KNOWS THE TIMES OF DEATH,

THE VIOLENT AND VICTORIOUS WAY!

THERE COMES A TIME TO DESTROY,

AND THEN, A TIME TO REBUILD.

ALAS, A TIME FOR KILLING,

BUT, ALSO, A TIME TO HEAL.

WE FIND OUR TIMES TO GRIEVE,

AND YES, SOME TIMES WE CRY.

BUT JOY COMES IN THE MORNING,

OUR LAUGHTER RINGS THE SKY.

SOME TIMES WE SCATTER ROCKS AND STONES,

SOME TIMES WE BRING THEM IN.

SOME TIMES WE HUG; SOMETIMES WE DON'T...

SOME TIMES WE LOSE A FRIEND.

THERE ARE TIMES WE STOW AND TIMES WE THROW

AND TIMES WE TEAR AND REPAIR...

THERE ARE TIMES TO KEEP SILENT AND TIMES TO SPEAK UP

TO SHOW OUR CONCERN AND OUR CARE.

THERE ARE TIMES THAT WE LOVE AND TIMES THAT WE HATE.

IT'LL HAPPEN 'TIL TIME DOETH CEASE---

WE SPEND SO MUCH TIME IN WAR, DEAR LORD:

HELP US FIND TIME FOR PEACE.



Phyllis Downey

ALVIN

He came with his mother for registration. His head seemed almost too large for his thin body. Lots of blond hair failed to hide a forehead that bulged somewhat over eyes that were slightly protruding and a bit too widely spaced in his pale face. As his mother paid the workbook fee, he eyed the stack of bills on the table and spoke softly, unintelligibly.

"No," his mother smiled. "The money is not for us."

When the records came, the fourth-grade teacher immediately cornered the principal to demand that he be removed from her class. After all, his tested IQ bordered on the Trainable classification, and it must be obvious he did not belong in a regular classroom, not even for roll call or recess. Obviously, the other children would make fun of him, of his awkward way of walking, of his distorted speech. For his own sake, he should be placed with other children like him.

A compromise was reached. He would, of course, spend most of the day in the Special Education Resource Room, but he would return to the fourth-grade class for activities more social than academic in nature--things like art, P.E., and recess.

That was the beginning.

He learned much that year, some things from the teachers, others from the children. He was proud of his accomplishments. "Look, Dustin--a hunard!" Or, beaming broadly, "I did it. No help!" A special reward was a "Mr. B" from the principal, who regularly writes his praise on students' work: "Good! Mr. B."

When sent on errands, he often managed to take a detour through the Learning Center, where he would stop to visit with the Aide. Late in the year, while he was being tested in that room (no other place was available), the examiner asked him to do some math. He puzzled over one question briefly, then looked up and called on his friend for help. "Ms. Lee!" he yelled. "C'mere!"

While waiting for the morning bell to ring, he would make overtures to the other boys. His favorite was a gentle push or tap, by which he initiated a game of tag. In class, if someone was lacking paper, he was the first to offer some of his.

But pencils were another story. Nearly every day he needed a new one. Although the school office did not sell school supplies, the principal or secretary would usually manage to find a pencil for him, sometimes accepting his money, often just telling him to keep it. Not just any pencil would do; it had to be a new one. The mystery of where all his pencils disappeared to is still unsolved; somewhere, in a drawer or in some secret spot, there must be an enormous cache of pencils!

He was generous with his praise of others. He would tell them, "That's pretty," or add his own "Good, John," to the teacher's. Unlike most, he never failed to say "Thanks!" for stickers or other small rewards.

Some of the things he learned were less admirable. For instance, he traded "one-finger salutes" with another boy in class. Once, returning to class from the Resource Room, he arrived just in time to hear the teacher announce that, because the class had been unruly, she was deducting five minutes from recess. "Five minutes!" he moaned. "Aw, shhhhit!"

He could be stubborn, too, once refusing to do an assignment. Finally, hoping to convince him that she meant business, the teacher asked, "Do you want an F on this?" Determinedly, he nodded his head. As in most such contests of will, he won.

He had an eye for a pretty girl. Picking out one of the cutest sixth-grade girls in the Resource Room, he wrote, "I love Rachel." She accepted his adoration graciously.

A real competitor, he enjoyed Special Olympics. Every day, though, he gave his all. He demanded, and got, a copy of all the fourth-grade work--tests and all. Each afternoon he would run back to class from the Resource Room to get ready for the school bus and ask, "What's homework?"

At the end of the school year, the same teacher who wanted him removed from her room in September awarded him a certificate for Most Improved Student. Beaming, he stood to a warm round of applause.



Phyllis Downey

### FREE TO A GOOD HOME

I'll never forget the expression on his face. He gave me a "don't you dare say a word" glare as our young daughter excitedly showed me her new kitten. Surprised and a bit confused, I asked for an explanation. It seemed that, at the birthday party from which my husband had just brought Jenny home, she had won a prize. That's right--the kitten was the prize.

The birthday child's mother had said, "Only if your parents say it's all right." Naturally, put on the spot, circled by ten pairs of appraising child-eyes and implored by his cat-loving daughter, he could only mutter acquiescence.

You'll have to admit, that mother's approach to finding a home for surplus kittens was rather original. No humdrum ads in the newspaper for her, ads that invariably describe them as "adorable," "cute" and "playful." No doubt she had used up the available supply of friends and neighbors willing to take a pet and in her desperation had come up with this ploy.

Recently, the same daughter, now grown and living in her own house, met me at the door. "Have you seen her?" she asked. Through the door to the kitchen I saw newspapers spread under a bowl. "Seen her? Who?" I wondered. Just then I heard a mournful "Meeeoow" coming from behind the stove. Watching me with an expression reminiscent of her father's years ago, she told me the story.

She had come home for lunch about half an hour before I arrived. A knock on the door interrupted her preparations in the kitchen. Opening the door, Jenny found an attractive stranger cradling a tiny gray kitten in her arms. She asked if it were Jenny's, and said that she had nearly run over it when it suddenly darted in front of her car. It had scurried into the shrubbery of the church across the street, she continued, and seemed so frightened and helpless that she stopped to see about it. It must be lost; it seems barely old enough to be away from its mother; it must be hungry and thirsty. Could she have a disposable container of some kind to give it a drink of water?

As had happened years ago, Jenny was hooked. Mumbling something about trying to locate the owner, she accepted the kitten from the young woman and closed the door. Lapping warily, the tiny animal drank water from the plastic bowl, then skittered behind the stove, crouching in a tightly

curled defensive stance. Then, all the while silently protesting, "Why me? I'll bet she's had the cat in the car all day, just looking for a sucker!" Jenny hurried to the grocery for Kitty Chow and cat litter. She had just returned when I arrived.

The parallel was too strong; I could not suppress a smile. This time it was Jenny who was caught off guard, who couldn't say no, who was waiting ruefully for my reaction.

Was it Fate bringing things full circle? Or just another novel way to give away a kitten?

Bette Ford

### THE REAL AUTHORITY IN MY CLASSROOM - STUDENTS

For me, learning to teach writing has been an ongoing process of trial and error. Early in that process, however, I discovered that I must look beyond the textbooks and my own limited experiences for ideas, models, and methods. Determined that my students would not become imitative robots performing to the dictates of an unfamiliar authority, I began looking to them for help in writing instruction. The results overflowed. From the selection of an essay topic to the oral discussion of literature, my students have become their own authority and my chief resource center.

Selecting essay topics has always been crucial. During my first few years of teaching, the lament "I can't think of anything to write about" echoed in my high school English classes. And too often the textbooks offered no relief. If they provided topics at all, the topics were often too remote from the students' experiences. Typical of suggested expository topics I have found in textbooks are the following:

- How to raise a hamster
- Refinishing antique furniture
- Ballet for physical fitness
- What is melodrama

I haven't taught many students who were experts on hamsters, antique furniture, ballet, or melodrama. Thus, when my students have chosen such topics, what they have finally handed me has often been mere paraphrases of articles in magazines or encyclopedias. This process, though easy, was hardly fulfilling.

Seeking to remedy the problem, I tried compiling my own list of topic suggestions to present to students. Again I met failure. Like my students, I often couldn't think of topics. And many of the topics I did manage to dream up were as unfamiliar as those in the textbooks. I finally realized that if my students were going to write honestly they needed to write from their own experiences.

Accordingly, I began consulting students for topics. I have accumulated quite a list, repeating this request each

year. Below are some examples:

How I relax

How I get 'high' without alcohol or drugs

Two types of teachers

Studying for Mrs. Ford's literature test

Not one student has suggested "raising hamsters" or "refinishing furniture." Most significantly, however, no longer am I tormented by the I-have-no-topic lament. Students have solved their own problem.

Then has come the next cry: "I can't get started. Can you show me an example of this kind of paper?" In this function, too, I have found many textbooks deficient. Many have provided no models. Others have offered models consistent with their irrelevant topics:

Golden hamsters make excellent pets.  
They are docile, friendly, and easy to raise.  
They must, however, have the proper food  
and habitat....

Generally, my students have not found such models stimulating.

Neither have they always leaped into creative discovery after my desperate attempts to write models for them. I particularly recall their response to a descriptive paragraph I wrote. I thought I had described a tug of war between sun and clouds in an overcast sky; my students thought otherwise. They perceived my "straining yellow fellow" as everything from a scared kid to an overheated race car. They didn't consider my images impressive or exemplary - and, in hindsight, neither do I.

Besides, why should I have expected students to relate to my diction, my style, my impressions? What they needed was inspiration from their own domain. Having eventually learned to draw from that domain, I have acquired a treasure of examples.

My students have been challenged by these models. Knowing that another student succeeded in a particular writing goal has made it appear more attainable. Most likely, students have reasoned, "If old Chuck can do it, so can I."

Chuck's essay entitled "Coping with Senioritis," from which I've taken the following excerpt, may have evoked such a response:

Senioritis is a disease that strikes students during their last year of high school. Common symptoms of this affliction include arrogance, anxiety, and party fever. Unfortunately, there are only two sure cures for senioritis - an "F" or a diploma....

Chuck's essay continues, providing timely entertainment and a timely paradigm for writing.

I've found student essays valuable not only as composition models but also as enhancements to a variety of other learning experiences. From students' papers, I've isolated words, sentences, and ideas to enrich other units. Selected sentences, for example, form work sheets for sentence revision:

"Mayor Chain did everything he could to get all the outside money from the federal government he possibly could."

"My skin complexion is a light brown color."

"I enjoy fishing and to make a meal of my catch."

"Too few people know the consequences of pleasure."

After completing the work sheets, most students are eager to read their revisions to the rest of the class.

In essays about literature, students have provided me with still another collection of invigorating ideas. From that collection come these comments on Wordsworth's poem, "Composed upon Westminster Bridge":

Jamie: "It's a poem about nature before man has awakened and touched it."

Phil: "I didn't finish my explication of the poem because the soothing words put me to sleep."

Josye: "The poem just shows that true beauty is natural, not man-made."

And much of the "true" learning in my classes has resulted from "natural" student contributions, not artificially designed examples. Through their own examples, my students have enabled me to use fresh, realistic models each year.

## EARLY DRIVING EXPERIENCES

KAREN FULLER

I am an excellent driver. I have driven in Jackson, Mississippi; Atlanta, Georgia; and even Nassau in the Bahamas, where drivers travel on the wrong side of the road. I can maneuver my Mustang through the streets of downtown New Orleans with the dexterity of Mario Andretti. Passengers in my car are usually quite impressed with my ability to drive, and I am proud of these skills. But passengers who ride with me now are not the same passengers who rode shotgun with me during my adolescent years.

When I was growing up, my mom loved me dearly and totally spoiled me. My dad had died of a heart attack the day after my eleventh birthday, and she always felt she had to do more for me than usual to make up for it. One of the privileges I was given was being allowed to drive a car alone when I was thirteen years old. Thirteen year olds should not be trusted with their parents' car alone.

When I was in the seventh grade, my friend Nena Brister told me that the brakes on a car fail to work if the engine is turned off. Of course I believed Nena, since she was one of the "popular girls" in junior high and a cheerleader. But, being the

inquisitive person I am, I decided to test this theory after discussing it with my long-time partner in misadventure, Becky Wilson. At this time, I was only allowed to drive down our gravelled driveway to the chicken house. I would park my mom's green Ford LTD with a vinyl top and gather the eggs. This was the site Becky and I chose for the "Big Brake Test." I turned off the ignition, put the car in neutral, and began to roll backwards, straight towards a rusty barbed-wire fence and the slime-covered pond beyond it. I stomped on the brake pedal, but not hard enough (remember, my brain had already convinced my foot that it would be powerless.) Even in the seventh grade I was a logical person. I reacted in a most logical manner to this situation; I screeched "JUMP!!!!!" at the top of my lungs, and Becky immediately complied, no questions asked. Unfortunately we were too illogical to remember to close the car doors. After the dust had settled, Becky and I were faced with the sight of my mom's car entangled in the fence, both doors bent backwards from being caught on fence posts, and the vinyl top ripped to shreds. We walked slowly up the drive to deliver the news to my mom...

As I stated before, my mom really loved me. This is now apparent to me as I recall that she let me--even after the chicken house episode--take her new yellow Buick LeSabre to town when I was fourteen. I loaded up

three of my girlfriends and cruised Crystal Springs all afternoon. Everything was fine--until we decided to make a phone call. Being much too "cool" to get out and actually stand at a pay phone, I attempted to maneuver the car close enough to use it from the driver's seat. I made my call and carefully inched away from the phone stand. When I got home, however, I discovered I had not been careful enough; a three-foot-long scrape down the side of my mom's new car silently testified that fact. I walked slowly into the house to deliver the news to my mom...

Piggly Wiggly was the third obstacle with which I collided in my early driving career. My ever-loving, trusting mom had sent me to the grocery store for bread and milk. I had the radio loud and my mind on other things when I rammed into the concrete wall of the store, right between the "Piggly" and the "Wiggly" painted in bright blue letters. I looked up into the vacuous face of the Piggly Wiggly pig. He looked as if he knew about the chicken house and phone booths and was enjoying my renewed feeling of inadequacy. I inspected the dented fender, slunk into the store to make my purchases, then drove slowly home to deliver the news to my mom...

Parked trailers can be just as dangerous to high school drivers as grocery stores. The last damage done to my mom's car--again the yellow Buick LeSabre--was



inflicted by a eight-by-twenty-foot flatbed trailer. It was lying in wait beside the road I turned on to get to my high school. I was late as usual, and the sun was in my eyes. When I told my friend Roy Granger in first period study hall that the entire right-hand side of the car had been driven back about six inches, he advised me to tell my mom immediately. Instead, seven hours later I slowly drove the ten miles home to deliver the news to my mom...

Reflecting upon my early driving experiences now with the wisdom of adulthood, two things are apparent to me. First, parents should not allow their children to drive when they are underage; and second, if at first you don't succeed, keep trying. If the cars last long enough, you'll eventually get the hang of it.

Beth Havard

### MIXED EMOTIONS

Listed at the top of the "Things I Would Like To See" was STRATFORD. For at least twenty years I had wished to walk where Shakespeare walked; to see for myself the beautiful Avon, the birthplace, Holy Trinity Church, Warwickshire; to have tea at the Anne Hathaway Tearoom; to experience the sheer joy of a performance of the Royal Shakespeare Theatre Company. I did it.

Is there always a twinge of dissapointment in the fulfillment of a lifelong desire? The faint but recurring feeling of "Is this all there is?" intruded on the exultation of finally having made it to Stratford. I had expected comercialism, and I don't think that was the source of the disenchantment, even though I was a little shocked that all visitors to Anne Hathaway's cottage must pass through not one but two fragrant gift shops en route -- there's no other way out!

I guess I had expected to be overwhelmed by a mystique, an aura of holiness, but there was none -- no earthiness, no rustic smell, no dirt. Everything was beautiful and very well kept and very well preserved, and the memorabilia was fascinating. Everything was, in reality, too polished, too newly painted, too perfectly planned, too professionally displayed in glass cases. Even the gardens were neatly patterned with each symmetrical patch of "wildflowers" very clearly labeled. The banks of the river were clipped like a fairway to the water's edge and the paths were all paved. The Royal Shakespeare Company version of Romeo and Juliet was in modern dress, and the Capulets and Montagues were Mafia families! Does bemoaning the lack of sanctity make one sanctimonious?

Where has all the romance gone?

## APPROACHING MIDDLE AGE

Middle age is the time you never thought you'd get to when you were teenaged; then you thought that middle aged was a euphemism for old. During the latter part of your young adult years you begin to push back the starting point for the mid-life portion of your years, and you continue to feel that middle age is at least a few years away until you are forty-five, or is it fifty?

Every time I call my brother to wish him a happy birthday, I tease him about getting old and he laughs and declares that it's better than the alternative! I guess he's right about that, but it's so emotionally painful to be approaching middle age.

Middle age implies neither one nor the other; it's like being ambiguous. Middle is on the fence, indecisive. Besides, we've all heard of the middle-age spread as a terrifying illness characterized by the need for a sign bearing the message "WIDE LOAD." I've got it; it's awful!

Another tell-tale sign of approaching middle age is the mental lapses. Have you ever put the toast in the refrigerator and the butter in the oven? Have you ever gone to the grocery store and come home with three bags full but not the one thing you went for? Have you ever thrown the fruit away and almost served the peeling? Have you ever forgotten to put the towels in the dryer until you noticed the smell? Do you lose your keys or your glasses? Then you've got it too!

The stereotype of middle age is the English teacher with failing eyesight and a pinched facial expression, with hair drawn back tightly in a bun. Middle age gives meaning to the word dowdy with a pompously barreled figure, thick stockinged ankles and wide heeled, sensible shoes. I'm not sure about you, but I know I won't even be able to think about this stage until I'm at least fifty-five, or is it sixty? Sixty-five?

The physical realities of middle age are staggering: there is the slight but unmistakable beginning of bulldog jowls; there are ocean swells which develop on the back above and below the bra line; there are hangings sometimes called turkey waddles down under the upper arms that wobble when you clean the cabinets or write on the board; as my friend Nina says, the hips fall and form "pones" or saddle bags at the tops of the legs (I used to think that was crazy); the thighs develop waffles and jiggles; the cute knees begin to sag; and, worst of all, the dimples on the butt become potholes!

There has to be some joy--some bright spot to the approach of middle age. Maybe it's that by the time you're nearly middle, your children have already made it through their adolescent years and are realizing that you are not as stupid as they thought you were, and you know that they are hearing your words of wisdom whether they intend to do anything about them or not. Middle age is the time you begin to genuinely look forward to spending money on something you want--not something the children have to have. Best of all, in middle age you can anticipate having the time to enjoy the things you've always taken for granted-- good health, good friends, and good family.

Verna Miller

### A. Camping We Will Go

After a exhausting week of involved work in a summer writing project, I had nothing better to do than to schedule a weekend camping trip for my group of cub scouts, Pack 472.

As it got closer to five o'clock on Friday, which was the time scheduled for the pack to meet, the weather got worse. It started to rain; thunder and lightning filled the sky. A raincoat or an umbrella would not have shielded the downpour.

The other den leaders were in charge of meeting the pack and arranging transportation for the group. Everything else had been worked out - where to meet, what to bring and who to call, if needed.

Having little responsibility at this point, I decided to rest before going to the campsite. It seemed as if I had taken a sedative. If I would sit still for a few minutes, I would fall asleep. So, I took a nap. It felt like heaven. I realized how much I needed to rest when my son woke me an hour later saying a cub scout wanted to see me. I dragged myself out of bed, in a daze, wondering, "Where am I going?"

As I came into the living room, I saw a frightened child, dressed in his scout's uniform. Water was dripping from his shoulders. He stuttered and fumbled for words, breathing as if he had been running. All he could get out was my name before his mother rushed in from waiting in the car. She frantically asked Ronald, "Where is your leader?" I had no idea what was going on since the other leaders were in charge of the outing.

The child's mother went on to explain why her son had been left. She thought that the trip on a day like this was stupid, and being involved in other things left no time for her to take Ronald to the campsite. All of the talking, by now, aroused my consciousness. Still feeling sleepy, I wondered if my ears were deceiving me. I thought I heard her say, "no time for her son." I felt like screaming as loud as I could, "Are you crazy? This your son!" but I didn't. Ronald appeared frightened enough knowing that he might not get a chance to go camping.

Even as cub scoutmaster I had no answer for her many questions. As I blinked my eyes to continue to wake up, I

wonderingly searched for the membership list to get a phone number to call. I was hoping to get information that would calm her down by answering her questions.

On top of being sleepy, I became nervous due to the panting and pacing the floor by the mother and the child. I asked mom and chil to have a seat, while I completed the call.

I was happy and surprised to learn that the weather at the campsite was perfect for camping. The sun was shining and there wasn't a drop of rain in sight.

I eagerly shared this information with the mother and announced I would take Ronald to the campsite. Joy filled his face. This would be his first camping trip.

The Smiths, of Petal, Mississippi, played host to our campers. It took us twenty minutes to get to the Smiths' Every five minutes Ronald would ask, "Are we almost there?" Once on the grounds, Ronald spotted the tents. He knew this was the real thing.

About seventy-five yards away, the pack was playing baseball. Ronald slowly ran to join in the game. The sounds of joy filled the air. Later, Ronald eagerly pitched horse-shoes. As the shoe landed near the stake, he jumped with excitement. Last, the tug of war made him feel special because he was the anchor man. His team gave a loud cheer when they won. They were patting each other on the back enthusiastically. You would have thought we were at the Olympic games with all of the excitement.

As the activities were coming to a close, the boys prepared for bed. I heard Ronald ask his leader, "Where do I put on my PJs?" The leader said, in a polite manner, "We will be sleeping in our uniforms." They settled down for the night. They got their sleeping bags out of the walking path in their tents, put their shoes under their pillows, and turning off their flashlights.

As the leaders walked away, a scout in Ronald's tent said, "Do you think a red bug will come in our tent tonight?" The leaders looked at each other and said in unison, "A red bug?" and laughed as they settled around the campfire.

Now that many days have gone by, I often wonder what would have happened if I had not been at home at a most important time in a young boy's life. Would his mom have gone the extra mile when there was no one else to turn to?

## Love and Tragedy

To some people, Natchez, Mississippi was never the same after a tragic fire there in the early 1940's. Memories of the Rhythm Night Club fire are still vivid in my mind, but I could not find a record of the fire in general references. I never actually saw the fire or the people killed, but I did see the aftermath of the tragedy. Over two hundred people were killed, others were severely burned, and some had narrow escapes. Many surviving relatives were grief-stricken for the rest of their lives; my grandfather was one of them.

My family was affected greatly by the fire because three of my aunts were in the club the night of the fire. They were my father's sisters: Faye, Isabella, and Ruth. Ruth, seventeen years old, was the youngest. Her mother had died when she(Ruth) was nine.

We had moved to a new house on the outskirts of town and had no telephone. So we got the message about the fire when Aaron, my father's youngest brother, walked twenty-three blocks during the early morning hours and told us the sad news. I saw my father cry for the first and only time.

Faye, the oldest of the three sisters, told us how they had all three been inside the club dancing and having a good time. She said the decoration was beautiful: moss taken from old trees and spread across open rafters in the top of the club with colored light bulbs scattered throughout it. After a while, she became tired of the crowded, stuffy building with only one side of a double door open for persons to go in or out of the club. All of the windows were locked, and bars were over them to keep people from slipping inside without paying an admission. Faye and her date left and walked four blocks away to a restaurant. Isabella and her date left and were walking home. Ruth was the only sister still inside the building when the fire started. Someone had thrown a lighted cigarette into the dry moss.

Faye said she and her date heard screams and went outside of the restaurant; they saw fire that went high into the sky over the Rhythm Night Club. Isabella and her date also saw the flames and heard the screams. The two couples hurried back to the club, each thinking that the other two sisters were still inside.

Faye said she began screaming her sisters' names, and in spite of the other screams and moans, Isabella heard her name and went where Faye was standing. They realized that



Ruth was still inside.

The one-door entrance was crammed with people who were trying to get out of the club. Faye said she got on her hands and knees and crawled through the legs of the people in the doorway attempting to get out. She made it inside the building, and the entire top was in flames, which lighted up the club; the heat was terrible. She looked in the area where Ruth had been earlier and started calling her. Ruth answered.

They ran to each other, and Faye grabbed Ruth by the hand. They started working their way over bodies on the floor of people who had been overcome by heat and smoke. People were fighting, pushing, and screaming, trying to get through that one, single side of the double door. It was discovered later that some people were literally trampled to death by others trying, in panic, to get outside.

Faye led Ruth near the front of the building and saw that the crowd was no longer in or near the door because the flames had spread down the walls, and the door was one big ball of fire; only the outline of the door frame was visible.

Faye, still holding Ruth with one hand and attempting to shield her face from smoke and flames with the other, pulled Ruth to the flaming entrance, told her to cover her face with her free hand, duck her head, close her eyes, and follow her through the flames to get outside.

Faye ran through the opening, and Ruth jerked her hand out of Faye's grasp and screamed, "I'm scared to come through the fire."

By this time, the firemen had arrived and would not let anyone go into the burning building. By dawn the next morning, the fire was finally out, but a dreadful sight was visible.

Living relatives of the fire victims were asked to look for and identify (if they could) their relatives. My father, Aaron, and Isabella found Ruth's body near the entrance where Faye had last seen her. The only burned spot on her was a small portion of the hem of her skirt. She had been scalded when water to put out the fire was put on the building; it was covered top and sides with tin. My grandfather was home in shock.

Some persons were burned to the point that nothing remained but charred bones, dentures, and jewelry, and this was how they were identified. People used rakes, sticks, and their hands to search for signs of identification.

The band members had attempted to calm the people down by



continuing to play; they died. Two of them were still sitting on chairs holding their instruments.

Two days after the fire, a woman was found alive. She had crawled into a big coke box and could not get out when bodies fell on top of the box. She rattled some bottle tops and was rescued.

Natchez was a town of continuous funeral processions during the days following the fire. Funerals passed other funerals; while some were going into the cemetery, others were coming out. Funerals were almost non-stop.

It was at Ruth's funeral that I saw the impact of grief on my grandfather. He cried so hard his whole body shook in spasms, and he blamed himself for Ruth's death. He had told her she could not go to the dance, and she had kept pleading and finally cried to go. He had said yes. My grandfather died five months later, some say, of a grief-stricken, broken heart.

Needed, Unheeded

As he leans forward  
closer to the  
television,  
he cups his left  
hand  
behind his ear.

Unused on  
the  
shelf, a  
hearing aid.

MEMORIES OF THE CHINQUAPIN

It was a bright August day when Margaret carried me back to Beaumont where we had lived for two years when I was eleven and twelve years old. I had done a lot of growing in those two years. My physical growth was gargantuan, I thought. I was taller than my two older sisters and almost as tall as my older brother, Bill. But more importantly I began to be a more feeling person. I found joy in nature. Each new season brought changes that left me mystified. We moved there in the fall, and the trees had turned from green to brown, orange, yellow, and red. One tree on North Liberty Street was especially beautiful. I would ride my brother's bicycle past the tree just to fill up on the beauty it offered. Down the street, between the constantly humming mill and the mill offices, a small creek flowed through a green wonderland. This area remained a quiet haven for me for the duration of our residence in Beaumont. The Chinquapin was not deep, and its water was always clear. The action in Wonder Woman Comics took on real meaning in that other-worldly place. Like Wonder Woman, I felt compelled to right wrongs, protect the innocent, cheer the downtrodden, and lift the spirits of the sick and infirm. I attained greatness there in that green dell on the banks of the Chinquapin. Unfortunately, again like Wonder Woman, it was all fiction.

We lived in two different houses during our short stay in Beaumont. The first house had a dead end street between it and the millpond, which was teeming with life. In the spring baby turtles sunned themselves in rows with the larger turtles on logs and other debris that floated in the water. Catching the little ones was easy enough for Bill and me. Even though we had a part Spitz, part Chow dog named Jack, we collected a menagerie of other animals as pets, including some of those baby turtles. We kept the turtles in a tin was tub in the back yard. My understanding of and respect for all living creatures had not matured at that time. I thought I took good care of the turtles when I fed them the tiny green frogs that seemed to fall from the sky with each shower, not considering how the tiny green frogs felt about it at all. We called the turtles Marmaduke, Sylvester, and other lofty-sounding names.

Summers were much longer in those days and entertainment was scarce. A streetcar ride into town to see a movie and buy fresh doughnuts at the bakery on Main Street was about as good as it got, and those trips didn't come often. Entertainment was sometimes provided by the bats in the attic, especially when one occasionally got inside the house.

Then there were the long freight trains on the Clinchfield Railroad. The old steam engines would pull a hundred or more cars. We'd count them and marvel when a higher count than before was reached. We also counted the planes that flew over in such large numbers during the war. Entertainment was scarce. I still catch myself counting things. The radio offered some relief from the monotony, but after listening to the "Inner Sanctum" I was afraid to go upstairs to bed. "The Hit Parade" kept us informed as to the most popular tunes, but my favorite program was "It Pays to Be Ignorant."

After Moma complained about the bats, we moved into another house on Beaumont Avenue. All of the houses were alike. They were wood framed salt boxes with a front and back porch. The downstairs part consisted of a bedroom, living room, dining room, and kitchen; there were two bedrooms upstairs. The bathroom was on one end of the back porch. In retrospect, I suppose it had been added after the house was built, but it may have just been the style. The walls and ceilings of the rooms were of wood, tongue-and-groove construction.

When the war was over, the need for the material produced by the mill was eliminated and so was Daddy's job. We moved back to Laurens where I had been born thirteen years before. Now, years after I had finished high school, my sister and I were going to drive over to see the little village we had called home for two years. We found a busy thoroughfare running beside the mill. The Chinquapin was gone. The millpond had been drained, filled in, and paved for a parking lot. Both of the houses we had lived in were gone. I'm sure the change was all in the name of progress, but for me it made Thomas Wolfe's statement "You can't go home again" very understandable for the first time.

Debbie Rigby

## GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Married bliss. I waited eagerly to experience it. I was an authority. After all, I had read all of those "historical" romances, so I knew exactly what to expect. MY husband would be independently wealthy, immaculate, docile, and of course, attentive to my every need. In other words, he would wait on me hand and foot. It was somewhat of a disillusionment to discover the real truth for myself.

If you are considering marriage to this paragon, this model of perfection, I'd like to clue you in to a few don'ts you should consider before tying the knot. I am, after all, something of an expert.

Don't marry a handy-man. You know, the do-it-yourself type. This man has a tool kit for every occasion. There's nothing broken that can't be fixed--cheap. My washer was broken. It would do everything but spin. Kenny took care of that. After only thirty minutes of intense work, he fixed it. Now it won't work at all. It just sits there. I only hope I haven't waited too late. Maybe the repairman can save it.

Don't marry a part-time mechanic unless you are a cousin to Mr. Clean. Kenny could benefit from a personal introduction to this man. There's not a T-shirt in his drawer that has not been subjected, at least once, to Havoline 10W-40. Kenny doesn't show favoritism; he gets grease on all of them.

Don't marry a man who is allergic to dirty dishes. Kenny swears that dishwashing detergent breaks him out. He also contends that he has a reaction whenever he puts on rubber gloves. I am convinced this carries over to dirty clothes, too. I've never known a man who could pile so much dirty underwear in one place--usually by the recliner in the den.

Last, but not least, never marry a man who has had a love affair with a car--any car. You can't win; you are defeated before you even begin. Luminous blue eyes, long, shapely legs, and lusciously painted lips are no match for steel-belted radials, plush seats, and spoilers on the rear end. Don't kid yourself, either, into thinking that only you can keep him warm on a cold night. The heater in that hussy ALWAYS works.

Lois Rodgers

### MISPLACED PRIORITIES

He had dark, brooding eyes, which seemed to mirror the depths of his agonizing soul, and even when he smiled, his eyes always remained serious and searching. His unkempt, shabby appearance reinforced the image of a child prematurely thrust into the negative forces of an adult world. Working nights, he attempted to support his mother and the child that she had conceived out of wedlock.

An air of fatalism and tragedy seemed to surround Thane. His face vividly portrayed his angry, arrogant nature even when his eyes appeared half-closed. Sensing his self-imposed estrangement, the students mocked Thane's mannerisms. Even his habit of leaning so close to the page that he appeared to asleep amused the students. Making Thane the brunt of their cruel jokes, they somehow failed to notice his partial blindness. But the torture did not end with the taunting by the students. Thane punished himself with loneliness and alienation, as he searched for an identity that he could accept, or at least understand.

Yet the anguish of his piercing brown eyes mysteriously juxtaposed against the deep melodic rhythm of Thane's voice. Reading poetry and prose which rose from the inner recesses of his emotions, he mesmerized the students into ignoring his almost alien eyes. Yearning to hear his words, the students recognized that he spoke wisdom that even they respected.

These hypnotic trances Thane generated in English and science tended to be ephemeral. He rarely worked his magic on the principals and other teachers, who found him curt, rude, and unresponsive. The last few months of Thane's senior year were spent serving time in the in-school suspension room. He had skipped school, or he had chosen to work instead of attend school. Thane became more and more sullen, and his eyes acquired an odd, faraway expression.

The last day he came to my class, I hugged him and attempted to communicate to him the great respect I felt for him. I challenged him to use his brilliant mind to overcome the tragedy of his life. With a remote, wary glance, Thane mumbled something about appreciating my concern and left.

Graduation day finally came for Thane even though I had worried that Thane's excessive absences would prevent his graduation. I was not assigned to help with the ceremonies, but I wanted to attend, because I felt a special attachment

to Thane's class. As I walked through the rows of jubilant seniors, I heard someone say, "They're pulling Thane out of the line; can you do something, Mrs. Rodgers?"

I raced to the end of the line and witnessed a male teacher jerking Thane out of the graduation line.

"He's got on tennis shoes!" the teacher yelled. "We told them not to wear tennis shoes."

I looked down to observe a new pair of black suede tennis shoes. I knew Thane did not have the money to buy dress shoes, and I realized that he had found the next best solution--a pair of nice, dark tennis shoes. My heart sank as I watched the pain and anguish in his dark eyes. Then he hurled the graduation gown into my arms and dashed angrily into the night.

During the graduation ceremonies, the superintendent announced that the two National Merit Finalists were Thane Glenn and Morrison McDonald. Guilt and sadness rose like a well inside me, and I cried for the defeat of the brilliant child with the brooding eyes who was denied the opportunity to experience a sense of honor. I could not refrain from wondering what had happened to the student-centered goals of education when petty rules about tennis shoes take precedence over the welfare of a desperate child.

Claudine B. Sonnier

### THE BIRTH OF A NEW PERSPECTIVE

For the first time in my life, I began to understand the strong feelings of warmth and concern which I have always had for my grandparents, my aunts and my uncles. It is all built on bonding which happens at birth and continues as years go by. The many things which a child experiences long before he can remember, tie him to people he may hardly know when he is grown up.

It was midnight and the phone was ringing. I answered, hurrying from bedroom to kitchen where the only phone was located. It was Joan's husband, Todd, telling us that he had just rushed Joan to the hospital. They were packing clothes and dishes, preparing for their move to campus housing, and her "water broke." According to calculations, Joan was only eight months pregnant. In rushing her to the hospital, Todd had forgotten his wallet. Someone had loaned him money to call us and he wanted us to come quickly to the hospital, bringing money so that he could call his mother in Florida. She had planned for a long time to be on hand to welcome her first grandchild.

We hurried to the car grabbing whatever clothes could be found. Issy, my husband and Joan's father, usually lagging behind me, was this time in the car with the motor going long before I could get dressed. We were rushing as if in delay there would be a great tragedy. Actually, there was plenty of time.

The next thirteen hours passed slowly. While labor and childbirth are universal, Joan was experiencing some things that I had never known. She and Todd had almost completed a series of lessons in order to prepare themselves for this special occasion. When I walked into the labor room, I saw that she was wired to a monitor system which showed in graphic form how the baby was progressing.

Todd stayed with Joan for the duration of labor, slipping away only for an occasional coke or cigarette. The rest of us came in and out of the labor room, checking on progress and probably slowing it down by keeping Joan active as hostess of the Labor Room. The rest of us means, Sharon and Charlotte, Joan's sisters, Claudette Ward, a friend of Sharon and Charlotte, Chris Risher, Todd's friend, Issy, and me, Joan's mother. There were also nurses and doctors who were paid to go in and out of the room.



Just outside the labor room was a large chalk board which reported progress in dilation of the cervix. Joan Norris was written there and I checked it often. Usually, there was no change.

I spent a lot of time in the waiting room where relatives and friends of mothers-to-be were gathered. And, as I waited out Joan's labor, listening to continuing accounts of child birth, told by those in the group, I began to remember the stories told me by my grandmothers about my own birth.

They had often told me how my parents married when they were young. My mother was fifteen and my father was nineteen. "They were just children, but good children," everyone had said. Both had only a ninth grade education. They had been pulled out of school to work in the cotton fields so that their families could survive during the depression. Actually, my father had skipped two grades so he had only seven years of schooling. He had walked four miles each way going to school. In his family, school was for the days when there was no work to be done on the farm.

My mother was bitter about her lack of education. When times were hard, she always blamed her mother, my Grandma Deen for her early marriage. She thought she had been pushed out of the house because food was short and that she would have gone on to college if she could have stayed in school. When I see pictures of my parents playing in the snow on their wedding day, I see them as beautiful and playful. They do not look as I remember them, tired, discouraged, and very stern.

Milver and Hazel Box had been married two years when I was born. In keeping with the customs of the day, I was born at home. My parents, by this time, had their own place, a two-room house which had been a country store. It was in "hollerin distance" of both sets of my grandparents. Uncle, J.C. Deen, then ten years old, was visiting my parents on that hot Sunday afternoon, when the labor began which would issue me into the world. He ran home with the news and immediately young aunts and uncles ran in all directions telling relatives and friends.

Grandma Box, my father's mother (whom everyone else called Grannie), arrived in a hurry. She was quarter Indian and a mid-wife. Most of the babies in the area had been delivered with her help. With her strong, yet gentle hands, she determined that I was not in the correct position to be born. By applying pressure to my head and buttocks, she turned me around to prepare me for a safe, head-first journey into the world. As far as I have been told, my young mother was not given anything for pain--not even an aspirin.

Grandma Deen heated water, and kept my father and all of the neighbors and relatives, who were outside, informed about

the progress inside. Grandpa Deen had gone into town for Dr. Brian. The doctor arrived just in time to complete the delivery.

I was weak at birth, or, as Grandma Box said, "you sure looked sorry!" My mother, exhausted from teenage pregnancy, hard work, and the limited food of depression years was too exhausted to nurse me during that first day and night. I was first nursed by Aunt Gordie who had a six month old baby.

To provide me with more nourishment, my grandmothers made what they called a "sugar tit." It was a soft clean cloth with sugar moistened with cow's milk and tied in a way that babies could suck on it. A sugar tit was always used when childbirth left a mother too weak to nurse.

The phone in the waiting room rang and I jumped, leaving behind the stories told and retold to me by my grandmothers. Someone answered the phone and said, "They are inquiring about Mrs. Norris." I took the phone and explained, that Mrs. Norris was enroute from Florida. "Isn't Joan Norris in labor," the party asked?

"Yes," I said, remembering in embarrassment, that Joan, my daughter, was also Mrs. Norris.

Todd came in and out of the labor room. Each time, I was sure that Joan was being rushed into the delivery room. Each time, he only needed a cigarette. Finally, after thirteen hours of sitting on edge, fearing a cesarean, and recalling my own pains of labor, the magic hour of delivery arrived. Todd and Joan were together during the birth which made them a family of three--Mom, Dad and Baby Boy. They named him Christopher.

Todd's mother, Billy Norris arrived, and there we all were, relatives and friends waiting outside the window for the first showing. Bonding was immediate! He was ours and we were his from that moment on!

Christopher Norris came into our lives bringing new joy and a better understanding of what is old. I am overwhelmed at what I have learned about my grandparents, and my aunts and uncles from the labor and birth of this tiny child. In the birth of a grandchild, I experienced the birth of a new perspective of my own childhood.

Hilda Wade

### A SPECIAL LADY

I received a letter today. The words were unreadable. The handwriting was atrocious and punctuation nonexistent. Could it be from a young child? No, this special letter came from a special lady in her fifties, so special that I even named my first child Alice after her.

Aunt Alice was born with little sight in one eye and none in the other. Her parents were told at that time she had a brain tumor and wouldn't live very long. But she continued to grow and mature until it was time to begin her education.

With the other first graders, she was enrolled in school. She attempted to keep up with the other six-year-olds but was unable to do so. In the early thirties, this little one-room school was not equipped to handle this unique child who could barely see so she was sent home.

However, she didn't sit down and feel sorry for herself. Though barely seven-years-old, she promptly climbed on a stool and stirred the soup brewing on the ancient wooden stove. It was time for her seven sisters, two brothers, and parents to arrive home from school and various other responsibilities. From that time on, she became chief cook and bottle washer. Cooking for the daily dozen was a huge order for such a tiny girl.

MY LOVE for Aunt Alice began the day I was born. She promptly delivered a teddy bear, my constant companion for twenty years. When I was a small child, we visited each other on many occasions. Aunt Alice, a slim young lady with auburn hair, always carried me to town on the bus to buy me a little something. It might be paper dolls, bubbles, a picture book, or a doll bottle. The cost of the item was small, but the thought was worth much more.

Never marrying or having children of her own, she "adopted" her many nieces and nephews and now the great nieces and nephews. As unofficial family historian, she remembers all important dates; including everyone's birthday and anniversary with a card, telephone call, or present.

Aunt Alice never ceases to amaze me. She can quote at least fifty telephone numbers verbatim. Her sense of feel is remarkable. On one occasion, she gave me a ten-dollar bill and a list of groceries she needed. When giving her the change, I handed her a five-dollar bill. Immediately, she informed me I only owed her a one. That's when I realized she felt the bills to know the difference.

Even though, she resides with a wealthy sister with full-time help, she continues to prepare those mouth-watering meals and is actively involved in family life and in church and civic work. She remains fiercely stubborn and independent; a woman who doesn't see herself as a person with a handicap.

Senita Walker

## COTTON PICKING

"If you don't do what I tell you, then you can't play," Carr announced.

I stopped and defiantly returned his stare knowing that I would have to play the way Carr wanted me to play. Carr would win for one very important reason--he was eight and I was five, and age is power with children.

Our argument ended suddenly when Bob, Sil, Aunt Elmer, and Uncle Claude arrived at our house to get the cotton scales and Daddy's truck so Bob could transport the cotton from the field to the shed where it was stored. Bob and Daddy had raised cotton on halves, and Bob was trying to get the cotton gathered before the fall rains started. Raising cotton on halves means that one provides the field, the seeds, and the fertilizer; and the other plants, tends, and harvest the crop with the profit being split.

It was hard to explain my relationship to Bob. He was my Mama's first cousin, but he was more than a cousin to me. Bob's mother, my Great-aunt Mollie had died when he was born, and Granma had carried Bob home with her from the funeral. Since he was near the age of my other cousins, Bob was a cross between a cousin and an uncle. Tall, thin, and lanky with a shock of copper-colored hair and freckles, Bob moved awkwardly as if his body was having a hard time adjusting to new-found growth. He liked to tease, laughed easily, and sometimes found time to play with me.

Sil was Bob's new wife. I remember the strangeness of Sil. She and Bob had only recently married, and they were both young--Bob was sixteen and Sil was seventeen. When I had first met Sil, I hid behind my Mama and peered out at her from Mama's skirts. Sil had tried to talk to me, and I had hidden my face in Mama's lap and peeped out to watch Sil. Later, I had sneaked over behind her chair to feel the softness of the material in her dress and to smell the fragrance of her perfume. Sil was different from the rest of my family; she was new.

Uncle Claude, Mama's only brother, and Aunt Elmer had come to help gather the cotton. Aunt Elmer and Uncle Claude did not have children, or rather their two sons had died within hours of birth. They spoiled us, and we loved them dearly.

Carr and I ran in to see them and to beg to go help pick cotton. Bob said that we could go, but looking at Mama, I held my breath. Mama was "peculiar" about her children, and I was afraid I wouldn't get to go. Mama said that we could go and got the cotton sacks which she had made for us. A cotton sack is a rectangular envelope of material with a strap to go over the shoulder leaving both hands free for picking. Our sacks differed from those of the adults in that Mama had made them just long enough to reach the ground when they hung over our shoulders, and they didn't have the special beading on the back to make them more durable. A bonnet was found and tied under my chin because Mama was afraid I would blister or freckle, and hard shoes were put on our feet. Everyone got in the truck; Carr and I rode in the back.

The cotton field was a sorry sight. The beautiful green plants which were covered with pink and white blossoms in the summer were almost dead bushes. The summer heat had turned the leaves brown or dirty yellow; many of the branches were broken. The cotton hung soft and white from the open bolls, but upon close inspection, it was lumpy with seeds and dirty from the rain and dust. The field was already hot because cotton cannot be picked until the dew has dried from the field, and the heat seemed to rise like steam from the red clay earth.

Picking cotton proved to not be as much fun as it had promised, and I soon tired of it. Playing in the dirt and looking for unopened cotton bolls or a rare cotton bloom filled most of my time. Aunt Elmer and Sil urged me to pick, but I continued to dawdle and beg to go get a drink of water. The end of the row provided opportunity to stop for the much needed water.

We passed the water jug around, and the water was cool and sweet to my tongue. Hot and tired, I was ready to quit when Carr said, "The men are going to beat the women; I've picked more cotton than Senita."

When I looked from my sack to Carr's, my heart sank. His sack was already half-full while mine only had a little cotton in it. Carr usually beat me at everything and then had to remind me that he had won. I knew that I would let the women down.

Sil spoke up, "The weigh-in at dinner will tell who picks the most."

"Alright," laughed Bob, "It's Senita against Carr. We'll see who has the most cotton at dinner."

Aunt Elmer, Sil, and I went to one side of the field and Carr, Bob, and Uncle Claude went to the other side. Picking cotton began in earnest for me as I pulled the cotton from the bolls and put it into my sack. The sweat ran down my face leaving streaks in the dirt there, and my scalp prickled under the bonnet as my hair grew wet. My arms were protected by the long-sleeved shirt Mama had made me wear, but the sharp ends of the cotton bolls pricked my hands. My legs stung from scratches from the cotton plants, and my feet complained from the weight and heat of the shoes they were unused to wearing.

Suddenly Aunt Elmer leaned down, put a large handful of cotton in my sack, winked, and said, "pick." I worked harder at pulling cotton and placing it in my sack which grew heavier and heavier as Sil and Aunt Elmer put handful after handful of cotton in it.

As we worked, we visited. Aunt Elmer and Sil talked of the recent deaths in the community and of upcoming marriages. Then, at their urging, I told them of school and my teacher. I didn't like school because the other children, bigger and older than I, teased me about my white hair, and called me "cotton-top." Most of all, I didn't like being away from Mama all day.

My sack was now near full, and its weight began to cut into my shoulder. When I complained, Aunt Elmer said, "Think of all the things you can buy with the money you earn." Trying to guess how much cotton I had in my sack was fun, and my energy returned as I dreamed of the things I could buy. I remembered the store filled with material of different colors and textures where Mama went to buy material to make my dresses for school. Feeling the cloth, and looking at patterns had been fun. Later, Mama had taken me to the drug store and bought me an ice-cream cone. My money would buy material to make "mother and daughter" dresses for Mama and me. The dresses would be red calico with white rick rack; I would wear mine with my new shoes. A briar scratched my hand, and I was once again in the cotton patch. More cotton went into my sack until it was filled.

After packing the cotton in my sack so I would have more room, Sil said, "I'll carry your sack." By placing my sack on the end of hers, Sil could pull it, and I could put cotton in it. Picking was easier now, and I picked faster. Sil and Aunt Elmer kept adding to my sack, and it had to be packed again and again until finally it would pack no more. The cotton poured from the top.

Bob called across the field, "Dinner-time".



Aunt Elmer and Sil carried my sack, and I trailed behind them. Everyone met at the truck so that we could go to the scales.

Weigh-in was fun. Carr had picked twenty-six pounds of cotton, but there were forty-five pounds in my sack. Bob gave us each three cents per pound. Carr got 78 c, but I got \$1.35. That was the most money I had ever had in my life!

Sil rode in the back of the truck with Carr and me on the way home. Carr was mad and said I had cheated because Aunt Elmer and Sil had helped, but my cousin Sil said, "The cotton was hers so she won."

Mama had fresh vegetables and fried chicken for dinner. We washed our hands and faces, said the blessing, and ate. I was so tired that I didn't eat much even though I was hungry.

After dinner everyone rested for awhile. Mama made Carr and me take off our shoes and lie down on a pallet. I remember hearing them tell Mama about the contest and how hard we worked. Uncle Claude said, "Senita really worked, but ya'll helped her."

Sil replied, "I just couldn't let Carr beat her; she wanted to win so bad."

The sound of their soft laughter is the last thing I remember as I drifted to sleep.



Jane Whorton

## The Old House

We call it "the old house" now, ever since Mom and Dad built the new, brick two-story on Briar Creek. I used to drive by it every time I went back home just to feel the sweet pain of homesickness that the sight of that gangly old wooden house with its broad porches sent through me. The last time I saw it was three years ago, just after it became the Montessori School of Batesville. Staring up at the new pink trim and the child-proof, chainlink fence surrounding the shady yard, I knew that "the old house" no longer existed except in the memories of those of us who called it home for so long.

Even in 1941 when my parents first bought it, this was not a new house. In fact, some folks already called it "the old Grover place" after the original owner who had built it for his bride around the turn of the century. Since then there had been several rooms added--usually with more concern for needed space than attention to architectural lines. For the first seven years of my life, the downstairs of this strange hybrid-house was home to us four little Landers girls.

During the war the upstairs was rented to two young women whose husbands were overseas, but when they moved these rooms were left vacant and became our private daytime domain. I say daytime, because not one of us would have dared venture above the staircase landing after dark. There were lights up there, of course, but by the time our flailing arms found the pull-cord overhead, whatever was crouching in the darkness would have gotten us.

These upstairs rooms were unfurnished then except for a few odd pieces of furniture and some boxes of old clothes including some tattered but elegant formal gowns that had belonged to my mother's sister who had died in a typhoid epidemic. It was a wonderland for playing dress-up, holding school, keeping store, displaying rock collections and conducting club meetings.

But there were dark places in the old house that held unspeakable horrors. One was a trap door on the second floor. Behind this door lay a bottomless expanse of bare pipes against a background of blackness. My young mind made some vague connection between this space and the nothingness that Columbus's contemporaries feared in

falling off the earth. In my more mature years, I realized that had I fallen through that door, as I often dreamed I might, I would have fallen two stories into the spidery underworld of the crawl space beneath our house.

As my sisters and I grew older, we each were given our own room. This meant redecorating the upstairs one room at a time until eventually we lived all over the house. It was spacious, but at this point in my life I was embarrassed by the old house. We had no air-conditioning and although the attic fan with huge wooden blades provided a cool breeze throughout the house, it was not the same as the chilly closeness of my friends' low-ceilinged, new houses. Besides that, all of our furniture seemed as old and dark as our wooden floors--none of the beautiful, blond furniture that filled those sleek ranch styles.

By the time I finished college and brought my husband-to-be home to visit, I had become very nostalgic about the old house. I appreciated a certain character if not charm in the old place. It was not a beautiful house--too large for its lot really, and very cold in the winter. But through his eyes, I saw it in some ways for the first time. We laughed together at the slope in the upstairs bathroom floor that seemed to sag under the weight of the footed tub. I recognized the absurdity of the floor plan which made the guest bathroom a major passage way from the kitchen to the living room. At the same time, I noticed the beauty of the carved moldings and the mantle over the fireplace.

I wouldn't want to go back to those days of cold feet on bare wooden floors, flying squirrels in the attic, and roots in old plumbing. But just once more I would love to have the scary thrill of sliding down that old bannister.

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