

GRADE 8 English Language Arts Writing: Lesson 6

Read aloud to the students the material that is printed in **boldface type** inside the boxes. Information in regular type inside the boxes and all information outside the boxes should **not** be read to the students. Possible student responses are included in parentheses after the questions.

Any directions that ask you to do something, such as to turn to a page or to hand out materials to students, will have an arrow symbol (\implies) by them.

Purpose of Lesson 6:

In this lesson, the tutor and students will

- ◆ reflect on their attitudes toward writing, perceptions of their writing ability, and ways to improve their writing by writing responses to a survey, and
- ◆ share their responses in a group discussion.

Equipment/Materials Needed:

- ◆ chart paper on a stand
- ◆ paper
- ◆ pencils
- ◆ Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 6-1

Introduction:

Today I want you to take a few minutes to think about your writing as you complete a survey I will give you in a few minutes. I often hear students make comments about hating writing and anything to do with it. Now you have the opportunity to give your honest opinions about writing. There are no right or wrong responses to this survey. Just do the best you can to write honestly.

I am more interested in what you have to say than how you say it. For this activity, you don't have to write in complete sentences; but you may choose to do so. If you don't know how to spell a word, spell it the best you can. Remember, the most important thing is that you send a message that I can read. I want to know what you think about writing. I will complete this survey also and then we will share our responses with each other.

⇒ Distribute Student Worksheet: Writing Lesson 6-1.

Before we begin writing, let's go over the instructions. Read each item and complete the sentence prompt. Remember, there are *no right or wrong answers*. You simply must give your opinion.

Look at the first sentence prompt. It says *Reasons for writing are...* What are some reasons for writing? Pause. (answering questions, doing well on a test, writing notes, etc.)

There are so many reasons for writing. Focus on *your opinion* when you write your response. I will share my opinion with you when we have finished the survey.

Some items have sentence prompts with two parts. Be sure you respond to both prompts. For example, number five says, *When my teacher gives me an assignment I feel...; I feel this way because....*

Are there any questions? Pause. Clarify instructions as needed. Allow 20-30 minutes for students to respond to the survey. As their tutor and role model, you need to complete the survey during this time.

After most students have completed the survey, ask them to share their responses; then offer to share your own responses. So that you do not influence the students' opinions, do not offer your responses until students have shared their responses. Encourage students to elaborate and express themselves freely. Prompt them to go beyond simply reading their responses; ask for thorough explanations.

Be careful not to respond negatively to students' responses, even the responses that are negative: i.e., *I hate writing; my teachers never taught me anything*. Keep in mind that the purpose of this activity is to get students to think about their writing. Hopefully, students' increased awareness of their own attitudes towards and abilities regarding writing will result in more positive attitudes, greater motivation, and ultimately, improvement in their writing performance.

After the discussion, collect the students' surveys and explain that the surveys will be used in the next lesson.

Thank you for sharing your thoughts about writing. Thinking about our writing and the purposes for writing should help us all become better writers. We will use the information we learned about ourselves today for our next writing lesson.

(to be continued in lesson 7)

Student Worksheet Writing Lesson 6-1 (continued)

7. The best example of my writing is...

This piece is the best example because....

8. Writing is easiest for me when...

9. Writing is hardest for me when...

10. The hardest things about writing are...

11. I could be a better writer if...

12. I wish my writing...

13. I wish teachers would...

14. I expect my writing to ...

Note. From *Self-Assessment Guide for Reading/Writing Portfolio*, June, 1997, developed by Deidra W. Frazier. Reprinted with permission.