

***New Youth Connections* Lesson Guide—November 2009**

(For more information about *NYC* go to the end of this file.).

Lessons in This Month's Guide

- 1. Writing Contest #198 (Remember a great time): Win \$150!**
- 2. Writing Contest #199 (Loyalty in relationships?): Win \$150!**
- 3. Practice for *Regents Listening Exam*: Dropouts & Pushouts**
- 4. Health Class Activity: Cyber Safety and Sexting**
- 5. Health Class Activity: Addiction and Video Games**
- 6. Disruptive Students (reading/summarizing lesson)**
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1. Lesson: Writing Contest #198—Win \$150

Contest question:

Describe a time when you were on top of the world—everything was going well and your life seemed wonderful.

Note: Many teachers send us class sets of contest entries. After students have written their essays, collect them and send them to us. (Or at least send the best ones.) Thanks!

Deadline: December 7, 2009

Objective: Students will learn about using the five W's to help them start a writing assignment.

Before the lesson: Write the five W's on the board: Who, What, When, Where, Why.

Part #1: Writing down notes to develop ideas about what to put in the essay: Hand out copies of the November issue of *New Youth Connections*. Tell your group that they can win up to \$150 by entering the writing contest on page 2. Or write the above contest question on the board and tell them about the contest prizes. Tell them that most entries we receive run about 300 words or about one double-spaced page.

Tell them that everyone—including professional writers—sometimes struggles to get started and put those first words on paper. One way to help them get started is to use the “five W's” to help them think about the events they are writing about.

First, give students a few minutes to remember a time when they were “on top of the world.” (Explain the meaning of this phrase to non-native English speakers.) It might be a birthday, a vacation, a special time with a friend or family member, winning a game or an award, etc.

Then, ask them to copy the W's and tell them they are going to make brief notes about each question. Tell them the notes can be lists, words, incomplete sentences, etc. The idea behind making notes is just to get your thoughts on paper.

Ask them **who** was involved. Friends, siblings, parents, uncles, aunts, teachers, coaches. Tell them to write their names down.

Then ask them to choose **what** time in their life they will describe. Ask them to write notes about **what** happened that made them feel so good. Give them a few categories to think about: relationships/friendships, school, job, athletics or other extracurricular activities. What was going on? Tell them to write for two minutes—it doesn't matter what they write they just have to keep pen moving on paper.

When? How long did this feeling last? What seasons? How old were they? Was it cold or hot?

Where? Ask them to list two or three places where something happened related to their feelings: classroom, park, church, home, street, swimming pool, store. Write them all down.

Then ask them to look at **why**. **Why** did the situation they picked feel good? Ask them what emotions were involved—love, pride, courage, trust, kindness, loyalty, etc? AGAIN: they have to write for two minutes without stopping.

Part #2: Ask them to look at their notes. They will be surprised that through this pre-writing activity they have more than enough information to write a 300-words essay (or longer, if they choose).

2. Lesson: Writing Contest #199—Win \$150

Writing Contest: Loyalty in Relationships

Contest question:

Have you ever cheated in a relationship? If so, what happened? Would you do it again? If not, what keeps you faithful?

[Note: Students who have not been in a relationship can *imagine* how they would behave if they were in one—and were tempted to cheat. If their story is based on an imagined scenario, rather than a real one, they should mention that in the essay.]

Deadline: February 1, 2010

Objective: Students will learn about using the five W's to help them start a writing assignment.

Part #1: Use the “Five W” prompts from the previous lesson but modify them to relate to this question.

Part #2: Write a contest entry using their notes from Part #1.

3. Lesson: Practice for Regents Exam Listening Section

Story: “Kick Them Out! I say banish the bad kids,” p.5

Objective: Students will improve skills needed to pass the Regents Listening Section.

What the teacher needs to know to use this lesson: The Regents English exam has a listening section. A proctor reads the students an **Overview** (see below). The proctor then reads a passage to the students, *twice*, during which time the students can take notes. The students then answer some multiple choice questions.

Step One: Read the Overview

(Note: During the real test the students have a printed version of the Overview in front of them as the proctor reads the story. If you can’t make copies of the overview consider writing it on the board or just reading it to them.)

Read this to your students:

Overview: You will listen to an article written by a teenager about behavior problems at her school. You will then answer some multiple choice questions. You will hear the article twice. You may take notes.

Step Two: Tell your students, “Now I will read the passage aloud to you for the first time.” Read **PART OF THE** story Kick Them Out! on page 5 of the November issue of *New Youth Connections* magazine. (NOTE: Stop reading after the sentence “Teachers are there to educate, not serve as disciplinarians.” That sentence is in the third column, right before the subhead “My Right to Learn.”

Step Three: Tell your students “You make take a few minutes to look over your notes. (Pause) Now I will read the story again.”

Step Four: Multiple Choice Questions

After reading the article for the second time give them the questions on the next page.

Here are the answers to the multiple choice questions:

1) d 2) c 3) b 4) c 5) d 6) d 7) a

‘Kick Them Out’ Test

Multiple Choice Questions

Directions: Use your notes to answer the questions about the story read to you.

1) What does the writer do when the class is disrupted?

- a) She calls security
- b) She tells the troublemakers to keep quiet
- c) She leaves the classroom
- d) She reads a book

2) According to the writer, how frequently do teachers stop teaching because of student behavior?

- a) Almost every day
- b) Weekly
- c) At least monthly
- d) Two or three times a month

3) What adjective best describes the author?

- a) Whiny
- b) Motivated
- c) Quiet
- d) Self-satisfied

4) According to the story, why was the school sued?

- a) It did not provide a good education
- b) It did not provide good security
- c) It forced students to leave the school.
- d) It didn't force the most disruptive students to leave the school

5) What does the work “recurring” mean in the sentence, “Class disruptions are recurring events?”

- a) unpleasant
- b) sporadic
- c) unavoidable
- d) happening regularly

6) What teachers are mostly likely to face disruptive students?

- a) older teachers
- b) women teachers
- c) white teachers
- d) all teachers no matter who they are

7) Which of these titles would best fit this story?

- a) My Right to Learn
- b) Dropouts and Truants

- c) The Brave Principal
- d) Security to the Rescue

4. Health Class Activity: Cyber Safety and Sexting

Story: “The Talk: Is Sexting Sassy or Stupid?” pp. 16-17

Objectives: Students will think about the consequences of:

- taking, sending, or forwarding a sexual picture of someone underage, including themselves.
- taking images of themselves that they wouldn’t want everyone—classmates, teachers, coaches, family, employers or future employers, college admissions staff—to see;
- not being able to control where any image may travel.

Activity: Tell the group they are going to read a story about sexting. Ask if everyone knows what that is and ask the group if they know someone who has done it. (It’s sending nude or sexually provocative photos, usually phone to phone.)

You read the introduction out loud (that’s the part before Sven’s part).

Ask for a male volunteer to read Sven’s part. After he’s done, throw out these questions for discussion. Most of the answers will be speculative. Some students may offer silly or inappropriate answers. In most cases, however, other students will offer more mature and thoughtful answers. If they don’t, you can gently guide students toward an understanding of the dangers of sexting.

- Why does his girlfriend offer to send him a picture of herself in her underwear?
- Why does he accept the photo?
- Why does he “promptly” show it to his friends after promising to keep it to himself and when he knows he can be arrested for doing it?
- Why does he send her a nude picture of himself?
- He says he wouldn’t mind if she showed his picture to her friends. Do you think he’d feel differently if his photo got around the school?
- Sven says it’s OK to sext if you are “comfortable with your partner.” What does that mean? (Should his partner be “comfortable” with him after he betrayed her confidence?)
- What if Sven and his girlfriend break up after a big fight? Do they delete the photos, or spread them around to get back at each other?
- What if one of Sven’s enemies gets hold of the photos and posts them online where any college admissions officer or employer can find them?

Then ask a female volunteer to read Shakira’s part. Here are some more questions.

- Why is Shakira disappointed in her friend’s photo display? Why do you think she showed them to Shakira?
- Why does Shakira mention the legal cases dealing with sexting? Did you know that teens can be prosecuted for sexting?
- Why does Shakira think teens sext? Do you agree that teens who do it have low self-esteem and are just trying to get attention in all the wrong ways?
- Why doesn’t Shakira sext? Do her reasons make sense? What are some other reasons for not sexting besides fear of prosecution or worry that a photo will be circulated?
- Do you think boys and girls have different motivations for sexting?

5. Health Class Activity: Addiction and Video Games

Story: “Virtually Addicted: Xbox was all fun and games till it took over my life” by Jaminson Robinson p. 14

Objectives: Students will learn more about the nature of addiction in general and explore the issue of video game addiction.

Before the activity: Write this definition of addiction from The American Heritage Stedman’s Medical Dictionary on the board: “Addiction: habitual psychological and physiological dependence on a substance or practice beyond one’s voluntary control.”

Put these questions on the board as well:

“How would you define addiction?”

“What makes something addictive?”

“Is there a difference between a habit and an addiction?”

Activity Part 1 (5-8 minutes): Tell the class they are going to read a story by a teen who describes himself as addicted to video games. Before you hand out the magazine, read these sentences from the story out loud. The purpose of this read aloud is to get them interested in reading the story.

At midnight—a full 16 hours later—I would finally tell my friends: “Yo, I’m gonna go, guys.”

I jumped up from my seat and began screaming at the top of my lungs at my father.

The breaks forced me to calm down and return to reality.

Then ask the group to read the definition and the sentences on the board. Then ask them for responses to the questions and write down any points of agreement, which might be phrases like “can’t stop,” “forgets about other things,” “loses control,” “feels good,” etc.

Ask the group to name some “substances” or “practices” that could be addictive and note them on the classroom board. They might say alcohol, caffeine, some prescription drugs, cocaine, heroin, marijuana, chocolate, exercise, the Internet, video games, gambling, pornography, shopping, etc.

Activity Part 2 (20 minutes): NOTE: This might be a long story to read for some of your group. You can start with the sentence, “Yep, this was certainly the life.” which is in the lower half of the second column. If you do this, tell the group that as the story starts Jaminson has been playing online Xbox games with his friends.

After reading the story ask them where in the story Jaminson showed these signs of addiction:

- He needed to spend more time on the game.
- He played for longer than he intended or couldn’t stay off the game for more than a few minutes.
- He spent time talking about the game.
- He gave up sleep to play the game.
- He neglected his school work.
- He reacted strongly to being told he was addicted.

6. Disruptive Students (reading/summarizing lesson)

Thanks to Roderick Michael at DeWitt Clinton HS for this lesson format.

Story: “Kick Them Out! I say banish the bad kids,” by Chantal Hylton, p. 5

Objective: Students will strengthen skills in reading, summarizing, and answering questions about a text. They will also clarify some of their own feelings about their high school experience.

Before the lesson: Print out the question sheet below and have it ready to give to your students.

The activity: Hand out copies of the November issue of *New Youth Connections* magazine or a printed version of the story downloaded from the Youth Communication web site (youthcomm.org). Tell your students they are going to read a story about a young woman who thinks her fellow students are ruining her education with their bad behavior in the classroom. They will then answer some questions in writing about the story.

First, ask them to look at the title and then ask them if they have ever felt the same way as the writer. Let the discussion go for 2-3 minutes.

Give them as much time as you think they need to read the story silently. Then hand out the question sheet and a piece of loose-leaf paper. NOTE: The last question asks your group to write letters to the author of this article. We are eager to publish student letters in *New Youth Connections* magazine. Feel free to send your students' letters to us.

Question Sheet/Reading Class Work

Directions: Answer the questions below in essay answer format. This means you should use parts of the question to start your answer. Write 2-5 complete sentences for each question. The answer for the first question has been started for you.

1. What is the full title of this story? Who wrote the story?

Answer: The full title of the story is...

2. Many stories and books describe problems that someone tries to solve or a conflict that has to be worked out. What is the main problem or conflict described in this story? Is the problem solved?

3. According to Chantal, what behaviors should not be allowed in a school? Can you think of other behaviors that should not be allowed, for example, cell phone calls and dressing in certain ways?

4. Why does Chantal think misbehaving students should be kicked out of schools?

5. Write a five-sentence letter to Chantal telling her what you think about her ideas about kicking "bad kids" out of school.

7. Can Students Give Up Their Technology? (treasure hunt)

Story: "Off the Grid: NYC Writers Give Up Their Gadgets," pp. 22-23

Treasure Hunt

Objective: Give students practice in:

- locating information and ideas in texts;
- taking notes;
- working cooperatively in small groups.

Part #1: Hand out the November issue of *New Youth Connections*. Split your group into smaller ones. Tell them to open up to pages 22-23. Tell them each group will have five minutes to read the stories on those pages (except the one titled "Solar Shut Down").

NOTE: The short time limits in reading the articles and looking for the information should be a hint to each group that they have divide up the tasks among them, for

example, each member should read a different story. You can suggest they do this but it might be more instructive to let them figure it out for themselves.

Then tell them you are going to read ten questions aloud, one after the other. After the tenth question, each group will have 5 minutes to locate the answers to all the questions and make a note about its location. You will then ask each question again to see which groups found the answers.

Here are the questions:

- a) Which writer seems most addicted to his or her gadget?
- b) Which story involved a class flirtation?
- c) Who stayed a “little unplugged” after the experiment ended?
- d) Who blundered into a new form of expression?
- e) How many people read books?
- f) Who made the biggest sacrifice?
- g) Who relies most on his or her gadget to get through the day?
- h) Who watched TV to fight boredom?
- i) Who played a sport?
- j) Who got out of doing school work because of being unplugged?

Discussion idea: After you go over the answers, ask each group if they divided up the work in any way. For example, did each person in Group A read one story or did everyone try to read all the stories? Did everyone take notes about while you were reading the questions or did one person take notes while the others in the group continued to read the stories?

Answers to questions:

- a) Jordan Temple
- b) “No Phone, No Fun”
- c) Chantel Morel
- d) Marco Salazar
- e) Two (Chantel Morel and Conor Dawson)
- f) Depends. Let them argue a little.
- g) Probably Christina Gee
- h) Conor Dawson and Marco Salazar
- i) Conor Dawson
- j) Conor Dawson

Thought experiment

Have your group read the “Don’t iTunes Out,” “Offline, Off-Kilter,” and “No Phone, No Fun.” Ask them to imagine living for 5 days without one of these: an iPod, internet access or a cell phone. How would their lives change? What could be the worst moment? What would they do instead? They can email responses to us at

nycmail@youthcomm.org or use snail mail to Youth Communication, 224 West 29th St. 2nd Floor, NYC, 10001.

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