

Writers Workshop
8th Grade Language Arts
Mr. Schmerbach

How it works:

Writer's Workshop is designed to help you develop as a writer. Every Wednesday and Thursday for the rest of the year we will be using Writer's Workshop (WW). Each day that we have Writer's Workshop you will be working through the writing process on something that you have written. Taking the time in class to write as many different things as your mind could possibly think of, finally choosing **three** pieces of writing that you will take through all the steps until it reaches the published form. You will need to bring a composition journal every class period of WW. *This collection of your writing will also be turned in to be scored throughout the trimester.* Inside this journal, you will need to keep a record of your work. A form to help you do that is provided (WW Daily Planner). Once you've finished a draft you can decide to conference and keep the writing process going, or stop completely and start something new. It is your choice! That is what's great about WW! It's all about you making the choices!

You will have freedom to choose almost everything; how fast you write, what you write about, when you turn in your writing, who you conference with, when you conference with the teacher, and even where you want to sit while you write in the classroom. Even with all this freedom there are some boundaries. The room must be quiet for students to focus and put their thoughts on paper. Conferences will take place in class, but in at specific tables in the room. Unless you are conferencing you need to be working independently – unless a cooperative project has been given the “okay” by Mr. Schmerbach. Students will also conference with the teacher during class before self-editing. Plus each day of WW is accompanied with a mini-lesson and a short writing task that must be completed before you can free-write.

How it looks:

The day will start out with a short check up on what everyone is working on and where you are at in the writing process. Then there will be a short lesson about something relative to writer's workshop or your writing. This will usually last no longer than five minutes. You will need to record each mini-lesson in your daily planner along with the step you are on in the writing process and the title of what you are currently working on. All mini lessons are to be completed before any free writing takes place. After that you will be free to write for approximately 40 minutes. Moving your desks or sitting on the ground is okay; sit where you feel the most comfortable to write. Also during that time you can conference, depending on where you are at in the writing process of course. During the last 5 or 10 minutes of class we will meet as a group. Here we can discuss as a class and share our work, triumphs, problems and confusions.

Rules:

- NO ERASING! Write with a blue or black pen and put a line through a mistake.
- WW is about your writing not your friends –Work independently.
- Quiet voices must be used in the conference areas, in order for people not to be distracted.
- Always edit with a red pen on your one work and someone elses.
- All mini-lesson assignments will be checked. Make sure you finish each one before starting on something else.
- Journals will be reviewed throughout the semester.
- All writing should be appropriate enough for anyone to read at this school.

Grading: You will be graded on every facet of the writer's workshop. Below will be a breakdown of your overall grading on this project.

Journal of all writing:	100 points
Participation, Productivity, Commitment:	50 points
<u>Three</u> published pieces of writing:	75 points
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Total	225 points

Journal of all writing (100 points): This is the record of everything that you write. You are not allowed to erase, so by the end of the semester you should have quite the collection of writing including the mini lessons from each WW class. This will be turned in even though many of the items in it, may not have been taken to the published form. *How much writing do you have? At least **3 full journal pages** per day of writer's workshop. Is the Daily Planner filled in for each day, and are there enough entries? Only make entries in your Planner on days that we have WW class and a mini lesson. Is the journal organized with dated entries? Date each page, title all your work, and work from left to right in your journal! Don't skip around from front to back to middle.*

Commitment, Productivity, Participation: Each class period you will be participating in group meetings as well as conferences with other students and the teacher. To get full credit for this part of your grade you will need to *give input during group meetings: by sharing, asking questions and offering advice.* During conferences you will be asked to abide by all rules and *take each conference seriously; which means that having side conversations, putting people down, sharing inappropriate items, not paying attention and making the sharing area uncomfortable for others is not acceptable.*

How much writing did you actually do in class? Each class during writer's workshop you will be writing, and if you're not writing, your conferencing about your writing or someone else's writing. So even though you may have all the freedom to work at your own pace, choose your own topics, conference with whomever you choose, and all the other freedoms of this time, you will still have to be productive in class. To put it simply, to get full credit for this part of your grade you cannot waste your time, a classmate's, or teachers time during any part of this project by being loud, being off task, being inappropriate or being unprepared.

*This just boils down to effort and maturity! How much effort are you going to put in to make yourself a better writer? Taking your time to write when your in class and not talk, taking conferences and the self and peer editing seriously, following and taking all of the steps of the writing process seriously (NOT SKIPPING ANY) and producing **three** great pieces of writing by the end of the term; that is what the commitment category is all about.*

Three published pieces of writing (75 points): This is simply the main goal of the workshop, to use your time to create five wonderful pieces of writing that you took through all the steps of the writing process.

Writer's Workshop
Steps of the Writing Process

1. Generate an Idea (brainstorm, rehearse, find an idea, think, use your head!)
2. Draft 1
3. Conference (with another student)
4. Draft 2
5. Conference (with teacher)
6. Self Edit
7. Teacher Edit
8. Final Copy/Publish

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