

Habits of Strong Writers

During this class period, students will generate a list of habits they connect to good writers. They will develop this list as they complete current and future writing projects. More importantly, they will self assess their own use of these habits. As a final activity, students will develop their stamina as writers. In this class, we will start with a short period of non-stop writing. Future classes will increase the time.

OBJECTIVES AND SKILLS

By the end of this class, students will have met these objectives:

- They will have a better idea of what the habits of good writers are.
- They will have a clearer understanding of themselves as writers and the areas they have difficulty.
- They will have developed their tolerance for writing for a sustained period of time.

MATERIALS

Overhead projector or board space; large poster paper (one for each group); students' writers notebooks or journals.

Do Now: Whole Class

10 MIN.

T: "Are you born a good writer or do you become a good writer? (Are good writers born or made?) Write your answer and explain your choice." 3-5 min.

Students share out thoughts. Follow-up questions may include the following:

How have you changed as a writer over time?

When have you been a "good writer"?

What was the situation?

Discuss with students the idea that most writers are made, not born. Explain that you have to work at it and the more you work at it, the easier it becomes and the better you get.

Overview of Agenda

2 MIN.

Explain what the lesson today is about and our objectives. Ask if there are any questions.

Small Group Brainstorm

10-15 MIN.

Review term "habit."

Write on board: "The habits of strong writers are..." Explain that strong writers have habits that we can also develop to make us strong writers.

Ask students, in groups, to finish the above sentence with as many ideas they can think of. As they do this, ask one person from each group to go to the board to write down what they come up with. The list may include some of the following:

- Strong writers write! They don't spend all their time planning. They get down to business.
- Strong writers often write for more than 30 minutes straight.
- Strong writers don't stop writing when they don't know how to spell or don't know if it's a good word. They move on and keep writing and go back to it later.
- Strong writers go back and get rid of things, add things, change their minds on things.
- Strong writers "cut up" their writing and tape it back together in a different order.
- Strong writers take risks. They try to say something new and say it differently.



- Strong writers let their personality into their writing. They're funny or serious or poetic.
- Strong writers know their audience and speak their audience's language.
- Strong writers "show" what they're thinking (through examples or stories) instead of just telling.

Whole Class Share-out

Ask if there's anything missing or that should be changed. Ask probing questions to add more, if needed.

After class, record students' responses on a piece of poster paper so students can add to it as they discover more habits during this and future writing projects.

Self-Analysis

4 MIN.

Ask students to put a star next to the habits they believe they have already developed. Ask students to circle the 3 habits they believe they need to work on the most.

Students share findings. Revisit this in the future so students can track their development.

Individual Practice

10 MIN.

Explain that we are now going to practice one of these habits – "Strong writers write for a long period of time." Ask students why strong writers are able to do this.

Ask students to open up their journals. Give them three high-interest writing prompts from which they must choose one to write on for 5 or 10 minutes straight (depending on the level of the class).

As they write, they must maintain complete silence. If needed, give them credit on how well they use this time.

Final Review

8 MIN.

First ask students what this writing experience was like. What did they notice about themselves? What were the challenges? The surprises? If a student has an issue, ask the class to give him advice. This could also be recorded.

Next ask students to share out some of what they wrote.

Explain that we will be practicing this specific habit frequently so that we are all more comfortable writing for a long time.

Next class

What kind of environment do writers need to write well?