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# Writing Strategies for Boys, K-12 (good for girls, too!)

Sample Pages



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## Course Overview

*Writing Strategies for Boys (good for girls, too!)* is a graduate level course, focusing on writing strategies tailored for boy's interests and learning style preferences based on findings from research. Develop authentic purposeful writing tasks that help boys pursue an interest, gather information to be competent and honor their love for action, power and humor. Understanding the nature of boys, their brain wiring and what motivates boys, helps educators develop writing curriculum to motivate boys to write "more", include detail, and respond to assessment. This course will give you a compendium of practical writing activities and strategies that you can use in your classroom, K-12 while also meeting Common Core State Standards for Writing.

Responses from boys to survey questions asking boys how they would rate themselves as writers and what kind of writer they want to be yield surprising information. Of the hundreds of interviews collected, K-12, boys report, they think they are pretty good writers and want to be excellent writers. Designing writing strategies that appeal to boys' nature and develop their competency as writers is the heart of this course. Research studies show that what seems to be good for boys, works well for girls, too!

This course is set up in 4 parts, Part 1: You and Your Boys; Part 2: Research about Boys and Writing; Part 3: The Writing Process Boy Style and Part 4: A Compendium of Boy-Friendly Writing Strategies (that are good for girls, too). You will be asked to tap into your experience of working with boys and writing, read research outside the text for this course, try out some boy-friendly writing strategies that are good for girls, too, and participate in the writing process yourself. Read and complete the exercises in the four parts of the text.

The last part will present you with a compendium of writing strategy ideas. This is the heart of the course. You will choose 10 writing strategies from the compendium. Practice the strategy yourself, to create an authentic experience to share with your students as well as offer a mentor text. I strongly encourage you to field test the writing strategies with boys. If you are taking this course while you are teaching, try out some of the strategies with your students. If you are taking this class during a break, bribe or cajole a male person (adults, included) to try out a writing strategy. Feedback from boys is invaluable in creating viable writing curriculum.

Create a boy friendly lesson plan that you can use in your classroom. Complete the outside reading and writing activities. Choose articles or books on current research about boys and writing, such as Ralph Fletcher's *Boy Writers*. Review books on writing that inspire writing and match writing strategies to what you learn about boys. Keep a journal of observations about boys. If you are not currently in a classroom, use observations from your view of males at home, at the store, out of doors. What do they talk about? What do they write about?

Upon completion of the course, you will be able to:

1. Identify what instructional and curricular practices work for boys and writing and what doesn't.
2. Select information from the current research literature on the nature of boys, the writing habits of boys and implement findings in curricular and instructional writing practices.
3. Synthesize the research on boys and wisdom gleaned from master writers on the topic of writing, with curricular and instructional writing practices for boys to meet the need for authenticity, writing curriculum, as well as meeting the rigors of writing standards.
4. Use and produce writing strategies and activities that build on interest, choice, authenticity, purpose, humor and an understanding of a boy's need to explore power to develop competency, confidence and self-esteem.
5. Experiment with text types and purposes, such as informational writing, opinion writing, argument writing, writing for assessments with boy's in mind.
6. Prepare boy-friendly writing strategies.
7. Evaluate the effectiveness of creating writing strategies for boys, (good for girls, too) aligning writing strategies for boys with writing curriculum and state standards for writing.

At the end you will be asked to write a short reflective essay. What did you learn from your experience of taking this course - completing the exercises, participating in the research, and writing and working with boys - that is meaningful to you? If you practiced these writing strategies in the classroom, how did it go? What did you learn about boys and writing that will help you develop writing curriculum that encourages writing? What new questions came as a result of this work? Where will you go next?

The course and its assignments are designed to offer you insights about boys and writing. But they are also designed with you in mind. If there are modifications or accommodations that would better suit your needs, feel free to contact the instructor with your questions or ideas. The courses from College Courses Online are intended to personally and professionally meaningful to YOU.

Use the text, outside reading and writing activities to complete the course work.

A syllabus is available on [www.collegecoursesonline.com](http://www.collegecoursesonline.com)

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# **Part 1**

## **You and Your Boys**

From Your Experience- A Survey  
Attitude toward Writing  
Using Your Writing Curriculum  
Be a Researcher

**Part 1** is devoted to reflections about you and your boys, whether it is the boys in your classroom, home or boys you've taught in previous years. . Each section in this part is focused on your experience with boys and your experience with writing. Boys are motivated to learn skills and tools to be competent. They are interested in authentic learning. Boys look to the behavior of adults in their world to decide if what we are teaching in school is authentic, practical and useful. Does it match to "real world" activity? If boys perceive that writing is a necessary skill to help them become more competent, they are more likely to be engaged. They are looking to us to practice what we preach. If writing is important, they will know because they will see us writing, too. Better yet, we can participate in the writing process by sharing our writing with them.

## From Your Experience - A Survey

“Squeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeek”, said the little mouse as the cat had him hanging over the toilet ready to flush him down. “Squeeeeeeeeeeeeeek! Squeeeeeeeeeek! Squeeeeeeeeeek! Please don’t flush me!” said Squeeky as the angry cat was still holding him over the toilet bowl. “Whoooooosh, Kasploosh,” and then Squeeky went into the other world.

2nd grader

This little boy was seven years old and in second grade, and he is my little boy. I thought his Squeeky story was delightful. He did not know how to correctly use quotation marks, but everything was there to make a delightful story with a little editing. I was shocked when I was asked to come in to speak to his teacher. She said that he was being lazy and taking up the space with all the E’s that he made while trying to describe what Squeeky was saying.

G. S., mother and teacher

With all of our best intentions, there may be times when instead of encouraging a writer, we instead discourage him or her. Learning about boys and writing will offer you new insights about boys and how to motivate them to write. The topic is a two-sided issue, and revolves around what we, as teachers, value about writing and what boys value about writing.

Before delving into writing strategies for boys, it is helpful to explore what you believe about boys and writing. Use your experience from teaching and working with boys, or your experience from parenting boys or being a boy yourself!

### **Exercise: From Your Experience- A Survey. Please respond in writing.**

- What have you noticed in your classroom about boys and writing?
- What is a boy’s attitude toward writing?
- Is there a difference between boy’s writing on assigned writing tasks, writing on assessments, writing in other curriculum areas or writing on their own? Please describe.
- What do boys like to write about?
- Can you pick out boy’s writing from girl’s writing without looking at the name? If so, what are the characteristics of “boy” writing? What are the characteristics of “girl” writing?

- When you evaluate boy's writing, what do you notice that you **like**? What do you notice that you **don't like**?
- What are your expectations for boys and writing?
- Make a list of positive and negative attributes about boys and their writing.
- What works for boys and writing? What doesn't work? Make a list.
- What do you hope to get from taking this class?

At the end of class, come back to this list and evaluate what you've learned about this course. This will help you write your final reflection paper.

## **Attitude toward Writing**

Boys are engaged in schoolwork when it is perceived as authentic and purposeful. Boys look for evidence that writing is authentic. If they see evidence of adults writing, then they are more willing to write themselves. If they see adults struggle with writing, their feelings are authenticated. If they see adults getting satisfaction from writing, they will persist. Boys look to see what the adults around them are doing to know if what they say is real or true. If we want to convince them that writing is important, they must see us write. Better yet, they must witness us sweating through writing to know their experience is “normal”. Best is when we, too, share our writing with them. Be a model of writing by being a writer among writers. Throughout the research, the most powerful indicator of helping boys improve writing is attitude- their attitude about themselves as writers and the value of writing as a real-life activity. That attitude starts with us, their teachers. (Fletcher, 2006)

There are a few people who love to write just for the sake of writing. They write in journals, write letters or scrapbook. But most who are not published perceive writing as something “hard”, better left for authors and the world of publishing. Most people write minimally- lists, e-mails, letters, lesson plans, cards and notes, but when asked to write papers, reports or grants, most people stall, balk and cringe.

Our attitudes toward writing and what we are asking our students to do in the classroom, starts with what you believe about writing and yourself as a writer. Attitude is shaped from our experiences as writers as well as what we are told about writing and writers. Take a moment and reflect on your experiences as a writer. What is your attitude about writing? How do you perceive yourself as a writer?

END OF SAMPLE PAGES.

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