



***Blocking Writer's Block: How do we encourage students to overcome their fear of writing?***

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Davidson Elementary School

This curriculum unit is recommended for:  
Fourth Grade Writing

**Keywords:** emotions, close reading, writing process, perspective, balanced literacy, analyzing, opinion and persuasive

**Teaching Standards:** See [Appendix 1](#) for teaching standards addressed in this unit.

**Synopsis:** This curriculum unit is designed to empower students to write without fear and be able to receive feedback which will strengthen their writing. At the completion of this unit students will be able to: effectively analyze a poem, write their own poem, effectively analyze a story, write an essay about that story and write a persuasive story.

*I plan to teach this unit during the coming year to 54 students in writing for 4<sup>th</sup> grade.*

*I give permission for Charlotte Teachers Institute to publish my curriculum unit in print and online. I understand that I will be credited as the author of my work.*

## **Blocking Writer's Block: How do we encourage students to overcome their fear of writing?**

*Robin McLennon*

### **Introduction**

Elementary school students are told writing is a vital form of expression and a communication skill that is required for the work force of the future. Based on this statement, writing continues to play an important role in elementary, middle and high school. Although this may be true, colleges are continuing to see a gap in the preparedness of the students entering for the first time. As a result of the students' lack of readiness to communicate effectively what they know and what they have learned, they are having to repeat their high school writing courses. Perhaps this gap is a result of the enormous amount of attention given to reading because of the new state's initiative Read to Achieve, or could it be, we as teachers need to learn different strategies to motivate our students to tap into their creative power allowing them to welcome feedback, to be able to draft their own writing and to progress along the different genres of writing. Equally important is the fear of writing which could also play a role in stopping students from moving forward to write. Mark David Gerson explains:

The only solution to overcome that fear is to keep writing through the fear, however it shows up. Your fears and all your emotions can be the most powerful components of your writing. Don't run from them. Write them. Write them in your journal. Write them into your stories and characters. Write them onto the page and out of you.<sup>1</sup>

This curriculum unit is designed to empower students to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and just write. Write without fear! Write with confidence! Write daily! To be able to accomplish this task, it is important for students to learn basic writing skills that will enable them to organize, develop and critically discuss their thoughts and opinion. It is these skills that will distinguish college-ready students from those who will need remedial writing courses.

### **Background / Demographics**

This unit will be implemented at Davidson Elementary School which is located in the historic college town of Davidson, just walking distance from downtown Davidson and Davidson College. As a result of its location, DES is able to offer students community field trips, guest speakers and excellent classroom volunteers from the college and the area.

There are 720 students enrolled in grades K-5 in Davidson Elementary School. The demographics are, White 78%, African American 6%, Asian 2%, Hispanic 12% and Multi-Racial 2%. There are 65 students with Disabilities, 42 English Proficient students and 109 Talent Development students.

Davidson Elementary School consist of 33 regular education K-5 classrooms. In addition to 14 teachers who serve in environments of Exceptional Children Resources, Music, Media, Physical Education, Art, Talent Development, Guidance and School Psychologist. Turnover rate for 2015 – 2016 school year was <5%.

Based on the 2015 – 2016 school year, Davidson Elementary School has met 15 of 15 Federal Annual Measurable Outcomes with an overall performance composite of 84% with 83 % of students in grades 3 to 5 identified as Grade Level Proficient. In addition, DES met the requirements for Exceeding Expected Growth as outlined by the state of North Carolina for the 2015 –2016 school year.

Unfortunately, in spite of all of the data provided there is none for writing. As a fourth grade teacher I am responsible for teaching reading, writing, math, science, social studies and health. I feel very fortunate to have a principal who understands the needs of both teachers and students and has allowed me to departmentalize with another teacher who shares my teaching philosophy. Departmentalizing has been a great experience for teaching reading, writing and science, because of the additional time I am able to spend on student's mastery of assignments.

## **Rational**

Several students are entering fourth grade without the background knowledge of sentence structure. Since sentences are the framework of paragraphs, without a strong sentence structure, how can students be expected to write letters, stories, poems and essays. A paragraph is only as good as its strongest sentence. This lack of sentence structure knowledge creates apprehension and anxiety for students towards writing.

For some students, writing sparks different emotions. Being able to identify these emotions is a great way for students to start generating writing ideas. Paul Lima, author of Unblock Writer's Block How to face it, deal with it and overcome it claims,

“Emotions make writing come alive and ring true for others. In short, a story without emotions is like a day without sunshine: dull, flat and dreary.”<sup>2</sup>

Through the course of the unit, students will be encouraged to tap into and write about their emotions, which lie just beneath the surface at this age. Lima suggests, "Childhood is a rich source of creative ideas, and creative ideas help us break through blocks. Facing them, the good, the bad and perhaps even the ugly can free us and help us face the other writing we want to do."<sup>3</sup> Once the students' emotions are identified, they will then be taught how to channel those emotions into various genres of writing.

With this in mind, I will encourage them to think back to a time when they felt mad, sad and glad. There are other emotions students could be feeling, but the ones mentioned earlier covers a full range of emotions. With the intent of motivating my students I will share one of my childhood stories. Connecting with my students has always been very important to me. For this reason, I have always shared stories about my children with them. As a result, my students are always asking me to share more stories. This I think will also motivate them to write.

This exercise will ultimately lead to the students writing a letter to the person who has provoked that specific emotion. This exercise was completed in my seminar, *Writing with Power: No Fear Here*. I found this activity very helpful for several reasons. First, I was able to get my thoughts down on paper which released my initial anxiety about writing. Second, I was able to move past the various emotions I was experiencing because I was able to write about them and receive feedback. The feedback I received was very important to me because it gave me clear guidance on how to improve upon my writing.

## **Objectives**

This unit is closely aligned with North Carolina Common Core Standards for reading, writing, speaking and listening. The focus for the fourth grade North Carolina course of study for writing are: Write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly. Write narratives to develop real or imagined

experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequence. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose and audience. Develop and strengthen writing by planning, revising and editing. Use technology to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection and research. Write routinely for a range of discipline specific tasks, purposes and audience.

This unit will have the students journaling daily in their Writer's Notebook. This notebook will be created at the beginning of the unit and will be used for daily writing. S.J. Scott explains why daily writing helps students to overcome fears of writing:

Having a routine helps because once you force yourself to actually write something, your internal critic relaxes and lets you get down to business." Making writing part of your daily routine will improve your ability to write. It will also help you establish the habit that is required to continue writing. Having a set time to write will help you establish writing discipline which is important if you want to tackle larger projects.<sup>4</sup>

Students will be engaged in close reading and analyzing of poetry using specific strategies like visualizing images, using clues to figure out the speaker of the poem, looking carefully at individual words and phrases to determine why the poet chose those words and carefully thinking about the poem's message or theme. Students will also be close reading and analyzing stories.

Through the writing process students will apply their knowledge of story structure gained from reading to develop and write an essay. They will be given "Would You Rather" questions that would require them to choose between two options and write a persuasive essay. Selecting the correct story for students to read and analyze is important for their engagement. This is something I learned during my seminar. We were required to read several stories for discussion and writing, some of those stories kept me engaged while others I read only because it was a requirement.

It is important for students to understand that they can learn how to write by analyzing how other writers have created their works and by analyzing the impact that those works have on them. At the completion of this unit students will be able to: effectively analyze a poem, write their own poem, effectively analyze a story, write any essay about that story, and write a persuasive story.

## **Teaching Strategies**

Differentiation is key in the classroom in order to reach all students at their different learning levels and styles. This unit employs a variety of teaching and learning techniques in order for students to reach mastery of skills taught.

Assessment is just as important as differentiation. It is an integral part of instruction, as it determines whether or not the educational goals and standards of the lessons are being met and if students have demonstrated their understanding of the subject matter. With this in mind, students' notebooks, teacher observations, peer discussions and students engagement will be assessed for mastery of subject matter.

Strategy one: *An Introduction to the "notebook"*.

Students will have a notebook for the unit with the unit's title. Students will be required to bring in pictures of their family, vacations they have taken, their pets, sports, hobbies and friends to decorate their notebooks. The notebook will be divided into the following sections: vocabulary, daily journal writing, poems, stories and letters.

Strategy two: *Modeling*

No matter what grade level you are teaching, or what you are teaching, everything you want your students to be able to do, must be modeled. Modeling shows students what is expected from the beginning to the end. I will model expectations for all assignments while students observe, we will practice, then they will complete their assignments.

Strategy three: *Mini Lessons*

A mini lesson is a short lesson completed before a reading and writing workshop. It is used to teach a particular skill. Students will then relate the skills taught to a larger lesson that will follow. Mini lessons will be utilized before every new assignment.

Strategy four: *Independent Sustained Writing*

Students will write in their notebooks daily for 15 minutes. Committing to daily writing will become a habit which will lead to the student's success.

Strategy five: *Interactive Read Aloud*

Interactive Read Aloud is a powerful tool for teaching literary elements and addressing the standards. Read Aloud will be utilized before every lesson.

Strategy six: *Close Reading*

Close reading is the critical analysis of a text that focuses on significant details in order to develop a deep and precise understanding of the text. It requires reading a text 3

times and showing their thinking by annotating the text. Students will utilize this strategy while reading all text.

Strategy seven: *Anchor Charts*

Anchor charts are a great way to make thinking visible by recording the most important information. The chart will be used as a whole-class reference as the unit progresses.

Strategy eight: *One-on-One Conferencing*

Conferencing is a great way to teach students individually. This strategy will be used to give students feedback on their writing. Feedback is very important because it allows you to give students information to improve their writing.

Strategy nine: *Small group/whole class discussions*

Small group and whole class discussions allows students to engage with different points of view. Small groups allow students to work at their own pace with more direct instruction. Discussions will be a part of every lesson.

Strategy ten: *Four Square Writing Model*

Four Square writing is a method of teaching writing skills that is applicable across grade levels and curriculum areas. The prewriting and organizational skills are taught through the use of a graphic organizer.

## **Lessons and Activities**

*Whole Group Activity*

*Lesson 1: Objectives: Fourth Grade CCSS: L. 4.4, W4.10*

*Day 1.* Students will be made aware that they will be working on ways to overcome their fears of writing. This will be accomplished by daily journal writing, close reading, analyzing and writing poems and close reading, analyzing and writing stories.

They will first decorate their notebooks with the pictures they brought in from home. Next, they will divide their notebook into sections. Section 1. Vocabulary, Section 2. Daily Journal Writing, Section 3. Poems, Section 4. Stories and Letters, Section 5. Self- Reflection.

Students will be asked to define the word "emotion". Students will then write their definition in their vocabulary section of their notebook. Students will share their definitions whole group. Definitions will then be written on working anchor chart to be used as reference as the unit progresses.

*Emotion has been defined as, an effective state of consciousness in which joy, sorrow, fear, hate, or the like, is experienced.*<sup>5</sup>

Next, students will be asked to think about an incident that made them feel sad and answer the questions below in their notebook, journal writing section."

- How old were you the first time you felt sad?
- Where were you when you first felt that emotion? Be as specific as possible.
- Who was around when you first felt sad? What was your relationship with anyone who was around?
- Who or what caused you to feel sad?
- Why did it make you feel sad?
- What happened next?
- Then what?

*Lesson 2: Objectives: Fourth Grade CCSS: RF. 4.4 L. 4.1f, W.4.3b, W.4.10*

*Day 2 and 3: Activity: Journal exercise*

Students will be required to use their Day 1 answers to journal for 15 minutes. They will be encouraged to journal without thinking about grammar and spelling. Just write! Write about the emotion of sadness.

### Mini Lesson: Sentences

Students will be asked, "What are sentences?" Dave Kemper, Ruth Nathan, Carol Elsholz and Patrick Sebranek wrote that a sentence is made up of one or more words that express a complete thought. A sentence begins with a capital letter, and ends with a period, a question mark, or an exclamation point. Sentences have two basic parts, the subject and the predicate. The subject tells us who or what the sentence is about. The predicate tells what the subject is or does. There are three types of sentences, simple, compound and complex. A simple sentence states one complete thought. A compound sentence is made up of two or more simple sentences joined by a comma and a coordinating conjunction. A complex sentence contains one independent clause (express a complete thought and can



stand alone as a sentence) and one dependent clause does not express a complete thought and cannot stand alone as a sentence).<sup>6</sup>

*Activity: Strengthen your writing style*

Students will be instructed that the way they express their thoughts and feelings on paper is their writing style. To help students strengthen their style, they will choose five sentences from their writing journal. They will then work on making each sentence better by changing the order of the words, by using a different verb, or a specific noun, or by adding details.

Next, I will read a realistic fiction story, "Jodie's Daddy is a Garbageman "by Matthew Licht. This story is reflective of the experiences kids encounter daily. With this in mind, students should be able to identify the various emotions highlighted in the story. This is a story about a little girl who loves her dad and what he does for a living, but once her classmates find out what her father's job is they are very judgmental and mean to her.

*Activity: Small Group*

Students will analyze the story they just heard by considering the plot, setting, characters, point of view, imagery, tone, and theme". Questions will be asked pertaining to each category.

Plot questions: *Plot is what happens in the story, events and thoughts which make up the story's basic structure.*

- What is the story about? What are the main events in the story, and how are they related to each other?
- Are the main events of the story arranged chronologically, or are they arranged in another way?
- How do the thoughts, behaviors and actions of characters move the plot forward?
- What are the conflicts in the plot? Are they physical, intellectual, moral, or emotional? Are they resolved? How are they resolved?
- Is the ending of the story happy, or sad?

Setting questions: *Setting is the location of a story in terms of place, time, social environment (the location of characters and events in a particular society and/or a particular social class, such as, lower, middle, or upper class) and physical environment (the details of the location in which the story takes place).*

- What is the setting of the story?
- Where and when does the action take place?

- How does the setting affect characters in the story?
- How does their environment make them feel?

Characters questions: *Characters are the people in the story. Most stories have a main character the protagonist or hero/heroine), whose personality traits move the plot forward and contribute to the conflict in the story. Many stories also have at one minor character, who is not the focus of the story but who still plays an important role.*

- Who is/are the main character(s) in the story? What does the main character look like?
- Describe the main character's situation. Where does he/she live? Does he/she live alone or with others? What does the main character do for a living, is he/she dependent on others for support?
- What are the characteristics (personality traits) of the character? How are these traits revealed in the story? How does the main character interact with the other characters?
- What is the main character's attitude towards his/her life? Is he/she happy or sad? At the end of the story, is the main character different from how he/she was at the beginning of the story? In what way has the character changed? What has caused the change?

Point of View questions: *Point of view is the perspective from which a story is told. The author creates a narrator to tell the story. It is through the narrator's eyes and mind that readers learn what is happening in a story. The point of view and the narrator are tools used by the author to tell a story in a certain way.*

- What point of view does the story use? Is the story told from a first-person perspective in which the narrator is one of the characters in the story, and refers to himself / herself as "I"? Or is the story told from a second-person perspective, in which the narrator addresses the reader directly as though he/she is part of the story? Or is the story told from a third-person perspective, in which the narrator is not one of the characters in the story or may not participate in the events of the story?

Imagery questions: *Imagery refers to the collection of images in a selection: The mental pictures created by the author's words. Most images are created through words that the author uses that triggers a reaction of the reader's five senses.*

- What scenes, moments, descriptive passages, phrases, or words stand out in your reading of the story?
- Did a particular image make you feel happy, or frightened, or angry, or sad? Why?

- Which of your five senses did this image appeal to? What do you associate with this image, and why? What do you think the author wants you to feel about a certain image?

*Tone questions: Tone refers to the author's attitude or position toward the action, characters, narrator, subject, and readers of the story. To determine the tone of a story, the reader must look at the language the author uses and decide what effect the author's choice of words has.*

- What is the author's attitude towards actions or events?
- Is the story funny or tragic or frightening? Does the author want you to laugh or cry, to feel happy or sad to experience anger or fear?
- What is the author's attitude towards characters or the narrator? Does the author like or dislike, trust or distrust the characters or the narrator?

*Theme questions: The theme is the central idea, topic, or point of the story.*

- What was the author's purpose in writing the story?
- Does the story have a theme?
- What lesson or message does the author want the reader to understand from the story?

*Activity after analyzing short story:*

Students will be required to write a summary of the story. Kemper, Nathan, Elsholz and Sebranek explains, “When you write a summary, you choose only the most important ideas from a reading selection. Then you use your own words to combine these ideas into a simple paragraph or two.”<sup>7</sup>

*Lesson 3: Objectives: W.4.10, W.5.2*

*Day 4: Activity: Journal exercise*

Students will be asked to think about a time they felt scared and answer the questions below in their notebook, journal writing section.

- How old were you the first time you felt scared?
- Where were you when you first felt scared? Be as specific as possible.
- Who was around when you first felt scared? What was your relationship with anyone who was around?
- Who or what caused you to feel scared?
- Why did it make you feel scared?

- How did your fear manifest itself: What did you do, or not do? What did you want to do?
- How did anyone around you act or react?
- When did the feeling end? Why?

Students will then revisit short story, “Jodie's Daddy is a Garbage man” from Day 2, looking for the various kind of emotions experienced in the story.

*Whole Group Activity: Mini Lesson on letter writing*

Students will be informed that they will be writing a letter to the person that made them feel sad or scared. They will use the information from their journal writing to decide who they will be writing their letter to. Students will be instructed to be clear, detailed and specific. They need to make that person aware exactly what they did to make them feel that emotion. Their letter will be written in the letter section of their notebook."

*Students will then be asked to identify the different parts of a letter.*

The different parts of a letter are:

- **Heading:** Includes the address and the date, in some cases it is okay to just write the date.
- **Greeting:** The greeting usually starts with 'Dear' and is followed by the person's name and then a comma.
- **Body:** After skipping a line, you begin the body of your letter which is the main text of your letter. Indent for each paragraph.
- **Closing:** The closing includes a short capitalized expression such as 'Sincerely' or 'Love' and is followed by a comma. Skip a line after the body before writing your closing.
- **Signature:** You sign your name directly below the closing.

A sample copy of a letter will be completed on the working anchor chart for reference as the unit progresses.

A copy of my letter written during one of my seminars will be used as a model. My letter was written to my sister who often made me feel sad, mad and frustrated. The original letter was changed to make appropriate for my classroom.

*Lesson 4: Objectives: W.4.10, SL.4.4, RI .4.3*

*Day 5: Activity: Journal exercise*

Students will be asked to write about the answers from Day 3 in their journals. They will be instructed to write until they hear the timer. Write without thinking about spelling or grammar. Just Write!

### *Whole Group Activity*

Before reading Ruth and the Green Book, I will briefly share my thoughts about going on family vacations. Going on family vacations when I was younger was always exciting. Visiting relatives and stopping at new hotels was lot of fun. In their journals, students will write about a time they went on a family vacation. What was it like? How did they feel? Were there any incidents that made them sad? Happy?

### *Next: Interactive Read Aloud*

Read historic fiction story, Ruth and the Green Book by Calvin Alexander Ramsey and Floyd Cooper. In this historical fiction book, a young girl tells about her adventures with her family while traveling. They are headed to Alabama to see Ruth's grandmother. Along the way they learn that as African-Americans they are not welcome at most hotels, restaurants or gas stations. The parents are angry and Ruth is sad.

- Students look at the cover of the book and predict what the book is going to be about.
- After reading pages 1 to 6, ask, "Why do you think the family couldn't use the restroom? How do you think they felt having to go in the woods?"
- After reading page 7, ask, "Why did the man behind the desk shake his head and turn his back?"
- After reading pages 8 thru 10, ask, "Why was Ruth homesick?"
- After reading pages 11, ask, "How did Ruth feel at Eddy's house?"
- After reading pages 12 thru 14, ask, "What are Jim Crow Laws?"
- After reading pages 15 thru 17, ask, "Why did Ruth say it was like coming home when they got to the tourist's home?"
- After reading pages 18 thru 20, ask, "How do you think the family felt when the car broke down? When people drove by?"
- After reading pages 21 thru 24, ask, "Why did Ruth give her bear to the little boy?"

### *Activity: Four Square Writing Method*

Using the Four Square Writing Method and the writing process, students will write an essay from Ruth's perspective about her trip. Students will think about these questions as they are writing their essay:

- What did you learn over your trip?
- How did you feel about your trip?
- Why do you think people at Esso stations were nice to you and your family?
- Why didn't you know about Jim Crow laws before your trip?
- Do you think your family was brave to travel in the south during this time period?

- How have laws and people's opinion about race changed since the 50s?

*Lesson 5: Objectives: W.4.10, RF4.4b*

*Day 6: Activity: Journal exercise and reading and understanding poetry.*

Students will be encouraged to write about the poems they have read by thinking about the following questions.

- Would you choose to write about the same subject as the poet? Why? Or why not?
- If you could add a line or two to the poem, what would you write?
- Write a new title for the poem. Explain why you choose that title.
- *Activity: analyzing and writing poem*

Getting out of bed in the morning is a struggle for some of us for a variety of reasons. With this in mind, “Why I Will Not Get Out of Bed” by Liz Enagonio, will be read with the intentions of having students reflect on their own emotional state when they have, unwillingly gotten out of their own bed. Students will then analyze the poem with the questions below in mind. Questions will then be written on working anchor chart.

- What is the poem about?
- What type, or what style of poem is it?
- Does the poem rhyme?
- How does the poem make you feel?
- List five words from the poem that peak your interest.
- What is your favorite line from the poem?
- What other things does this poem make you think of?
- What message do you think the poet is trying to get across?

Using the writing process, students will write their own free verse poem, poetry that does not follow a specific form and usually does not rhyme. Poem will be titled, “Why I Will Not Get Out of Bed.”

*Lesson 6: W.4.10, RF. 4.4b*

*Day 7: Journal activity and letter writing*

Students will use the pictures on their notebooks to journal. They will journal until they hear the timer. They will journal without thinking about grammar and spelling.

Students will listen to poem, “This Is Just To Say” by William Carlos Williams. Using the working anchor chart students will analyze poem. Next, students will be encouraged to think of something they have done that they know they should apologize for, but they are having a difficult time doing. Once the incident has been identified, students will

write an apology letter to that individual. Apology letters should be divided into three sections:

- Describe what they did
- Describe why they did it
- Apologize for doing it

Students will revisit working anchor chart to remind them of the parts of a letter.

Lesson 7: *Objective: W.4.1*

Day 8: *Write an opinion piece*

We all have opinions and some of us would like to share them. One good way to share your opinion is to write a persuasive essay. The goal is to convince someone to agree with you. The best way to do this is by supporting your opinion with facts and details. Kemper, Nathan, Elsholz and Sebranek explains, “When you carefully organize your thoughts into a persuasive essay, you make your opinion more convincing to your readers.”<sup>8</sup>

Students will be given “Would You Rather” prompt that states, “Would you Rather” Never be able to watch TV again? Or never be able to go on the computer again? Students will then be instructed to write the title of their claim in the middle of their four squares, this will be followed by one general reason in square one with three specific ideas related to that reason. In square two they will write general reason number two with three specific ideas related to that reason. Next, they will write general reason number three with three specific ideas related to that reason. Square number four will have concluding sentences. Students will then use the information in their four squares to draft, revise and publish their persuasive essay.

## Appendix 1: Implementing Common Core Standards

CCSS. ELA. W.4.1 - Students will write opinion pieces on topics or texts, supporting a point of view with reasons and information.

CCSS.ELA. W.4.2 - Students will write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.

CCSS. ELA. W.4.3 - Students will write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.

CCSS. ELA. W.4.4 - Students will produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS. ELA. W.4.5 - With guidance and support from peers and adults, students will develop and strengthen their writing as needed by planning, revising and editing.

CCSS. ELA. W.4.6 - With some guidance and support from adults, students will use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others: students will demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in a single sitting.

CCSS. ELA. W.4.8 - Students will recall relevant information from experiences or gather relevant information from print and digital sources; students will take notes and categorize information, and provide a list of sources.

CCSS. ELA. W. 4.9 - Students will draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS. ELA. W.4.10 – Students will write routinely over extended time frames and shorter time frames for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

CCSS. ELA. L. 4.1 – Students will demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCSS. ELA. L. 4.2 – Students will demonstrate command of the convention of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

CCSS. ELA. L.4.3 – Students will use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.

CCSS.ELA. RL.4.10 – By the end of the year, students will read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poetry.



## **Materials for classroom use**

Notebook for journaling and writing exercises.

Anchor charts will be used for students to refer back to as they complete their written assignments.

Would You Rather card for persuasive writing.

Four Square graphic organizer for writing.

## **Resources for Students**

X. J. Kennedy, “An Introduction to Poetry.” Harper Collins Publishers. 1990.

This book has a great collections of poems that can be used to encourage and motivate students to write.

Matthew Licht. “Jodie’s Daddy is a Garbageman!” Short Stories,  
[www.eastoftheweb.com](http://www.eastoftheweb.com)

This is an excellent short story about the various issues students face at school.

Calvin Alexander Ramsey.” Ruth and the Green Book.” First Scholastic printing.  
September, 2012.

This is a great book to have discussions about emotions. It can also be used to discuss The Civil Rights Movement from a child’s perspective. This is a story about a young girl and her family taking a vacation in the 1950s and the prejudice they encountered along the way.

## **Bibliography for Teachers**

Calvin Alexander Ramsey. "Ruth and the Green Book." First Scholastic printing. September, 2012.

This is a great book to have discussions about emotions.

Dave Kemper, Ruth Nathan, Carol Elsholz and Patrick Sebranek. "Writers Express". Houghton Mifflin Company. 2000.

This is a handbook to assist teachers with the writing process, the forms of writing and different learning tools for students.

Judith S. Gould and Evan Jay Gould. "Four Square Writing Method." Teaching and Learning Company. 1999.

This is a resource to teach students basic writing skills.

Paul Lima. "Unblock Writer's Block how to face it, deal with it and overcome it." Paul Lima Presents. 2013.

This is a great book with a number of writing exercises to get you to start writing and to keep writing.

S.J. Scott. "Writing Habit Mastery." Archangel Ink. January 2014.

This book contains ways to help you overcome writer's block.

Mark David Gerson. "Writer's Block Unblocked." MDG Media International. 2013.

This is a great resource to get you involved in writing again.

"Would You Rather?" writing prompt cards for opinion/persuasive writing, Really Good Stuff, Item #161917, <http://www.reallygoodstuff.com>, 2014.

## Endnotes<sup>i</sup>

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1. Mark David Gerson, *Writer's Block Unblocked: Seven Surefire Ways to Free Up Your Writing and Creative Flow* (MDG Media International, 2014), 59.

2. Paul Lima, *Unblock Writer's Block How to face it, deal with it and overcome it* (Canada: Paul Lima Presents, 2013), 52

3. Ibid., 51.

4. S.J. Scott, *Writing Habit Mastery: How to Write 2,000 Words a Day and Forever Cure Writer's Block* (Archangel Ink, 2014), 23

5. Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary (Massachusetts, 2002).

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