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# Ms. Soloway's 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Class 2015

See below for newsletter and text reminder sign-up information

“Words are, in my not so humble opinion, our most inexhaustible source of magic. Capable of both inflicting injury and remedying it.”

~ Albus Dumbledore ~

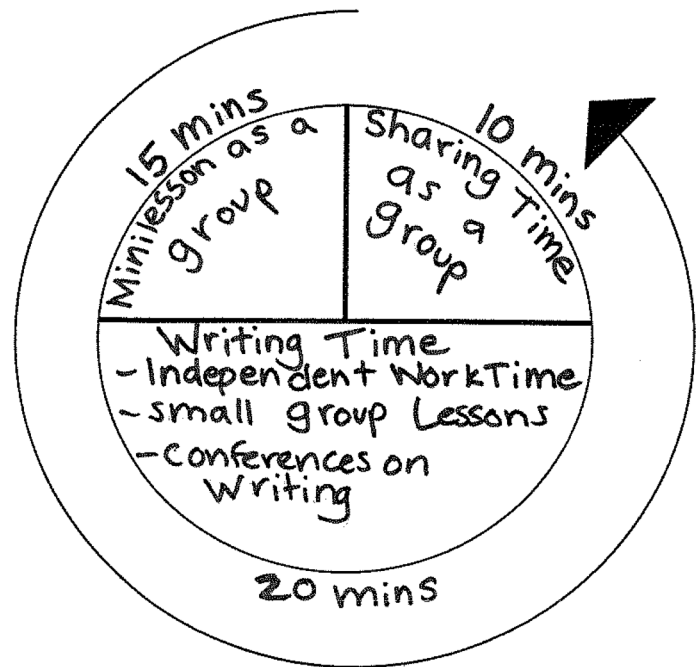
## Welcome,

to the 2015-2016 school year here at

Conestoga Middle School and Ms. Soloway's 7<sup>th</sup> grade Writing classroom. I am excited to be teaching writing because it gives you the opportunity to share your unique experience the world. My hope for this year is that every student has the opportunity to create at least one piece of writing that they feel truly proud of. This year is going to be full to the brim with learning opportunities. To make sure you to have all the information you need to be successful this year. I have answered some Frequently Asked Questions. Be sure to hang onto your syllabus so that you can look up this information later in the year.

### What will we be doing in writing class?

You will have the opportunity to learn about many types of writing including narrative, informative, and argumentative. We will also have several opportunities to explore and write poetry. We will be using the writer's workshop classroom model. Each day we will start class as a group to address new concepts and skills. Then you will then put the concepts and skills into action during their writing time. This time may be used for independent writing, small group lessons with me, working with their peers, using the computers to type or research, or conferencing about their writing. To end class we will have an opportunity to share what we have been working on. We will use this model throughout the writing process starting with reading mentor texts and collecting ideas to creating a final draft and publishing.



### Will we have fun?

It is up to you. If you come to class prepared and you are willing to take chances and try something new we can have a great adventure together.

## **What do I need to bring with me to class?**

Good question! This is very important. Writers have several tools that they need in order to really get going with their work. For our class you will need:

- a spiral notebook (you will actually need 4 of these this year. We will be starting a new one every 9 weeks). You will be keeping EVERYTHING in this spiral so it is important to have it EVERY DAY. No excuses. There will be a place for you to keep it in the classroom.
- a pencil and a pen. I will not be providing writing utensils! Find a pencil or pen that is your favorite to write with, you should like the way it feels in your hand and the way it writes. Having the right tools is very important. This too could be left in the classroom.
- You will also need to bring your school planner with you. It is important to keep track of what you are working on so that you don't miss important deadlines. Even professional writers have to meet deadlines.
- The last thing you need to bring every day, and this one is very important, is a sense of adventure. You should be ready to explore your mind, the writings of others, and the limitations of our language. The more sense of adventure you bring, the more exciting our class will be.

## **What if I don't get my work in on time?**

It is very important to complete your work by the assigned due date. However, we all have situations in our lives that get in the way. If you find yourself in this situation don't fret, all is not lost:

- If you didn't get it in because you were absent, just turn the assignment in as soon as you return.
- If you didn't get it in because you are struggling with the assignment you should do several things: 1. Talk to me as soon as it becomes clear that you won't finish on time, I am happy to give you an extension. 2. Ask for help! Don't struggle alone. I am very happy to meet with you to figure out where you are stuck. 3. Finish and turn in the assignment within a week of the original due date.

If there is something going on that is stopping you from getting your work done on time please communicate with me.

## **What should I do if my parent or I need to talk to you or get information about our class ?**

Technology is great. There are many ways to get in contact or get information that you need. Here are the steps you should take:

1. Check my website ([www.solowayteach.weebly.com](http://www.solowayteach.weebly.com)). I will post lots of helpful things here. If you are absent you can find out what we did in class and even download handouts, notes, and assignments.
2. Send me an email ([molly\\_soloway@beaverton.k12.or.us](mailto:molly_soloway@beaverton.k12.or.us))
3. Sign up to get text alerts. That way when I have something really important say it will just pop up on your phone! \*(this is for parents too!) You can do this by sending a text to 81010 that says @msolowa. That's it! How cool!
4. Sign up to receive my classroom newsletter. This will have similar information as my website but it will arrive right in your inbox once or twice a week. It will have updates on what we are working on, reminders about important dates, helpful resources, and even some student work. There is a place to sign up for this on my webpage and I will be sending it out by email as well \*(this is also for parents too!)

## How will you figure out what my grade is?

You will be getting two kinds of grades. The first kind is your academic grade. On your progress reports this grade will be a number between 1 and 4. On your semester grades though it will be a letter grade. The second grade you will be receiving is your behavior grade. This grade will be a C, I, G, or R. Here is some more information about each of these grades:

### Academic Grade

You will be graded on your ongoing growth in class throughout the year. You will also be graded on the final drafts of your writing in all three writing modes (informative, narrative, and argumentative).

- 1 --**Working Towards Proficiency** = beginning understanding of the topic, often minimal response, needs substantial correction or completion
- 2-- **Nearing Proficiency** = partial understanding, or inaccurate understanding, needs correction or completion
- 3-- **Proficient** = work that consistently meets the standard and shows adequate understanding of the topic
- 4 --**Highly Proficient** = strong work that shows student has thorough understanding of the topic and could apply it to an unknown situation

### Behavior

Your behavior grade will be based on your organization and willingness to participate and try new skills and strategies during writer's workshop. This will also include how you treat your classmates and support our classroom environment. This grade is really important. Part of learning is putting in the effort along the way. You might notice that most students who get an A also have a C/I in behavior.

- C/I-- Consistently / Independently** = the expected behavior is demonstrated consistently and independently by the student.
- G --Generally** = the expected behavior is usually demonstrated by the student. Sometimes they need reminders, but when prompted, the student corrects their behavior.
- R --Rarely** = Improvement is needed in the expected behavior. The student does not demonstrate the expected behavior, or needs frequent reminders or re-teaching to demonstrate the behavior.

You will be graded on learning targets. These targets tell about what you are working on learning. There is one target for behavior and four targets for academics. They are listed on the next page to help you understand what we will be working on this year.

## **Behavior Learning Target (BLT):**

*I can manage my responsibilities as a student.*

- I turn in work on time.
- I use my class time appropriately.
- I prepare for class with necessary materials and am ready to learn.
- I use a system for tracking my assignments.
- I follow directions accurately.
- I demonstrate quality craftsmanship in my work.

## **Academic Learning Targets (ALT):**

**Language 1:** *I can use conventions and language correctly.*

**AST 1.1 - Conventions:** I can use conventions and language to enhance my writing.

**AST 1.2 - Pronouns:** I can use pronouns correctly.

**AST 1.3 - Spelling and Punctuation:** I can spell correctly and use punctuation to set off details related to the subject.

**AST 1.4 - Sentence Patterns:** I can vary sentence patterns and maintain style and tone.

**Writing 1:** *I can write arguments to support claims.*

**AST.1.1 - Writing Style:** I can produce writing in a style appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**AST 1.2 - Writing Process:** I can use the writing process.

**AST 1.3 - Reasons and Evidence:** I can introduce claim(s), acknowledge opposing claims, and organize the reasons and evidence clearly.

**AST 1.4 - Transitional Words:** I can use transitional words and phrases to create clarity.

**AST 1.5- Conclusion:** I can provide a supportive concluding statement or section.

**Writing 2:** *I can write informative/explanatory texts.*

**AST 2.1 - Writing Style:** I can produce writing in a style appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**AST 2.2 - Writing Process:** I can use the writing process.

**AST 2.3 - Thesis Statement:** I can introduce a topic clearly using a thesis statement and organize ideas.

**AST 2.4 - Develop a Topic:** I can develop a topic using relevant facts, information, and examples.

**AST 2.5 - Transitional Words:** I can use transitional words and phrases to create cohesion and clarity.

**AST 2.6 - Precise Language:** I can use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to explain the topic.

**AST 2.7 - Conclusion:** I can provide a concluding statement or section that supports the information.

**Writing 3:** *I can write narrative texts.*

**AST 3.1 - Engagement:** I can engage and orient the reader in my writing.

**AST 3.2 - Writing Process:** I can use the writing process.

**AST 3.3 - Narrative Techniques:** I can use narrative techniques.

**AST 3.4 - Transitional Words:** I can use transitional words and phrases to convey sequence.

**AST 3.5 - Precise Language:** I can use precise language, relevant description, and sensory details.

**AST 3.6 - Conclusion:** I can provide a conclusion of the narrated experiences or events.