



High School Teachers: use BOSTON TEENS IN PRINT in class!

CURRICULUM GUIDE

for March 2009 issue

Write a “Take Me There” Story

Have students read “My dream high school job” by Ryan Ward and ask them to write a “Take Me There” story in the same vein.

- They can focus the story on **describing a place**, OR
- They can focus the story on **describing a job or chore**, OR
- They can do both.

Make vivid description the goal. Ask students what stands out about Ward’s story, what takes them inside the job of a Fenway vendor. As they pick out sensory details, anecdotes, and quotes, they can mark them and then try these techniques on their own.

DESCRIBING A PLACE Get students started with a visualization exercise or a photo. Have them close their eyes and go back to a place, a moment, a time. Or get them started with a phrase like “I’ll never forget how crowded it was in...” or “The quietest place I’ve ever been was...” or “It was so cold/hot that day...”

DESCRIBING A JOB Students choose from a list of jobs/chores or brainstorm their own list and narrow it down to one and then freewrite.

Washing dishes	Painting the house
Doing laundry	Mopping the floor
Cleaning the bathroom	Cleaning your room
Changing a tire	Dusting
Taking out the trash	Vacuuming
Cooking	Pulling weeds
Babysitting	Picking up trash

Write an *Informed Opinion*

Students practicing writing opinion, persuasion, and argument can read “At home drug tests: parental prying or sensibility?”, “More sex ed is needed,” “Helping ESL students achieve their goals,” and “Hate your school lunch? BPS wants to know” and analyze the degree to which the writers succeeded to persuade them as readers.

Ask students to identify the **purpose** and **audience** for each piece as well as the writer’s **main points**.

Students can evaluate the strength of each writer’s claim.

Students can then practice with an issue they feel strongly about. They can list ideas under four categories: “Something that really makes me mad is...” or “A lot of my friends are talking about...” or “These days, my family is worried about...” or “Something I see around my neighborhood that bothers me is...” Then, they can pick one issue that most resonates with them and freewrite about it.

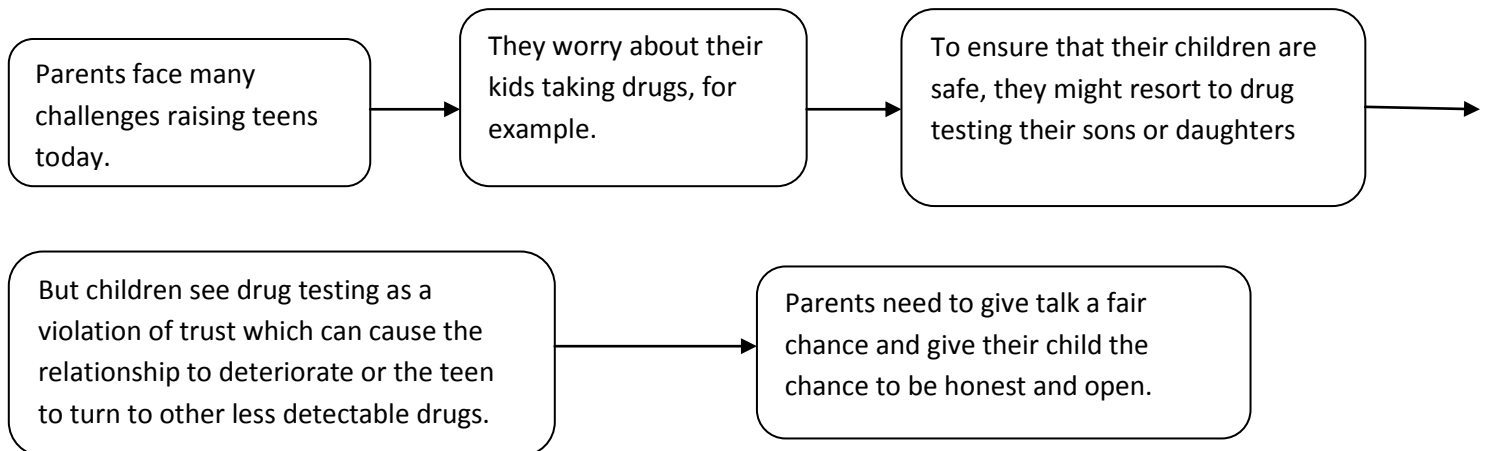
Help students form stronger arguments and write **concession thesis statements** by requiring them to consider each side of an issue.

SAMPLE CONCESSION THESIS:

Although raising teens today may feel more challenging than ever, parents who use at-home drug tests risk destroying their child’s trust.

Practice having students research BOTH sides of an issue they feel strongly about—an issue on which they have a firm position. Require that they do some pointed research (including interviews) on the side they disagree with.

Then students should plan and write an essay using a concession thesis. They can shape their freewrites into something more formal by following a “kernel essay” format. For example:



Each bubble becomes a paragraph that the student should develop with reasons, facts, quotes, and statistics. Students can use the kernel essay to plan an essay on any issue. Walk them through a few sample topics until they get the idea.

Write a Problem/Solution Essay

Students can also read “At home drug tests: parental prying or sensibility?”, “More sex ed is needed,” and “Hate your school lunch? BPS wants to know” as examples of stories that follow a problem/solution framework.

They can identify an issue in their school or life, define it, research it and then propose solutions for it.

They might use a template like this:

1. DEFINE THE PROBLEM

Begin with yourself

What do you know about the problem?

Others

Ask others what they know about the problem. Write down relevant or thoughtful quotes from the people you talk to. If you uncover opposing views, capture quotes that represent each “side.”

Experts

Look up some resources on the subject and see what you can learn about it from experts. Try for .gov or .edu websites. Academic and professional journals and newspaper articles are OK too. Some .orgs are OK if they are not partisan. Fedstats.gov is the place to go for statistics.

2. PROPOSE SOLUTIONS

Follow the same protocol you just used: think for yourself, ask others, and then go to the experts.

3. WRITE THE ARTICLE

Don't forget the following!

- Who are you writing to?
- What are you trying to tell them? Why should they care?

- Start with a story, fact or statistic that will grab the reader’s attention.
- Assume your reader knows nothing. Answer WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY and HOW.
- Define the problem. *Be as specific as possible.*
 - Use statistics, facts, reasons.
 - If it’s not a new problem, what is the status today? Has the problem gotten worse recently? Why?
 - Think impact or “So What?” Include some of the quotes you got from interviews.
- Propose solutions. *Again, be as specific as possible.*
 - Use quotes, statistics, or facts that support the solution.
 - Is the solution you are proposing timely and realistic to the *current* version of the problem?
 - Explain HOW this solution will work. What will it change? What are the implications or long term effects of your solution? What if no one does anything?

UPCOMING SUBMISSION DEADLINES

For the May 2009 paper: April 7

See submission guidelines on page 3 of Teens in Print.

As always, we welcome your feedback about the paper. We also love to hear how you incorporate it into your classroom instruction!

Thanks for reading,

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