

Day 12 (2/23): This I Believe



Author: Erica Smith 02/22/2011 05:34:00 PM EDT

VITAL INFORMATION

Subject(s): Language Arts (English)

Grade/Level: 11

Time Frame: 80 minutes

Learning Context: The students have been reflecting on beliefs that they hold since the unit began; the writer's notebooks are filled with the students' beliefs in agreement or disagreement with characters from Looking for Alaska.

Objectives and Understandings: ST: Students will be able to reflect back on all of the lessons that we have had on Looking for Alaska, including literary elements and techniques, the 5 stages of grief, prepositions, and main themes within the text.

ST: Students will be able to write a personal essay about a belief that they possess, in 350-500 words.

ST: Students will be able to recognize the characteristics of a personal essay versus the characteristics of a transactive piece of writing.

LT: Students will be able to understand the difference between transactive and personal essay writing.

LT: Students will be able to write a personal essay using the standard characteristics such as informal language, conciseness, a one-sentence thesis that states the belief in the first paragraph, the story is in chronological order, the story is told in narrative form, the story is personal, and the story is told in the first person point-of-view.

Essential Questions: What is the difference between transactive writing and personal essays?

Which belief forms one of the moral guidelines of my life?

Rationale: **Administrators:** Students will be able to use Looking for Alaska on the Regents exam because they will remember the themes, literary elements, and prepositional lessons that were taught during the unit. Students will also be able to write personal essays and note the differences between personal essays and transactive writing; this differentiation is a part of the NYS 11th grade standards.

Students: You will be able to write a personal essay (which is important when you are applying to college or trade schools because they are usually a part of the application process.)

Critical Pedagogues: Students will be able to write personal essays and to note the characteristic differentials between transactive writing and writing personal essays. Writing personal essays will allow students to reflect on their own beliefs and to become empowered through the realization that have positive attributes.

Background Knowledge and Skills: Students need to understand the difference between transactive writing and writing a personal essay.

Students need to understand what a belief is and how it influences their life.

Standards:

 **NY- New York State Standards**

- **Subject:** English Language Arts (1996)
 - **Learning Standard 1 :** Language for Information and Understanding
Students will listen, speak, read, and write for information and understanding.

As listeners and readers, students will collect data, facts, and ideas; discover relationships, concepts, and generalizations; and use knowledge generated from oral, written, and electronically produced texts. As speakers and writers, they will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language to acquire, interpret, apply, and transmit information.

- **Level :** Commencement
 - **Key Idea :** Listening and Reading
 - **Performance Indicator :** Use a combination of techniques (e.g., previewing, use of advance organizers, structural cues) to extract salient information from texts.
 - **Performance Indicator :** Make perceptive and well developed connections to prior knowledge.
 - **Key Idea :** Speaking and Writing
 - **Performance Indicator :** Present a controlling idea that conveys an individual perspective and insight into the topic.
 - **Performance Indicator :** Use a wide range of organizational patterns such as chronological, logical (both deductive and inductive), cause and effect, and comparison/contrast.
 - **Performance Indicator :** Use standard English skillfully, applying established rules and conventions for presenting information and making use of a wide range of grammatical constructions and vocabulary to achieve an individual style that communicates effectively.

- **Learning Standard 2 :** Language for Literary Response and Expression
Students will read, write, listen, and speak for literary response and expression.

Students will read and listen to oral, written, and electronically produced texts and performances from American and world literature; relate texts and performances to their own lives; and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for self-expression and artistic creation.

- **Level :** Commencement
 - **Key Idea :** Listening and Reading
 - **Performance Indicator :** Identify the distinguishing features of different literary genres, periods and traditions and use those features to interpret the work
 - **Key Idea :** Speaking and Writing
 - **Performance Indicator :** Write original pieces in a variety of literary forms, correctly using the conventions of the genre and using structure and vocabulary to achieve an effect
 - **Performance Indicator :** Use standard English skillfully and with an individual style

Summary:

Students will be taking a quiz on Looking for Alaska. Students will then be learning about the differences between transactive writing and personal essays; we will begin working on ways to deduce the belief that students want to write about for their essay.

Procedure (Including Motivation and Closure):

- Collect completed homework.
- Take the quiz on Looking for Alaska.
- Go over the ending of the book; what do students think about death? What is one thing that they have discovered about themselves through this unit?
- We will go over the requirements for the end project that they must turn in by Wednesday, March 2.
- We will go over writing task from page 17-18 on the "This I Believe" essay.

- We will listen to a few of the NPR "This I Believe" essays (2 times for each one). I want the students to write down the belief (thesis) of each person's essay.
- We will then go over how long the essay should be.
- I will give the students a sample essay; working in groups, I will have the students decide what vital characteristics constitute "This I Believe" essays.
- We will go over the characteristics that they discovered, and we will go over the rubric for their essays, as well as the formal characteristics of the "This I Believe" essay.
- We will compare the formal characteristics of a personal essay to those of transactive writing. I will give the students a hand-out that lists the genres of writing that constitute transactive writing. We will also go over two forms of transactive writing: a business letter, and article from paper.
- We will work on developing a thesis (the belief)
- Students will begin to write down their own beliefs; we will first go over the page "What Do You Think?" on page 15 of their packets. Then I will have the students begin to answer the questions on page 13 in their writer's notebooks.

Extension: Students will complete the questions from page 13 in their writer's notebooks, and they will come up with two or three beliefs that they could write about in an essay. The beliefs must be accompanied by a quick personal story.

Sample Student Products:

Differentiated Instruction: I will follow students' IEP's for the quiz; I will be walking around, helping students if they need it.

Assessment/Rubrics: I will check the students' homework tomorrow.

Reflections on Teaching:

Materials, Resources, and/or Handouts:

1. Quiz on Looking for Alaska.
2. Rubric for requirements of final project DUE: March 2.
3. "This I Believe" Essay writing task (pg 17-18).
4. Sample essay from the packet (pg. 11).
5. Rubric for their essays (pg. 19).
6. Hand-out with characteristics of transactive writing (with 2 examples).
7. What Do You Think? (page 15)
8. Writer's notebook questions (pg 13)