

write

young voices across the globe

EDUCATORS' NOTES / VOL 2

the

world



Dear Teachers,

We hope you find this Educators' Supplement to be a useful accompaniment to our journal—*Young Voices Across the Globe*. Inside you will find a range of resources to assist you in establishing a regular writing practice with your students, and indeed a thriving writing culture at your school.

These resources include:

-  **3** **A guide on how to establish best practice peer review with your students.**
-  **7** **Write the World prompts—perfect to kick-start a regular writing practice.**
-  **12** **Tips on setting up and running a successful writers' club at your school.**
-  **15** **Ideas on how to bring “real world” writing opportunities into the classroom.**

We encourage you to visit our website, www.writetheworld.com, where you can put all these ideas into practice in our global community of educators and young writers. For more information about using the *Write the World* website in the classroom, go to www.writetheworld.com/educators.

If you have any feedback on our journal or website, we would love to hear from you. Please get in touch via email at hello@writetheworld.com.

We wish you a wonderful year of writing,

The *Write the World* team



Peer Review in the Classroom

A Sample Lesson Plan

I love how reviewing my peers' work makes me more appreciative of others' writing. In the first place, in order to balance encouragement and criticism, I must point out many places where I feel the writer has succeeded, so I am forced to concentrate on all the positives in the piece, great and small. In the second place—and for me this has come much more gradually—I have learned that just because a piece doesn't align with my own writing style, or I don't like a piece, doesn't mean I can't appreciate it. And this law applies to and helps me in many other areas of my life as well.

Hanan Adi
Young Writer, United Arab Emirates



Nancy Sommers describes the art of giving feedback as “helping fellow writers understand what they want to say before they’ve said it.” As a teacher of writing at Harvard’s Graduate School of Education (and prior to that at Harvard College), she has spent the last two decades studying how feedback influences the writing process. Inspired by Sommers’ work, *Write the World* seeks to help writers grow through the interaction that feedback affords. Rather than “red pen” edits (mistakes circled, passages cut out, and margin comments giving only criticism), our expert reviewers and student ambassadors strive to offer feedback that opens up possibilities for a writer and inspires them to get to work on their next draft.

But how do we transfer this type of reviewing to the high school classroom, where students are offering feedback to one another? As Claudine Fernandez explains, “In my experience as an English and Literature teacher, I have observed that writing peer reviews may not come naturally to most students. In fact, many students whom I have taught were at first skeptical about the effectiveness of peer reviews in the writing process. They would much rather receive feedback from the teacher.”

We developed the following lesson plan with these challenges in mind.

LESSON PLAN: An Introduction to Peer Review

Part One

- Have students bring to mind an experience in which they shared a piece of writing and received feedback that shut them down; rather than feeling inspired to continue expanding and refining their work, they were left feeling discouraged.
- Spend five to ten minutes writing about this experience.
- Share with the rest of the group: have students share their stories and then reflect on what qualities of the feedback caused them to shut down. Why did the feedback have this unintended effect?
- Explain that lots of students and writers of all ages feel the same way when they receive feedback that shuts down the writing process and discourages them from wanting to work on their draft.

Part Two

- Have students spend five to ten minutes jotting down ideas in response to the following questions:
 1. Based on the experiences you've just identified, what are the qualities of a review that would encourage and inspire a writer to return to their draft?
 2. How can constructive feedback be given in a way that is growth-oriented rather than critical?
- As students share, compose a list of "Peer Review Guidelines" to post in the classroom.

For Reference

The following Reviewing Guidelines were developed according to Nancy Sommers's extensive research on written feedback, and with the help of our Peer Review Ambassadors—a rotating group of students from around the globe who help us cultivate a positive culture of feedback on the *Write the World* site. These might be helpful for you to consider as you and your students build your own set of classroom guidelines.

Reviewing Guidelines:

Feedback DOs

- Always begin by praising what is working.
- Be specific. Find concrete moments in a piece to praise or critique.
- Use a supportive, encouraging tone. What would you say to someone about their work if they were sitting right next to you? Read over your review to make sure you're striking the right tone.
- Offer comments that prompt the writer to think about his or her choices. Ask questions!

- End on a positive note. Remember that letting a writer know what's working is often the most important feedback we can give.

Feedback DON'Ts

- Avoid being nitpicky. Instead, read holistically and review a piece as a sum of its parts.
- Remember that most writers are working on an early draft. Look to help the writer expand, rather than shut down.
- Avoid trying to make the piece your own; respect the voice and style of the writer.
- Avoid offering specific solutions to problems; instead, guide the writer to find her own solutions.

Further Tips on Giving Constructive Feedback

Our biggest objective when giving feedback is to help other writers grow and expand. Often, we do this with positive feedback. Writers commonly don't know what's working (and therefore lack the confidence to put the pen to the page) unless they hear from readers that their words are meaningful and interesting. But it's also important to help students become stronger writers with constructive feedback.

Here are some methods to play with:

- Choose a couple of elements to focus on. Offering constructive feedback on more than two elements in the piece can make the writer feel overwhelmed and less likely to engage with the feedback.
- Be curious. Try framing your feedback as a question or series of questions. This can help the writer think about their story in new ways.
- Make suggestions rather than demands. For example, you could say: "What would it be like to open with this paragraph instead?" Or: "Perhaps introducing this idea to the reader earlier would help build the reader's investment in the piece."
- Be concrete. Rather than saying "this is vague", explain what kind of additional detail would help clarify or strengthen the writing. If you are making a general comment, such as "paragraph breaks would help me better digest your ideas", point out an example from the text so the writer knows what you're referring to.
- Frame your "criticism" around the piece's strengths. Let the writer know, for example, if there are places where some of their convincing evidence or use of powerful short sentences could be expanded.

Writing peer reviews for *Write the World* has given me the invaluable opportunity to learn how to give feedback in a way that balances constructive criticism with kindness. It has also helped me to refine my own craft as I have been exposed to the work of countless other writers of my age group and have thus observed different techniques and manners of writing that I can apply to my own. I have learned a great deal about what does and what does not work in crafting a well constructed piece and feel that I have grown as a writer because of it.

Grace Cassidy
Young Writer, Australia



Writing peer reviews for *Write the World* has definitely helped me with my writing skills, in both giving constructive feedback to other writers and seeing the different elements of my own writing in a different light. However, I think this experience will reach far beyond just my writing skills. As a result of writing peer reviews regularly, it has become much easier for me to voice my opinion during class, club meetings, or any sort of discussion or negotiation I face. It has even helped me in my personal life; I'm better at giving my friends helpful advice, I have a better work ethic, and I feel more confident speaking up, and I even feel more prepared for college writing. Reviewing for *Write the World* helped me make a lot of improvements in my life in only 11 weeks.

Phoebe Lease
Young Writer, USA



2

A Selection of *Write the World* Prompts

Designed to inspire students of all writing abilities, *Write the World* prompts draw on real-world examples to illustrate the boundless nature of the craft of writing. We've found that prompts can encourage new ways of thinking, even for the most reluctant student; helping young writers push beyond their comfort zones and experiment with new topics and styles.

You may have noticed that the journal sections are organized by prompt titles and subtitles, followed by student writing. For example:

Quartet

A character in four details.

On our website, however, the prompt appears with more details; a description, guidelines, an example response written by one of our young writers, and questions to guide peer review as outlined below:

Quartet

FIRST LINE – Capture a character in four details.

“He let his beard grow and traveled to America, read Arthur Rimbaud, and wrote poems.”

So begins the short story by Norwegian author Ari Behn, “When a Dollar Was a Big Deal”. In just one sentence, Behn creates an intriguing character that pulls the reader into the story. Rather than relying on generic details (“his hair was brown”), Behn chooses specific attributes (“he let his beard grow”) that give the reader a sense of action and agency. In fact, all four details are delivered as verbs.

This week, dear writers, try your hand at beginning a short story with this same format: four details that capture a character. Extra kudos for using four verbs, as young writer Tacita does here in “o the beloved”:

Student Response:

o the beloved

by Tacita, USA

She trimmed her hair, her nails, her fangs. She packed her bag full of everything she had left of what she loved. She ate her shadow, and then she left.

footnote: runaway

Peer Review Questions

Which detail reveals the most about this character? Why?

What else would you like to know about this character, based on these four details?

Below, you'll find several prompts in their full form to use in your own writing classroom. At the bottom of each prompt, note the page number indicating where young writers' responses to these prompts appear in the journal. You'll also notice that each prompt includes two to three peer review questions. Designed to help students engage with the work of their peers, these questions guide the reviewer to offer positive and constructive feedback. Open-ended and reflective in nature, our peer review questions guide students in becoming rigorous and thoughtful reviewers.

Using these prompts in conjunction with the Peer Review Lesson Plan can help build a sense of audience and community among your student writers. We hope they serve as inspiration for you and your students to design your own original prompts.

Mysteries Abound

LIST – What we don't know.

Like our ancestors before us, we humans share the instinct to search for life's meaning. Tirelessly, we examine the world through the lenses of science, religion, philosophy, art and poetry.

And yet, for all our findings, mysteries abound. And it is in this unknowing that beauty and magic reside—a reminder that the world is more vast and complex than our intellect can contain. “This is the greatest damn thing about the universe,” wrote author Henry Miller toward the end of a long, prolific life, “that we can know so much, recognize so much, dissect, do everything, and we can't grasp it.” Journalist Tim Radford sums it up this way: “In a nutshell, the universe is 4% visible, 23% undetectable and 73% unimaginable. Welcome to the cosmos, full of mass you can measure but not manhandle, driven by a force you can infer but not explain”.

In his recent book, physicist Sean Carroll echoed this sentiment: “We don't know how the universe began, or if it's the only universe. We don't know the ultimate, complete laws of physics. We don't know how life began, or how consciousness arose. And we certainly haven't agreed on the best way to live in the world as good human beings.”

This week, dear writers, celebrate the unknown. Fashion a short list, borrowing Carroll's format above: three “don't knows” and one “we certainly haven't agreed on...”

Acknowledgements:

This prompt was inspired, in part, by a Maria Popova [Brainpickings](#) post.

Peer Review Questions

Which item on this list gets you thinking? What about it strikes a chord? Does the order work poetically? Might some items be switched to achieve greater rhythm or lyricism?

Student Responses to this prompt in *Young Voices Across the Globe—Volume Two*.

1. “My father wasn’t always an alcoholic, you know” by Hailey Duggirala, 15, USA (page 25)
2. “Ineffable” by Millie McIntyre, 16, New Zealand (page 49)

One Sentence Story

FLASH FICTION – What can you capture in a single sentence?

Write a short story in just ONE sentence. You may use as many commas, dashes, ellipses (...), and semi-colons as you like, but only one period. Your story may be a very short sentence or a very long one, or somewhere in between. Check out the guidelines below for more ideas.

Here’s an example by Ernest Hemingway:

UNTITLED

For sale: baby shoes, never worn.

And a very different sort of “sentence” by Betsy Kemper:

THIS IS HOW I REMEMBER IT

Watching Joey pop the red berries into his mouth like Ju-Ju Bees and Mags only licking them at first, then chewing, so both of their smiles look bloody and I laugh though I don’t even eat one... then suddenly our moms are all around us (although mine doesn’t panic until she looks at the others, then screams along with them things like God dammit did you eat these? and shakes me so my “No,” sounds like “oh-oh-oh”) and then we’re being yanked toward the house, me for once not resisting as my mother scoops me into her arms, and inside the moms shove the medicine, thick and purple, down our throats in the bathroom; Joey in the toilet, Mags in the sink, me staring at the hair in the tub drain as my mom pushes my head down, and there is red vomit everywhere, splashing on the mirror and powder-blue rugs, everywhere except the tub where mine is coming out yellow, the color of corn muffins from lunch, not a speck of red, I told you, I want to scream, and then it is over and I turn to my mother for a touch or a stroke on the head like the other moms (but she has moved to the doorway and lights a cigarette, pushes hair out of her eyes) and there is only her smeared lips saying, this will teach you anyway.

Guidelines

Take a look at the following suggestions when responding to this prompt: if your sentence is a long one, do you utilize other punctuation to keep the rhythm and momentum alive?

Do you utilize the power of suggestion? Because your story is only one sentence long, think about how you can suggest certain elements to your reader, without saying them directly. Hemingway, for example, conveys quite a lot about the lives of the baby-shoes' previous owners, though he tells us all this in just six words.

Peer Review Questions

What is said in this one sentence story through what is left unsaid? That is, what bigger meaning are you left with from this short piece? What words of encouragement do you have for the writer?

Student Responses to this prompt in *Young Voices Across the Globe—Volume Two*.

1. “Guilty” by Janelle Hammonds, 18, USA (page 25)
2. “Why I Worry” by Hanan Adi, 16, United Arab Emirates (page 25)
3. “SEEKING ALEX” by Alyssa Meli, 16, Australia (page 25)
4. “Mirror Canvas” by Ashley Romans, 17, USA (page 73)
5. “Decisions, Decisions” by Lucy Ritzmann, 18, USA (page 107)
6. “A Smile” by Megan Lynch, 16, Australia (page 107)
7. “The End of Everything” by Ryanne Kap, 18, Canada (page 107)
8. “Side Effects of Politics May Include...” by Kristen Siegal, 18, USA (page 107)
9. “Sam” by Kristen Kaichen, 18, USA (page 107)
10. “Purpose” by Sony Muskan Kaur Grewal, 17, Singapore (page 107)
11. “Miscommunication” by Billy Gene Balsamo, 18, Phillipines (page 107)
12. “Goodbye” by Danae Templeton, 17, Tunisia, USA (page 132)
13. “Lost” by Liberty Osborne, 13 United Kingdom (page 133)

Joy to the World

LINGUISTICS — One-word manifestation.

Harpers Magazine recently published an excerpt (called “Joy to the World”) of the 216 words collected from around the world that convey different expressions of joy. In Swedish, for example, *Gokotla* means “to wake up early to hear the first birds sing.” And in Icelandic, *Solarfri* means “when workers are granted unexpected time off to enjoy a sunny day.” And in Norwegian, *Peiskos* means “to sit in front of a crackling fireplace and enjoy the warmth.”

This week, dear writers, come up with a new word that conveys a particular manifestation of joy.

Peer Review Questions

What do you appreciate about this new word? Use this joy-infused word in a sentence.

Student Responses to this prompt in *Young Voices Across the Globe—Volume Two*.

1. “Helat” by Imogen Mills, 18, United Kingdom (page 48)
2. “Fologaud” by Dara Weinstein, 17, USA (page 48)
3. “Inoublie” by Lorraine Ge, 18, Singapore (page 48)
4. “Anilov” by Christina Foltz, 17, USA (page 48)
5. “Tereil” by Anna Hallihan, 13, USA (page 48)
6. “Peolave” by Sarah Grimson, 14, Australia (page 48)
7. “Kertie” by Sarah Doyle, 17, Australia (page 106)

Six-Word Memoir

NONFICTION – Your human experience in a handful of words.

The six-word memoir project has taken the world by storm, with nearly one million entries published. This week, dear writers, we’re bringing the six-word-memoir to *Write the World!* Can you tell us something about your life in just six words? A phrase or sentence that somehow encompasses a central aspect of your human experience?

Here are a few from the the six-word website to spark your interest:

This is my first bright Christmas.

Each of us, hero and villain.

Wish my writing force would awaken.

I’m a souvenir from the past.

Lost moments in her unfinished sentences.

Peer Review Questions

How does the writer use the power of suggestion? In other words, what story unfolds in your head based on the details in the piece? If you were to tell a friend what this piece is about, what would you say?

Student Responses to this prompt in *Young Voices Across the Globe—Volume Two*.

1. “The Process” by Robert Snider, 14, USA (page 32)
2. “How I Breathe” by Ioana-Georgiana Florescu, 18, Romania (page 32)
3. “Not a Bestseller” by Jess Ison, 17, USA (page 72)
4. “Unexpectations” by Anna Lang, 15, USA (page 72)
5. “The Latent Generation” by Sunhyoung Bang, 16, USA (page 72)
6. “Books Are For Reading” by Abigail Mohr, 16, USA (page 72)
7. “Quiet” by Crystal Partridge, 18, Portugal (page 72)
8. “The Divorced Daughter” by Erin Sheckard, 17, USA (page 86)
9. “I Called” by Abigail Weiss, 17, USA (page 109)
10. “Umbrella” by Amal Ahmed, 16, USA (page 109)
11. “Right or Wrong” by Demory Hobbs, 19, USA (page 132)
12. “Today’s Us” by Mona Islami, 18, Albania (page 132)
13. “Growing Up” by Annabella Twomey, 18, USA (page 132)
14. “Unending” by Grace Cassidy, 17, Australia (page 132)
15. “Several Ways This Could Go” by Angela Soria, 18, USA (page 132)

3

Reflections on Building a Writing Community with Juliette Bentley

Juliette Bentley, a teacher, writer, and member of the *Write the World* team from Brisbane, Australia, talks to us about creating a thriving school writers' club and gives tips on starting your own.

Tell us a little bit about the Writers' Club that you run at Mt St Michael's.

The Mt. St. Michael's College Writers' Club has been under my care for eight years and has grown from five students meeting for half an hour on a Friday afternoon in the first week, to 28 in the second week, meeting for an hour. Today I have 65 members on my roll with an average of 49 attending for two hours each week. Students who graduate regularly return to participate and we have just created an Alumni Writers' Group. The vertical structure of the club allows students of all ages to participate and this adds to the richness of the exchanges and rapport which extends beyond the four walls of our meeting space. Since piloting the *Write the World* online community and platform three years ago,

I have discovered a beautiful blend of a real life tribe of writers and participants in a global community who are, almost incidentally, learning empathy, social capital and confidence through exposure to young writers from other cultures.

What propelled you to start the club?

As a young writer, I had struggled to find an audience for my words. Teachers and parents would read my work but through the critical lens of correction and assessment, not for pleasure. My sister Trish, also a wordsmith, taught me to persist by challenging me on my drafts and encouraging me to not only edit for effect but to extend my vocabulary so that I might choose the best word rather than the first word. I loved her reactions and those of my sister Claire and brother Paul. They would patiently listen when I read them my work. I learned that a real audience who were listening for pleasure and who were candid and encouraging in their response made me take greater care. I got such pleasure from sharing my poems and stories. It was this joy and the intrinsic desire to share my own work, rather than simply being assessed, that led me to build this writers' club for my own students.

I had a distinct model of a writing group in my mind that was based on social interaction, sharing of words, and responding to a variety of stimuli. From the first

week, I set about creating stimulus material. Sometimes it would be an arrangement of disparate objects that were placed on a table, sometimes the objects were thematic. Some weeks we would have guest speakers and authors, and on other occasions I would take the group to the art gallery to use exhibitions as stimulus and then grab a pizza after. Our group would write for 40 minutes and then share what we wrote. I was ‘teacher as writer’ and so modelled the writing and sharing process. The sharing was always a challenge by choice and despite having a number of shy members, it wasn’t long before everyone was sharing their work, and so after writing we would have a ‘shotgun’ moment where the members would dash up to the board and write their names down, ready to read their offerings. Pieces were then shared in our *Write the World* Group and within the platform’s global online community and this practice continues today.

What are the essential ingredients of a successful school writers’ club? Any tips for someone trying to start one at their school?

I think the essential ingredients for any school writing club, is the understanding that it isn’t an English class. The facilitator is simply a coach who builds a rapport with each member and who nurtures a culture of confidence, good humour, clear direction and flexibility. All you need is a venue conducive to a degree of intimacy, a plethora of pens, paper and a quick eye for writing opportunities. Small groups in a vast space take longer to establish the cohesion that a smaller space affords. Stimulus can come from anywhere. Before I had easy access to computers I used physical things. I’d read really interesting passages of text, build sensory activities and play music. I often begin with a tabula rasa (blank slate otherwise known as a brain dump). This time is for simply having a stream of consciousness blurt on the page. Oftentimes it leads to a pithy interest piece because it holds all of the energy of the moment.

It’s also important to set a few ground rules. In our community, criticism must be constructive and informed and must offer solutions or suggestions. The author has final say on whether they accept or reject advice but at least it is an informed decision. Nice and good have been banned from the room. Judgment must have an elaboration. A rule I have for myself, as the facilitator, is that I not only write with the group but share and invite students to critique my work.

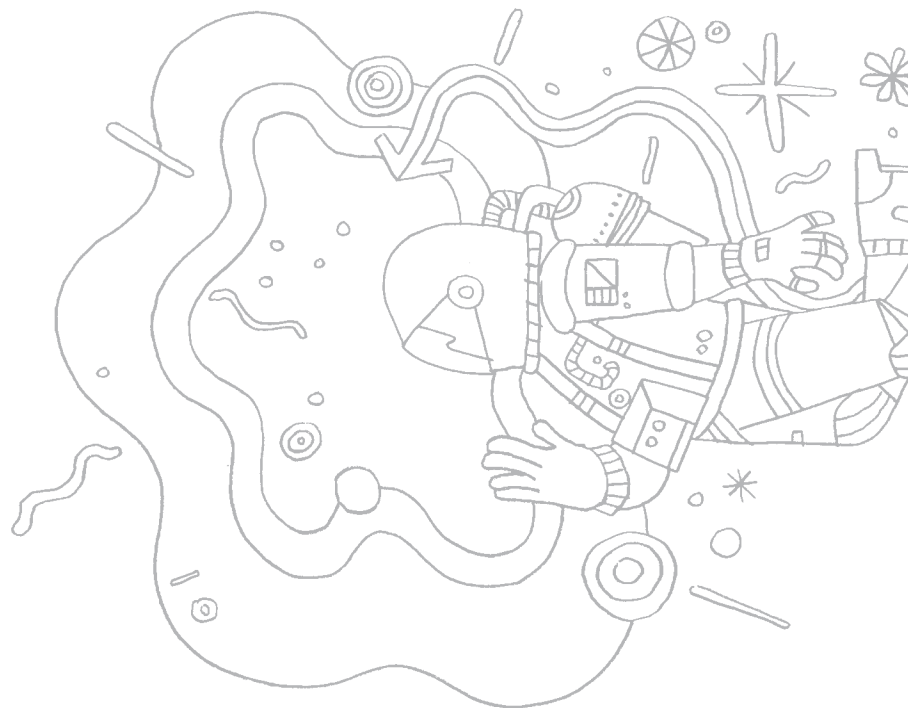
I remind my members that we are all on a journey to becoming that has no ending. It is this appreciation of one another that builds the culture. To reinforce this sense of community, I even encourage writers to bring a plate to share.

Finally, invest in building the group, whether it be hosting a camp and creating an immersive world or creating a website as a focus, or leveraging the benefits of *Write the World*. Our club is a family, a tribe if you will. Members feel safe and welcome and most importantly, accepted. Many young writers are quite independent thinkers who frequently walk to the beat of a different drum. Investing

in them, unleashing them from the critical teacher’s eye and opening their minds to their own authorial voice, celebrating their work, their writing for pleasure, is a life giving experience and a celebration of the creative spirit and the power of language.

What have you learned from the experience of running the writers’ club?

I have learned so many things in the years of leading this writing community. Firstly I think I have a better understanding that writing is not an insular activity; it is a social activity that needs to have a range of audiences to both appreciate and critique the writing. I have learned the power of belonging to a tribe of wordsmiths who value one another, who develop their own authorial voice and who are willing to challenge themselves and one another constructively. I have also discovered that there has been a latent need for imaginative expression that has been overlooked by curriculums past and present—a writers’ club is an invitation for creatives and independent thinkers and writers to find a fuller expression of their talents. Perhaps the greatest lesson I have learned from my experience over so many years, is that Writers’ Club is more than words on a page or a gathering of people, it is a safe place where self-esteem and self-efficacy is built. Members inadvertently become better at modulation and performance; they build solid respectful friendships that feed dreams, and they develop higher order thinking. For me, Writers’ Club is liberation, leverage, and a launching pad for independent, thoughtful, and compassionate thinkers.





Writing for the Real World

By *Write the World* resident blogger, Lisa Hiton

As teachers, we frequently ask our students to write. From English papers, to persuasive essays, to poetry, to book reviews, writing assignments occur across many disciplines. For teachers, student work is a translation of thinking. We learn what ideas students are having and how fluent they are at translating those ideas into something that can be read and understood. Student writing teaches us about literacy at large, as well as aptitude within the disciplines we teach.

Students, however, often experience writing with narrower outcomes. To many young people, writing assignments relate to study, homework, and grading as a primary goal, with a sense of audience limited to the teacher doling out the grade. Writing is an activity experienced in relative isolation, with minimum real-world impact. Beyond the grade and their teacher's approval, there is little motivating students to invest themselves in their writing.

How different the stakes become when students are given the opportunity to share their work with the broader world. The following examples of “Real World Writing” are designed to inspire teachers and students to consider the cultural, intellectual, and artistic relevance of their ideas and how they might become part of the cultural fabric of communities large and small.

Literary Readings

Writers are everywhere. They aren't just the famous members of the canon taught in our classrooms. They are making work, publishing, and most importantly giving readings. Taking students to a reading of emerging or established writers can help them see writers as real people. Oftentimes, writers answer questions and sign books after their readings, which is a great opportunity for students to ask questions about the writing process and what it means to be a writer.

Further, you can encourage your students to host a reading of their own. Perhaps your school has a studio theater or a spare classroom where young writers can organize a reading series for their peers. This can range from open mic, to slam poetry, to multi-genre readings of student work. Let students get inspired by themes you've used in class to make the performance or reading even more cohesive.

Literary Objects

Unlike visual and performing arts, literary arts can disappear quickly without giving students a sense of object permanence. In other arts practices, the artist has a painting, a song, or a performance to show as an outcome of their practice, but writing often gets lost in digital archives or recycling bins.

There are many ways students can achieve a sense of permanence—and validation—in literary arts, which we can encourage by providing opportunities like the following:

- Students can take their best gems, poems, and passages and turn them into broadsides and chapbooks. This activity can serve as a culminating assignment for a curricular unit, or you can host DIY time for students to make these objects themselves. You might also encourage your students to collaborate with visual artist peers to make something together. For more ideas on creating [chapbooks](#) and [broadsides](#), visit the *Write the World* blog archive.
- Many teachers have students submit final portfolios of their writing. AP Senior English teacher, Jeff Berger-White, takes it a step further. Each student submits one essay written during the year. Berger-White has the works printed and bound together and gives each student an anthology of the class' work. Because students rarely read each other's writing, the astonishment of ideas found in those pages is a reminder of the collective intellectual journey a class experiences together. This sense of community is often lost in the literary arts, for on the book's cover, only one name stands. Building an anthology speaks to the larger work of writing and preservation of thought that is achieved by reading and writing together for a year.

Write-a-thon/ Submit-a-thon

Writers tend to need accountability to keep up with their writing practice. Many writers participate in monthly write-a-thons, or set a goal for how many hours (or pages) they write each week. Students can work together to write a little bit every class day in a chosen genre. You may even have students develop their own class goals, such as a collective weekly word count.

To take this practice to the next level, host a monthly or bi-monthly submit-a-thon. The experience of seeing one's work published (either online or in print) is perhaps the biggest motivating force to keep on writing. Remind your students that rejection is a huge part of the writer's life, and that one good way to get through such struggles is to submit work ad-nauseum. Submitting work is of course more fun in

good company, with good snacks. Resources on [how to submit work to literary journals](#) and [how to write a cover letter](#) can be found on the *Write the World* blog archive.

New Media

Media presents many opportunities for students to understand the practical applications of writing in everyday life. From web content, to news, to blogs, to podcasts, to video; writers are at the helm of delivering information and/or art to the masses.

You can help students experience the role of writing in popular culture by turning student work into something “real” for a public audience. If your students have written papers on philosophical texts, for example, try transforming their essays into a podcast. You could choose a contemporary political topic and have students record a conversation about how the philosophical text they studied applies to the current event. Podcasts and videos are also excellent places for students to practice their writing and interviewing skills. Recording is as easy as finding a smartphone. Students can talk to writers, each other, other teachers in the school. These works can easily be placed on a class site as a forum for sharing their work.

These ideas are also easy to translate for students who have written scripts. If they wrote a one-act play or a TV pilot, have them perform it or film it. Armed with smartphones, students can get creative in filming their work and screening it—you needn’t have a fancy film department to give students access to making something great.

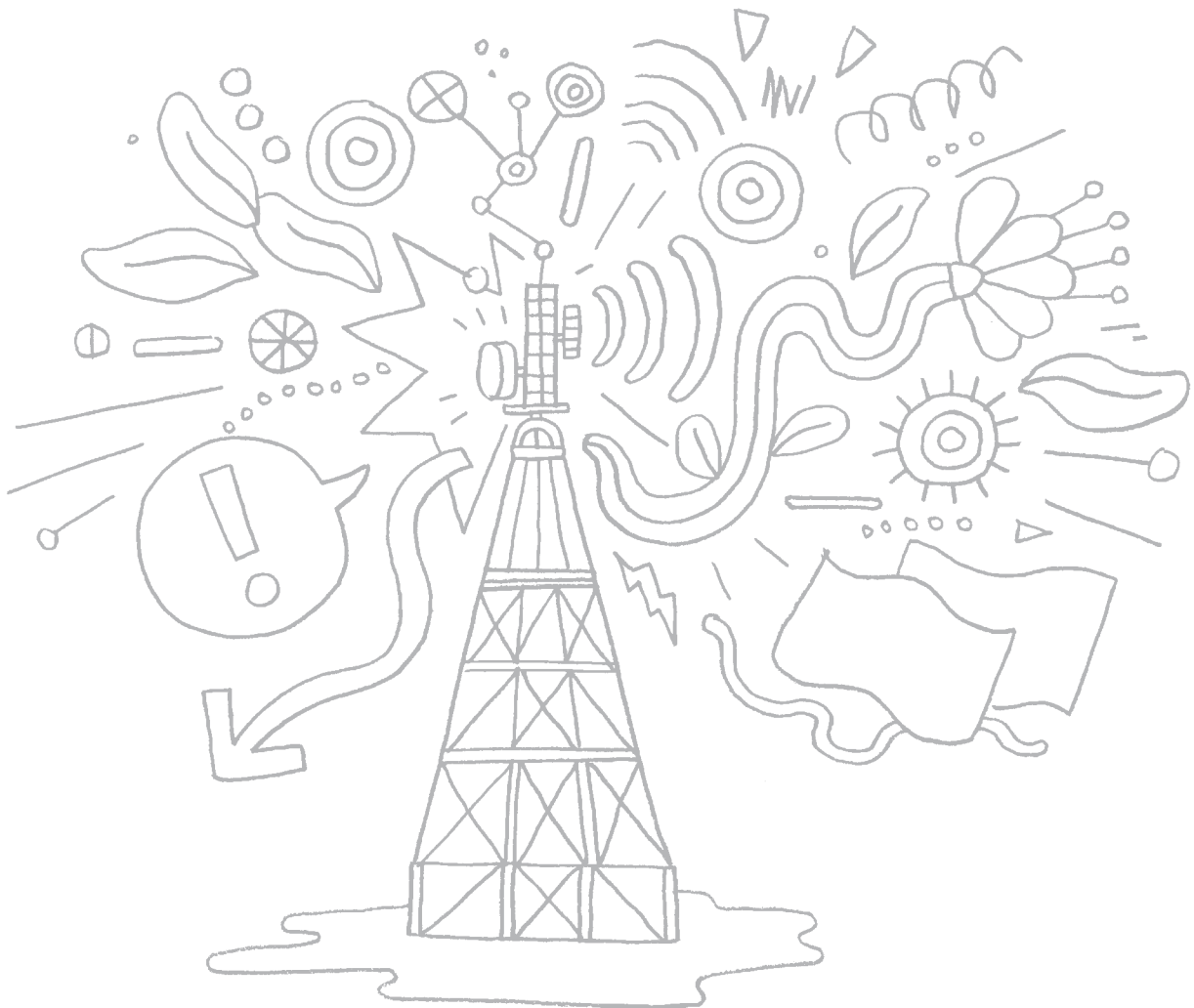
Traditional Media

Though it may be said that print is dying, the literary magazine as envisioned and revised by emerging writers is thriving. From *Write the World* to the *Adroit Journal*, there are many models of excellence that illuminate the reach of literary magazines. These publications can be an important source of inspiration for your students, as they discover how other young artists are getting their words out into the world.

Does your school already have a student-run paper? If so, how can students get involved? If not, what would it take to start one? This could be print journalism, but it could also be an online magazine or newspaper. With so many free website hosts, online journalism can be an exciting way for students to curate their work into something formal and aesthetic.

Another increasingly powerful genre for young people is documentary.

How can students take work they've already done and translate it into written and oral histories? Can photography (still or motion) be used in collaboration with what they've found? English teacher Susan McCray from Casco Bay High School of Portland, Maine, arranged for her students to interview refugees in the Portland community. This project turned into excursion based work that also incorporated film. To learn more about McCray's work, go to <https://vimeo.com/111012353>.



In Closing

As teachers, we don't often see the fruits of our labor. But by engaging in these projects, we may get a glimpse of what's to come of our students. Particularly as writing is thought of, primarily, as a practice of the humanities, this good work stands as an opportunity to show students and our communities just how far-reaching the skills we teach stand to go in cultural influence, especially in the hands of society's young minds.

Further, these integrated approaches that exemplify writing in the real world stand to show students that these skills are not isolated to their time in the classroom. That they will encounter writing in their life long after school, regardless of what sector they may land in, and considering themselves writers will give them means to communicate with others and have a voice in whatever community they may enter.



www.writetheworld.com

© 2017 Write the World LLC,
All Rights Reserved.
One Mifflin Place
Suite 400
Cambridge MA 02138
United States

