

Creativity of the Written Word

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National Writing Project

All of the writing activities that you will see today were part of the Acadiana Writing Project, an organization that emphasizes the value of writing for both educators as well as their students.

The activities are numerous, varied, and adaptable.

Word of the Day/ Fishbowl



The Rules:

Just keep **WRITING!**



Classroom Applications

- Bellringer

- Entry/Exit slip with academic vocabulary or topic taught in class

Six Word Stories



“For sale: baby shoes, never worn.”

--Ernest Hemingway

-- Smith Magazine

<http://www.sixwordmemoirs.com/teens/>

Your Turn

Write at **least** one six-word story about each of the following:

- your teaching philosophy
- your personal memoir
- your educational history

Classroom Applications

- Improving the blank page
- Condensed review of topic studied

Name Memoir



“My Name”

by Sandra Cisneros

excerpted from The House on Mango Street

In English my name means hope. In Spanish it means too many letters. It means sadness, it means waiting. It is like the number nine. A muddy color. It is the Mexican records my father plays on Sunday mornings when he is shaving, songs like sobbing.

It was my great-grandmother's name and now it is mine. She was a horse woman too, born like me in the Chinese year of the horse--which is supposed to be bad luck if you're born female-but I think this is a Chinese lie because the Chinese, like the Mexicans, don't like their women strong.

My great-grandmother. I would've liked to have known her, a wild, horse of a woman, so wild she wouldn't marry. Until my great-grandfather threw a sack over her head and carried her off. Just like that, as if she were a fancy chandelier. That's the way he did it.

And the story goes she never forgave him. She looked out the window her whole life, the way so many women sit their sadness on an elbow. I wonder if she made the best with what she got or was she sorry because she couldn't be all the things she wanted to be. Esperanza. I have inherited her name, but I don't want to inherit her place by the window.

At school they say my name funny as if the syllables were made out of tin and hurt the roof of your mouth. But in Spanish my name is made out of a softer something, like silver, not quite as thick as sister's name Magdalena--which is uglier than mine. Magdalena who at least- -can come home and become Nenny. But I am always Esperanza. would like to baptize myself under a new name, a name more like the real me, the one nobody sees. Esperanza as Lisandra or Maritza or Zeze the X. Yes. Something like Zeze the X will do.

Writing Prompt:

In 1-2 paragraphs, describe what your name means and how you feel about your name. How did you get your name? Do you have a nickname? If you could change your name, what would you change it to? Has anyone ever commented on your name? If so, what did they say?

Classroom Applications

- Start of school year to learn students names and have classmates learn each other's names
- Can incorporate visual representation of name and have students present name memoir

Obsession List



from, *Writing Down the Bones*

“Every once in a while I make a list of my obsessions. Some obsessions change and there are always more. Some are thankfully forgotten.

Writers end up writing about their obsessions. Things that haunt them; things they can't forget; stories they carry in their bodies waiting to be released.

I have my writing groups make lists of their obsessions so that they can see what they unconsciously (and consciously) spend their waking hours thinking about. After you write them down you can put them to good use. You have a list of things to write about.”

Your Turn

Step 1: Make your obsession list.

Step 2: Choose one obsession from your list and free write about it for the next three minutes.

Classroom Applications

-- Creative Writing

--List of things to refer to when a student has writer's block

**“So Much
Depends Upon”**



“The Red Wheelbarrow” —

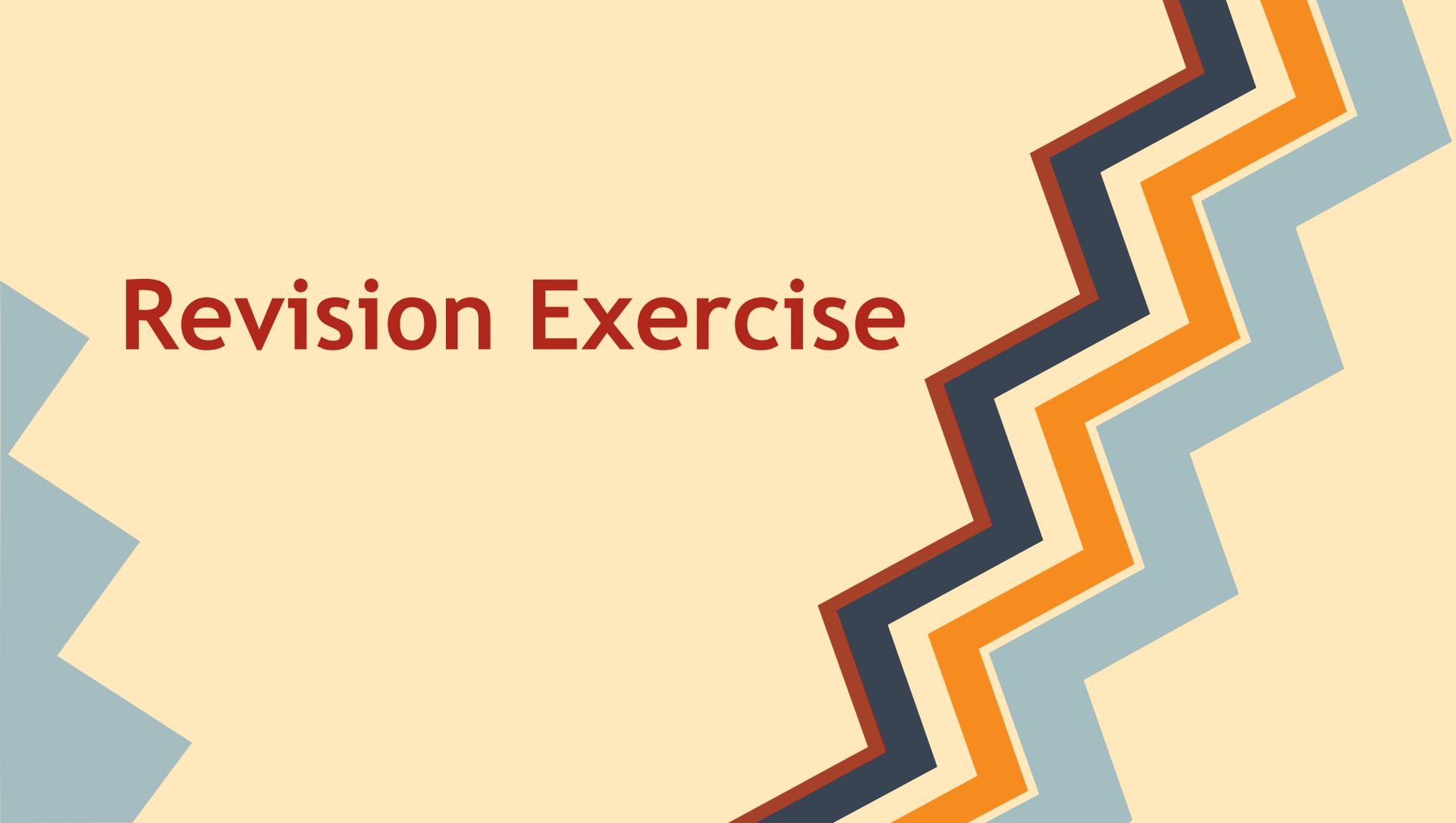
By William Carlos Williams

so much depends
upon
a red wheel
barrow
glazed with rain
water
beside the white
chickens

Classroom Applications

- Creative Writing
- Poetry Slam/enrichment
- Review of lesson

Revision Exercise



Loafing

I looked into the room a moment ago,
and this is what I saw--
my chair in its place by the window,
the book turned facedown on the table.
And on the sill, the cigarette
left burning in its ashtray.
Malingerer! my uncle yelled at me
so long ago. He was right.
I've set aside time today,
same as every day,
for doing nothing at all.

Raymond Carver

66 words total in the poem

decrease to 55 and read it now

decrease to 44 and read it now

decrease to 33 and read it now

decrease to 22 and read it now

decrease to 11 and read it now

The Best Time Of The Day

Cool summer nights.

Windows open.

Lamps burning.

Fruit in the bowl.

And your head on my shoulder.

These the happiest moments in the day.

Next to the early morning hours,
of course. And the time
just before lunch.

And the afternoon, and
early evening hours.

But I do love

these summer nights.

Even more, I think,
than those other times.

The work finished for the day.

And no one who can reach us now.

Or ever.

76 words total in the poem

decrease to 60 and read it now

decrease to 44 and read it now

decrease to 28 and read it now

decrease to 12 and read it now

Classroom Application

-- Help students to apply concept of being minimalists

-- Could work in conjunction with Six Word Stories

Reading Memoir



Writing Prompt

In 1-2 paragraphs, write about your personal experience(s) with reading.

When and where do you like to read? What is your favorite book? Author? Genre? What is your earliest memory involving reading?

Classroom Applications

- Allows students to connect writing to what they are reading (without having to write an essay or book report)
- Allows teacher to have a better understanding of student and his/her relationship with reading

Bless, Press, Address



What it is

Let your readers/audience know the following:

- What's the purpose of your piece?
- Who's your intended audience?
- Do you want your piece BLESSED, ADDRESSED, or PRESSED?
 - **Bless:** If you want your piece blessed, you're not ready to hear criticism yet (however constructive it might be). You want only to hear about what's working so far.
 - **Address:** If you have chosen the address option, what one problem or concern do you want your readers/audience to address? Be as specific as possible.
 - **Press:** You're ready to hear constructive criticism and give the readers/audience the freedom to respond in any fashion. This, of course, can include "Bless" and "Address."

Listen carefully when group members are responding to your piece. Take good notes. You may find yourself resisting some of the comments and suggestions, but try to remain as objective as possible during the response session. You may need to think about the feedback you receive for a few hours, days, or even weeks.

http://www.nwp.org/cs/public/download/nwp_file/12381/Guidelines_for_Response_Groups.pdf?x_r=ncfile_d

Your Turn

Step 1: Get in a group of three. Prep one note taking sheet for each member of your group (not including yourself).

Step 2: Each person will take a turn reading one piece of writing from today. They will tell their group whether they would like it blessed, pressed, or addressed.

Your Turn

Step 3: While listening to pieces being read, make sure to take notes and stay true to what the reader asked you to focus on.

Step 4: Once the reader has finished, group members will take turns sharing their comments aloud.

Step 5: Repeat this process until everyone has shared a piece.

Classroom Application

-- Alternative to traditional peer-editing strategies

Exquisite Corpsing



A Little Background

- a method in which a collection of words or images is collectively assembled
- invented by the Surrealists
- parlor game

Basic Format

Each person writes one word and then folds it over following the basic format below:

1. Article
2. Adjective
3. Noun
4. Adverb
5. Verb
6. Article
7. Adjective
8. Noun

Variation 1

Each person writes the lyric (famous or obscure) to a song.

Keep going until you get all the way around or until you get to the end of the page.

Variation 2

Write an original line of poetry but “drop” the last word of the line onto the next line of paper. When you fold the paper over the only thing showing should be the last word of the previous line of poetry to assist the next writer in adding on to the work.



Thank you very much!

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