

An Expository Essay:

A Problem Middle School Students Face

Directions for Administering

6th Grade

Greetings 6th Grade Teachers! This Process Writing Assessment reflects the joint work and wisdom of the Middle School Writing Proficiency Project Team - a collaborative of OUSD classroom teachers and the Bay Area Writing Project. Its purpose is to assess students' writing to better inform our instruction. Please read these directions carefully; we want to make sure that all students have the same test conditions.

Overview

Time Schedule

The Process Writing Assessment takes place over 2-3 consecutive class periods, not to exceed 60 minutes each. You may decide how to break up the pre-writing activities according to your schedule. However **DO NOT** give students more than one class period to write the essay unless such accommodations are indicated in an IEP. Schedule the PWA within the testing window according to how you believe your students will perform best.

Student Materials

The student packet is designed to move students through the writing process in the context of a timed writing. Please instruct students to write their essays on the folded writing paper and write their names and class information only in the space provided on the back of the paper. If a student needs additional space to write, please provide him or her with an extra page. Each student should have his or her own packet and his or her own writing paper.

Do not allow any materials, including the reading selection, notes, or pre-writing charts to leave the classroom. **Students should not do any written work at home or outside of the time allotted for this assessment.** Remember that this is a first draft.

Specific Instructions

Introduction

Introduce the Process Writing Assessment and the schedule. Distribute the prompt packet and read the *Introduction* section. Answer any student questions that arise.

Getting Started

Read directions aloud to students. Ask them to brainstorm with a partner to generate information about three important problems that middle school students experience. They can jot down words or phrases

and/or draw pictures. When students have finished brainstorming, have them share their ideas as a whole class and record answers on chart paper or the white/chalk board. Ask them to put a star beside the problem they can write the best and the most about. *NOTE: You may want to encourage students to write about a problem that they have experienced, either directly or through someone they are close to.

Vocabulary

Read directions aloud to students. Remind students that a synonym is a word that means the same, or almost the same thing as another word. You can instruct students to complete the matching activity independently or you can have them do it as a whole class. The answers are as follows: 1. clique: gang, group 2. pervasive: persistent 3. problem: issue, challenge 4. mend: repair, fix

Reading

Begin by reading the directions aloud and asking students to code the article as they read. Instruct students to write a #1 in the margin where the writer explains what the problem is, a #2 where the writer describes how the problem makes kids feel, a #3 where the writer describes how or why the cliques are formed, and lastly, a #4 where the writer explains what can be done about cliques. The purpose of the reading selection is to suggest strategies for developing students' writing and to provide a professional model. Students should proceed independently, annotating the reading selection. You may answer questions about vocabulary and/or clarify parts of the reading selection. You may also choose to read the article aloud to students.

Thinking, Talking and Planning

Divide students into pairs to complete the questions in the graphic organizer. The purpose of this section is to help students identify the author's strategies and approach to describing and explaining a serious problem facing middle school students.

On Your Own

Students complete this section independently. This is when they do the planning for their own writing. A graphic organizer like the one they just completed is provided to help students think about their topic. You may want to review the headings of the graphic organizer and answer any questions students have. It is helpful to use an overhead copy of the graphic organizer when you go over the different sections with the students.

Organizing Your Ideas

Ask students to think about their thesis/controlling idea, and write it in the top box. Then tell them they should look carefully at the graphic organizer they completed in the *On Your Own section*, and choose a few ideas they would like to use in their essay. Remind them that they don't need to use ALL of the ideas that they wrote in the boxes. Students should fill out the graphic organizer on page 6 before starting

to write their essay. If you have a different graphic organizer that has been successful with students, feel free to use that instead.

Writing

Read aloud the prompt and checklists of writing and editing reminders on page 7. Students may refer to the reading selection and any notes they recorded earlier to help them as they write. The entire class period is dedicated to writing. You may remind students to reread their work and make revisions and edit as time allows. Collect students' pre-writing packet separately and save for future reflection on their writing process. **Do not** allow any materials, including the reading selection, notes, or pre-writing charts to leave the classroom.