

Freewriting

Freewriting is similar to journaling and to keeping reading logs. What differentiates freewriting is that it allows students to express their thinking in a purely spontaneous manner. The spontaneity of this kind of writing prompts students to run the text through their conscience like a movie or slide show. Here are some suggested guidelines for freewriting:

- Ask students to write about the text continuously for five to ten minutes.
- Ask novice freewriters to briefly summarize what they've read and to comment about their reading; this helps them get into the mind-set of being a critical and active reader.

When the students complete their freewriting, encourage them to share with their classmates. Students can also choose a word or phrase and write more about it. Peter Elbow (2002) calls this "looping." Students will have the opportunity to review and evaluate their own freewriting. Freewriting should *never, ever* be evaluated or formally judged. Students need to know that they are not being graded, as this can lead to a loss of spontaneity. Instead of writing for themselves, students will write for their peers. Exhibit 5.9 outlines teaching strategies for freewriting in the classroom.

Exhibit 5.9 Freewriting Lesson Plan

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| Creative Writing Activity | Freewriting |
| Objective | To promote creative thinking, problem solving, and higher-order thinking |
| Materials | Plain paper and pen |
| Time | 20 minutes |
| Procedure | |
| Step 1 | Ask the students to spend 5 minutes writing freely, writing <i>whatever</i> comes to their mind. |
| Step 2 | Model the writing process by showing a previous writing on an overheard or reading aloud a previous freewriting. |
| Step 3 | Direct the students, working in pairs or individually, to draw a picture of their character and complete the information that is requested on the template. |
| IRA/NCTE Standards | <p>2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.</p> <p>3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).</p> <p>5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and non-print texts.</p> <p>11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.</p> <p>12. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).</p> |

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