**Nonfiction Writing and Essays**

Possible Teaching Points

* Writers begin by collecting bits of life and then declaring them important, precious. They pay attention. The particle they notice-an observation, an image, a phrase, a bit of data and grow their writing from there.
* Collecting ideas for essay writing is not only “desk work” it’s “life work.” Writers collect observations and write them down. They then push themselves to the next thoughts about why this is important and what the glimpse makes them realize.
* In order to write even more, writers push themselves by adding information, facts and descriptions. We write in two columns, one for what we see and hear and one for what we think.
* Contrast the differences between narrative and nonfiction. Nonfiction is organized around ideas and these ideas are advanced or brought forward.

1. Stories tell what happened first, next, and next. Nonfiction essays don’t.

2. Stories show a character going through a sequence of events. Nonfiction essays don’t.

3. Stories lead the reader through a sequence of events. Nonfiction essays don’t.

* Writers take a subject that is important to us (a person, place or object) and list ideas related to that subject.
* We write off the books we read.
* Organizing our writing with boxes, stars helps us plan what we want to write in our nonfiction piece. We set up a system to collect and sort information. Quick sketches, timelines and story maps, on the other hand, organize narratives.
* Dashes and dots help us to add in elaboration. Elaboration can include facts and statistics, descriptions, and reasons.
* Examples, “tight lists” or lists of items linked by a repeating phrase can make for great elaboration.
* Composing a mini-story or personal anecdotes for elaboration.
* Build a cohesive draft by organizing elaboration so it makes sense to the reader and me. Writers choose a logical way to sequence materials.
* Writers story tell to rehearse for writing. Talking about our writing helps us to know if what we are saying really matters to us. It helps us to see where we need to add more elaboration.
* Don’t wait until the end to revise. Sometimes writers learn to revise before the end of the essay. Revising and thinking about our writing along the way can help us to write a grown-up thesis.
* Writers write introductions and conclusions to say, “This is important!” Thought they don’t use those words, they often rely on some common ways to introduce and close their essays.

*Ways to start an Essay~*

1. *Tell a story about one person needing the information the essay will convey. What (that person) and others need to know is that…*
2. *Many people don’t know and don’t realize that…*
3. *Have you ever wanted to know….wondered…*
4. *Raise a question that people ask…and show that this essay will answer it. Three in a row!*

*Ways to end an Essay*

1. *(My thesis is true) Because this is true. Isn’t it also true that…*
2. *I realize that…*
3. *This makes me think…*
4. *This is important because…*
5. *Answer the questions from your lead.*

* Celebration