SUMMER WRITING EXPERIENCE

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Metropolitan Campus
Regional Center for College Students with Learning Disabilities
Students with learning disabilities can continue to learn strategies to improve their writing
Students can benefit from the extra support as they transition to college
It uses a different approach than most traditional writing classes
It offers systematic way to critically analyze writing
AVERAGE DAY

Students

- work in a technology lab
- read literature to analyze critically
- write Quick Writes based on the story
- use revision process to incorporate quick writes
- have Mini-lessons on increasing sentence complexity (Verb Stretcher or Noun Expanders)
- create complex sentences using sentence combining techniques
- share
QUICK WRITE

- What is it?
- Why do it?
- What are possible expected results?
- How is it done?
Write all the things that come to mind when you think of snow.
Just before Christmas my father took me skiing at Mount Baker. He’d had to fight for the privilege of my company, because my mother was still angry with him for sneaking me into a nightclub during his last visit, to see Thelonius Monk.

He wouldn’t give up. He promised, hand on heart, to take good care of me and have me home for dinner on Christmas Eve, and she relented. But as we were checking out of the lodge that morning it began to snow, and in this snow he observed some rare quality that made it necessary for us to get in one last run. We got in several last runs. He was indifferent to my fretting. Snow whirled around us in bitter, blinding squalls, hissing like sand, and still we skied. As the lift bore us to the peak yet again, my father looked at his watch and said, “Criminey. This’ll have to be a fast one.”

By now I couldn’t see the trail. There was no point in trying. I stuck to him like white on rice and did what he did and somehow made it to the bottom without sailing off a cliff. We returned our skis and my father put chains on the Austin-Healey while I swayed from foot to foot, clapping my mittens and wishing I was home. I could see everything. The green tablecloth, the plates with the holly pattern, the red candles waiting to be lit.

We passed a diner on our way out. “You want some soup?” my father asked. I shook my head. “Buck up,” he said. “I’ll get you there. Right, doctor?”

I was supposed to say, “Right, doctor,” but I didn’t say anything.

A state trooper waved us down outside the resort. A pair of sawhorses were blocking the road. The trooper came up to our car and bent down to my father’s window. His face was bleached by the cold. Snowflakes clung to his eyebrows and to the fur trim of his jacket and cap.

“Don’t tell me,” my father said.

The trooper told him. The road was closed. It might get cleared, it might not. Storm took everyone by surprise. So much, so fast. Hard to get people moving. Christmas Eve.

What can you do?

My father said, “Look. We’re talking about five, six inches. I’ve taken this car through worse than that.”

The trooper straightened up. His face was out of sight but I could hear him. “The road is closed.”

My father sat with both hands on the wheel, rubbing the wood with his thumbs. He looked at the barricade for a long time. He seemed to be trying to master the idea of it. Then he thanked the trooper, and with a weird, old-maidy show of caution turned the car around. “Your mother will never forgive me for this,” he said.

“We should have left before,” I said. “Doctor.”

He didn’t speak to me again until we were in a booth at the diner, waiting for our burgers. “She won’t forgive me,” he said. “Do you understand? Never.”

“I guess,” I said, but no guesswork was required; she wouldn’t forgive him.

“I can’t let that happen.” He bent toward me. “I’ll tell you what I want. I want us all to be together again. Is that what you want?”

“Yes, sir.”

He bumped my chin with his knuckles. “That’s all I needed to hear.”
Have you ever made a decision that you later regretted?
Where?
skiing at Mount Baker
into a nightclub
around us

When?
on Christmas Eve
on our way out

How?
hand on heart
like white on rice

Why?
by the cold
because my mother was still angry with him
I was a boy who kept his clothes on numbered hangers to insure proper rotation.

My father was driving. My father in his forty-eighth year, rumpled, kind, bankrupt of honor, flushed with certainty. He was a great driver.

Create your own:
The boy with ______________ began to trust his father.

- bitter, blinding squalls
- good care
- few sparse, feathery flakes
**Instead of saying this:**

We finished eating. He went to the pay phone in the back of the diner. He joined me in the booth again.

**The author said this:**

When we finished eating he went to the pay phone in the back of the diner, then joined me in the booth again.

**Practice**

1. The man is tall
2. The man has dark hair.
3. The man is standing by the counter.
4. The man looks suspicious.

The tall, dark-haired man standing by the counter looks suspicious.

The tall man, with the dark hair, standing by the counter looks suspicious.

The suspicious looking, dark-haired, tall man is standing by the counter.

Standing by the counter is a tall, dark-haired suspicious looking man.