

News Piece Examples.

Name _____

SESSION 5 HOMEWORK RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

Directions: We will read all six. Notice: (mark-up)

"Tonight you will respond to your feedback. You might write a 'comment' piece that responds to your readers' comments. You might add to your original piece. If you think some of the questions merited additions. You might reflect in your notebook about what's next for you as a writer. Come in tomorrow with some writing that shows you responded to your feedback."

- Action
- Dialogue
- Inner Thinking
- Scenes

1 Surprising Help Arrives When the Pressure Is Turned Up

Dealing with pressure is something that kids have to learn in middle school. Here at Pathways Middle School, the events of yesterday show that pressure is not just something kids deal with though. It's something adults deal with too. Here's the scene that matters. Three days ago, kids were dancing in the gym. They were busting some moves. But they weren't working together. "This is going to be a disgrace," their director yelled. What the kids didn't know was that this school dance performance was going to be filmed.

Just one day later, kids were practicing again. Witnesses reported that their performance was rough. One might use the word chaotic to describe their footloose choreography. "I don't know how to help them," one bystander overheard the director whisper. She found a way, though.

The next day, new teenagers filed into the gym. Who were these graceful strangers? They were dancers, come to help. "We can teach you to dance like Justin Timberlake and Beyoncé combined" these kids promised. Soon, these shaking, shimmying teens were leading each row. Behind each expert, a row of Pathways Middle School kids copied their every move. But surprise—soon some Pathways kids were moving to the front, busting out their dance moves, leading their rows to follow along.

"I never thought it would happen," the dance director murmured, as the cameras rolled and kids danced and laughed. It just goes to show that sometimes pressure can make you pull together, and sometimes it makes you realize you need a little help, and sometimes . . . that's okay.

2 Need a Nurse?

By Lauren DH

If you find yourself with a nose bleed, or a twisted ankle, or a weird bug bite, find Jasmine. Jasmine wants to be an emergency nurse. Her plans are to work for Doctors Without Borders, or for the US Army. Jasmine has big plans. A bit quiet and shy, Jasmine says that she doesn't talk about her plans much. She's not waiting, though, she's practicing all the time. "You just have to pay attention," Jasmine says. "Most people just don't notice when other people are hurt. Or they panic and don't know what to do."

A recent event in the gym shows Jasmine's medical eye. The air was hot and damp in the third-floor gym as class 702 practiced basketball. No-one noticed when a boy's nose began to bleed—no-one but Jasmine. Balls were flying back and forth. Kids were running and shooting. Meanwhile, a small pool of blood pooled on the floor.

"I'll get ice!" Jasmine yelled, and she dashed off—to the cafeteria? Her brown hair flew back as she ran. Her footsteps echoed in the cold hallways. The hot gym kept busy with the ball playing. Before anyone else had even noticed, she was back. Moments later, bystanders moved aside as Jasmine sat on the ground with the boy's head in her lap. She put ice on his nose and made him stay put.

Witnesses were clueless why this young nurse cared so much. Was this a crush? No, it was her brother. Sam's nose was the size of a baseball and as red as a cherry. Watch out for flying balls in basketball. And hope you have a sister as nice as Jasmine. Even if she's not your sister, call on her if you get hurt. Jasmine may be quiet. But she will be there for you. . . . She'll know what to do.

FIG. 5-1 Jackson's newscast ends with a lesson.

FIG. 5-2 Students' stories sometimes call attention to classmates as hidden heroes.

3
New Club Encourages Kids to Write Out of the Box

On Thursday, January 30th, 2014, at 7:30 am, thirty-five PRM students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grade gathered in room 312 under the supervision of Mrs. Florio and Mrs. Jeczko. Why? To form PRM's first-ever Creative Writing Club! In this brand-new before-school activity, where members meet Thursday mornings at 7:30, students from all grade levels will write creative works, such as short stories, songs, poems, plays, and more.

The club members have already started working on their first project, in which they will write individual children's books about a stuffed animal (received at the first meeting). The story and the plush will be donated to Morristown Memorial Hospital, so a sick child in hopes of getting better will have his/her spirits lifted by the toy and corresponding original story written by a club member. Another project of the club is separating into small groups and developing scripts for original short plays that will be performed collectively at an assembly for Kiel school students.

This reporter spoke with club co-advisor Mrs. Florio, who said, "This club was formed to give kids who really enjoy writing an opportunity to be creative, to have fun, and to see their work in action; to see their writing come alive as it's put to really good use." Co-advisor Mrs. Jeczko commented, "I would really like the kids to find the joy in writing when there isn't an assignment attached and to be able to experiment with their writing without being worried about a grade."

The first meeting kicked off with a creative writing game akin to a written version of the game "Telephone." Mrs. Florio and Mrs. Jeczko gave all members a bouncy ball, saying, "Creative writing is a ball!"

And the club members couldn't agree more. Students are extremely enthusiastic about their new creative outlet. One member said, "I love writing, but I sometimes feel restricted with the school's curriculum of essays and analyses. With the creative writing club, my friends and I can write our way and have lots of fun, too." Three other students said they couldn't wait for the second meeting.

All PRM students are welcome to participate in this group of creative writers. If you are interested in becoming a member, talk to Mrs. Florio or Mrs. Jeczko. So what are you waiting for? Get off your bottom and get out of the box with the Creative Writing Club!

FIG. 5-4 As Maddie's piece shows, students can use writing as a tool to promote things in the community that deserve a spotlight.

4

Boys Basketball Season Recap

Zipporah G

The basketball team did not win the playoffs last week. But if you watched their humble confidence, you would not know that.

You may remember every morning walking into the auditorium and seeing a group of boys convened in the corner, sitting and laughing. Well, that was the Boys basketball team. As an outsider looking in, the team looks more like a family than it does a regular team.

The boys basketball team had a strong season this year. If you went to a game or heard about it afterwards you would know this. Games are said to be full of intense energy that encases the whole room. You may not see yourself as a hardcore basketball fan, but it's said to be hard to go to a game and keep yourself in your seat. The crowd feeds off the energy the team is giving them and it seems to be the same with the team getting energy from the crowd.

Kaseem, the team captain, had some very uplifting words although the team didn't get as far as planned, "The season went pretty well. The team had its ups and down but we pulled up for the playoffs. . . . Everyone stepped up and even though we lost, there wasn't any weakness or flaws on our part." The basketball team deserves a big round of applause for the efforts they put forward this season.

With every good team there is always people who are working behind the scenes. Shaun, manager of the team, echoes Kaseem's opinion of the season. "We were a strong team; we have talented players, and I am proud and have no regrets of being part of this team." Shaun keeps track of the

stats of the players by keeping the score book during games, operates the clock, and is responsible for setting up before and cleaning up after games; in addition he is also responsible for the equipment. He also partakes in practices just as any other member.

If you want to join the Varsity team next fall, get ready for a lot of intense workouts to stay in shape. Though the workouts are intense, Kaseem intones that one of the more important things about being on the team is your grades, "Coach J. explained to me that it doesn't matter if you're the best player ever, if you don't have the grades then you won't go far in life." Keeping your grades above a 75 average is a must.

Lastly, Kaseem passes on this advice to students eager to join the team next year. "Coach doesn't play favorites and everyone has to earn their spot on the team. Just come in the gym and try not to imitate Kobe Bryant if you don't have it like that."

FIG. 5-5 Zipporah's piece reflects that good reporting, even when it's about a specific topic, brings out big themes.

Not So Different After All

By Lauren DH

It can be hard to explain what makes you different. Sometimes it's embarrassing. Finding the courage to talk about being different, though, can change how people treat you.

Lauren found this out when she explained how her brain works to her classmates. It wasn't an easy thing to do. It wasn't even her idea originally. It was the guidance counselor who noticed that Lauren was having a hard time. Some kids didn't like it when Lauren asked the teacher to repeat things. They laughed when she took a long time to think or to say something. Later, classmates said that they didn't know what to say when some kids were laughing. They didn't know if it was better to say something or to act like nothing was happening.

It was not an easy day for Lauren when her class had a meeting . . . about her. "We're here to talk about how Lauren's brain works," her teacher said. "Her brain doesn't work like everybody else's."

The meeting began at 9 a.m. sharp. The room was quiet as Lauren began to speak. She explained that she can't remember things, because her brain was injured. She also explained how it was getting better, because she was working on rewiring parts of her brain. She showed pictures of brain activity. She spoke about the medications she took, and what it was like when she suddenly wouldn't remember where she was, like if it was an unfamiliar place—like when she first came to middle school.

FIG. 5-3 Lauren's final newscast teaches important lessons in empathy.

Students wanted to know how her brain got injured. "When I was a baby," she explained. A boy asked if it could happen to anyone. Lauren explained that brain injuries can happen if you get hit on the head, or if you don't have enough oxygen. Then parts of your brain don't work, and you have to train other parts. Kids were quiet as they thought about that. "I hit my head in football," Brian said. "I had a concussion last year," said Sean.

One hour later, class 508 ended their meeting. One boy (he asked not to have his name in this article) who sometimes laughed at Lauren stopped to talk to her. "I'm sorry I laugh at you," he said. Then he added "I didn't know what it was like for you." He didn't say anything else, but this reporter heard him tell his friend "Maybe I will wear that helmet when we ride later." HA!

For kids with special brains, it's important to explain yourself. Lots of kids who were mean become nice. It takes courage. But it's worth it. Everybody is different, everybody is special.

Is it Time for the Gym Lockers to Retire? By Nicole F.

If you ask any student in our school about the gym lockers, everyone will agree on one thing... they are impossible to open!

This reporter noticed that our gym lockers, both in the boys and girl's locker rooms are more than 30 years old and most students have difficulty opening them. Every so often, repairs are made on some of the lockers, but they have never been fully replaced. Mr. Hynes says that he has tried to renew the lockers but the school does not have enough money for all of them.

The gym lockers are more than 30 years old so chances are, some of our parents may have used them. This reporter interviewed Diana Friedman, who is currently a junior at Rutgers University. She also recalls the trouble she had with her gym locker in P.R.M. Her locker would get stuck every single time she tried to open it. The lockers tend to get stuck and that causes some students to be late for class. Students only have five minutes to get ready for Physical Education so if four of those minutes are spent opening the lockers, an one minute is left to slip into your gym clothes and sneakers. "Jammed lockers cause aditional stress before their next class which make it harder to concentrate and pay attention in class. Diana says. Repairs are made every so often. Lockers that are really badly damaged are asked to be fixed. Not all of the jammed lockers are fixed though, some are left to stay how they are.

What can we do?

There are a lot of ways we can help. If we have fundraisers we could raise enough money to pay for repairs ourselves. Sports teams can also raise money and donate it. Class committees can organize bake sales, or other gatherings that can raise money towards new lockers. Or, just organize something by yourself!

This locks up our article! Hopefully, in the next few years, the gym lockers will be restored and there will be no more problems.

FIG. 5-6 Journalism can be activism. Writers have a history of pointing out problems. What makes writing essential to a society is that the common response to such writing is to work on solutions to those problems, as we see in Nicole's piece.