

A Response to Literature Essay:

“Dancer” by Vickie Sears

Directions for Administering

8th Grade

Greetings 8th 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 to break up the pre-writing activities according to your schedule. **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.

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

(Each section is aligned with the student prompt packet)

Introduction

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

Getting Started

Read the directions aloud to students and guide them through the questions. You may have students answer the questions in partners or in a whole class discussion.

Vocabulary

Begin this section by reading the directions and guiding students through the vocabulary matching. You may want to remind students that a synonym is a word that has the same or almost the same meaning as another word.

Reading

Read and clarify the directions with students. Students should read independently, reading and annotating the selection. Remind students that they will be thinking and writing about a theme from the story. They should underline words and phrases that they think are important or meaningful. You may also choose to read this story aloud and have them annotate as they read along. You may answer questions about vocabulary and/or clarify parts of the reading selection. You should also explain to students before they begin reading that the story is written in a vernacular dialect of English.

Thinking, Talking, Planning

Students should complete questions 1-3 on their own.

For question #4, students should share their idea with a partner. After students have had a chance to write down their own and their partner's ideas about the themes they found in the story, you should elicit ideas from the whole class and write these on the board. Students should write down other ideas that they hear in the space under question #5.

Now that students have had time to think and talk about the themes in the story, ask them to think about the one they find most interesting and have the most to write about. Have students write the theme that they will write their essay about on the lines below #5.

Next, turn the page and read the directions aloud on the top of page 5. You may want to create an overhead transparency of this page and go over the different parts of the graphic organizer. Remind students that when they write commentary they will be analyzing a quote or passage from the text and explaining how it is important to the theme. Good commentary does not summarize, repeat key words and phrases, or include statements such as "I think" or "I feel." Good commentary is concise and provides essential context information.

Writing

Read the prompt to students. As a class, break down the important elements of the prompt: role of writer, intended audience, format, and topic. Read through the checklists for *Writing Reminders* and *After You Write*. Students may refer to the reading selection and any notes they recorded earlier as they write. The entire class period is dedicated to writing. You may remind students to reread their work and make revisions and edits as time allows.

You may want to collect students' pre-writing packets separately and save for future reflection on their writing processes. **DO NOT** allow any materials, including the reading selection, notes, or pre-writing charts to leave the classroom.