Pushing Past 5 Paragraphs

How authentic audiences and genres can make learning more engaging and meaningful

Meg Grossnickle
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5 Paragraphs

Model of the essay

- Introduction that narrows to thesis
- Body paragraphs (at least 2), with topic sentences and details
- Conclusion that begins with thesis restatement and broadens out
So what are we saying when we say move past it?
Why use authentic audiences and genres?

A3: A key point in Student centred classes, mine at least, is that students are taking responsibility for their learning where they can. It frees me up to help those not quite ready for that move. #G2Great Back from the walk.

What matters is not what we teach; it’s what they learn, and the probability of real learning is far higher when the students have a lot to say about both the content and the process.

Alfie Kohn
(Feel-Bad Education)
"To write is to make choices, word by word, sentence by sentence, paragraph by paragraph. Writers choose what they want to write about, whom they want to write to, and why they’re writing."

“The five-paragraph essay is an artificial construct, a way to contain and control variables and keep students from wandering too far off track...It is very rare to see a five-paragraph essay in the wild; one finds them only in the captivity of the classroom."
Why teach like this?

When learning is this?
Shift the structure

What trends do you notice between these 3 lessons?

How do they compare to “traditional” thinking & structures?
How can we build these opportunities?

Finding good mentor texts

Opportunity for students to gather texts
How to: get readers to feel good about buying a product so that they are inspired to buy it.

- Brag
- Exaggerated description: smell, taste, texture
- Where it came from
- Describe how it's made
- Set in a story
- Funny with jokes
- Talk to reader "you"
- How much/money in a product

Key
- #5
- Real photos

Color = meaning
- Titles
- Symbols
- Where info came from

Size = meaning
- Compare

Explain
- The Story of Sugar in Cane
How can we build these opportunities?

- Capture noticings about mentor texts and genre
- Refer back to these throughout all stages of writing
What do final writing pieces look like?
Argumentative Writing

• Blogs
• Podcasts
• Infographics
• Essay
• Op-Ed
• Photo Essay
• Documentary
• Tweets
• Letters (to congress, to editors)
• Contests
Student Examples

Women who are raped contemplate suicide and substance abuse which can lead to death...so it actually does result in someone's death because by you forcing yourself upon someone the mental toll it does to them is unimaginable.

UmsilentMajority @The_Umsilent_
"If a woman has the right to an abortion why shouldn't a man be free to use his superior strength to force himself on her?" At least the rapist's pursuit of sexual freedom doesn't result in anyone's death.

soclibwaiifu Free education would be of great benefit to the people of the United States of America. People who are only high school graduates will earn $28,000 annually on average while someone with a bachelor's degree will make $45,000 yearly on average. This vast difference in income shows the necessity for all people in our country to obtain a higher education. Furthermore, the student debt in our nation is currently at a crisis level, to prevent even more massive growth of our student debt it is a necessity to give free higher education to the children of America. Low income high school graduates are also put at a disadvantage in our current system, as only 46 percent of all low income graduates were actually enrolled for college in 2013. Free education will allow these lower income graduates to obtain their necessary college education on an equal footing with those who are more fortunate. In essence, free education is the solution to our nation's current inadequate higher education system.

#freeeducation #freecollege #usa #university #college #america #education #politics
Dear Mr. Wunderlich,

I am a junior at Waterford Kettering High School. I am writing to you for an English project. We had a variety of topics to choose from, and I chose changing the start time for high school students. I have done a lot of research and here is what I've found. Studies have shown that we need 8.5-9.5 hours of sleep.

Without that we could suffer from sleep deprivation. When we do not get a good amount of sleep, we have better reflexes, balance, and hand-eye coordination. The amount of sleep we get can also lead to our mood. Depression and suicidal thoughts are at a higher percent because we are all sleep deprived. Studies have shown that kids that have sleep deprivation have a lower GPA. When kids are staying up all night studying for tests, it is very bad for the body. If we started school later, we would be more academically engaged.

Rather than starting school at 7:30 we should start at 7:45 or 7:50. That way we have time for sports and after school activities. If we started school at 7:45 we could go to 2:53 or if we start at 7:50 we could go to 2:58. The time change isn't that big of a difference but it could improve the biggest of things! The number of kids who have gone to Durant during the 2017-2018 school year has doubled, studies have shown that school-aged children from disadvantaged backgrounds not only risk higher rates of tardiness and truancy, but also higher rates of dropping out of school. I believe that if we started school later, more kids would be here on time. Kids also wouldn't fall asleep as much in class.

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter. I hope you would take this into consideration. I hope to hear back from you!

Sincerely,

Katelynn McGraw
695 Thompson Dr
Waterford, Mi 48329
248-920-4164
km3000@gmail.com

Keith Wunderlich
509 N. Cass Lake Rd
Waterford, MI 48329
Fax: 248-706-4888

Dear Mr. Wunderlich,

Thank you for your letter regarding high school start times. You probably already know this has been a huge topic of discussion for many years. There is quite a bit of literature supporting your premise.

I propose one of my major assumptions. You state that students need 8.5 to 9.5 hours of sleep. Would most high school students get that sleep if we changed the starting time? I don't think so. Think four children. When they were in high school they would have just shown up later for school once starting later.

But, let's say we could make the change. You suggested a time of 7:30 to go home. We can't do that. We don't have enough buses or tax drivers. That's when middle school gets out. Our buses go directly to elementary after that. So, in order to make it work, we'd have to start high school much later, like 9:30 a.m., and you'd go home much later, like 4:45 p.m.

Maybe you need to just move middle school up earlier so high school doesn't have to be so late. Then, you have the same lack of sleep arguments we have for high school.

On the surface, it seems like an easy fix. The reality is that we have many different age groups and schools to think about. If one time change, many time changes.

If we had more buses and more drivers, it could work. You need more high school and middle school students at the same time, but, there's a national shortage of bus drivers.

I appreciate your idea. We have discussed the same thing over the years. Unfortunately, we keep running into obstacles that prevent us from making a change in the start and end times.

Sincerely,

Keith O. Wunderlich, Dr.
Superintendent
Literary Analysis

• Essay Contests (Letters to Literature)
• Tweets
• Letters to Authors
• Podcasts (Binge Mode)
• Blogs
• Updated Book Reports
• Videos (Crash Course)
Confessions of a Sociopath
- A Life Spent Hiding in Plain Sight.

Cover Story: The cover is very interesting. Honestly I think that’s why I bought it in the first place. The cover is what seems like a doll face made into a mask and the text is like a handwritten chicken scratch type. The cover definitely caught my eye when I came across it at the store about 3 years ago. It gave me an eerie feeling followed by a serial killer vibe which didn’t bother me but more so intrigued me.

The Deal: So far in the story you are introduced to the main character M.E. Thomas also the author. She goes on to explain the search of her unexplained personality, speaking to many people, doing lots of research, taking many, many, many personality test to find if she truly is a sociopath and what that holds for her future. She talks about her past when she was a child dealing with the oddities of herself being VERY different from the other children, how her family left her and her brother to fend for themselves and overall how she dealt with everyday life being slightly different from how it should’ve been.

BFF Charm: In all honesty I would love her as a friend. Come on over M.E. Thomas, let’s eat mac and cheese and talk about your crazy thoughts and I’ll tell you mine. We can talk biology and chemistry. I don’t care just be in my presence. The “vibe” she gives off is very intriguing and just pulls me in. Kind of in a comforting way. With me being kind of an open book I tend to over talk and when I do I can sometimes tell when someone begins to get annoyed or aggravated with my over-share personality. With her she says she likes to listen. I would feel
Personal Narrative

• Poems
• College Essays/Scholarships
• Blogs
• Essays
• Short Stories
• Contests
Emotion is something I struggle with for reasons that I am unsure of. I was not raised to never show emotion, I was always taught to talk things out with people and let people know how I am feeling. Since I was little I was always the “mom” of my siblings not because my mom wasn’t present or being a good mom but because when we would hang out alone without my mom I was always told to make sure no one does anything dumb and my siblings alongside my friends always treated me like a second mom even though I was the youngest of the group. The role of a leader was something I took on in life pretty early and it was something I valued. I was always the one that helped people out before helping myself and I think that is the reason I act how I do today when it comes to showing emotion because I don’t know who to talk to or what to say because I never grew up that way.

My grandpas death. This is an internal challenge I face, something that my parents and friends aren’t aware of how much it affected me, but that’s the challenge right there I don’t let people know how things affect me and showing emotion is hard for me. I won’t forgive myself for how I handled everything when it came to my grandpas passing and what I wish I would’ve said to him.

My grandfather passed away in the summer of 2014. My sister was getting married in less than a month and there was a lot of stress with last minute details that needed to be done. The death was sudden but expected. My grandpa alongside my dad are the reason I have the personality I hold today.

I remember my mom coming home and telling my siblings and I to get in the car to visit grandpa in the hospital. I was 12 at the time, and didn’t quite understand what my grandpa was going through and the seriousness of it. My mom said it might be our last time seeing my grandpa. I struggled to fight back tears because my siblings alongside my mom were crying, and I felt an unassigned role to be their rock. Something I’ll always hate about myself is my inability to effectively show emotion or empathy no matter how badly something is affecting me. I never cried in front of them but I did on my own when no one could see.

At the hospital my grandma pulled me aside and told me that grandpa could still hear us but he was too weak to respond, she said that I should tell him I love him because it will make him happy. When I went back in the room I walked to my grandpa and grabbed his hand. I never told him I loved him, I never thanked him for all he has taught me. I didn’t say a word to him, I just held his hand till it was time to leave.

Later that night I was laying in my bed beating myself up for not being able to say something to my grandpa, I layed there crying hoping I would get tired enough to fall asleep. I stayed up that night and eventually went downstairs to talk to my mom, when I got down there my sister and her bridesmaids were sitting there putting together party favors for the bridal shower. I did not want to cry in front of my mom let alone my sister and her friends. I remember going up to my mom who was sitting on the couch and just burying my head into her so no one would see me
I have not had very many accomplishments that I have been proud of. Really, there's only one thing that I can remember actually bringing me pride...

Earlier last year, I was put into the Philharmonic Orchestra as a Sophomore. I've been hard working in music, and not in a good way. Either, while I may seem Mr. Load, I was the best addition since. I think it is still rather new and on my mind. Exhilarating things about my place that I have never seen before. You guys are going to high school, there's going to be lots of hard work there. Too!
Mindset Shift
Losing control  →  Facilitating Learning
Expert in Every Genre

Comfortable Facilitating Analysis
Grading: prescriptive checklist of WHAT to include

Assessment: Descriptive HOW Purpose & skills
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developing (1-7)</th>
<th>Proficient (8-9)</th>
<th>Advanced (10)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Engages the reader from the beginning. Introduces main conflict/characters/setting.</td>
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<td>Sequences the events in the story so that they build on one another toward a particular tone or outcome.</td>
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<td>Provides a conclusion that reflects on what is experienced over the course of the narrative.</td>
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<td>Uses precise word choice and phrases to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</td>
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<td>Includes specific details to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.</td>
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<td>Makes effective choices concerning style of writing that help to support the tone, experience, or purpose for writing.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate a command of Standard English conventions.</td>
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<td>Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>I presented a precise claim that takes a clear stance on a significant issue.</td>
<td>I produced a clear and coherent piece of writing, in which the development, organization and style are appropriate to the genre.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>I introduced my topic, gave relevant background information, and presented my claim in a clear fashion, being aware of potential audience biases.</td>
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<td>The support for my claim is organized and well thought out to build my argument as it develops, with significant reasoning and multiple connections.</td>
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<td>Development and Organization</td>
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<td>In the conclusion, I re-visited my claim, and I described the significance of my argument for stakeholders, or offered additional insights, implications, questions, or challenges.</td>
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<td>I supported my argument with relevant textual evidence, including direct quotes where appropriate.</td>
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<td>I acknowledged potential counterarguments and rebuttals, staying fair to those who might disagree with me by describing how my position is one of several and making it clear where my position stands in relation to others.</td>
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<td>Conventions</td>
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<td>I used Standard English conventions properly, including spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.</td>
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<td>I created an engaging voice and tone through appropriate level of vocabulary, varied sentence structure, and transitions.</td>
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<td>My paper is formatted according to the proper medium or utilizes MLA structure, including a Works Cited page, if needed.</td>
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## Literary Analysis Rubric

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<th>10</th>
<th>8</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Themes</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>· Identifies and explains important themes</td>
<td>All Criteria Met</td>
<td>Most Criteria Met</td>
<td>Some Criteria Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Clear and appropriate for the novel</td>
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<td>· Written as a full sentence</td>
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<td>· Demonstrates full understanding of novel</td>
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<td><strong>Evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>· Clear and distinct</td>
<td>All Criteria Met</td>
<td>Most Criteria Met</td>
<td>Some Criteria Met</td>
<td>Little to No Criteria Met</td>
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<td>· Exact text from the novel</td>
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<td>· Supports theme</td>
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<td><strong>Explanation/Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>· Fully explains the connection between theme and text</td>
<td>All Criteria Met</td>
<td>Most Criteria Met</td>
<td>Some Criteria Met</td>
<td>Little to No Criteria Met</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Demonstrates understanding of the text</td>
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<td>· Thoughtful</td>
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<tr>
<td>· Includes inferences and connections</td>
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Prepare them for the test

Prepare them to be writers who are flexible in genre
Student Feedback

“I really liked the opportunity to actually write to her (Senator Stabenow) and have a small chance that she could do something in the real world, which is something I never got to do in other LA classes.”
Final Thoughts

Meg Grossnickle
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