

Be A Winning Writer Syllabus

Teacher – Sabrina Ayers

Overview: Students will develop their character through examining the book *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey. At the same time, they will expand their SAT vocabulary and writing techniques through the use of two skill books. The prompts and skills they will encounter will help expand and strengthen their writing so they become strong applicants (and winners!) for: essays contests, and college applications. This course is ultimately designed for students to help understand who they are in order for them to express themselves more fluidly.

Week 1

Week 1: Change Your Perspective

Goals: Introduce students to the course, materials, and create a writing community promoting self-expression.

Readings:

1. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey; Part I: Inside Out, The 7 Habits – An Overview
2. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter: Period As A Stop Sign
3. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Words with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Pg 15-25

Lesson 1 -

- A. Introduce Course + Ice Breakers
- B. Lecture: 7 Habits:
 - a. Perspective – two different perspectives can still be right
- C. Activity: Students work in pairs to look at Muller-Lyer Illusion
- D. Short Writing Exercise: Photo Exercise.
- E. Homework: Finish writing. Introduce yourself to your writing partner.

Lesson 2 -

- A. SAT Vocabulary Quiz
- B. Lecture: 1. Character Ethic + Personality Ethic + 2. Writing Tools – Period As A Stop Sign
- C. Longer Writing Assignment:
 - a. Imagine you -always- have a certain narrative about yourself: “I can’t do that.” “I can’t trust people” or “Nothing ever works out for me,” etc.. Now imagine a story

from the point of view another “character” from your story a friend, family member, teacher, etc. How would they tell it?

- i. Tell a story in the future from the point of your friend. It could be as simple as meeting up for a drink at Starbucks or going to the movies. Whatever it is, really try to think about how what your friend would say, and do.
- ii. As you write, think about: What can you see now that you weren’t willing or able to before? How does including their points of view add complexity and nuance to the storytelling?

D. Homework

- a. Finish classwork. Peer feedback.

Week 2: Habit 1 – Be Proactive

Goals: In order to be effective, one must be proactive. Students learn to take control through speech, habits, and writing tools.

Readings:

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 1: Be Proactive
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter: Observe Word Territory
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Pgs 26-36

Lesson 1

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary Matching Quiz
- B. Lecture: Active v proactive behavior
- C. Partner Roleplay active v proactive behavior
- D. Short Writing Exercise:
 - a. Situation A: If you are a proactive person you are “response-able”. This means you don’t blame others for what happens to you. You choose your behavior. If your parent schedules you to volunteer during a special event, like Homecoming, after you requested it off. You choose your behavior that you will respond with. Are you going to be hostile, and mean? Or will you approach your parent with a winning attitude to work out the situation?

Lesson 2 -

- A. Warm-up: Introduce Essay contest information
- E. Lecture: Writing Tools – Writing Tools: Control The Pace
- B. Activity: Students work individually to practice writing tool
- C. Longer Writing Assignment:

- a. Letter to yourself:
 - i. Thinking about the proactive choices you made earlier this week (and that you'll be making this summer and next year). Write a letter to your wise future self.

Perhaps, recognize and thank yourself for all the hard work you are going to put into this new skill. Ask questions. Explore. Write. And even give a little advice too.

D. Homework: Finish writing.

Week 3: Habit 2 Begin With The End In Mind

Goals: Students select their values in order to craft a mission statement. At the same time, they ponder: who am I and who do I want to be as a writer?

Readings:

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 2: Begin With The End In Mind
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter: Tune Your Voice
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Pgs 37-47

Lesson 1 –

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary Quiz
- B. Lecture: 7 Habits: Begin with the end in Mind + Mission Statements
- C. Activity: Group Work – Analyzing Examples: What makes a powerful Mission Statement?
- D. Short Writing Exercise: Writing Mission Statement –
 - a. Prompt: How do I want my values to reflect who I am?
- E. Homework:
 - a. Brainstorm for mission statement
 - i. Get feedback from writing partner. Introduce yourself to your new writing partner.

Lesson 2 -

- A. Warm-up: Evaluate a few personal mottos
- B. Lecture: Writing Tools – Tune Your Voice
- E. Activity: Students work individually to craft their 'voice'
- F. Long Writing Assignment: Mission Statement

Week 4: Habit 3 – Put First Things First

Goal: Students learn the importance of time management in life and the power of ‘NO’ AND writing.

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 4: Put First Things First
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter: Too Many -Ings
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Lesson Pgs 48-58

Lesson 1 -

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary Fill In The Blank Quiz
- B. Lecture: 7 Habits: Put First Things First – Time Management/ Quadrant II
- C. Activity: Paired activity: Asses the pros and cons of staying in each quadrant.
- D. Short Writing Exercise: What one thing you could do in your personal life, that if you did it on a regular basis would make a tremendous positive difference in your life?

Lesson 2 –

- A. Warm-up: The Power of Saying No
- B. Lecture: Writing Tools: Too Many –ings
- C. Activity: Individual exercise to practice the tool
- D. Longer Writing Assignment: Imagine a year from now. You are firm in your ability to say, “No.” What does that part of you sound like? What does it feel like in your body? Does it have a name? And most importantly, what kinds of things are you saying no to in order to say yes to?
- E. Finish writing. Peer feedback.

Week 5: Habit 4 – Think Win-Win

Goal: Students focus on win-win interactions in order to create interdependent relationships.

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 5: Think Win-Win
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter:
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Pgs 59-69

Lesson 1 -

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary Quiz

- B. Lecture: 7 Habits: Six Paradigms of Human Interactions + Abundance/Scarcity Mentality
- C. Activity: Paired Exercise: Examine examples – how to turn them around
- D. Short Writing Exercise: You have an important final project coming up in English class. However, you already know you are unable to complete this assignment on time due to your busy and packed schedule. This teacher is known to be flexible, but only through tough negotiations. How do you reach a win-win situation?
- E. Homework: Introduce yourself to your new writing partner. Get peer feedback.

Lesson 2 –

- A. Warm-up: Class Discussion: “We have committed the golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life.” – Edwin Markham
- B. Lecture: Writing Tools – Collaboration
- C. Activity: Paired Work: Combined Workbench Activities – Gathering Information, Praising, and Learning: How does your partner work best?
- D. Long Writing Assignment: You have to be brave in order to think win-win. Think of a relationship (friend, family member, teacher, etc) that would be strengthened over time, if you were able to shift it to a win-win. What is this relationship? How would you go about this change? What would the results be? Be brave. Think of the possibilities, and think of the endless opportunities.
- E. Homework: Finish writing.

Week 6: Habit 5 – Seek to Understand, Then to be Understood

Goal: Students seek to understand other BEFORE they give advice.

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 5: Seek to Understand, Then to be Understood
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter:
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Pgs 70-80

Lesson 1 -

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary oral quiz
- B. Lecture: 7 Habits: Empathic listening
- C. Activity: Role play with empathic listening

- D. Writing Exercise: Watch a dialogue. What emotions are being communicated that may not come across in words alone? Reflect: Do you usually pick up on these subtle cues? Why or why not?

Lesson 2 –

- A. Warm-up:
- B. Lecture: Writing Tools – Learn from criticism
- C. Activity: Individual: Workbench #1 reflective writing
- D. Writing Exercise: Right now, there are many people doing important, essential jobs: healthcare workers, postal workers, police officers, etc. Write a letter to one of them where you try to really inhabit the letter with empathy. Think (or even research) of what their day must be like or what challenges they must face. You may not be able to ‘listen’ to them right now, but you can try.
- E. Finish paper.

Week 7: Habit 6 – Synergize

Goal: Students will learn to value multiple perspectives in order to uncover new possibilities in life and in their writing.

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 6: Synergize
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter:
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Lesson 81-91

Lesson 1 -

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary Quiz
- B. Lecture: 7 Habits: Synergize
- C. Activity: Groupwork: Roleplay looking to sidestep, catalyze, encourage or value.
- D. Writing Exercise: Think about a person who typically see things differently than you do. Consider ways in which those differences might be used as steppingstones to third find alternative solutions.

Lesson 2 –

- A. Warm-up: College Application Prompt Intro
- B. Lecture: Writing Tools – Cut Big, Then Small
- C. Activity: Paired Activity: Students will bring in a previous piece to edit in pairs.

- D. Writing Exercise: If you were going to give a TED Talk on a problem you would like to solve in the future., what would it be? It could be any intellectual, research, or ethical problem. How would you use synergy to solve it?
- E. Homework: Introduce yourself to your new writing partner. Get peer feedback.

Week 8: Habit 7 – Sharpen The Saw

Goal: Students learn to renew themselves and their writing in order to become more synergistic.

- A. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey; Part 1: Habit 7 Sharpen The Saw
- B. *Writing Tools: 55 Essential Strategies For Every Writer* Roy Peter Clark; Chapter: Let It Flow
- C. *Vocabulary Cartoons, SAT Word Power: Learn Hundreds of SAT Word with Easy Memory* Bryan Burchers; Pgs 92-102

Lesson 1 -

- A. Warm-up: SAT Vocabulary: Sketch the meaning
- B. Lecture: 7 Habits: The 4 Dimensions: physical, mental, spiritual, social/emotional
- C. Activity: Paired Work: Brainstorming personal renewing activities
- D. Writing Exercise: TBD

Lesson 2 –

- A. Warm-up: Wrap up – Quote Discussion: “Sometimes when I consider what tremendous consequences come from little things . . . I am tempted to think . . . there are no little things.” – Bruce Barton
- B. Lecture: Writing Tools – Let It Flow: how to transition from writing tools to everyday writing
- C. Activity: Individual Reflection: How can you “let it flow” or rather, transition from using the tools to being a writer?
- D. Writing Exercise: Imagine that you have written a 400-page autobiography of your life to this point. In a year, what would page 150 of that autobiography, especially in regard to your ability sharpen your saw. What have you explored? What have you discovered about yourself?
- E. Finish final paper. Course reflection. Peer Feedback.

