



Character Education Infused English-Language Arts Lessons

Writing an Essay: All About Me

<p>Grade Level: 7</p> <p>Character Education Focus: Respect, Responsibility and Integrity</p> <p>Summary</p> <p>Students will be led through the five-step writing process (pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and final draft) to write a five-paragraph autobiographical essay. Students will respond to a set of writing prompts for each paragraph which includes questions about how the character traits of respect, responsibility, and integrity relate to their lives and to reaching their school and personal goals. This essay can be used as a getting-to-know-you assignment at the beginning of the school year. (Three 50-minute class periods)</p>	<p>Materials Needed</p> <p><i>All About Me</i> Essay handout</p>
---	---

Academic-Character Education Objectives

Students will:

1. Discuss the meaning and provide examples of the character traits of *respect*, *integrity*, and *responsibility*.
2. Demonstrate their understanding of the five-step writing process.
3. Organize ideas and write an autobiography.
4. Write using correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
5. Explain the importance of *respect*, *integrity*, and *responsibility* in their lives.
6. Work with classmates to brainstorm, respond to classmates' writing and practice cooperative team work.

California English-Language Arts Standards Addressed

Writing

- 1.0 Writing Strategies
 - 1.1 Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.
 - 1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.
 - 1.3 Use strategies of note-taking, outlining, and summarizing to impose structure on composition drafts.
 - 1.7 Revise writing to improve organization and word choice after checking the logic of the ideas and the precision of the vocabulary.

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

- 1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions.
 - 1.1 Place modifiers properly and use the active voice.
 - 1.2 Identify and use infinitives and participles and make clear references between pronouns and antecedents.
 - 1.5 Use correct capitalization.
 - 1.6 Spell derivatives correctly by applying the spellings of bases and affixes.

Standards reprinted, by permission, California Department of Education

Lesson Procedures

Part One

1. Introduce the purpose of the lesson which is to write an autobiographical essay using the five-step writing process. They will be doing peer editing and sharing parts of their final product with the class. They will also be thinking about how specific behaviors related to character traits such as *respect*, *responsibility* and *integrity* can support their efforts towards reaching academic and personal goals.
2. Introduce the meaning of *respect* (I treat others the way I want to be treated), *integrity*, (having the courage to do what is right, even when it's hard), and *responsibility* (being accountable for my own actions and choices and their consequences without blaming others) and provide examples of each.

Select heterogeneous teams of four before the lesson begins. Present the round robin structure. Each student takes turns presenting an example. Pause and allow students to ask a clarifying question or make a comment. Then repeat the process for each student in turn. Have each team focus on one character trait of choice. The question is: *What are some of the specific behaviors related to your home and school life that are examples of respect, responsibility, or integrity?* After sufficient time have each team share one or two examples with the class.

Part Two

3. Assess students' prior knowledge of the five-step writing process, and review the process with them, writing information on the board and having students take notes.
4. Distribute the *All About Me* autobiographical essay handout. Review the writing prompts for each section of the essay. Respond to any student questions as each section of the essay is explained and clarified. Encourage students to ask their parents for help with some of the information gathering.

5. Demonstrate the use of a pre-writing web cluster for the hobbies and interests paragraph. Ask one student to respond to these sample questions and illustrate the responses in the web cluster on the board.

Name one your hobbies or interests (center circle)

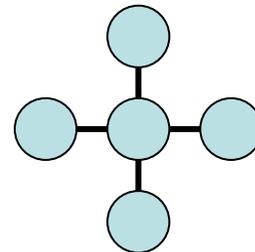
What makes you interested in this activity?

How long have you been involved?

Who got you involved?

With whom do you engage in this hobby?

How does being respectful, responsible and having integrity relate to your hobby or activity?



Point out how quickly ideas for paragraphs can be generated with this technique. You may want to have students work in pairs to assist each other with the pre-writing brainstorming. Once pre-writing is completed for each paragraph, students can draft their essay.

Part Three

6. On the day the rough draft is due, have students organize in groups of three or four to conduct the Responding to Writing (http://charactered.ocde.us/ICE/lessons_html/responding.pdf) process described in more detail in the *Support Materials* link found on the ICE lessons' webpage. This process focuses on issues of content, organization, clarity, and diction. In this four-step process the author reads her paper aloud; the responders (classmates) give praise; the author asks questions; and then the responders give suggestions. After students revise their essay based on this feedback from their classmates, paired proofreading can occur which focuses on conventions of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and formatting. (See the section "Teacher Notes" for a guide to editing symbols.)
7. Remind students of the final formatting requirements found on the instructions handout. Debrief the series of processes that the students experienced in writing their autobiographical essay. As a closure to this project, in teams of four, ask students to respond to this question: *How was respect, responsibility, and integrity demonstrated during this writing project?*

Academic–Character Education Assessment

1. Essays can be assessed on responding to all writing prompts, clarity of writing, student understanding of the five-step writing process, and use of correct grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
2. The assessment can also reflect student understanding of the meaning and importance of *respect*, *integrity*, and *responsibility* in their lives and the appropriateness of their responses.

Reflective Journaling Prompts

- How can you become more respectful at home?
- How do students' demonstrate integrity at school and in the classroom?
- How do you show your parents and teachers that you are a responsible person?

Extensions and Variations

On the day the essays are returned to students, assign the following journal topic:

1. In a one-page journal entry, discuss what your feelings and concerns are about your grade (i.e. Were you surprised at your grade? Do you think you deserved the grade you received?)
2. Based on the "correction comments," what will you do on the next essay to improve?
3. What was the most valuable thing you learned about essay writing during this assignment?
4. Finally, did writing about how you view *respect*, *integrity*, and *responsibility* change the way you view your life or the importance of these traits? Why or why not?

Teacher Notes or References

This assignment, if given at the beginning of the year, can be a useful gauge of students' writing skills. It can be used to make decisions for instructional planning.

Responding to Writing (http://charactered.ocde.us/ICE/lessons_html/responding.pdf) is a useful process for students to take the lead in improving their writing. Students can practice working cooperatively and respectfully with classmates while sharing their writing.

More details can also be found in the lessons section grades 9-10 at:
<http://charactered.ocde.us/ICE/Lessons/index.asp>

For a student guide to using editing symbols go to:
<http://www.timeforkids.com/TFK/media/teachers/pdfs/2003S/030131WR1.pdf>

Author: Brian Seguin **Editor:** Cheryl J. Jensen

An Autobiographical Essay: All About Me

Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Directions: Write a five-paragraph autobiographical essay that addresses the questions below. Decide on an original title for your essay. Your final product should be typed double-spaced in 12 point Times New Roman font with the title centered. Include your name, period, and date.

Paragraph One: Introduce Yourself and Family

1. Begin with an interesting fact about yourself.
2. Include your full name and the date, place, weight, and time of birth.
3. What is your birth order (only child, first, second, third child)?
4. What are the names of your parents and siblings? Write a sentence or two about each person in your family.

Paragraph Two: Hobbies and Interests

1. What are your hobbies, interests or sports activities? Explain why they are attractive to you. How did you get involved in the hobby, sport, or activity?
2. Is there a hobby, sport or activity that you would like to try? Explain.
3. What other talents or interests do you that may not be a hobby?
4. Do you think it's important for teens to have hobbies and interests? Explain.
5. In what ways are your hobbies and interests important to you? What have you learned from them?
6. How does being respectful, responsible and having integrity relate to your hobby or activity?

Paragraph Three: Your Experiences in English-Language Arts Class

1. Describe your experiences and feelings about English-Language Arts class last year. What was the best and worst part of your experience?
2. What were some of your favorite readings or books? Why?
3. How does being respectful, responsible and having integrity relate to your experiences in English-Language Arts class?
4. What is your favorite school subject? Explain why.
5. Explain what you think and feel about school and why you think and feel that way.

Paragraph Four: Your Goals

1. What do you hope to learn and accomplish this year in English-Language Arts class?
2. What would you like to see happen in this course?
3. What other goals do you have for yourself as a student this year?
4. How do you think being respectful, responsible and having integrity would help you reach your goals as a student this year?

Paragraph Five: Conclusion

1. End your essay with your final thoughts.
2. Is there something you want to share that is important for others to know about you?