

## Mentor Author

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Summer 2006

### Mentor Author Description:

Students examine a favorite fiction or nonfiction text for rhetorical strategies (e.g., sentence structures, word choice, figurative language, parallel structure, transitions, style/voice, and genre characteristics). Ideally, students will analyze how their selected author uses writing strategies purposefully and effectively and will apply those strategies to their own writing while brainstorming, revising, and editing. I use mentor author activities as 15-minute class starters to support the direct instruction of related skills and strategies over a quarter or semester. While the mentor activities I have developed are for grade 11 students in suburban high school on a four-period day schedule, they may be modified for most ages and schools.

### Possible lessons:

- ✓ Class criteria for “good literature.”
- ✓ Sentence strategies and sentence combining (e.g., compound, introductory dependent clauses, participles, absolutes, and appositives) to support direct classroom instruction.
- ✓ Vocabulary words (especially verbs).
- ✓ Parallel structure.
- ✓ Transitions.
- ✓ Introductions.
- ✓ Figurative language (simile, metaphor, descriptive imagery, poetic techniques used in fiction or nonfiction).
- ✓ Dialogue.
- ✓ Genre characteristics.
- ✓ Style, voice, and breaking the rules.

## Class Criteria for “Good Novels or Nonfiction Books”

### A. Activity Details:

1. Meet in your writing group.
2. Each group needs a piece of butcher paper and a box of magic markers.
3. Your group will have 15 minutes to complete this activity.

### B. Directions:

1. Develop four different phrases or sentences that your group agrees describe good novels or nonfiction books.
2. You may not use the words “interesting” or “boring.”
3. You may not use “it’s short” as one of your phrases or sentences that describes good novels or nonfiction books.
4. You must use school appropriate language.
5. Write your four descriptive phrases/sentences on the butcher paper provided; tape on the wall.

### C. Activity Wrap-Up

1. Read the list developed by another group.
2. Underline in red, those phrases/sentences that pertain to characters.
3. Underline in green, those phrases/sentences that pertain to plot.
4. Underline in blue, those phrases/sentences that pertain to themes and ideas.
5. Underline in black, those phrases/sentences that pertain to special writing techniques (e.g., simile, metaphor, descriptive imagery, unique genre requirements, etc.)

### D. Ms. Malwitz’s Follow-Up

1. Consolidate and type

## A Sampling of Mentor Author Class-Starter Activities

### Group A:

2. Mine your mentor author books for five great verbs.
3. Write the selected verbs on an overhead and present to the class.
4. Provide definitions, if necessary.
5. Read the passage from the novel in which the verb is located.
6. Classmates: write down the verbs/definitions in your notebook.

### Group B:

1. Mine your mentor author books for three compound sentences.
2. Write the sentences on an overhead.
3. Make three new compound sentences by combining existing simple sentences in your mentor author books. You may make-up new sentence information if necessary.
4. Write the old and new sentences on your overhead.
5. Present to class.
6. Classmates: write down one sentence in your notebook.

### Group C:

1. Mine your mentor author books for three sentences that can be revised by adding an appositive.
2. Write the new sentences on an overhead.
3. Present to class.
4. Classmates: write down one sentence in your notebook.

### Group D:

1. Mine your mentor author books for three sentences that can be revised by adding a participle.
2. Write the new sentences on an overhead.
3. Present to class.
4. Classmates: write down one sentence in your notebook.

### Group E:

1. Mine your mentor author books for three sentences that can be revised by adding an absolute.
2. Write the new sentences on an overhead.
3. Present to class.
4. Classmates: write down one sentence in your notebook.

## Sentence Samples

### Compound:

Dixie and Dopey frolicked in the backyard, but they soon tired and whined at the back door.

Dixie and Dopey frolicked in the backyard; however, they soon tired and whined at the back door.

Dixie and Dopey frolicked in the backyard; they chased squirrels and buried their chew toys.

### Participle:

Whining and whimpering, Dixie and Dopey scratched on the screen door.

### Absolute:

Ears pointing and tails wagging, Dixie and Dopey begged for doggie treats.

### Appositive:

Dixie and Dopey, champion Welch corgis, begged for doggie treats.