

The Greatest Excuse

Background

Your homework is late and the dog did not eat it, something else happened. What was it? Did you go through a portal to a different world? Did you wake up and have a huge adventure just getting to school? Your teacher is looking at you with skeptical eyes and is ready to put a ***BIG RED X*** next to your name... you have to think fast to save your grade!

Challenge: You will write a 400-800 word excuse in the form of a story that you will share with the class. You will either read it out loud or tell it to the class like a storyteller. You will receive a mark for your story (writing) and a mark for your presentation (oral language).

Class Work Blocks (2-3 weeks)

- Brainstorm
- Write....write....write....
- Draft....draft...draft....
- Edit!
- Practice storytelling/reading
- Present/hand in story

Class Expectations

Good writers need writing time and collaboration for inspiration. You will be given time to collaborate (with 1-2 people), but you will also have quiet writing blocks. During this time it is expected you will write...write...write.....The trick to a good story is to get your ideas out and then to rewrite until it is gold! Good writers also demonstrate respect for their peers by being on task during all blocks and not disrupting each other.

What will you hand in?

- The story
- Format of the story
 - Handwritten in pen or typed (size 10-12)
 - Double spaced

This page has 240 words written on it.... 400 is not that many!

Marking

The Story: _____

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Proficient</i>	<i>Expanding/Extending</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Meaning	-Straightforward with some originality -Supporting details and descriptions -Sense of audience	-Logically absurd, creative, sense of voice -'Shows' through detail and description -Clear awareness of audience	
Style	-Language is varied with sensory detail -Variety of sentence patterns	-Language is varied with sensory details and figurative language -Flows smoothly with a variety of sentences	
Form	-Clear beginning, middle, and end -Logical sequence -Appropriate dialogue and interesting use of characters	-Engaging beginning, middle, and end -Believable, unpredictable, and unique -Individuality in the characters and effective dialogue	
Conventions	-Minor errors in complex language -Generally correct sentence structure -Presented clearly and neatly	-Occasional errors in complex language -All sentences are structured correctly -Presented neatly with care	

The Presentation: _____

Clear pronunciation		
Appropriate volume		
Appropriate emphasis		
Use of hand gestures		
Appropriate Pacing		

Definitions

Logically Absurd: taking something to its logical extreme which may show how absurd it is....in your stories you may spiral into events that could not really happen, but you will tell them with such confidence and logic that you make your absurd ideas believable!

Figurative Language: language that uses words or expressions with a meaning that is different the literal meaning. Examples: metaphor, simile, alliteration, idiom, personification, onomatopoeia

Sensory Details: using senses in descriptions to make the listener hear, feel, smell, taste, or see something when they are listening/reading.

Sense of Audience: who are you writing for? What language would be appropriate for this audience?

Sentence Patterns: the simplest sentence has a subject (noun) and an action (verb). You have been learning to write more complex sentences overtime that involve connectors (and, but) and clauses. Good writing contains a variety of sentence patterns and lengths, but the sentences are always complete. You can check by looking for a subject (noun) and an action (verb) in every sentence!

Final Thoughts

- *Timescale:* Keep it short (a few hours)
- *Characters:* 2-3 at the most
- *Point of View:* Write in the first person... you are the one talking and telling the story about yourself
- *Humour:* Humour is a good tool when writing an excuse

Brainstorming

Real Reasons for Late Work

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Ideas for your excuse.....

Descriptive Language: Your Senses

Use your senses.....

Topic 1: Your Shoe

Topic 2: _____ (Keep it a secret!)

Which sense was the easiest to write about?

Which was the most challenging?

Revising 101

Story Summary

Challenge: Tell your whole story in five main points...

Use the Space

Challenge 1: Use paragraphs and spacing to separate big ideas/sections of your story. Use a pen and try to mark places in your draft that should be different paragraphs.

Challenge 2: Make sure you use a new line for a new speaker... mix up the dialogue tags.

Don't be so Tense

Challenge: Your story has already happened; therefore, it should be in the past tense! Read through your draft and make sure you are referring to events in the past tense.

Hack, Tighten, Trim

Challenge: Remove any event or idea that does not move the plot forward. Be ruthless and edit your work to gold.

Read it Out Loud

Challenge: Read your work out loud to a friend and make sure every word/piece of punctuation is perfect! I read many very LONG sentences..... How could punctuation help?