



Anne Morrow Lindbergh 1906-2001

While looking for information about Anne's feelings on being alone with her thoughts, alone to write, often alone to make household decisions, I rediscovered some wonderful quotes from her book, "A Gift From the Sea". I cannot begin to reword what she so eloquently says:

"...what extraordinary spiritual freedom and peace [such] simplification can bring. I remember again, ironically, that today more of us in America than anywhere else in the world have the luxury of choice between simplicity and complication of life. And for the most part, we, who could choose simplification, choose complication."

"...I feel that we are all islands-- in a common sea.

We are all, in the last analysis, alone. And this basic solitude is not something that we have any choice about. It is, as the poet Rilke says, 'not something that one can take or leave. We are solitary. We may delude ourselves and act as though this were not so. That is all. But how much better it is to realize that we are so, ...' "

"...We seem so frightened today of being alone that we never let it happen. Even if family, friends, and movies should fail, there is still the radio or televisions to fill up the void. ...Now, instead of planting our solitude with our own dream blossoms, we choke the space with continuous music, chatter, and companionship to which we do not even listen. It is simply there to fill the vacuum. When the noise stops there is no inner music to take its place. We must re-learn to be alone."

Is it necessary to be alone to become a writer? The authors that I have asked about this say, no, but it often does present a different type of thought.

Time Passing...

We lost her, our dear friend Sandra. Yet we didn't. She's with us here at Lindbergh school every day. Her smiles, comments, jokes, pop into my mind as I walk down the hall. I have known her presence every day since her passing. Have you noticed the beautiful sunrises and sunsets- every day- since we got the news? I didn't realize that she had such an eye for gorgeous colors, but I'm sure she has something to do with those sunrises and sunsets.

Perhaps Sandra is telling us to use the time that we have here wisely. Possibly she is reminding me to think about what, if anything, I accomplished between those sunrises and sunsets. Is she saying, this is a glorious place, wait until you get to see it?

I have a million questions to ask Sandra- why didn't you go to the doctor sooner; what symptoms did you have; how could you cope with the heartbreak of leaving your family; why didn't I know you were so very ill? Some of my questions are selfish, some too personal to put in a public format. One question that I don't have to ask- were you ready? We all know that she has been ready for years. Would I be that ready? Could I be as gracious as she in such a dire situation?

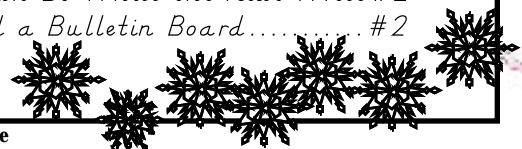
We are all blest for having known this wonderful woman, even for a short time. Yes, Sandra continues to be a vital part of our Lindbergh school family.

As time passes for all of us, use some of it to write and encourage our students to write. Express thoughts and fears, good times and bad, happiness and sadness. Reflect. Celebrate. Put into words that which helps us find peace. Enjoy the time and the people who touch your lives. Know that it is limited.



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Graphic Tome! (Descriptive Writing!)

The New Year is a perfect time to start descriptive writing with your students! They have many new experiences from the holidays or vacation that they are ALL wanting to share with you and the class. Put them into a writing activity.

Start by using the beautifully illustrated Ruth Heller books that talk about descriptive words (all parts of speech are represented). These are the titles:

- *Fantastic! Wow! And Unreal!*
- *Kites Sail High*
- *A Cache of Jewels*
- *Up, Up and Away*
- *Many Luscious Lollipops*
- *Merry-Go-Round* (all available in the Media Center!)



Have the students describe:

- their favorite meal during the holidays
- the worst/best thing that they got for a gift
- the most 'unusual' person at their holiday gathering
- a fun/scary/silly event that happened over the holidays

The Feb./Mar 2003 issue of *The Mailbox: Intermediate* is bursting with tremendous concepts that will tantalize your scholars reflections!

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Seasonal Journal Prompts

- ◇ What I didn't get for Christmas...
- ◇ When I think about what quiet means, I think of....
- ◇ If I had magical powers, I would change....
- ◇ Things that I can do in the winter that a student in Hawaii can't.... (or that they can do that I can't!)
- ◇ I could make school a better experience by...
- ◇ Write about what you **DON'T LIKE ABOUT WRITING**- such as: when the teacher reads mine out loud... correcting it... dumb assignments... never getting our papers back... when we have to pick a topic off of the board & I don't like any of them or what you **DO LIKE ABOUT WRITING**- such as: when it doesn't have to rhyme... when I write letters to my friend... listening to each others writing... getting help fixing mistakes....

"The idea is to get the pencil moving quickly." - Bernard Malamud



What the Teacher Does While the Kids Write...

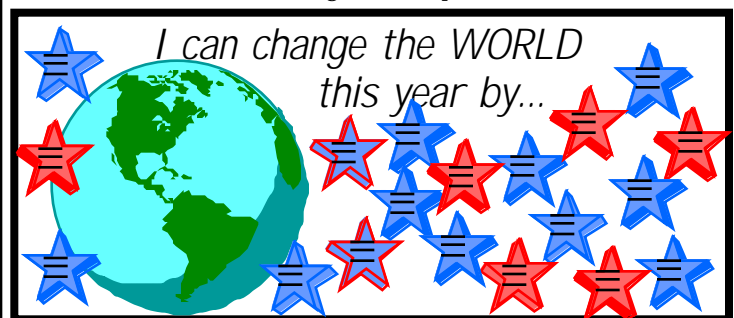


You are there to:

1. Inspire and jog ideas from their lodging places, and to keep the assignment alive and fresh.
2. Show them how to collect impressions: "...Close your eyes... you're looking right into that wave... it's coming toward you,, what is the water doing?... what do you see in the wave?...how does it look?... sound?..."
3. Help them find a form to fit the topic.
4. Listen and probe and suggest.
5. Ask open-ended questions: "What sounds do you hear in a haunted house?" "How cold was that ice rink?" "What thoughts did the boy have while he was lost?" "Who else was around?"
6. Read, admire, chat, encourage. Praise genuinely and specifically.
7. Watch for those who need help. Give them more ideas, combine them with other writers or ask them to write with you.
8. Support their rewriting attempts.
9. **WRITE YOURSELF!**

Bulletin Board Idea!

Have the students write a paragraph about what they could do to make the world a better place, or change the world. Mount paragraphs on stars, surround a globe or map of the world.



Quote from a student while I was helping him find a poetry book....

"Mrs. Sharon, when I write poetry, it makes me feel like I can do anything, like there is a special person inside my head coming up with the words. We never get a chance to really write in class. Do you think it is ok for me to be writing when I'm not paying attention in class?" **Hhmmmm....**

How do you say 'No' to that?... I didn't say no.

www.scholastic.com/kidsareauthors

