Expectations for Writing

• Find topics and purposes for your writing that matter to you, to your life, to who your are, and who you want to become.

• Keep a list of your territories as a writer: topics, purposes, audiences, genres, forms, and techniques.

• Try new topics, purposes, audiences, genres, forms, and techniques.

• Make your own decisions about what is working and what needs more work in pieces of your writing. Be the first responder to your own writing.

• Listen to, ask questions about, and comment on others’ writing in ways that help them move the writing forward.

• Create a handbook of writing and reading mini-lessons, recorded chronologically, with a table of contents.

• Produce at least three to five pages of rough draft each week and bring at least two pieces of writing to completion every five weeks (Rief 1992).

• Maintain a record of the pieces of writing you finish, and file finished writing chronologically in your permanent folder.

• Sometime during the school year produce a finished piece of writing from each of the following genres:
  • a memoir
  • speech (Own the Throne)
  • 7-10 poems
  • a book review
  • a short story, myth, or legend
  • an opinion or persuasive piece on an issue that matters to you
  • biographical essay
  • an expository report or essay

• Attempt professional publication

• Recognize that readers’ eyes and minds need your writing to be conventional in format, spelling, punctuation, and usage. Spell, punctuate, capitalize, etc. correctly as you draft.

• Keep an individualized proofreading list that you check your writing against when you edit and proofread.

• Enter words you don’t know how to spell, or aren’t certain of, on the personal spelling list you keep in your spelling folder.

• Take care of the materials, resources, and equipment I’ve provided for you.

• Establish and work toward significant, relevant goals for yourself as a writer each quarter.

• Take a deliberate stance (Harwayne 1992) toward writing well: try to make all of your writing literature.

• Work as hard in writing workshop as I do. Re-create happy times from your life, work through sad times, discover what you know about a subject and learn more, convey information and request it, parody, petition, play, explore, argue, apologize, advise, sympathize, imagine, look and look again, express love, show gratitude, and make money!

--adapted from In the Middle, Atwell 1998