

Using Students' Love of the Ridiculous to Build Serious Writing Skills (Grades 12)



DownWRITE Funny: Using Students' Love of the Ridiculous to Build Serious Writing Skills (Grades 7-12)

by Randy Larson

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

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In the realm of education, where fostering a love of learning is paramount, educators are constantly seeking innovative ways to engage students and cultivate their skills. For writing instruction in particular, finding creative and engaging approaches can be a challenge. However, by embracing the ridiculous and humorous elements that students often gravitate towards, teachers can unlock a powerful tool for building serious writing skills.

The Power of the Ridiculous

Students, especially in their teenage years, often exhibit a fascination with the silly, absurd, and downright ridiculous. This fascination can be a valuable asset in the writing classroom. By incorporating humor and the unexpected into writing exercises, teachers can tap into students' natural

inclinations and create a learning environment that is both enjoyable and productive.

When students are given the freedom to explore the ridiculous, they develop a number of important writing skills. These skills include:

- **Creativity:** The ridiculous often requires students to think outside the box and come up with unexpected ideas.
- **Flexibility:** Writing about the absurd can challenge students to adapt their writing style and approach to different types of content.
- **Observation:** The ridiculous often involves noticing and highlighting the unusual aspects of the world around us.
- **Inference:** Writing about the ridiculous can require students to make inferences about characters, situations, and events.
- **Perspective:** The ridiculous often encourages students to consider different perspectives and viewpoints.

Practical Strategies for Incorporating the Ridiculous

There are countless ways to incorporate the ridiculous into writing instruction. Here are a few practical strategies:

- **Freewriting:** Encourage students to engage in freewriting exercises where they can write whatever comes to mind, no matter how silly or absurd.
- **Parody:** Have students write parodies of traditional literary works or familiar stories, injecting humor and exaggeration into the plot or characters.

- **Role-Playing:** Assign students ridiculous roles to write from, such as a talking animal, a superhero with a silly superpower, or a historical figure in a modern setting.
- **Character Sketches:** Ask students to create character sketches of eccentric or absurd characters, focusing on their unique quirks and personalities.
- **Scene Writing:** Have students write short scenes that take place in unusual or ridiculous settings, encouraging them to explore the comedic potential of the situation.

Examples of Ridiculous Writing

To illustrate how the ridiculous can be used to build writing skills, here are a few examples of writing exercises that incorporate humor and absurdity:

- **Ridiculous Headlines:** Have students create absurd and attention-grabbing headlines for newspaper articles. Encourage them to be as creative and over-the-top as possible, using puns, wordplay, and exaggeration.
- **Nonsense Poetry:** Ask students to write nonsense poems that follow the rules of traditional poetry forms, such as sonnets or limericks, but with nonsensical content.
- **Mock Book Reviews:** Have students write mock book reviews of fictional books with ridiculous titles and absurd plots, encouraging them to use humor and wit to critique the absurdity of the book.
- **Superhero with Silly Powers:** Ask students to create a superhero with a ridiculous superpower, such as the power to turn into a giant rubber duck

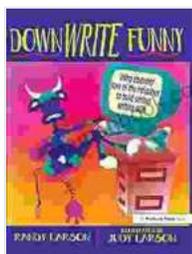
or the ability to control windsocks. Encourage them to write about the challenges and advantages of having such a power.

- **Outlandish Scenarios:** Give students a series of outlandish scenarios to write about, such as "a talking cow becomes the mayor of a small town" or "a group of teenagers travel to the moon on a giant trampoline." Challenge them to create believable and entertaining stories based on these scenarios.

Fostering a Passion for Writing

By incorporating the ridiculous into writing instruction, teachers can not only enhance students' writing skills but also foster a passion for writing. When students are allowed to explore their imaginations and express themselves in humorous and unconventional ways, they develop a deeper understanding of the craft and a genuine love for the written word.

, embracing the ridiculous in writing instruction is a powerful tool for engaging students and building serious writing skills. By incorporating humor, absurdity, and unconventional elements into writing exercises, teachers can unlock students' creativity, flexibility, and passion for the written word.



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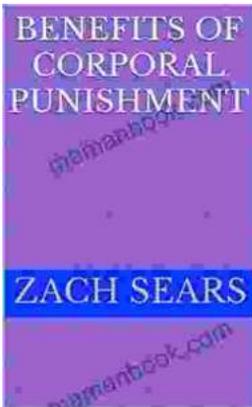
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