

So you've collected a great group of score point 4 papers from last year's test.

In the old days, we used to just read them and say "Ahh. " Those days are gone. Now, they're incredible teaching tools, far better than anything we could buy.

So what can you do with them in class?

1. Read one aloud and see what you notice.
2. Do "Say back" as a large-group. Instructions are in Acts of Teaching by Joyce Armstrong Carroll.
3. Find one with great linking and convert it to a template for imitation. For more information, see the "Changing Gears" lesson handout.
4. Devolve one. For more information, see "Devolving an Essay" lesson handout.
5. Read openings and listen to the variety.

6. List genres of samples you find.
7. Make a chart of strong verbs.
8. Make posters of your school's best paper, and line up that great work in a "hall of fame" display. (You'll need permission from the authors and their parents, to post the student names.)



9. Get a "How I did it" commentary from writers, and post annotations with the essay.
10. Look at interesting punctuation across several papers.
11. Find essays with very different voices, and read

- several aloud. Ask students to describe the differences in voices.
12. Type up one without any punctuation, and try to read it aloud. Compare it to its original.
13. Take a look at dialogue across several papers.
14. Do a highlighter hunt for brushstrokes (For more information, see Harry Noden's *Image Grammar*. Or visit <http://www.heinemann.com/s/hared/onlineresources/0466/demo03.html>)
15. Draw what you hear.
16. Underline every other sentence, and read with two voices. Listen for variety in sentence lengths.
17. Do a vocal color-coding: listen to the first 4 words in every sentence, in alternating voices.
18. Make a labyrinth on the floor, with corners holding

examples of whatever you find in the gorgeous essays, like extraordinary vocabulary, striking verbs, rhetorical devices. Then use it as a “walk” for students writing their own essays.

19. Devolve one sentence from specific to general.
20. Read one aloud, and write letters to the author.
21. Do a highlighter-hunt for truisms or life lessons.
22. Do a highlighter-hunt for ba-da-bing sentences.
23. Draw a “3D Memory” target. For more information, see Linda Stubbs’ lesson handout.
24. Draw, or map out, the text structure.
25. Search for words from the prompt, to see where or if they appear in the piece.



Compiled by:
Gretchen Bernabei
Dottie Hall
Linda Stubbs
Tracy Winstead
Jeff Anderson

Score-point-four essay collections consist of papers by students in Judson I SD, Northeast I SD, and Northside I SD, courtesy of Jayne Hover, Virginia Guerrero, Melissa Bosley, and the English Department of O'Connor High School.

To download the score-point-four collections, visit www.trailofbreadcrumbs.com.

Heartfelt thanks to
Sandra Poth, NI SD
and Alicia Narvaez, parent and
word processing whiz

What To Do With Your Best Student Samples With 10 Minutes a Day



San Antonio Area Council
of
Teachers of English
October 23, 2004
Alamo Heights High School