

A Common Core State Standards-Aligned
School Visit Programming Guide for
ages 14 and up



Author Kimberly Sabatini

*Exploring the Authenticity,
Originality, Tenacity, and the
Community of Being a Writer*

Document prepared by Debbie Gonzales
www.debbiegonzales.com



Note: *The projects and lessons included in this document have been created to compliment the content of Ms. Sabatini's school visit presentation and are intended to enhance the students' program participation and reading experience.*

Table of Contents

Practice vs. Talent - Sentence Crafting.....	3
Excerpt: <i>Touching the Surface</i>	4
Authenticity - A Study in Voice	5
Originality - Writing Outside the Box	6
Boxes - A Template.....	7
Sample: Boxes - A Template.....	8
Community - The Peer Writers Workshop.....	9
The Peer Writers Workshop: Participant Information.....	10
The Peer Writers Workshop.....	11
Meet the Author: Kimberly Sabatini.....	12-13
<u>Common Core State Standards Alignment:</u>	
English Language Arts Standards » Writing.....	14
English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening	14
<i>Touching the Surface</i> : Synopsis	15



Practice vs. Talent - Sentence Crafting

“No matter what profession you want to be in you must do the work. No one would choose a surgeon that hasn’t done their training, so we shouldn’t expect writers with no experience and practice to be excellent at what they do.”

~ Kimberly Sabatini

Objective: To use imitation as the foundation for observation and experimentation of crafting stylistic sentence structure.

Materials:

- *Touching the Surface*, the book
- Writing paper and pencil
- Excerpt: *Touching the Surface* (Guide, pg. 4)

Procedure:

- In her book *The Writer’s Portable Mentor: A Guide to Art, Craft, and the Writing Life*, Priscilla Long states, “Imitation acts as an aid to close, writerly reading and can carry you into strategies, styles, and forms different than your accustomed ones. Imitation can help you expand your range” (pg. 185). The intent of this lesson is to take a paragraph and write it several different ways, noting the stylistic differences of each form of expression.
- Choose a paragraph from *Touching the Surface* or the excerpt printed on the following page. Use writing paper and pencil and copy the selected paragraph — word for word. Long suggests that you “Consider the passage to be your master-teacher for this moment” (pg. 185).
- After you’ve copied your model paragraph:
 - ~ Imitate it by making sentences of your own, using different words, but the same syntax and parts of speech. While your topic can be imaginative and creative, your sentence structure must be sound, making sense to the reader.
 - ~ Replace the verbs in your model paragraph with similar kinds of verbs. For example the verb *lift* can be replaced with the words *elevate*, *raise*, or *boost*. Discuss the effect the different expressions of the original verb has on the overall meaning of the sentence.
 - ~ Choose a passage that carries emotional resonance. Explore the structure of each sentence in the passage. Analyze how the word choice, syntax, and structure serve to heighten the intended emotional resonance.
- Discuss observations with class or critique group.

Reference: Long, Priscilla. *The Writer’s Portable Mentor: A Guide to Art, Craft, and the Writing Life*. Seattle: Wallingford Press, 2010.

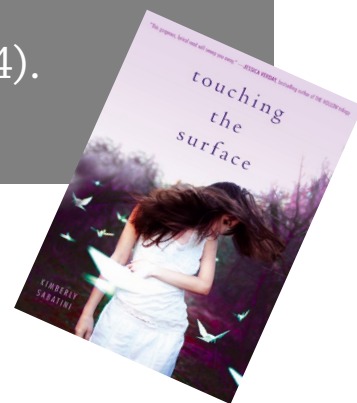


www.kimberlysabatini.com
isbn: 978-1-4424-4002-9



Excerpt: *Touching the Surface*

Out in the open field of flowers, I could feel the sun and see how every golden blossom faced the light. I tilted my own face in the same direction, trying to discover what it was that was making them content — complete. I felt the warmth on the bridge of my nose but it didn't give me any answers. Very carefully, I thought about one smooth boulder, with all its sharp edges tumbled away with time. It rose out of the ground before me and I scrambled up and stretched out on top. I knew that if I stayed there long enough, the flowers would follow the patch of sun in the sky. It seemed like they knew what they were doing, and at least for a little while, I wanted to be a part of that (pg. 174).



www.kimberlyabatini.com
isbn: 978-1-4424-4002-9

Guides by deb
www.debbiegonzales.com



Authenticity - A Study in Voice

“The best writing comes from a real place—your stories. It usually requires bravery to be personal and unique.”

~ Kimberly Sabatini

Objective: To explore the use of colloquial language to study voice as a literary device.

Materials:

- Writing paper and pencil
- Social settings

Procedure:

- The term *colloquial* is defined as ordinary language exchanged in familiar conversation; not formal or literary language. Natural speech, authentic and unique to each individual.
- According to www.fictionwriting.about.com, the term *voice* is defined as the author’s style, the quality that makes his or her writing unique, and which conveys the author’s attitude, personality, and character.
- Explore aspects of voice by completing the following exercises:
 - ~ In a short essay using your colloquial voice, describe an everyday activity as if it were the best, most fun, terrifically exciting thing to do. Be it activities such as brushing your teeth, shampooing your hair, or folding laundry, dramatically elaborate each step of the process.
 - ~ In a short essay using your colloquial voice, describe the same activity as if it were the most loathsome, disgusting, nauseating thing you’ve ever done. Elaborate each step of the process in the most miserable fashion possible.
 - ~ Read both essays aloud to the class or your critique group. Identify their similarities and differences. Consider how the use of voice contributes to the tone and intent of the pieces.
 - ~ Listen closely to the voice of a friend or family member. In a short essay, attempt to replicate their colloquialisms by asking them (as a character) to talk about something that happened to them. Determine how the use of certain words or phrases serve to create a unique and authentic voice like that of the person of your choosing.
- Share your work with the class or your critique group.

Reference: “Have You Developed Your Characteristic Authorial Voice?” About.com Careers. Web. 09 Aug. 2016.



Originality - Writing Outside the Box

“When coming up with ideas for you own writing you must think outside the box. Creativity is mined from the layers below habit and predictability.”

~ Kimberly Sabatini

Objective: To transform creative, sensory exploration into concrete, inhabitable characterization.

Materials:

- Writing paper and pencil
- Boxes - A Template (Guide, pg. 7)
- Sample: Boxes - A Template (Guide, pg. 8)
- An active setting such as a park, a classroom, or a social setting

Procedure:

- Print a copy of **Boxes - A Template** for each student. Explain to the students that they will be filling out the boxes together as a group. Instruct them to wait for instructions in completing each step of the lesson process. Rather than belabor and overthing the process, they are to respond quickly to the prompts.
- To begin, direct students to close their eyes, become very still, and listen to the sounds in the room. The time allowed for this step is five minutes (For clarification of process, refer to the sample provided on page 8.). Using the Boxes - A Template sheet, instruct students to write four of the **sounds** heard on the top line in each box.
- On the second line, instruct students to **identify a color** that represents the feeling or tone of each respective sound.
- On the third line, instruct students to **identify a place** that represents the feeling or tone of the chosen color.
- On the fourth line, instruct students to **identify a personal memory** triggered by the sound, color, and place.
- On the fifth line, instruct students to **identify a specific type of person** that is inspired by the earlier choices. Be specific here. Some examples of choices might be a toddler, an elderly man, a female punk rocker, or an adult male.
- On the sixth line, instruct students to identify the height or weight as the **size of the person** they've chosen.
- On the seventh line, instruct students to identify the **person's job/activity** by telling what they do all day. For example, a child might play in a sandbox or an elderly person might play checkers in the park.
- On the final line, instruct the students to describe a **deep, dark secret** that their person has never revealed. Make it dramatic!
- Tell students to choose two of the characters they have created Write a dialogue between the two. Have them confess and respond to each other as they share their secrets.
- Share written pieces with class or with critique group.

Reference: Ayres, Elizabeth. *Writing the Wave: Inspired Rides for Aspiring Writers*. New York: The Berkley Publishing Group, 1991.

www.kimberlysabatini.com
isbn: 978-1-4424-4002-9



Guides by deb
www.debbiegonzales.com



Boxes - A Template

Sound: _____

Color: _____

Place: _____

Memory: _____

Person: _____

Size: _____

Job/Activity: _____

Secret: _____

Sound: _____

Color: _____

Place: _____

Memory: _____

Person: _____

Size: _____

Job/Activity: _____

Secret: _____

Sound: _____

Color: _____

Place: _____

Memory: _____

Person: _____

Size: _____

Job/Activity: _____

Secret: _____

Sound: _____

Color: _____

Place: _____

Memory: _____

Person: _____

Size: _____

Job/Activity: _____

Secret: _____



Sample: Boxes - A Template

Sound:	<u>lawn mower</u>
Color:	<u>green</u>
Place:	<u>summer camp</u>
Memory:	<u>making sand paintings</u> <u>during craft time</u>
Person:	<u>teen-aged girl</u>
Size:	<u>5 feet tall</u>
Job/Activity:	<u>movie theater ticket-taker</u>
Secret:	<u>lied about stealing \$20 from</u> <u>her grandmother's purse</u>



Community - The Peer Writers Workshop

“When I started trying to be a writer I felt very alone and out of place at my first conference. No one wants to be lonely or uncomfortable. Think about the power you have to change a life by including someone. Being included changed the course of my writing career and now I go out of my way to make sure other people do not feel alone.”
 ~ Kimberly Sabatini

Objective: To establish a format through which students can create a supportive collaborative community of writers.

Materials:

- The Peer Writers Workshop Planning Sheet (Guide, pg. 10)
- Peer Writers Workshop (Guide, pg. 11)

Procedure:

- Discuss the advantages of sharing one’s writing projects with a group of like-minded peers.
- In *Steering the Craft*, Ursula K. LeGuin states, “The optimum number of members for a peer workshop is probably six or seven up to ten or eleven.” She also says, “. . . with a big group there may be too much to read and the sessions become very long.” She adds, “In general, a peer group works best is everybody in it is on pretty much the same level of accomplishment,” and, “The great thing is to find the right bunch of people” (pg. 151). The contents of this section of the guide consists of materials through which to do so.
- Review **The Peer Writers Workshop Planning Sheet** with students:
 - ~ Identify a place where the group can come together on a consistent basis. Libraries, coffee shops, or gathering in homes are possible suggestions for locations to meet.
 - ~ Designate a time and date to get together. Keeping these aspects of the workshop consistent allows for participants to schedule workshop sessions in a more successful manner.
 - ~ Recruit participants. Record contact information in the spaces provided.
 - ~ Agree upon the number of pages for each writer to be reviewed during the workshop session. (Five pages per writer is a good number to consider when embarking upon a new endeavor, such as this.)
- Once group has been established, consider format structure suggested in the **Peer Writers Workshop** sheet. Discuss topics and come up with a group consensus of how your Peer Writing Workshop should function.
- Meet regularly.
- Support one another diligently.
- Submit written pieces for publication confidently.

Reference: Le Guin, Ursula K. *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussions on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew*. Portland: The Eighth Mountain Press, 1998.



www.kimberlysabatini.com
 isbn: 978-1-4424-4002-9

Guides by deb
 www.debbiegonzales.com



The Peer Writers Workshop: Participant Information

Meeting Place & Time: _____

Dates (plan for 6 months): _____

Participant Information:

<i>Name</i>	<i>Email</i>	<i>Cell</i>
-------------	--------------	-------------

Establish the number of pages to be reviewed in the Peer Writing Workshop prior to the first meeting. Note that 5 to 10 pages is an ample amount to be critiqued during the session. Writers must bring a copy of the manuscript for each member to review during the critique session. Consider the Peer Writers Workshop sheet as a group. Discuss whether the practices listed appeal to the majority of the members. Tweak procedures as needed.

Write well. Meet often. Support one another tenaciously.



The Peer Writers Workshop

Listening:

- A copy of the manuscript is to be given to each member of the group.
- Pieces are to be read aloud by author.
- Listen closely, making notes for comments afterwards.

Rotations:

- Choose a facilitator.
- Start with a volunteer author's piece and go right around from there to every person who has submitted a piece.
- The critiquing goes clear around the circle, every person speaking about every piece.
- Mutual respect and trust by and for each group member is *essential*.

Critiquing:

- Each critique should be brief.
- Each critique should be strictly in turn.
- Each critique should be without interruption from anyone else.
- Each critique should be centered on important aspects of the piece. Make note of nit-picks on the manuscript.
- Each critique should be impersonal. It's the writing that is being critiqued, not the writer. For example, make references to "the narrator" not "you."
- Speak to the author, not other people, as you discuss the story.
- Begin your critique by acknowledging a strength in the piece. Word choice, sentence structure, use of voice or tone, etc. Begin with a truthful and positive comment.
- Criticism should lead to the possibility of revision. Sweeping negative judgements of the piece are seldom of any use to the author.
- Do tell the writer where you were confused or surprised or annoyed or delighted, which parts you liked, what worked for you, and what didn't.
- Suggestions for how to fix something may be valuable, but should be offered respectfully.
- If there are some members of the group whose critiques are habitually long-winded, you might have to get a kitchen timer and limit each critique to a few minutes.

Being Critiqued:

- Before and during the entire session, the writer must be SILENT.
- Offer no explanations or excuses.
- While being critiqued, make notes of what people say, whether you agree with them or not.
- Avoid being defensive.
- Listen to the comments being made. Note places where the group thinks need some work, what they misunderstood or understood, disliked or liked. That's what you are there for.
- Thank the group for their responses when your session has ended.

Reference: Le Guin, Ursula K. *Steering the Craft: Exercises and Discussions on Story Writing for the Lone Navigator or the Mutinous Crew*. Portland: The Eighth Mountain Press, 1998 (pp. 153-6).



Meet the Author: Kimberly Sabatini

Kimberly Sabatini is a former Special Education Teacher who is now a very busy Domestic Engineer. She lives in New York's Hudson Valley with her husband, three boys and a slightly naughty German Shepherd. Kimberly writes Young Adult fiction and is the winner of the 2016 Alice Curtis Desmond Award. She's represented by Michelle Wolfson of Wolfson Literary Agency and TOUCHING THE SURFACE is her debut novel (Simon Pulse – Simon & Schuster). Access www.kimberlyabatini.com to learn more about Kimberly and her writing process.



Did you always want to be a writer?

I absolutely wanted to be a writer as I kid, but then I became very self-conscious about people reading what I wrote. I realized that if they read my words, they would know what I was thinking, and I didn't feel brave enough to defend my thoughts. Instead of being so vulnerable and honest, I switched to writing things that didn't have much emotional depth. Not surprisingly, it didn't feel good, so I let it get away from me. I also think that I didn't have enough confidence in myself to believe I really could be a writer. I've always considered writers to be amazing and talented people and I just didn't see myself that way. It feels very good to know I belong here in this world.

What's your favorite thing about writing?

I love, love, love the moment when I realize that there are unintended threads in my writing, and that they've woven themselves throughout the story in a way that is beautiful and deep. It's like magic. My subconscious seems to know more about me than I can ever imagine—it's as if it let a little bit of my heart and soul leak out onto the pages.

What was the hardest thing about writing your YA novel, TOUCHING THE SURFACE?

The hardest part of writing TOUCHING THE SURFACE was learning how to write a novel while writing the novel. I'd never tackled anything this long or complicated before. There was a massive amount of trial and error on the journey. If I were to print off all the drafts that I've created over the years, I'm sure I could wall paper my whole house from top to bottom.

The good news was that there was a wealth of information out there for me to learn from. I attended conferences, found local and cyber critique partners, and read a ton of books on the craft of writing. Because I found all these amazing resources, I was able to grow and improve my manuscript.

One moment that really stands out was when I had my manuscript critiqued by a professional. The author gave me amazingly insightful suggestions on how to make my novel better. Unfortunately, I



www.kimberlyabatini.com
isbn: 978-1-4424-4002-9

Guides by deb
www.debbiegonzales.com



was too much of a newbie to properly implement her advice. I tried and made minor surface changes, but that was all I was capable of doing at that point. Over a year later I had an agent give me some suggestions about how to improve the manuscript. Everything she suggested immediately resonated with me and the ideas began to rush through my mind like white water rapids. Within 48 hours I knew I needed to add a whole other character to my story. Out of curiosity, I pulled out the notes from my original critique, and much to my surprise, they were almost identical. What had changed in that space of time allowing me to be able to effectively revise my work? I grew as a writer. I was developmentally ready to take the next step. I had practiced and practiced and practiced.

What message do you want people to take away from TOUCHING THE SURFACE?

This is going to sound strange, but I don't want to send the reader away with a specific message. I'd like them to walk away having found something about themselves within the pages of my book. I'm the author, and still, that's how it happened for me. The best way I can explain this is to tell you about what happened when my husband read TOUCHING THE SURFACE. He got to the end of book—a teen novel about life altering mistakes, best friends, and boys—and he looked at me and said, "This was a love letter to your Dad." Yes, it was, but no one would know that unless I spoke of it. It isn't a story about a father and daughter, but when I was done typing the last word, I knew I'd found what I needed, hidden within the story. My hope is that I've left enough room between the words for everyone to find what they need.

** When you are not writing, what are some of your other interests?*

My favorite interest is my family, particularly my husband and three wonderful boys. They're amazing people and I feel very lucky that I enjoy their company so much.

I'm also a dancer and a dance instructor. I take class—ballet, tap, jazz, modern in a workshop format and I teach 3 and 4 year-old beginner classes. It's something that makes me happy from the inside out. It's also a great way for me to get some pink and frilly little girl time once in awhile.

This always surprises me, but I'm a runner. I'm not sure how I went from a lifetime of hating it, to loving it, but I do! Besides physically feeling great, one of my favorite things about going for a long run are the ah-ha plotting moments I arrive at while I'm out pounding the pavement.

And I LOVE to read. Duh!

What plans do you have for the future?

I would like to continue to explore stories that teach me about myself. I want to write books that I'm proud of, that make me feel like a better person for having written them. I want to write with bravery. I may not be courageous by other people's standards, but I want to challenge myself. I aspire to be more and I never want to lose the feeling that I'm living my dream. Besides, if I do these things—I'm a better mom, wife, daughter and friend. So it works out pretty good for everyone. I also plan to eat a lot of chocolate ice cream.



Common Core State Standards Alignment

English Language Arts Standards » Writing		Sentence Crafting	A Study in Voice	Outside the Box	Peer Writers Workshop
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.		●	●	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.9-10.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.				●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	●			
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.		●	●	
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.10	Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.				●

English Language Arts Standards » Speaking & Listening

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11-12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	●	●	●	●
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.	●	●	●	●



Enjoy Kimberly's debut novel
TOUCHING THE SURFACE



ISBN 978-1-4424-4003-6

When Elliot finds herself dead for the third time, she knows she must have messed up, big-time. She doesn't remember how she landed in the afterlife again, but she knows this is her last chance to get things right.

Elliot just wants to move on, but first she will be forced to face her past and delve into the painful memories she'd rather keep buried. Memories of people she's hurt, people she's betrayed...and people she's killed.

As she pieces together the secrets and mistakes of her past, Elliot must find a way to earn the forgiveness of the person she's hurt most and reveal the truth about herself to the two boys she loves...even if it means losing them both forever.



www.kimberlysatatini.com
 isbn: 978-1-4424-4002-9

Guides by deb
 www.debbiegonzales.com

