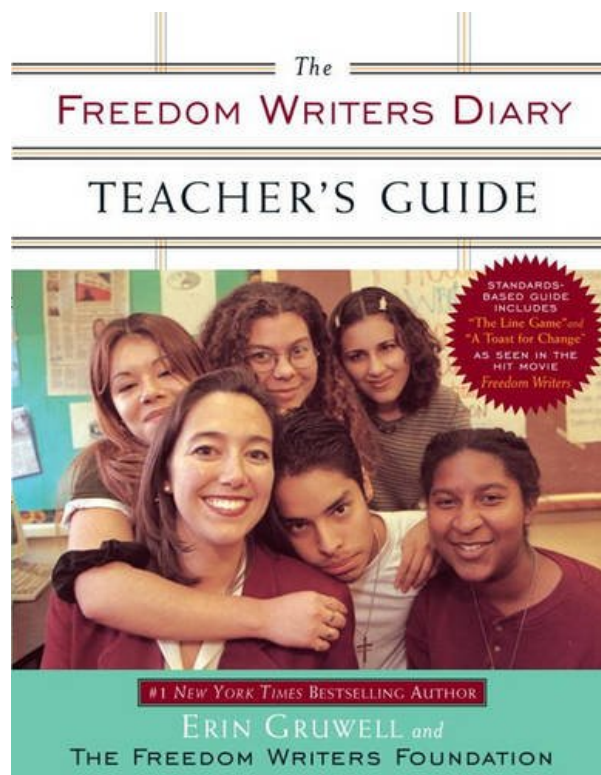
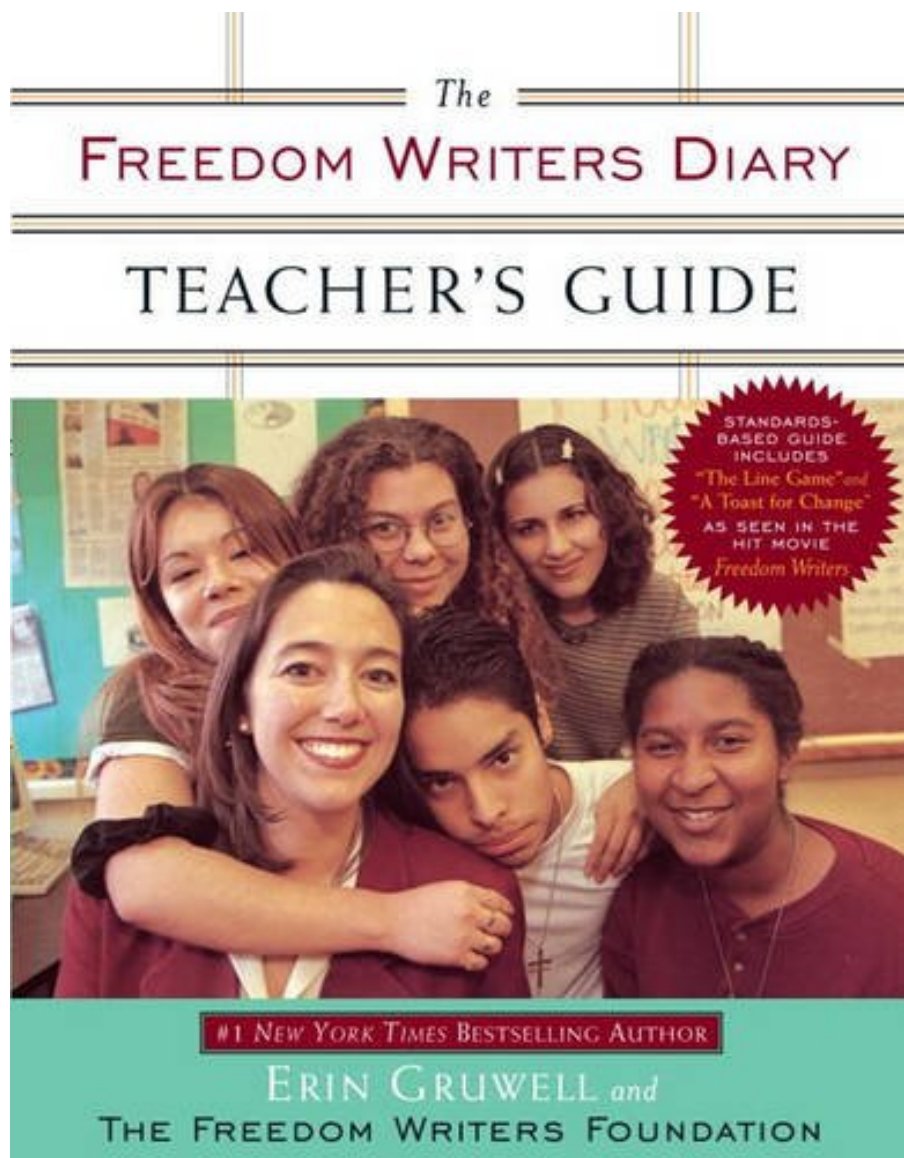


THE FREEDOM WRITERS DIARY TEACHER'S GUIDE BY ERIN GRUWELL, THE FREEDOM WRITERS



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It is my firm belief that authentic assessment does not compete with, but rather enhances student performance on mandated tests. By honoring their reading, writing, and communication skills through meaningful activities in which they are fully engaged, students develop critical thinking skills that serve them in testing environments and in the world at large.

Now It's Your Turn

Within the engaging, enlightening, and empowering lesson plans in the Teacher's Guide, you will find the key ingredients for cooking up success in your own classroom. We want to emphasize that The Freedom Writers Diary and the accompanying Teacher's Guide are not intended to serve as a substitute for your mandated curriculum, but rather as a means of enhancing that curriculum and encouraging your students to perform at the highest level. There is no one perfect model for every classroom, so we look to you as independent educators to implement our lesson plans as you see fit.

As a teacher, I was inspired by my students' hearts, minds, and voices, which reverberate within the pages of The Freedom Writers Diary. In that spirit, I have tried to honor the hearts, minds, and voices of your students as they read The Freedom Writers Diary and engage in the activities contained in this Teacher's Guide.

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You must make your students aware of the fact that teachers are "mandated reporters" and therefore

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THE FREEDOM WRITERS DIARY TEACHER'S GUIDE BY ERIN GRUWELL, THE FREEDOM WRITERS PDF

Designed for educators by the teacher who nurtured and created the Freedom Writers, this standards-based teachers' guide includes innovative teaching techniques that will engage, empower, and enlighten.

In response to thousands of letters and e-mails from teachers across the country who learned about Erin Gruwell and her amazing students in *The Freedom Writers Diary*, Erin Gruwell and a team of teacher experts have written *The Freedom Writers Diary Teacher's Guide*, a book that will encourage teachers and students to expand the walls of their classrooms and think outside the box.

Here Gruwell goes in-depth and shares her unconventional but highly successful educational strategies and techniques (all 150 of her students who had been deemed "un-teachable" graduated from Wilson High School): from her very successful "toast for change" (an exercise in which Gruwell exhorted her students to leave the past behind and start fresh) to writing exercises that focus on the importance of journal writing, vocabulary, and more.

In an easy-to-use format with black-and-white illustrations, this teachers' guide will become the essential go-to manual for teachers who want to make a difference in their pupils' lives and create students who will make a difference.

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Most helpful customer reviews

25 of 28 people found the following review helpful.

Freedom Writers Diary Teacher's Guide

By K. Burrows

The Freedom Writers Diary is an incredible book for teenagers to read, and this book will help any teacher use the FWD to motivate and inspire students. The Teacher's Guide contains practical activities that tie into the book but can also be used independently. Several of the activities, such as the Line Game and the Toast for Change, were featured in the Freedom Writers movie. All of the activities are tied to NCTE standards, and they are all ready to use. This book will help educators teach reading and vocabulary skills, but it will also help them reach their students. The Freedom Writers Diary is an incredibly powerful book for teens, and the Freedom Writers Teacher's Guide is the best teacher's guide I've ever used.

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

A Great Tool

By B. Feaver

I have been using the Freedom Writers Diary for eight years in my class. Students love this book. I teach at

risk kids who struggle reading and getting them to read any book is a major achievement. The Teachers Guide helps teachers: use the Diary, introduce other books and create a sense of family in your class in the order of Room 203. You will find that this book will become worn out from use.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Great Resource

By I. L. Segedi

I teach in a special education classroom in a high school setting with a mixed category grouping of students - college bound to students who will remain with their parents. This is a great resource to use with all students. I can use the same assignments and adjust the content level according to various ability levels quickly. I can easily select assignments I deem appropriate and not use others. Objectives follow my state standards and I simply add them to my lesson plans. Ms. G's Tips are great and the "What You'll Need" list makes it easy for any teacher on any budget to follow! There is also a section titled "Teacher Talk" that adds extra tips and ideas for all activities. This works with high and low functioning students. If you plan on studying The Freedom Writers - this is a MUST! Did I mention that all of the graphics and worksheets that you need are in the book ready to xerox!!! A real plus for the busy teacher!

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THE FREEDOM WRITERS DIARY TEACHER'S GUIDE BY ERIN GRUWELL, THE FREEDOM WRITERS PDF

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INTRODUCTION

The Freedom Writers Diary Teacher's Guide takes students through a three-stage process that will maximize their understanding of The Freedom Writers Diary while supporting the central message of tolerance. For best results, I suggest that you begin teaching the Engage Your Students activities first, following the order presented—which mirrors the timeline in The Freedom Writers Diary. The activities in Enlighten Your Students and Empower Your Students can then be taught according to what best suits your individual curricular needs and weekly schedules. There are no specific time allotments designated for the activities presented in this Teacher's Guide. Teachers can implement activities in one class period or over multiple days.

The Engage, Enlighten, and Empower Model

Engage Your Students: This section includes lesson plans and activities for you to share with your students before they begin reading The Freedom Writers Diary. The goal is to establish a collaborative and supportive academic environment that will draw your students into the learning process, help them make connections between who they are as individuals and who they are as students, and encourage them to discover commonalities with their classmates.

Enlighten Your Students: This section offers lesson plans and activities that help students delve into literary themes, topics, and concepts while reading The Freedom Writers Diary, and concludes with a unit on the film, *Freedom Writers* (2007). Due to its range of contents, Enlighten Your Students covers various categories for ease of use: writing, vocabulary, grammar, oral communication, culminating activities, and Freedom Writers film activities. Students will practice different kinds of writing and public speaking, and become critical thinkers as they explore their own opinions, reasoning, and reactions within a “real world” context.

Empower Your Students: This section encourages students to achieve positive changes in themselves and in their communities by bringing the outside world into the classroom, and taking their classroom into the world. Nontraditional activities, such as inviting a guest speaker into class or taking a field trip, can expose students to new social and academic perspectives.

The Teachers Guide promotes a holistic approach to language arts: We integrate reading, writing, vocabulary, and grammar with a variety of learning modalities, all focused on a common theme. Each lesson plan for the Engage, Enlighten, and Empower sections of the book contains five important educational elements: implementing different learning modalities, the use of visual graphics, journal writing, adherence to academic standards, and authentic assessment. What follows are brief introductions to each of these elements.

Learning Modalities

Many of the Freedom Writers struggled with learning disabilities (dyslexia) or behavioral challenges (Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). In addition, some were English Language Learners. As a new teacher, I desperately tried a variety of ways to engage my students and bring my activities to life.

Little did I know that my wacky idea of bringing in two sandwiches and some clumsy drawings of sandwich ingredients to teach about writing would prove successful. Later, I found out why this technique worked. Dr. Howard Gardner, a Harvard professor, advanced the theory of multiple intelligences to illustrate that all human beings have a repertoire of skills for solving different problems; within these repertoires, however, individuals have different learning modalities. By bringing in sandwiches, sketches, and other elements to teach the writing process, I managed to activate my students' linguistic, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and interpersonal learning modalities. (*)

Following suit, your students will have opportunities to use different learning modalities as they move from activity to activity. Each lesson plan includes a list of materials that you will need, ranging from popular culture (music and movie clips), to food items (peanuts and Froot Loops), to art supplies (crayons and poster boards). Be sure to check ahead of time what you will need for each activity. We also suggest that you have a television and DVD player, a CD player, and a computer.

Visual Graphics

I found that traditional note taking was often a significant challenge for the Freedom Writers. Allowing my students to process information and demonstrate their comprehension through visual techniques greatly enhanced the learning process. I am not artistic by any means, but I found that admitting my lack of talent seemed to bolster my students' sense of artist confidence. Suddenly, my creative students were tempted to submit their own visual graphics.

We have included student-drawn visual graphics with each activity in this guide, as well as explanations for how to use them. Your students may think these visual graphics are corny, so play off their reaction and challenge them to do better! Your students can create their own visual graphics for an activity using a black marker and blank sheet of paper. Add their names along with a copyright symbol at the bottom of the original, photocopy, and distribute to the class. Have contributors come to class early and draw their images on the board so that you can use the new graphic while modeling the activity for the class.

Journal Writing

To mirror the Freedom Writer experience, we recommend that you provide journals for your students prior to reading *The Freedom Writers Diary*.

By keeping journals, students learn to value writing as a process. Journal writing is an avenue through which your students can respond to events in their personal lives and in their academic lives. Because all the students will keep journals at the same time, they bond as a community of writers, reflecting on their individual and shared experiences at school, at home, and in their neighborhoods.

The license to write freely, without fear of criticism or judgment, is central to the success of student journals. The Freedom Writers method allows students to voice their own truths, however painful or awkward, in honest, unvarnished prose. Too often, I believe, writing is rewarded merely on the basis of standard spelling, punctuation, and usage. Teachers should also value vivid, forceful student writing that actually says something.

Encouraging students to use their own voices unleashes their potential for powerful self-expression and deeply effective storytelling.

The Teacher's Guide also includes activities that require students to use different writing styles in different contexts for different audiences. As students learn to edit their own and each other's prose for a specific purpose, they develop skills essential to success in the classroom and beyond. Since many educators have used *The Freedom Writers Diary* as a launching pad to discuss specific themes and inspired journal writing in their classrooms, we have provided writing prompts for every diary entry in Appendix B.

Academic Standards

The Freedom Writers Diary can easily be taught as literature on its own. However, using this Teacher's Guide will help you fulfill the requirements established by English Language Arts national standards. The current trend in education is for all curricula to be standards-based. As teachers, we must abide by the standards that our state and districts have adopted to ensure that our students are meeting their achievement goals in each academic area. We have aligned each activity in this guide with the Language Arts standards formulated by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE). Standards can be daunting, something imposed from the outside. However, the language of the NCTE standards does a good job of emphasizing the learner at the center of the academic process.

I understand that most states have their own specific standards, but there are also many commonalities that you will find reflected in the criteria listed in Appendix C. It is these common and interrelated themes that we address and that are specified in greater detail on the Web site for the National Council of Teachers of English: www.ncte.org.

Authentic Assessment

Standardized tests are a reality of our educational system. Regardless of how teachers may personally feel about the effectiveness of such testing programs, there is no way around them. But it does not follow that teaching to the test is the best way to educate our students, or even to help them achieve top scores. I believe that the best teaching and the best learning happen when you teach to a student, not to a test.

This Teachers Guide does not include quizzes, multiple-choice tests, or standardized essays. Instead, every activity is organized around the idea of authentic assessment. In authentic assessment, students are asked to demonstrate their language arts skills through meaningful and relevant tasks; teachers, meanwhile, monitor

the strengths and needs of their students as they progress from activity to activity.

The Teacher's Guide employs multiple forms of authentic assessment:

- Visual graphics: The graphics associated with each activity provide an immediate way of measuring the level of student engagement.
- Open-ended questions: Activities include open-ended language exercises that allow students to employ imagination, creativity, and critical thinking skills.
- Language arts assessment: A range of writing assignments, including interviews, letter writing, and a feature story, provide opportunities for evaluating student progress in reading and writing.
- Portfolios: We suggest that all assignments be collected in portfolios as a way of tracking students' developmental progress and showcasing students' work at the end of the unit. Portfolios welcome multiple audiences, including the student, classmates, teachers, and even parents. (We recommend that students use a three-ring binder to organize their portfolio.)
- Self-evaluation: An integral component of authentic assessment is self-evaluation, giving students an opportunity to review their academic progress.

It is my firm belief that authentic assessment does not compete with, but rather enhances student performance on mandated tests. By honoring their reading, writing, and communication skills through meaningful activities in which they are fully engaged, students develop critical thinking skills that serve them in testing environments and in the world at large.

Now It's Your Turn

Within the engaging, enlightening, and empowering lesson plans in the Teacher's Guide, you will find the key ingredients for cooking up success in your own classroom. We want to emphasize that The Freedom Writers Diary and the accompanying Teacher's Guide are not intended to serve as a substitute for your mandated curriculum, but rather as a means of enhancing that curriculum and encouraging your students to perform at the highest level. There is no one perfect model for every classroom, so we look to you as independent educators to implement our lesson plans as you see fit.

As a teacher, I was inspired by my students' hearts, minds, and voices, which reverberate within the pages of The Freedom Writers Diary. In that spirit, I have tried to honor the hearts, minds, and voices of your students as they read The Freedom Writers Diary and engage in the activities contained in this Teacher's Guide.

Mandated Reporting

You must make your students aware of the fact that teachers are "mandated reporters" and therefore obligated by law to report cases of child abuse or neglect when and if they become aware of such instances through their students' communications (oral or written). This does not mean students are prohibited from such communications, only that they must be made aware of possible repercussions.

ENGAGE YOUR STUDENTS

The Engage Your Students lesson plans allow students to forge new friendships, create a community, and establish the foundation for a nurturing and collaborative learning environment before they begin reading *The Freedom Writers Diary*. Most students, especially those in their teens, tend to be reluctant to share their anxieties and vulnerabilities. These activities challenge students to get out of their comfort zones and utilize all of their learning modalities. In doing so, a wealth of information about your students is revealed. This information will enable you to tap into your students' experiences, sensibilities, and learning styles as a starting point for their explorations of literature and language. I highly recommend that you teach the lessons in the order presented: first you engage your students as individuals, then as partners with other students, next as collaborative groups, and finally as a cohesive community within the classroom.

- **Visual Graphics:** Each activity has an original visual graphic designed to promote student participation while enhancing the particular theme of the lesson. For best results, have students clear everything off their desks except for the visual graphic and other materials integral to the activity. While students write or draw on their graphics, you will have an opportunity to walk around the room and assess their level of engagement and understanding.
- **Vocabulary:** Each activity contains vocabulary words that were inspired by the specific activity. The words are brought together at the end of the section in a culminating activity called Freedom Writer Bingo. These words will familiarize your students with concepts and terms useful for reading *The Freedom Writers Diary*.
- **Journal Writing:** After the inaugural What Makes Me Unique assignment, the journal writing prompts in this section are listed under the Assessments that conclude each activity. Journals serve as a way for students to reflect and expand upon their increasing awareness of themselves and their classmates. At the same time, teachers can use the journals to evaluate how much understanding and insight their students glean from each activity. Encourage your students to write in their journals every day about their experiences, thoughts, and feelings. This out-of-class "free writing" may yield some of your students' best stories, which they can then revise for the Class Book, the culminating project for the Enlighten Your Students section.
- **Primetime Live DVD:** Although this activity is optional, I have learned that teachers who use this video with their students have found it to be an exceptional motivational tool. (To order this DVD, please visit www.freedomwritersfoundation.org or www.films.com.)

LESSON PLAN FORMAT

The lesson plans for the Engage Your Students section of the Teacher's Guide are presented in a consistent format for ease of implementation. Each contains the following components:

- **Objective:** Describes the overall goal of the activity.
- **Backstory from Room 203:** Provides context, background, and pedagogical reasoning behind the activity derived from my classroom.
- **Ms. G's Tips:** Provides anecdotal advice from my personal experience.
- **What You'll Need:** List of required materials.

- Process: Step-by-step explanation of how to do each activity.
- Visual Graphic Instructions: Brief summary of how to use our student-generated visual graphics.
- Vocabulary: Lists of words that we suggest embedding into each lesson.
- Assessment: Journaling topics that assess student comprehension.
- Taking It Further: Explores ideas that go beyond the activity for further understanding.

Each lesson in the Engage Your Students section also has a sidebar that contains comments from The Freedom Writers Diary, the Freedom Writers themselves, and the Freedom Writer Teachers.

- Freedom Writer Feedback: Comments from the Freedom Writers recalling the impact these lessons had on them.
- Freedom Writers Diary Quotations: A passage from the book illustrating the Freedom Writers' experience.
- Teacher Talk: Comments from our Freedom Writer Teachers in the field who have implemented these lessons with their students.
- National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Standards: At the end of each lesson, you will find a list of the NCTE standards that are met by each activity.

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