

Adventure Writing Program by Peter Lourie and David Somoza

Who we are:

Pete is a professional author with numerous high-quality nonfiction books based on real experiences around the world. Research, analysis, and synthesis of nonfiction material are part of what he does every day. In addition to his writing career, Pete teaches college students how to write engaging nonfiction.

Dave is a 5th grade teacher with 20 years of experience, having lived and taught around the United States and abroad. He's seen the writing standards grow and transform over the past twenty years and has struggled right along with everyone else.

Our approach – an overview:

Through years of trial-and-error practice, analysis, and reflection we've developed an adventure writing model, which incorporates nearly every aspect of the new Common Core, writing standards. From the in-depth use of technology to assist the writing and research process to the step-by-step writing and integration of nonfiction material, our detailed process covers it all. What makes it so successful for students is the fact that it's so engaging for students. Their engagement allows them to dig deeper and create a deep understanding of their subject, an appreciation of their discoveries, and the confidence to reflect on their new-found knowledge.

What we have to offer:

Adventure presentation for students: Pete will come to your school and give a dynamic and engaging presentation about his amazing travels around the world and the passion for writing that drives him on. In addition, students will learn about the writing process that Pete uses as he creates his amazing nonfiction books for young adults.

Professional development for teachers: Dave and Pete will involve your faculty in a hands-on writing workshop, which will engage teachers in every step of the adventure writing process from setting essays to character development to in-depth research techniques to the adventure itself.

Student writing workshops: Pete and Dave will return to your school to work with students on a specific writing task designed by your teachers in collaboration with Pete and Dave. Through class discussions about writing technique, hands-on practice, analysis of student writing, and our well-defined peer critique model, students will take their writing to a whole new level.

A year-long writing plan:

September – Setting development: Students learn how to articulately describe settings, both real and imagined through writing. This is where they begin to learn about the power that language has to create a place and a mood.

October – Character development: We begin to understand how character development happens in fiction and nonfiction. Students depict characters in their own writing that have real emotions and come alive on the page. We focus on both real and imagined characters.

November – Research: We begin to incorporate research into the writing process. Through research, students become informed about real people, places, and events, which they fuse into engaging nonfiction pieces.

December/January – Adventure genre: We explore the adventure genre in literature and nonfiction. Through reading, analysis, and discussion, students gain a deep understanding of the elements of an adventure. Students write adventure vignettes (developing scenes) to begin honing their craft as adventure writers.

February – In-depth research: We dive into research topics and explore at a deeper level than students have researched in the past. Their understanding of the topic becomes apparent through their writing.

March/April – Adventure: Each student creates an imagined adventure with nonfiction researched material woven in. This blend of fact and fiction allows students to carry the story forward through the narrative, but their researched material is what grounds the story and makes it come alive. The project is the synthesis of everything learned during the year – setting, character, research, analysis, and the adventure narrative.

May – Opinion: We now use research as a basis for developing opinions. Students research a topic, and then write persuasive essays based on the opinions formed as a result of their research

June – Writing to explore: By now the students are so comfortable with this research writing model that they need less guidance, and are able to explore new subjects through travelogues.

What challenges does the Common Core bring to writing?

9 out of 10 writing standards are covered by our Adventure Writing Project, but the highlighted sections are the most challenging areas for most teachers to cover

Text Types and Purposes

- 1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- • 2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
- • 3. Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- • 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- • 5. Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.
- • 6. Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- • 7. Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- • 8. Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- • 9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Range of Writing

- • 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.

Some aspects of the writing standards are not intimidating, because they're commonplace in most classrooms.

Standards:

1. Writing persuasive arguments
3. Writing narratives
4. Producing clear and coherent writing
5. Develop writing through planning, revising, editing, and rewriting
- 7a. Conducting short research projects

It's the rest of it that's new and intimidating, especially since we have no extra time to fit this all in. This is the part that we will focus on in our adventure writing process.

Standards:

2. Writing informative text to convey complex ideas
3. Using technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing
- 7b. Conducting more sustained research projects based on focus questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject
8. Gathering relevant information from multiple print and digital sources
9. Drawing information from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research