



Worksheet for Lesson 10

Giving Words Power Like a Writer—Voice

The Denim Beret
writing and literature
for teens

NAME:

DATE:

*If you are typing your answers, please use **blue**, **purple**, or **green**.*

PART 1: Reading and Journal Check

____ I have read lesson 10 carefully and thoroughly.

____ I have completed my lesson 10 warm-up. (This will be checked during our next video chat.)

PART 2: Annotation Practice

The essay we will read for this lesson is “How It Feels to Be Colored Me,” by Zora Neale Hurston. You will find it on pp. 138-143 of *The Seagull Reader: Essays*. Read the introduction first. Then annotate the essay as you read it, aiming for at least **eight different annotations of at least three different kinds**. I chose this essay because Hurston speaks so frankly about who she is and her perspective on being black. Her voice is strong, bold, and personal, as if she is chatting over coffee to the reader.

Use your annotation cheat sheet to help you. Remember that you can make annotations on the essay itself, on sticky notes attached to the essay, or in your reading notebook (labeled clearly). Your grade will be factored into your overall lesson grade, and it will be based on whether you followed instructions or not.

PART 3: Personal Response Practice

After you read and annotate the essay, respond to it in a well-developed paragraph (six-sentence minimum). You may write more than this, if you choose. Your response may be approached in one or more of the following ways:

- what you thought of the essay in general
- what you thought of the essay's specific ideas

- what you thought of the author's writing skills and artistry
- a section or sentence that moved you in some way and why (any emotion)
- a section or sentence that made you think or see something in a new light
- your own thoughts on the subject of the essay and why you see it differently from the author
- something you noticed about the writing and how it might affect you as a writer (this can be positive or negative)
- anything else that directly pertains to the essay and/or the author's writing

You will be graded on following directions and on putting in thought and insight. I do not grade on whether I agree or disagree. Your grade for this section will be factored into your overall grade for the lesson.

I prefer that you write your response in your writing notebook and then scan it or type it below. However, if you are pressed for time or write better on the computer, you may compose your response below. If you do this, you may want to print and cut-and-paste it into your reading notebook when you are finished, so that you have a complete record of your work.

IF YOU TYPE YOUR PERSONAL RESPONSE, PLACE IT HERE:

PART 4: Lesson Exercises

EXERCISE 1: For this exercise you will need your favorite contemporary book, story, article, or essay that you have available. Do not choose poetry or older classics. Choose a page or two from your chosen literature and read it. Pay attention to the author's "presence on the page"—his or her voice, as well as his or her style and enthusiasm. Then answer the questions below in complete sentences:

- Describe the author's voice in at least three specific ways.
- Does his or her voice appeal to you? Why or why not?
- Is the author's voice an important reason why you like the piece? If so, had you noticed this before? Why do you like his or her voice? If the voice is not a reason, explain why you like it and how the voice affects your enjoyment.
- Does the author's passion for his or her subject come through the writing? If so, how? How does it affect your enjoyment of the literature? If his or her passion does not come through, how does the lack of it affect your enjoyment of the literature?

EXERCISE 2: In your writing notebook in the journal section, start a new entry. Using freewriting or listmaking, describe your personality and character as specifically and completely as you can. *Example: snarky, fun, and flirty.* If you want to, you can ask others how they perceive your personality and character in order to make your description well-rounded and objective. Copy your answers here:

Now read three or four of your past writing warm-ups and/or essays and ask yourself, "Does my writing reflect my true self, as described above, when I'm not afraid of being criticized or laughed at? Do I write with enthusiasm? If not, ask yourself why not, and consider how you should change the way you write to make it sound more like *you*. Write your reflections below in 1-2 well-developed paragraphs:

EXERCISE 3: Read two of your past essays or papers from this year or last year (any subject and any teacher or occasion). Ask yourself, "Is this something I would want to spend time reading if I was the audience?" Then answer the question, "Why or why not?" Assume that you would be interested in the subject already. If you answered "no," then discuss how you could have written the piece differently to be more engaging. If you answered "yes," discuss why you would want to read it. Write your reflections below in 1-2 well-developed paragraphs:

EXERCISE 4: In a separate document or in longhand, write the rough draft of a story in which you relate a memorable personal experience. You may tell it any way you want, even if it includes reflections on your experience. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and try an unusual way to tell your story. Also, it can be serious or funny, but it needs to be true.

The most important part of this exercise is that you use your natural voice and writing style as you write and that you write with enthusiasm for your subject. Avoid writing the way you think it *ought* to sound; instead, write it the truest way that you can. Try to be brave on the page, and let yourself "bleed" a little if necessary. You may find it easier to speak in your natural voice if you pretend that you're telling the story aloud to someone else. Or you can record yourself telling the story; then transcribe it onto paper.

Example: I might tell the story of the time I visited Belgium as a college student after several weeks of backpacking through Europe. I was so bedraggled by the time I reached the quaint town of Bruges that I was taken for a beggar by a man in a tourist group. Yes, he actually tried to give me money! Now, I could simply tell this story from beginning to end, or I might add a conclusion in which I discuss my reflections on this funny but embarrassing experience. Or maybe there's even another way...?

TYPE YOUR ROUGH DRAFT BELOW. If you revise anything, it should be only for the sake of clarity and detail, not your use of language. Let yourself write in a completely natural way this time to ensure that your voice isn't stifled.