

My Book of...

This exercise is designed to help your students adapt a piece of writing and to make it their own. It is best suited for students in the fourth grade and up.

1. Choose a particular piece of writing that you and your students are currently, or will be soon, studying or using in class.
2. If you haven't already, discuss the piece with your students. Investigate the plot, the characters, and the themes present in the work.
3. Then, invite your students to write down what they most identify with in the piece. This could include certain characters, particular situations, feelings expressed in the piece, or feelings that it brings up in the students.
4. Next, have the students write down the parts that are most difficult to connect with. Again, this could include characters, situations, or feelings. It could also include the time period, the language used, etc.
5. Given what they most and least connect with, have your students identify:
 - a.) Five elements of the piece that they would keep and amplify. In other words, these should be things they would like to experience more of in the writing.
 - b.) Five elements of the piece that they would change to fit their tastes, interests, or feelings more fully.
 - c.) One completely new element that they could add into the writing. For example, this could be a new character or a plot twist that changes the ending.
6. Now, give them 10 – 30 minutes to write a new version of the story/piece of writing which incorporates the elements listed above. (The length of time will depend on what kind of writing you chose, its length, and the age of the participants.)

One suggestion: if they are struggling with writing, we often recommend that students write a first line and a last line. Then, all they have to do is fill in the middle and, as such, it does not feel as challenging!

7. Once the writing is complete, ask them to choose a title for their version of this piece.
8. Invite your students to create a cover page for their writing that includes the title. This could be just text-based, or it could be a drawing that captures something about the piece.
9. Share the new works!