

Creating Boy-friendly Writing Classrooms

- Get boys excited about writing. Worry about their engagement first; the quality will come later.
- Give them real choice about what to write and how to write about it.
- Show an interest in what subjects your boys are passionate about. These often make great topics for writing.
- Be more accepting of violence in writing (with commonsense limits).
- Celebrate the quirky humor in boys' writing. (Humor = Voice)
- Give boys specific praise during writing conferences.
- Don't overwhelm boys with too many revision suggestions.
- Don't insist that they revise everything they write.
- Make room for genres that engage boys: fiction, fantasy, sports writing, spoofs/parodies, comics/graphic novels, nonfiction, etc.
- Give them opportunities to draw while composing.
- Messy handwriting is a developmental issue that affects many boys.
- Don't take it personally. Allow keyboarding when possible.
- Talk about the writer's notebook as a place to collect important "stuff" including odd facts, artifacts, quotes, lyrics, and drawings.
- Include mentor texts that appeal to boys: *Knucklehead* by Jon Scieszka, for example.
- Encourage "greenbelt writing."
- Show an interest in the writing boys do at home, for fun.