



Welcome to the 2018-2019 Do the Write Thing Challenge!

Recent research conducted by the University of Texas at El Paso on the “Do the Write Thing Challenge” found the program had a positive impact on the relationship between students, parents and teachers. Participating students exhibited a “greater empathy and understanding for the victims of bullying and violence.” Additionally, the research showed that participating students show **“more positive behaviors and attitudes towards peers and teachers.”** The program has helped motivate widespread community involvement aimed at making schools and neighborhoods safer for young people and therefore a better environment in which to learn.

Many students and teachers this school year continue to deal with the trauma and challenges associated with Hurricane Harvey – from being displaced from their homes and schools to losing cherished personal property. They may be angry, anxious, confused and be tempted to act out their frustrations. Do the Write has been proven effective in helping students to channel their feelings and express themselves through writing rather than other more harmful ways. Over the past twenty years, the Do the Write Thing Challenge has been shown to help reduce youth bullying and violence in schools and communities across the United States. In that time nearly one million students have accepted the “Challenge”.

The packet enclosed explains this year’s Do the Write Thing Challenge in more detail. **Due to the overwhelming positive response to last year’s modifications to the Do the Write Thing Texas Challenge, we have continued the eligibility of 6th grade students to participate along with amending the submission dates from October to mid-January in order to better help accommodate those whose school calendar continues to be overburdened by multiple deadlines. Remember, we will always strive to accommodate your students and school.** This packet includes information for participating classroom teachers and information about program rules, entry deadlines, selection criteria, classroom discussions, common core application and student recognition. All of this information can be downloaded from our website, www.dtwtx.org, under the Houston/Harris County tab.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Lester at 713-447-4942 or Nora Carbajal at 713-274-7070.

Let your schools know you want your kids to take the Do the Write the Challenge! We appreciate your support of Do the Write Thing in the past and look forward to having your district, principals, schools, and teachers be part of the Do the Write Thing 2018-2019 Texas Challenge!

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kathy Lester".

Kathy Lester
State Program Director
Do The Write Thing –Houston/Harris County
klester@hctx.net



Classroom discussion is not a requirement for participating in the Challenge. However, candid discussions have proven to be beneficial. Classroom discussion provides an opportunity for educators to learn about problems simmering in school before the problems become crises.

Following are some questions to generate discussion among your students before they prepare their entries for the Challenge:

- What do you think of when the term 'violence' is used? Do you think it means physical confrontation of some kind or something more?
- What are some signs of bullying? Can bullying be a prelude to violence? Can anything be done to reduce bullying?
- Can bystanders be the key to controlling some types of bullying? If safe, how can bystanders intervene? How can bystanders safely intervene?
- Do you think the media promotes youth violence? How does the amount of violence portrayed in movies, music, books, television, newspapers, videogames, and Internet sites affect you? Are today's youth being desensitized about violence due to the amount of violence they are exposed to on a daily basis?
- Do celebrity role models influence today's youth to dress provocatively, diet to be thin, drink underage and make poor decisions? Are they sending the wrong message to their fans?
- Are social media postings and reality shows teaching us that it is ok to be rude and uncaring to others?

JUDGING CRITERIA

Entries of 6th, 7th and 8th grade students will be judged by a panel of volunteer readers (Community Readers) recruited by the *Do the Write Thing* Texas Committee. The entries are then read by a committee of business, community and government leaders. (The Executive Committee Readers)

Entries will be judged on the basis of content, originality and the most thought provoking responses to following three questions:

- **How has bullying/violence affected my life?**
- **What are its causes?**
- **What can I do about it?**

Remember, No Fictional Writings in Essays!



SCENARIOS FOR 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR

Scenario Correlations to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and STAAR Test. The attached lesson plans correlate to the TEKS and ultimately the 7th grade STAAR writing test.

ELAR 14A Plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience, determining appropriate topics through a range of strategies (discussion, background reading, personal interests, interviews), and developing a thesis or controlling idea,

ELAR 14 B, Develop drafts by choosing an appropriate organizational strategy (e.g., sequence of events, cause-effect, compare/contrast,) and building on ideas to create a focused, organized, and coherent piece of writing

ELAR 14C Revise drafts to ensure precise word choice and vivid images, consistent point of view, use of simple, compound and complex sentences, internal and external coherence, and the use of effective transitions after rethinking how well questions of purpose, audience, and genre have been addressed

ELAR 17Aiii, Write a multi-paragraph essay to convey information about a topic that is logically organized with appropriate facts and details and includes no extraneous information or inconsistencies.

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills: 7th Grade Language Arts Writing/Writing Process 7.14 - plan a first draft by selecting a genre appropriate for conveying the intended meaning to an audience determining the appropriate topic through a range of strategies (e. g. discussion, background reading, personal interest, and interviews) and developing a thesis or controlling idea.

Resources:

- Class set of the scenarios and current newspapers or copies of current news stories involving violent acts
- Do The Write Thing Teacher Packet for the teacher

Focus:

Ask the class if bullying/violence is a problem in our country. Ask for volunteers to give examples of problems related to this. Display or read the definition of bullying and violence.

Teach: Explain the background of the Do The Write Thing Essay Contest. Tell the students they will discuss and begin to organize their thoughts and personal experiences about violence.

Guided Practice:

If you do not have established rules and expectations for group work in your class then go over those guidelines now before doing this part of the lesson. Arrange the students in groups of three or four and distribute the scenarios to each student. Display and orally read directions for each student to silently read the scenario and allow two minutes. When time is up, continue to orally read and display directions for each student to share their answers to the discussion questions one at a time within their group. Allow five minutes for discussion. Follow the same procedure for the remaining three scenarios.

Independent Practice:

Tell students they will work independently to read current event news stories that are about bullying or violent acts. They should underline the acts and underline the its cause if it is included in the article. Distribute the newspapers or copies of current event stories about the topic. Allow ten minutes for this activity. Have the students write out the answers in complete sentences to these three questions:

How has bullying/violence affected my life?

What are its causes?

What can I do to stop it?

The students should keep this paper for tomorrow's lesson.

Close:

Tell the students they have formulated their thoughts about bullying/violence around three ideas: effects, causes, and solutions. These three main idea sentences will be developed into three body paragraphs for an expository essay about stopping these problems in today's world. In our next class you will use a graphic organizer to add a thesis or controlling idea in an introduction to come before your three body paragraphs. You will also create an effective wrap up sentence to convince your reader of the importance of your thesis and follow some of your solutions

DISCUSSION SCENARIOS

SCENARIO 1:

Shayla agrees to meet her boyfriend after school at his house. Her boy friend has some beer, so she drinks one. Then he wants to take pictures of the two of them with his cell phone. After they take some shots of them making funny faces, he asks her to pose, so he can have a 'special' picture of her just for him. She is uncomfortable and says, no. He gets mad and says that she does not really care about him. Shayla finally agrees and allows him to take a revealing picture. The next day at school a lot of guys are laughing and pointing at her. One of her friends says that a guy in her first period had a picture of Shayla without a top on his phone. Shayla is petrified with embarrassment. When she sees her boyfriend he tells her someone must have gotten his phone during PE and sent out the picture.

Discussion Questions:

Are there laws against sexting?

How could Shayla have made better decisions to protect herself?

What can parents and teachers do to stop sexting?

SCENARIO 2:

Josh has been pretending to be ill so that he may stay home from school. He's been having problems with a couple of other students who ride his school bus. The only adult on the bus is busy driving and can't always be aware or supervise what's happening on the bus. Josh is being picked on while riding the bus, and has no way of leaving the situation and protecting himself. Because the same children typically ride the bus based on location, bullies can count on targeting certain individuals on a regular basis. Just going to school is putting Josh in a vulnerable situation every day.

Discussion Questions:

What are some things students can do if they are being bullied on the bus?

Should other kids try to help him? If they don't, why do you think that is the case?

SCENARIO 3:

Katey, an outgoing and friendly 8th grader, was the co-leader with Anjie of a group of popular girls at her school. One day before spring break, Katey and Anjie had a falling out over what Katey thought was a minor matter. One day, after coming back from the break, she found to her surprise that she had been ostracized from the group with them even going so far as to taunt her at lunch and in the halls between classes. Katey started skipping school and forging her mother's name on excuse forms to explain her absenteeism. Once outgoing, she became quiet and shy. Towards the end of the school year father was transferred to another city and Katey left the school without ever letting her parents or teachers know why her personality had changed. Although she was able to adjust to her new school, she was not the same girl she had been prior to the move and was wary of anyone who wanted to be her friend.

Discussion Questions:

Do you think there is something Katey could have done to prevent the situation from escalating?

Should Katey have told her parents and teachers? What do you think would have been the outcome?

Why kids say and do cruel things to other kids?

What do you think would have happened to Katey if her family hadn't moved?

SCENARIO 4:

Someone took an unflattering picture of another student in the locker-room. Most students find the kid in the picture annoying and rude to others. Most of your friends have had the picture sent to their phones. Some still have it. The parents of this student are demanding action be taken to stop the picture from circulating and for the students responsible to be punished. You have seen the picture and know many of those involved. You know you will be one of those interviewed by the principal as having knowledge and possession of this image. What should you say?

Discussion questions:

Is there a difference between receiving the picture and keeping it to show others on your phone and sending it via text?

What if you received the picture and showed it to one other person and then deleted it?

What about the kids who received it, deleted it, verbally told others about the photo, but didn't report it?

What is a person's responsibility to stop the persecution of others?

SCENARIO 5:

Maya, a diligent, quiet girl, has been very depressed lately. She has isolated herself. No one seems to be able to reach her. Her counselor tries to help her; however, Maya rejects the counselor. Maya has done her best to be a top, high achieving student, but her stepfather constantly puts her down by saying, "You'll never amount to much, Maya!" He yells at her often crushing her feelings. Furthermore, her stepfather is physically abusive to Maya and her mother. Eventually, Maya cries out for help desperately to her math teacher. The situation is so bad, it has escalated to Mary thinking about harming herself

Discussion questions:

If you were Mary's friend, what advice would you give her?

If you were having thoughts about self-harm, who can you go to for help?

Describe the signs of depression. What may a person do or say if they are at risk of hurting themselves?

SCENARIO 6:

Devon's mom is raising him and his seven year old brother as best she can, but his mom spends most of their time together on the phone complaining about her ex-husband. His mother behaves emotionally more like she expects Devon to take charge and be 'the man of the house' even though he is only 13. Many times he has to calm his mom down or cheer her up. Devon feels he often has to be in charge of running the household and be a parent and is angry about it. Mrs. Barrie, Devon's teacher, called on him to answer a question in class. Devon verbally attacked Mrs. Barrie.

Discussion questions:

What should the teacher do?

How Devon's neglect at home is related to his behavior in class?

What should Devon do about his home situation?

What is his mother's responsibility?

SCENARIO 7:

Jackson, an eighth grader, has not spoken to his father since the age of seven. Though his mother tries to keep track of his actions, she is preoccupied with her three younger children. Jackson, desperate for a male role model and the feeling of being part of a group, begins to notice the friendship and loyalty among a neighborhood gang. He wonders what it would be like to become a member...

Discussion Questions:

Why do people join gangs?

What do you think Jackson will do next?

If Jackson's father was still around, do you think he would be in this situation? Why or why not?

Do you know a "Jackson"? How can you help him/her?

SCENARIO 8:

Tyler was invited to attend a party over the weekend. He knew that this party would include beer, marijuana, etc. Tyler, not wanting to be involved in these activities, made up an excuse that he would be "out of town." However, one the way over to the party, one of Tyler's classmates saw him. Monday, during class exchanges, Tyler was assailed with comments of "wimp, momma's boy," etc. Nathan, one of Tyler's friends, has informed him that unless he attends the next party, like "a real man", he will no longer be part of the "group." It has been a week and half and the harassment is escalating.

Discussion questions:

What are personal convictions?

What are possible consequences that one might face in standing up for those convictions?

If Johnny gives in to peer pressure what kind of support does he need to get through it and to later regain self-respect?

Are there ways to stop the harassment in the hallways?

For additional resources, please visit our website at:

www.dwtx.org

Also visit the Teen Resource Center from the Office of the Attorney General of Texas.

It's an excellent site with multiple resources for students.

www.oag.state.tx.us/teens