**Writing Workshop Protocol**

During independent time each day in the writing workshop, you will need to decide how you will use your time. I won’t be telling you what to do with this time, but I will be expecting you to use it wisely. Remember that you want to do things that will help you grow into a stronger writer. YOU are responsible for doing what it takes to make that happen.

Here are some of the kinds of things you might do during this time:

* Write new stuff in your writer’s notebook.
* Go back through what’s in your notebook already and “play with” those ideas. Write more about them or try to turn them into other kinds of writing.
* In your notebook, try some writing exercises recommended by professional writers. You will find these in the hanging folders on the Writing Rack. Make sure you return these to the hanging file folders when you are finished. You might try these with a friend.
* Work on writing drafts of pieces you want to publish or “do” something with.
* Have a writing conference with your writing group about something you are working on (either in your notebook or in a draft for a published piece).
* Read texts from the books we have in the room. Always be sure to ask, “How did this writer write this piece? Could I try that, too, with my topics?”

**Writing Workshop Group Protocol**

**The purpose of the response workshop is to allow writers to talk with an interested, supportive audience about work they’re doing, and make concrete revision (re-envisioning) plans based on observations and conversation.**

**Writers will:**

* come to group time with a draft piece for group response and copies for each member of the group (or agreement on another process for sharing drafts, such as using Google Drive or accessing each other’s websites or blogs)
* include an **AUTHOR’S AGENDA** at the top of the first page of the draft and state that author’s agenda to begin the response time
	+ an author’s agenda is a specific question/concern/problem regarding your piece for the group to focus on as they read/listen, something that needs specific responses from group members. This may be something you’ve worked on—realistic dialogue, an illustration of an important concept that you want to know is effective, an organizational structure you wonder about—or something you’re trying to do—getting your characters out of some situation you’ve written them into, improving your use of poetic techniques, developing sentence variety.
* begin by reiterating the author’s agenda then reading the piece out loud (**a targeted part or the whole**) to the group
* take notes on group responses as the piece is discussed
* not take group time to defend decisions, but will note feedback and make plans for revision as necessary

**Group Members will:**

* access the writer’s most recent draft if available before group time and read it at least once, paying attention to the author’s agenda and making notes/asking questions on/about the draft
* listen to the writer read and read along as the piece is read
* respond first with **POINTING**, highlighting a point of strength—“this is strong/good/clear”—or confusing or unclear—“not sure what this means.” Be precise
* respond second with **SAY BACK** to indicate why you pointed to specific words, phrases, sections, etc. to clarify your thinking as a reader for the writer. Examples: Keep this word. Cool image. Strong voice. I understand….  Reminds me of…. Be specific
* respond third with **ON THE EDGE QUESTIONS** to provoke the writer to re-examine or “see it another way.” Examples: I wonder what would happen if…?  Why?  How?  When…?  Could this be…?
* be sure to address the author’s agenda as they respond and discuss
* not tell the author how to “fix” the piece
* not degrade the writer or the piece, nor waste time with irrelevant feedback