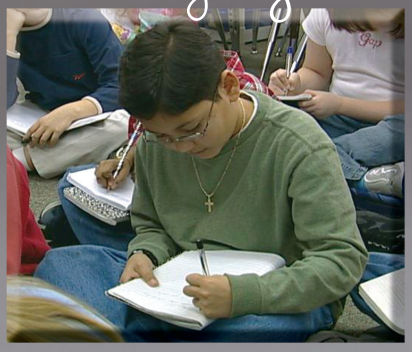
Viewing Guide

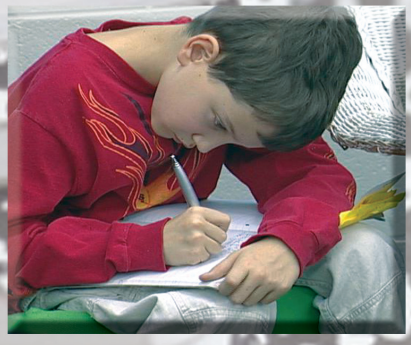




Inside Notebooks

Bringing Out Writers, Grades 3–6

Aimee Buckner



Contents

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Inside Notebooks is a two-part video series taped over two days in Aimee Buckner's fourth-grade classroom in Snellville, Georgia. In the series, viewers will see how Aimee uses writers' notebooks as a tool in her writer's workshop for brainstorming ideas, testing out new writing and reading strategies, and developing writing skills. The ideas in the video are adapted from Aimee's book, *Notebook Know-How* (Stenhouse 2005).

This guide is designed to help facilitators use *Inside Notebooks* in workshop settings. The plans provided are flexible, allowing you to tailor the suggestions to the needs of your group.

We encourage facilitators using these videos in professional development settings to begin by purchasing a blank writer's notebook for each participant, and distributing these notebooks before beginning the workshop sessions. Participants will quickly see the importance of teachers keeping their own notebooks, and these gifts can be a tool throughout the workshops for testing ideas presented in the series.

We've divided suggestions for each program into three sections:

1. Questions for discussion
2. Workshop activities
3. Readings from *Notebook Know-How,* the companion text from Aimee Buckner that can be used with the video series.

There is also a wealth of material in the figures, including many student notebook samples, which you can use to design your own flexible workshop plans.

Program 1: Mini-Lessons at Mid-Year

Many teachers mark early January as one of their favorite times of the year. Students understand routines and expectations, and have formed a classroom community. Holiday distractions have ended. In this program, Aimee shows how notebooks can be a tool to rejuvenate writers and workshops at mid-year. Through a series of lessons introducing new strategies for the notebook and revisiting successful strategies tackled in the fall, students find their interest in notebooks is

rekindled, and they build on writing skills developed throughout the fall.

Questions for Discussion

- In the "Daily Pages" segment, Aimee says to students: "I'm not going to be conferencing with you today. I'm going to do my own daily pages too." When is it appropriate/helpful to write when students write?
- What is the role of a teacher's notebook in a notebook program?
- Aimee often asks, "What surprised you in your writing?" Why do you think she uses this question?
- In the "Lifting a Line" segment, Aimee shares sensitive material from her own recent experiences with her father. What are your own boundaries for sharing your life outside the classroom? How do they differ than those of your colleagues?
- Aimee routinely has students reread all of their notebook entries and self-assess. What types of assessment do you think are most appropriate for notebooks? How do you use notebooks as a tool for assessment?
- How do you use self-assessment in writing now? Why would student reflection on writing be important in their writing development?
- Look at and discuss the rubric Aimee uses for writers' notebooks. How can this be used for self-assessment? How can teachers envision using this as a tool for assessment?
- Aimee assigns notebook writing to be completed at home. How do you hold students accountable for writing completed at home?
- What concerns do you have about sending the notebook home? Is writing outside of school important or should notebooks be an "in–school" activity?

Workshop Activities

1. Daily Pages

Distribute Figures 1 and 5, Aimee's explanation of Daily Pages and two student samples. Have participants try Daily Pages for a week, bringing back student examples to discuss at the next workshop.

Alternative suggestion: Begin each workshop session in a staff development course with time for a daily page. At the end of the study group, ask teachers how these helped them clear their mind for the staff development work. Having a personal experience to build from will make a difference in their teaching.

2. Lifting a Line

Ask everyone in the group to try freewriting for ten minutes. After ten minutes are up, have participants go back and highlight a line they might write more about. Discuss the experience together or in small groups, and what value it might have for younger writers.

If time permits, ask participants to lift the line and begin writing again for ten minutes. (Alternative suggestion: Do the freewriting first. Then watch the video clip. Go back and lift a line, and write again.)

3. Teacher Self-Assessment

Distribute Figures 2 and 3, Aimee's explanation of planning for notebooks and a self-assessment rubric. Ask everyone to read the explanation, noting how their expectations for notebooks are similar to or different from Aimee's. Have everyone fill out the self-assessment silently, and then discuss in small groups what plans participants have for making changes to their notebook program.

4. Student Self-Assessment

For participants currently trying/using notebooks, ask them to take the self-assessment questions back to their class. Have them bring some samples back the following week to discuss. What impressed them about student self-reflection? What disappointed them? How do you think a consistent manner of self-assessment will deepen student reflection? Why is student self-assessment meaningful? How does it differ from teacher assessment in terms of value to the writer?

Suggested Reading

Chapter 2 "Launching the Notebook" in *Notebook Know-How*

Program 2: Persuasive Writing Genre Study

Persuasive writing is a genre that is essential for students to master, and notebooks are the perfect vehicle for understanding the difference between facts and opinions, the language of argument, and how to make a case cogently. In this program, Aimee takes viewers through a series of mini-lessons in her classroom that enable students to grasp the writing techniques necessary for successful persuasive writing.

Questions for Discussion

- Aimee primes students for writing by having them develop lists of "fair" and "unfair" occurrences in the students' lives. Why do you think she does this? How does this differ from telling a child to make a list of ideas and write about one?
- Short news articles are an important tool for sparking writing in the notebooks. What are differences in the ways Aimee uses the articles about banning peanuts and child labor?
- Aimee reads the articles aloud to the children first. Why do you think she does that? Is this time well spent or should students be left to read this on their own? How else could students manage to read the article prior to this lesson? (Example: independent reading, pair reading, guided reading . . . discuss possibilities for different ways to combine reading and writing.)
- Aimee pulls together a small group for an additional lesson after many of her mini-lessons, calling these "differentiated lessons." Here she implements a form of "shared writing." What do you like about this practice? How might you do it differently? How can this practice be used for enrichment?
- Aimee often has students create charts in their notebooks, as well as cut and paste materials. Why does she do this? Is it important to help students get "resources" into their notebook, and if so, why? How is this practice similar or different to how you use notebooks with your students? What might you adapt or adopt?
- Aimee has one student who feels very strongly about the right of young children to drive cars (see the student's notebook sample in

Figure 10). How do you think Aimee handled this situation? How do you react when kids seem extreme or unreasonable in their responses?

Workshop Activities

1. Have participants read the "banning peanuts" article (Figure 11) and highlight where the position is presented strongly. How is the author being persuasive? What are the words used to connote the tone? Have participants make a t-chart to list the words or phrases that strike them for each side of the argument. Discuss in small groups. Then distribute the student response (Figure 7). How is the student's perspective different than what was presented in your group? Aimee doesn't try to change the students' minds regarding their position. (It surprised her how many kids were against the ban.) Why do you think she does this?

2. Photocopy and distribute the "Child Labor" excerpt (Figure 12). Have participants write their inner conversations as they read. In small groups, discuss these questions:

> If you were going to write a persuasive piece, what position would you take?
> Why?

3. Helping children become aware of their audience is often difficult. Create an anchor chart with the teacher participants for a genre they're interested in teaching. Begin with a three-column chart with reader/genre elements/writer headings. As a group create the chart. How does creating the anchor chart help teachers make the reader (audience) writer connection? How can it affect their conferring? How do you think it will affect students?

Suggested Reading

Chapter 5 "Using Notebooks to Understand Genre" in *Notebook Know-How*

Figure 1: Daily Pages

The fear of being wrong is the most difficult thing for students to get over. By fourth grade, or even earlier, students have determined that if they do the task correctly the first time they won't have to do it over. "Doing it right," to them, means perfect spelling, being neat, and knowing what to say so the teacher likes it. This is the wrong attitude for a notebook, and will result in perfectly mundane entries that mean little to the students or anyone else.

Daily Pages is an idea I adopted from Julia Cameron's The Artist's Way. *For this mini-lesson, students are required to write a minimum of one page every day before writing workshop. A whole page—no skipping lines, no starting three or four lines from the top, and no writing so big that you only fit three words on a line. A whole, normal-size page, which holds approximately one hundred words. (No, I don't count, but it impresses the kids.) Generally, they have time during morning arrival to do this. Or students might do it at home before coming to school.*

The point of this exercise for students is to take their trash out, to clear their minds. They might write about the routine soccer practice or the play-by-play of Monday night football, or about being bored at school or having no time for breakfast. If a student has nothing to write about in the morning, chances are he or she won't have anything to write about in a couple hours either. So it's okay to spend the morning writing about nothing on the daily page, as long as you are ready to write something during writing workshop.

(Excerpt from Notebook Know-How *by Aimee Buckner)*

Figure 2: "What-Ifs"

An important part of planning to use notebooks is preparing for the barrage of "what-ifs" students will ask. As my childhood soccer coach would say, the best defense is a good offense . . . be prepared. With notebooks, students are going to want direction—a lot of direction. Actually, if a ten-year-old really wants to avoid writing, she or he will revert to the old routine: I don't know how; I don't get it; I don't remember anything. Even if a child is not that overtly obstinate, a few guidelines will keep even the best students focused and on task.

The chart on the next page shows the expectations I have for both the students and myself. I give this to students and parents so we're all clear on who is doing what. This list is a starting point. Of course, you don't want to overwhelm children with rule upon rule upon rule. As I review and edit my expectations from year to year, I ask myself: What will students be expected to do in the notebook? How often? With what level of "correctness"? How will we (the writer and teacher) respect the privacy of each individual writer in class? What is my ultimate goal and how will I go about directing students to that end?

Be careful to select or create only the most essential expectations for your students. Keep in mind the most basic goal of the notebook: for students to be independent writers. Expectations need to be the safety net kids fall back on to keep them moving toward this goal. Children need boundaries, and they need to test those boundaries. Consider the expectations as a set of boundaries clarifying the line between student and teacher, and establishing the students' responsibility to write.

(Excerpt from Notebook Know-How *by Aimee Buckner)*

(continued)

Figure 2: "What-Ifs" (continued)

Notebook Expectations

Students are expected to . . .	*Students can depend on the teacher to . . .*
➸ write daily in their notebooks at school and at home three times a week (minimum).	➸ provide time each day for students to write during writing workshop.
➸ "find" topics from their notebook writing from their life, from reading, and from natural curiosity. Students are expected to make decisions about their writing topics on a daily basis.	➸ teach writing strategies as ways to discover writing topics. Teachers will also confer with students to help nudge their thinking and writing when students get stuck.
➸ try strategies from the mini-lesson before continuing with their own work for the day.	➸ teach mini-lesson each day to teach students how to be better writers.
➸ fold over any entry they deem too personal to share with the teacher. (Students many not staple, glue, or tape this page shut.) Any folded-over entries the teacher cannot read will not be considered an entry toward their required number per week.	➸ respect the folded entries. The teacher will respect the privacy of the writer unless there is reason to believe the student is being hurt by someone, is going to hurt someone, or is going to hurt him- or herself.
➸ respect the integrity of the notebook by taking care of it and having it in class every day. Students will respect other notebooks by only reading entries they are invited to read by the author.	➸ have his or her notebook in class on a daily basis. The teacher will also share some of his or her writing throughout the year to establish that she or he too is a writer. Teachers will not lose notebooks they collect, write all over entries in red ink, or spill coffee on them.
➸ practice what they know about conventional spelling and grammar. Entries must be legible.	➸ teach rules of spelling and grammar that will enhance student writing. Teachers will recognize that the notebook is a place to practice new conventions and words and to master conventions and words students already know.
➸ discover how writing can enrich their lives.	➸ discover how his or her life is enriched by the writing of each student.

Figure 3: Self-Assessment Reproducible

How are you using notebooks with students?

What would you like to try with students in the notebooks?

What new strategy will you try to teach your students based on the videos?

How will using writers' notebooks change your writer's workshop?

How has your vision of teaching writing changed/evolved over time?

Figure 4: Self-Assessment Student Samples

1. How do you use your notebook?

I use lists, word thinking. I love to write down my thoughts.

2. What topics do you tend to write about in your notebook?

I tend to write about memories, places I've been and about my life mostly.

3. How have you changed as a writer?

I've changed by writing longer, using more words, bigger words.

4. What do you need to improve?

I think I need to improve my spelling.

1. How do you use your notebook?

I use it for another side of me. Some things are the same but some are different. Making a list helped me. Quick writes help me and I developed a lot since I started.

2. What topics do you tend to write about in your notebook?

Stories that made me feel something. That's all about me.

3. How have you changed as a writer?

At first I used choppy words but now I use smooth stuff that will fit into my story.

4. What do you need to improve?

I need to write more details.

Figure 5: Daily Pages Student Samples

Daily Page

Today I have no homework and so I can play with my best friend. This would be the best day of my life. Having no Homework is the happiest day except for my birthday and Christmas. I might go to Chuckie Cheeses too because I have no homework. I get to buy school lunch to. Everybody asks if I ever buy lunch.

Daily Page

Things are crazy this morning we just got back from Boston and the camera crew is here recording us for two days. I'm looking forward to focus to finish my Chinese character and I'm a little tired. But I'm still excited because when the camera crew is recording us it feels like we're in Hollywood. So, I guess I'm tired and excited at the same time. In art, we're painting weird self-portraits like Pablo Picasso and I can't wait to finish mine. Now I've recorded all my thoughts. I'm just playing with my hair right now. By the way, today is NO HOMEWORK!!! Any way, things are very wild this morning in Ms. B's 4th grade class, but I guess things will quiet down after lunch.

Figure 6: Student Sample: Fair/Unfair List

*(*Starred Items to Write About)*

Fair	*Unfair*
1. Making my brother grounded	1. Homework
2. TV	2. Taking the trash out*
3. Summer vacation*	3. School
4. Pets	4. Chores
5. Getting new video game	5. Hospitals shot's*
6. Meet old cousins*	6. No tv on Saturday
7. Recess	7. Waiting
8. Scaring my sister who's scared of guys	8. Getting grounded
9. Getting money*	9. Getting grades you don't deserve*
10. Going to Six Flags	10. Going to my sister's house

Figure 7: Student Sample: Response on Banning Peanut Butter

Why do they have to ban it? I do feel sorry for the kids who die from it, but why take it away from the non-allergiced to peanut butter? I mean there are alot of factories in the world that make candy bars with peanuts in them, and there not banning them. The people that are allergiced to peanut butter should just avoid it. Stay away from it. Like in this artical I read the people who are with baning peanut butter 1 million out of 2 million people are allergic. But then the people who against banning peanut butter say 99.5 percent of the people are non-allergic. .5 percent of the people are allergic. I heard on the news that a girl who was highly alleric to peanuts kissed her boyfriend who ate a peanut butter sandwich 9 hours before and she died. Now there I feel really sorry for her because just from a kiss to die!

Figure 8: Student Sample: "Clean Room from Both Sides"

Kid	***Mom***
Mom, my room is clean enough.	*Kid, your room is a tornado, I cant*
There's hardly anything on the floor.	*fit through the door, much less see*
It's my room, so why do you care! I can	*the floor. There's dirty socks, an*
find my things, they are fine where they	*alarm clock, and I don't even know*
are! Yes, that toy is on the floor, but I	*what that is! It looks like a feather,*
like it there, that's where I know it is! If	*a ball, or piece of fiz! Things are*
your'e so worried, clean it yourself! I	*getting out of hand, dirty clothes*
don't want to clean my room right	*and socks, piled to the ceiling, the*
now!	*people coming tonight won't find it*
	very apeiling. So, here's a dust pan
	and a broom. I want you to finaly
	CLEAN YOUR ROOM!

Figure 9: Student Sample: Point of View

Point of View

Idea	*Kids*	*Parents*
Pets	wants a dog	no pets
Education	don't work hard	work harder
Chores	like it the way is	needs to be longer
Movies	I want to see them	not old enough
$$	More!	you have enough

Movies

Why can't we watch grown up movies? Parent's know we won't do what the movie people do. We're also growing up so bring on the action and disgust. Parent's get to watch everything, kids only get a little. Kids are more interested in movies than parents. Parent's won't agree with this but 4.45 percent of 10.00 percent of ids agree with this and this is a fact. So go movies. Kids shouldn't watch bad movies because kids are not old enough to watch PG-13 movies. Parent guidance is all requested so we make the decision plus if kids don't ask parent guidance it would be illegal. This is enough facts to prove kids can't watch PG13 movies or something even badder. So kids no bad movies.

Figure 10: Fair/Unfair Student Sample

Not Being Able to Drive

When your in the car and you see all the different types of cars that you really want. You can ask your parents if you can drive, but of course they always say no. You ask again, again, and again but they say no, you don't have a license and your way to young. I want to be able to drive to the museums, swimming pools, my friends houses, and to school. I want a BMW convertible, its always been my dream to have one. I'd be drivin' on the smooth road waving it would be cool to have a car. But the bad part is you have to pay for gas. THE END

Figure 11: Time for Kids Article

Peanut Problems

When Nicholas Pavia was 3 years old, he ate a piece of a brownie at a party. Within seconds, his throat was itching and his nose was running. An hour later, he started throwing up. Says Nicholas, now 7: "It was scary."

How can one bite of one brownie make someone so sick? Nicholas was having an allergic reaction to peanut-butter chips in the brownie. His mom quickly called the doctor and gave Nicholas some medicine. Without the medicine, he might have stopped breathing. Some people allergic to peanuts have died after eating them.

Danger: Peanuts Ahead!

People who are allergic to peanuts must avoid anything containing a peanut or its oil. Sometimes just smelling or touching peanut oil or peanut dust causes an allergic reaction. That can turn a school cafeteria into a danger zone!

Now some schools have decided not to take any chances. They're cracking down on peanut products to protect allergic kids. In some school cafeterias, peanut-free tables are being set aside. In other schools, no one is allowed to bring any peanutty foods at all.

Smoothing Out a Solution

But banning peanut butter creates some sticky problems. For one thing, peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches are popular! They are a nutritious, affordable food for most families.

Another problem is that banning peanuts may make allergic kids feel safe when they really aren't. It's almost impossible to make sure a cafeteria is peanut-free. Instead, says Anne Muñoz-Furlong of the Food Allergy Network, teachers and students should have an emergency plan to deal with any allergy attack. Allergic kids should always wash their hands before eating and should never trade foods with other kids.

(continued)

Figure 11: Time for Kids Article (continued)

At Nicholas' school in Manville, New Jersey, peanuts are allowed. Cafeteria workers keep a picture of Nicholas and a record of his allergies (he's also allergic to some seafood) so they can be sure not to serve him anything harmful. They also keep some medicine on hand, just in case.

What Is an Allergy?

One in 20 kids has a food allergy. The most common food that people are allergic to is peanuts, followed by all kinds of nuts, fish, shellfish (such as shrimp and crab), milk, eggs, wheat and soy. Besides food, people can be allergic to dust, pollen from plants and many other things.

When an allergic person eats or breathes in one of these substances, the body thinks it is a harmful invader and tries to attack it. The body's tiny attackers, called histamines (hiss-tuh-meenz), are released into the blood. This causes the blood vessels to get bigger and the skin to swell and itch. It also triggers the nose, throat and lungs to produce sticky mucus. In many cases, a medicine called an antihistamine (Get it?) can relieve these symptoms.

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Figure 12: Time for Kids Article: Hard at Work

Ten-year-old Wilbur Carreno is less than four feet tall and weighs only 50 pounds. He is small for his age. That's exactly what makes him good at his job.

Wilbur spends his afternoons climbing banana trees four times his height. He expertly ties the heavy stalks of bananas so the trees won't droop from the weight of the fruit. "I've been working since I was 8," he told TFK. "I finish school at noon and then go to the field."

In Wilbur's poor country of Ecuador, one in every four children is working. An estimated 69,000 kids toil away on the vast banana plantations along the country's coast. Ecuador is the world's largest banana exporter. Kids working in the industry are exposed to harmful chemicals, pull loads twice their weight and use sharp, heavy knives.

Do Kids Belong on the Job?

Child labor is certainly not limited to Ecuador. The United Nations estimates that 250 million kids around the world are forced to work. Many countries don't have laws limiting kids' work.

A concerned group called Human Rights Watch conducted a study of Ecuador's banana plantations last April. They found that most children begin working on plantations around age 10. Their average workday lasts 12 hours! By age 14, 6 out of 10 no longer attend school. Many families face the difficult choice of either putting food on their tables or sending their kids to school.

The family of Alejandro, 12, struggles with that choice. Alejandro has had to work beside his father, Eduardo Sinchi, on a plantation. "I don't want my kids to work," says Sinchi. "I want them in school, but we have few options." Sinchi has nine children and earns as little as $27 a week. "It isn't even enough for food, let alone school, clothes, transportation."

(continued)

Figure 12: Time for Kids Article: Hard at Work (continued)

Hard Work for Little Pay

Sinchi's pay is typical in Ecuador. The average banana worker earns just $6 a day. One reason pay is so low is that Ecuadorians are not allowed to form work groups called unions. In countries like Costa Rica, where laws allow unions, some banana workers earn $11 a day. Such countries have fewer child workers because better pay means parents can afford to keep their kids in school.

Ecuador's big banana companies have begun to do something about child labor. Last year, they signed an agreement not to hire kids younger than 15 and to protect young workers from chemicals. "We need to eliminate child labor," says Jorge Illingworth, of Ecuador's Banana Exporters Association. But small plantations did not sign the agreement, and, he says, they employ 70% of the kids.

Banning child labor is a start, but it doesn't really help families like the Sinchis. Now that Alejandro can't work, his family suffers more. The answer, most believe, is better pay for Ecuador's adult workers. For that to happen, U.S. shoppers would have to put up with higher banana prices or stop buying Ecuador's bananas to make their point. Guillermo Touma fights to help Ecuador's workers. "If we could raise awareness," he says, "we could raise wages and invest in education for our children."

Child Labor in the U.S.A.

The mistreatment of child workers is not just a foreign problem. Throughout its history, the United States has counted on kids to lend a hand in fields and factories. In the 1800s, children as young as 7 worked in textile mills for 12 hours a day. By the end of the 19th century, almost 2 million kids performed hazardous jobs in mills, mines and factories.

Many concerned citizens worked to change this. Photographer Lewis Hine, who took this photo of young cotton mill workers, was one of them.

(continued)

Figure 12: Time for Kids Article: Hard at Work (continued)

In 1938, a U.S. law was passed that limits work hours for kids and requires safe conditions. The law still exists, but it is not always enforced. An estimated 800,000 children work illegally in the U.S. today, mostly in farming and related industries. Some work with heavy machinery, poisonous chemicals or under other conditions that could harm them.

Slim Pickings

Ecuador supplies a quarter of the bananas sold in the U.S. Most of the money from sales goes to U.S. grocery stores. Workers in Ecuador get little money. Here's about how much a 43-pound crate costs as it goes from the plantation to you.

—$2.40 Amount per crate a U.S. distributor pays banana exporters in Ecuador. Of this, about $1.54 goes to plantation workers.

—$7.50 What supermarkets pay a distributor for a crate

—$22 What you would pay for 43 pounds of bananas at the grocery store

By Ritu Upadhyay. Reported by Lucien Chauvin/Ecuador
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Time Codes

Program 1: Mini-Lessons at Mid-Year
- Introduction: 00:00–02:38
- Daily Pages: 02:38–11:58
- Lifting a Line: 11:58–19:58
- Reread and Reflect: 19:58–28:19

Program 2: Persuasive Writing Genre Study
- Introduction: 00:00–1:48
- List and Star: 01:48–09:41
- Highlighting and Word Hunting: 09:41–17:47
- Anchor Chart: 17:47–24:04
- Student Mentor Text: 24:04–30:44
- Point of View: 30:44–36:09
- Differentiated Lesson: 36:09–40:13
- Questioning the World: 40:13–46:05