



Will You Write in My Yearbook?

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Practicing the Fine Art of Appropriate Yearbook Messages

Introduction to Your Class Discussion:

Very soon this year's annuals/yearbooks are coming out, and it will mean that everyone will want to collect signatures and messages to keep.

To get a message, you often have to **give** a message. So to get ready, you need to plan what you will do when you're asked to write in an annual. For starters, we need to think about some of the situations that arise when you are collecting messages and giving them out:

Let's talk about:

1. What problems do you have signing yearbooks?
2. What kinds of messages please you in your yearbook?
3. What purpose do you have in mind when signing a yearbook?
4. What are some of the problems that you have noticed that sometimes result from an entry someone has written in someone's annual?
5. What are some of the most overused, trite words or phrases people write in annuals? Is texting language ok? Should the writing be in good printing or cursive (or at least legible?)
6. Any "ethics" on signing someone's yearbook?
7. What happens to people who deface or ruin someone's yearbook?
8. Who are the hardest people to write to?"

Note to teacher: Have students work in small groups to discuss their ideas and end the discussion with some whole-class summaries of what their group suggestions. For help with responses to questions 1 and 8, here is a good guideline to provide:

[Question 7] You may want to check with your school's administration to find out what does happen to students who deface or ruin someone's yearbook. In addition, the yearbook advisor may know if there are any extra yearbooks available for such replacements if needed.

If you are asked by someone you **don't like** or **don't know well**, just sign your name under your picture. If you want to say something generic here, it is probably okay.

Setting Up the Practice:

A good way to practice is to role play with pictures from an annual from some other school. There are seven situations (plus one extra credit) for our class to troubleshoot with some sample candid pictures from a real annual. You will have a chance to try writing a personal response to someone in each situation.

You will get to share your answers with two others and see what each of you has done with each problem when we have finished.

Optional Extension: You can ask colleagues if they would like a visit from some of your student groups of three to come into their classrooms to prepare their students for signing annuals. If you find that to be a welcome service project, an additional writing project could be to have students prepare their scripts for peer mentoring in other classrooms. A whole school norming can be done by your presenters and can help create anticipation and lessen problems for the students in other classrooms.

If you choose to do this extension, this could be the next directive to your class:

You and your partners will be write a brief set of guidelines for kids in other classes to be distributed before the yearbooks are distributed. You can present your ideas for a discussion you lead with that class, and/or let them practice on some examples or see you own suggestions from the practice you did.

What you will need:

- **Student Yearbook Practice Packets** for each student, with practice prompts and pictures to introduce the simulation. Students can write on the packets, their own paper, index cards, computers or on favorite media you may have available.
- Possibly, **an annual from another school** to create your own candid picture packet. It is hard to practice with pictures of people whom the students are familiar with. On the student handout packet, you will find some copyright-free candid pictures that you can use already, but you may enjoy finding some of your own to fit the demographics and the changing styles from year to year.

Student Yearbook Practice Packet—Page 1

Name: _____ Class: _____

Discussion Questions:

First, jot down your ideas. You will share with two others, and then we'll discuss together and hear some of the best ideas you've had:

1. What problems do you have signing yearbooks?
2. What kinds of messages please you in your yearbook?
3. What purpose do you have in mind when signing a yearbook?
4. What are some of the problems that you have noticed that sometimes result from an entry someone has written in someone's annual?
5. What are some of the most overused, trite words or phrases people write in annuals? Is texting language ok? Should the writing be in good printing or cursive (or at least legible?)
6. Any "ethics" on signing someone's yearbook?
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8. Who are the hardest people to write to?

Student Yearbook Practice Packet—Page 2

Name: _____ Class: _____

Will You Write in My Yearbook?

Here are the people to write to in your practice yearbook pages:

Problem #1: This girl is the captain of the girl's softball team and she is one of the people everyone in school likes. She's very popular and friendly, as well as being a super athlete, and you are not only a good friend, but you know her brother well too. (Her name is Jennifer, but most kids just call her "Jen." What will you write to her?)

Problem #2: On April Fool's Day, one of the classes surprised their favorite teacher by greeting him while standing on the top of their desks. You had this teacher last year and really liked him too. Pick one of the kids on the desks to write a message in their yearbook. (Circle which student you picked. You can give him/her a name.)

Problem #3: When the teacher saw his kids on their desks, he responded by doing his teaching that day while seated on the floor. Write a message to this popular teacher who everyone called Mr. M. You can talk about more than what you see in this picture. Maybe you recall something special about him that you especially liked.

Problem #4: One of the kids in this photo is either your best friend or your boy/girl friend. Write an appropriate comment to that person, keeping in mind that any number of people will be reading what you write. (Their names are Jana and Jacob.)

Problem #5: You were part of a language arts class that wrote a lot of creative work that got put onto the class walls. You had a good friend in the class. (Choose one of the two pictures of the class, circle the person who you will be writing to, give that person a name, and then write that person a message.)

Problem #6: Pick one of the teachers pictured here, and tell that teacher why he/she was your favorite teacher. Be specific about either his/her way of teaching, or about their people skills. (Their names are Mrs. Johnson and Mr. Grant.)

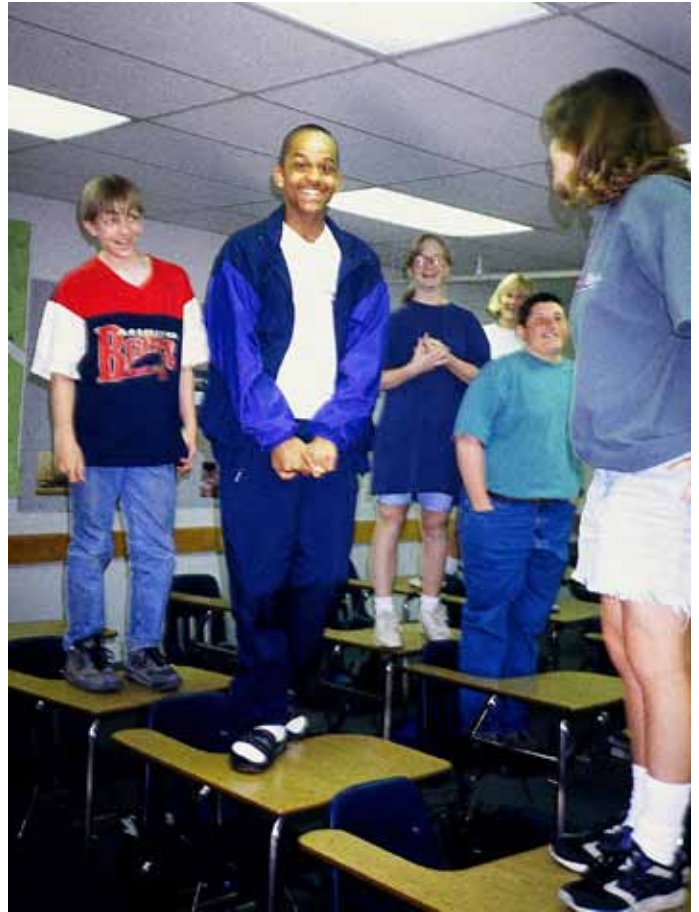
Problem #7: Some of the kids in Mr. M's class were always goofing around. Pick either one of the girls or the boy in a candid from his class, give that kid a name, and write something that is not too crazy, in spite of their picture.)

Extra Credit: One of the best artists in the school, and also the editor of the yearbook, was surprised to see a picture the staff inserted of him with one of the early art projects he did in ninth grade. The yearbook staff wanted to surprise him with this old picture of him from the archives of a previous yearbook. You didn't really know him well, but you were glad to add a message to him because of his great work on this yearbook. His name was Eric, and he sat next to you in science class.

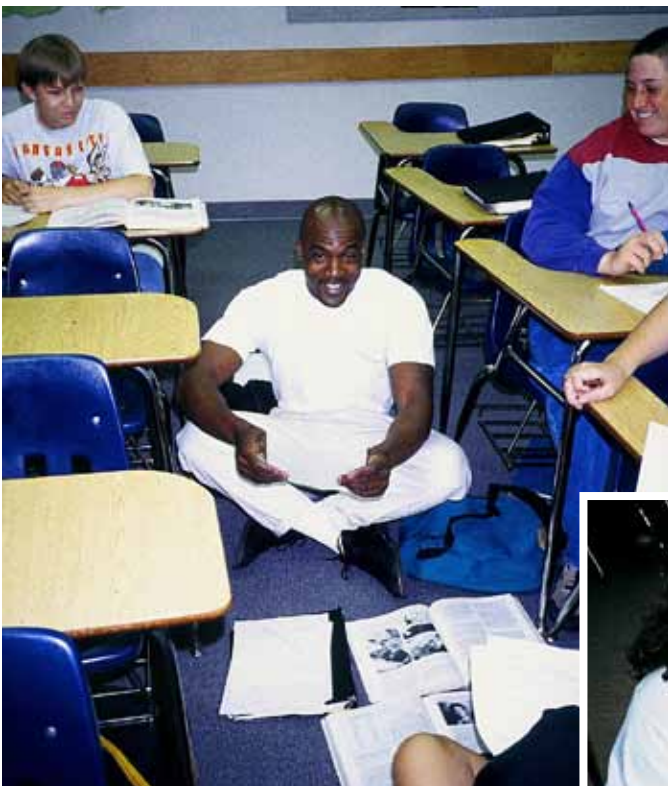
Problem #1:



Problem #2:



Problem #3:



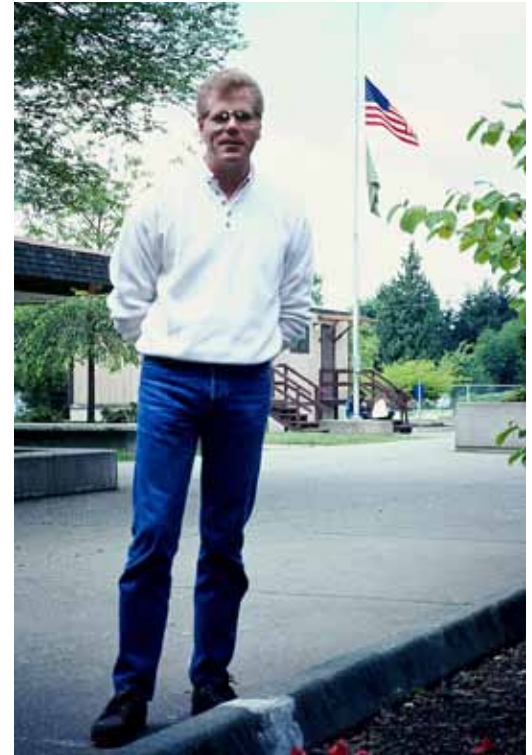
Problem #4:



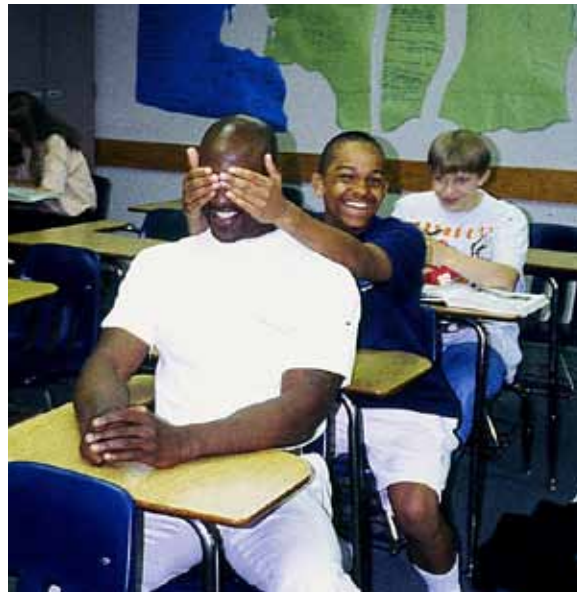
Problem #5:



Problem #6:



Problem #7:



Extra Credit: