

Genre 1 Biography (Obituary)

Version 1 (Written the day I found out)

Today my sweet, beautiful aunt lost her last battle with cancer. But she will always be a winner to me. Aunt Suzie faced each challenge with amazing grace and a positive attitude. She is out of our sight, but will always remain in our hearts and minds.

Version 2 (after many hand written drafts)

Aunt Susan had a warm caring heart, an amazing smile, and laugh that could be heard throughout the neighborhood. She always had a positive outlook on life. She had such a deep love for family and friends. These character traits showed her inner beauty and her curly hair added to her outer beauty. Of course the list could go on about what an amazing person she was but that would take up the whole page.

Aunt Susan was a fighter throughout all her cancers and lost her battle the second time around. Even during her toughest days she always love and concern for us who she was leaving behind. My life would never have been the same without this amazing woman in my life. She taught me how to be positive and kind to everyone. She taught me to never give up and to always shake it off even before Taylor Swift did. She introduce to wine and not the expensive stuff but the good cheap kind. Lastly, she taught me how to fight. Not just fight once but over and over again with everything that life will throw at you.

She leaves behind her amazing husband, Andy Wilburn whose wedding I attended on September 28, 2002. She also leaves behind her mother Raietta Ott; her sister Ann Skender and her husband Dave Skender; her brother and my grandpa Dick Raymond and wife Vicky; her niece Suzanna Beardslee and husband Scott; nephew Dereck Raymond and his wife Michelle; Uncle Andy's children, Stephanie, Bill, and Josh; and me her great niece and that is just how she made me feel everyday, great!

(Quick writing memo: I sent this to my other great aunt who used this as inspiration for writing my Aunt Susan's real obituary.)

Genre 2 Poetry

Topic 1: My Wedding

The Process

Busy

Frustrated

Overwhelmed

Dress after dress after dress

Colors

Music

Food

Decision after decision after decision

Love
Faith
Strength
Memory after journey after memory
Draft #2
Wedding Bells

Busy, “ring ring” goes the phone,
“We have sales on veils this Saturday.”
Frustrated.
Overwhelmed.
Dress after dress after dress,
Veil after veil after veil.

Colors, what’s in season?
Red, Rose, Gold, Rose-gold.
Music,
Country, Hip-Hop, Techno?
Food.
Plated or Buffet?
Chicken or Beef?
Decision after decision after decision.

Flowers,
Decorations,
Invitations,
Cake,
Photography,
Where does it end?

Love,
Heart beating.
Faith,
God singing.
Strength,
“We are in this together.”
Memory after journey after memory.

Two lives becoming one.

Topic 2: My dog Noah Draft #1

When I think about Noah I think about describing him because of how cute he is and how much I love him. He is a beagle, short, splinter hair, white tip tail, and long

floppy ears. His bark sounds like someone is trying to choke him as he howls. He loves people! He just turned 10 in the fall. I have had him since I was a senior in college. I received him from my high school boyfriend and my dog has been with me every step of my life journey.

We had our first journey when I had to leave to go to college. Sadly, MSU does not let you have dogs in the dorm so he had to stay with my mom. I visited him most weekends. Then after freshman year I got my own house and Noah was able to come with me for the next 4 years (It took me 5 to graduate, more fun that way). We had many adventures together. He tailgated, watch me stay up late studying, put his chin on me when I cried about school, and licked my face when I cried about a boy. Every moment of every day he was there for me as my safety net and best friend. Then after college I did my student teaching in which I moved back home then we moved to Arizona for a year to start my teaching career. From there we moved back home together and now he will watch me say I do.

Noah Draft #2

My dog,
Who I love
Is rounder then a pug

My best friend,
who I love
takes my shoes and chews them till they bend.

My safety net,
Who I will always protect.
Runs after a rabbit like a fighter jet.

No matter what I call him
He always comes haulin'
Licking me with his wet tounge.

Reviews from my first grade class:

- "It sounds right, like it makes sense."
- "You should add more picture words so we can see the poem better in our heads."
- "It has good rhyme."
- "It sounds like a song!"
- "You should add more words."
- "It has line breaks (and points to our anchor chart where we learned about line breaks)."
- "Don't forget to write who the author is!"

My Everything Draft #3 (after the reviews)

My dog,
Who I love
Is round like a brown log.

My buddy,
Whose fur is brown
Runs around getting all muddy.

My best friend,
who I love
takes my shoes and chews them till they bend.

My safety net,
Who I will always protect.
Runs after a rabbit like a fighter jet.

My companion,
Who I love
Also loves me a ton.

No matter what I call him
He always comes haulin'
Licking me with his wet tongue.

Writer's Memo

I choose the genre of poetry for two reasons. The first reason is that I wanted to introduce poetry to my first grade class. In order to teach others to do something it seems that you also need to have experience in this genre to relate to the students you are teaching. I also choose poetry for myself as well. In the fifth grade my teacher submitted my poem (without me knowing) to a contest and it won and was published in a book. It is something I have never forgotten yet I have forgotten how to write a poem. That is why I wrote two different poems for two different audiences. My first poem was written for myself as a way to relax with all the stresses of planning a wedding. My second poem was written for my students. I wanted to be able to read it to them and have a shared experience of exploring poetry together.

I wrote both poems after reading many mentor poems. Some were children's poems from a shared reading text that a teacher in my building shared. Others were the daily poems I read during my lunch hour from *The Writer's Almanac* daily emails. The poem I read aloud was the second one that I wrote about my dog. I choose to read it to my first grades since they have been the ones on this poetry writing journey with me. Their feedback was very powerful. They offered both positive and suggestive feedback. It gave me the chance to practice what I preach! It is funny how you can teach one thing but not do it yourself.

What makes for good poetry writing is writing about something that matters to you. This can be a wide range of things. It can be someone important in your life like your dog. It can also be something important to you in the moment like the ceiling you have been staring at for most of the day. The best part about poetry is that not every poem has to look or sound the same. When reading the article *The Poetry Café is Open! Teaching Literary Devices of Sound in Poetry* by Beth Kovalcik and Janine L. Certo they taught me that poems can have repetition, alliteration, sounds, and the most common one rhyme. However, it does not need to have it all. When I think about the way we grade other genres of writing the criteria of ideas and voice sticks out to me as what would be the most important in poetry.

Overall this genre is great for all ages. Often times in our personal and work lives most people biggest complaint is the lack of time they have in their day. Personally this genre became a form of writing that I could do quickly in a day everyday. I found myself writing more poems than I needed. Very few did I find good, but all of them brought me a sense of relaxation. Writing in a diary is something I think of as a form of children's writing to express their feelings. Poetry is a great way to do that same thing as an adult in our busy lives. As a teacher I have also found time to be a problem in the classroom. Being in a district that decides for you what topics for all subjects you will be teaching and when, I was not sure I would be able to fit poetry into our day to day. That was until I started writing it myself. It became a quick and calming part of our day right after recess when they needed it the most. In the future I see it as a way to start writing off for the beginning of the year. With the little restrictions on what is right and wrong in poetry I see it as a way to build all writers confidence in writing right from the start.

I learned that poetry is not something to be scared of. In a world where I feel as though I have to make sure everything I do is right I learned that in poetry no matter what you do it is right. I learned that no poetry has to have rhyme, but it can! Lastly I learned that poetry gives confidence to writers at all levels, from first graders to teachers.

The poem I wrote is about my dog and it is far from being done because well our journey isn't done yet. I built this poem based on the daily observations I made about my dog. Most days I would look at him or he would just be sniffing around outside and it made me feel a certain way about him so I would write it down in my work notebook. My idea to write about him came from my own classroom. I asked the students to fill their poetry hearts (in their poetry notebooks) with things that they cared about. I also did this activity and found that a big piece of my heart is my dog. My poem started as me just talking about why I loved Noah. Then everyday I thought about my thoughts about Noah and this brought a new piece to the poem. I even added a line today! I want to continue writing poems both for myself and for my students. I want to be able to share these pieces with students to come so I can show them the beginning of my journey as a poet as well as the current one.