

& PROJECT

P.S. You Sound Like Someone I Can Trust

Session 5 of 7

WHY WE WRITE

In this session, students read and respond to a new set of letters.

YOU WILL NEED

- Paper and writing utensils
- Optional: markers and stickers
- Method of watching the TEDTalk
- Letters from your buddies!

BEFORE YOU START

Before you start, make sure that you have delivered the letters you students wrote to their buddies *and* received the replies from your partner classroom.

You will also need to ensure that you have a method of watching the TEDTalk—the easiest would be projecting it so your class can watch it together, but you could also print the transcript and read it if you don't have access to a working projector.

HOW TO BEGIN (10 MINUTES)

Give your students a writing prompt to get their creative juices flowing:

Why do people write in journals, stories, poems, essays, napkins, the Notes app on their iPhone, etc.?

Give them about half the time (5 minutes or so) to respond. They can respond generally, focusing on the first part of the prompt (why do people write) or they can be more specific, exploring the reasoning behind different genres and mediums of writing—it’s up to them.

With about five minutes left, have your students share out with the class. There’s likely to be a huge variety of answers since writing is something that is hugely personal and can be motivated by a hundred different things, so this should be an interesting mini-discussion!

STEP 1 (20 MINUTES)

Mini-Lesson: Najwa Zebian’s TEDTalk

Watch Najwa Zebian’s TEDTalk, “[Finding Home Through Poetry](#)” (it’s just over fifteen minutes).

After the TEDTalk, discuss initial thoughts and impressions. Some guiding questions are below:

- What does Zebian mean by her TEDTalk title, “Finding Home Through Poetry”?
- Why does Zebian think people write? Do you agree with her?
- What is the poem she shared (it begins with, “my dear self”) about?
- How can you communicate why *YOU* write with your audience? Do you think it’s important for them to know that?

STEP 2 (25 MINUTES)

Reading, Replying, Reminiscing

Pass out the replies from their buddies. As they read their letters, they should make notes in their notebooks about what they want to say in response and what questions/stories they want to share.

One thing they should communicate in this letter is why they write—in any medium. It can be their motivator for being as honest and authentic in these letters or, if they write on their own time (stories, poems, raps, etc.), what motivates them to explore that medium. Your students will likely do this on their own, but encourage them to ask their buddy why they write too.

STEP 3 (5 MINUTES)

Wrap-Up

Have your students share one of two things with a partner—either one thing they loved from their partner’s letter or one thing they loved getting to add to their own letter. If your students want to, have them share with the whole class too.

Collect their letters to send along—they can (and should!) keep the letters they received.