



## Writing Workshops with Barbara O'Connor

### Basic Information:

- ❖ Workshops are 2 to 4 days
- ❖ 45 to 50 minutes per session (maximum 4 sessions per day)
- ❖ Suitable for grades 3 to 6
- ❖ Content varies according to number of days and grade level
- ❖ Fiction or Biography workshops available
- ❖ Great for MCAS preparedness

### “Show, Don’t Tell” Fiction Workshop

This is one of Barbara’s most popular workshops - perfect for MCAS preparedness.

“Our students actively participated in all the aspects of this fabulous program with enthusiasm and excitement. A definite supplement to our writing program,” says Greenwood Elementary School in Wakefield, MA. With the right tools, students can learn to write more descriptively.

“Show, Don’t Tell” is one of the most effective and versatile tools for:

- ❖ Word choice
- ❖ Setting
- ❖ Detailed, descriptive scenes
- ❖ Character emotion
- ❖ Character traits

In this 2-day workshop, Barbara helps students understand and apply this handy technique.

**Day 1:** Barbara presents her basic fiction program (“Show Me a Story) with plenty of oral brainstorming to reinforce the technique of “show, don’t tell.”. After the first program, the students have a clear understanding of the technique and are prepared to do a homework assignment using Barbara’s worksheets.

**Day 2:** Barbara returns to work with students in a hands-on, classroom environment. Students share their work from the previous day. Now students are ready to move on to more complex uses of “show, don’t tell” and to write lengthier pieces, including setting and descriptive scenes.

To arrange for a workshop at your school or for more information:  
E-mail Janet Zade of Zade Educational Partners at [news4jaz@aol.com](mailto:news4jaz@aol.com)  
or visit her website at [www.authors4kids.com](http://www.authors4kids.com).

*Read more about Barbara O'Connor's books at [www.barboconnor.com](http://www.barboconnor.com).*



## Writing Workshops with Barbara O'Connor

### Biography Workshop

This workshop gives students a chance to write their own mini-biographies (i.e., a chapter of a biography—one period of a subject's life). The ideal workshop lasts for 3 to 4 days, covering the process step by step.

“One of the best programs we have ever had.”

—John F. Kennedy Elementary, Canton, MA

“Her organization of her subject matter was outstanding, thus enabling the students to write biographies in a stressless way. The students were so excited about writing that they continued writing on their own at home ... This writing experience was certainly an experience I recommend for all students!”

—Dale Street Elementary, Medfield, MA

- ❖ Interviewing and researching;
- ❖ Creating a timeline (organizing information into a useful format);
- ❖ Choosing the most important facts;
- ❖ Converting facts into interesting writing (writing creative nonfiction);
- ❖ Applying effective writing tools to nonfiction;
- ❖ Revising

Includes clear, easy-to-use handouts and worksheets.

*How do students choose a subject for their biography?*

Ideally, students choose someone they know and can interview, such as a parent, grandparent or an adult acquaintance. (Experience has shown that students are better off not choosing a child for their biography. Children have shorter lives and, therefore, not as much information to use for the writing.)

*What will be the final product when the workshop is over?*

At the end of the workshop, students will have a revised draft of one chapter of a biography that they can continue working on to produce a finished product.

Students may enjoy finishing their biographies by typing their chapter, adding more chapters, designing covers, adding a table of contents, dedication, author bio, etc.

“Students were surprised by what they were able to produce. ..The teachers were extremely excited....They feel this is one of the best programs we have ever had.”

—Nancy Mark, Librarian at John F. Kennedy Elementary School; Canton:

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