



Basketball and Poetry Writing Workshop

Instructor: John Coy, author of *Strong to the Hoop*

“I love writing and I love basketball. I have been fortunate to combine these in a poetry writing workshop for children ***Basketball and Poetry***.”

HOW IT WORKS

This workshop works best with students aged nine to twelve in groups of around twenty. It can be done in a variety of locations, but a gym with baskets and basketballs for each pair of students is ideal. Two hour sessions allow time for all the exercises, drafts, and revision.

In this workshop, students concentrate on sound and touch while passing, dribbling, and shooting the basketball. Then they quickly write these details down. They focus on their breathing and pulse before and after they run and make comparisons. They pick their favorite images and create a first draft of a poem. Later, they work with similes and metaphors and revise their poems, adding new material and cutting out the Old.

After the revision, the students edit their poetry concentrating on tense, spelling, and line breaks. They write a final draft and read them out loud to each other. All students, regardless of their ability, are able to create an original basketball poem.

In writing about basketball, students write about something they know and enjoy. This provides an opportunity for boys and girls who are reluctant writers and for those who are strong writers. One mother recently said, "I've never seen my son so excited about writing." The combination of basketball and writing works extremely well, as students write diligently knowing they will soon be moving.

RESPONSE

After a recent public reading, one audience member said, “I’ve taught speech for over thirty years and I could not believe how poised and confident those kids were.” Another said “The kids bring the energy of the game to their writing, and are able to create remarkably original poetry about something they enjoy doing.”



LATEST BOOK

It was John Coy's passion for writing and playing basketball that inspired me to create the text for the picture book *STRONG TO THE HOOP* [published by LEE & LOW BOOKS, 1999; \$15.95 Hardcover, ISBN 1-88000080-6]. The story is about a young boy who has to prove himself against the older boys on the main court. I am happy to have the opportunity to lead these workshops, and observe the students as they surprise themselves, by how much they enjoy writing poetry about basketball.

HOW TO CONTACT THE AUTHOR

Feel free to contact John Coy to discuss particular needs or obtain more information. He can be reached via the following:

Contact directly:	email: johncoy@mac.com (612) 378-7715
Contact Lee & Low:	email: jchristie@leeandlow.com (212) 779-4400 x. 32

STUDENT POETRY SAMPLES

Zach Sinks A Shot!

By Alex Kies

My shirt is long and white
and covered in a Tom Gugliotta Timberwolves uniform.

I wear blue shorts down to my knees,
a Texas Rangers blue baseball cap, red brim to the back.

I run to the free-throw line of the court in the gym.
I shoot it. And sink it.

I notice Zachary, my little brother,
trying to sink one.

I walk over to him.
I tell him to try, to try, to try again,
and you will make it.

He tries and tries and tries again.
And he sinks one!

He thanks me a million times, and
I tell him basketball is a game of grace—it isn't easy.

Practice is required, try some more.
Come on, let's play one on one.

The Glory Of Basketball

By Jonathan Lindstrom

A bouncing basketball is like a big yo-yo,
going up and down.

When I run with the ball,
I feel like an ostrich, fast as the wind.

My pulse reminds me of the Mississippi River,
flowing with a steady, quiet rhythm.

Basketballs lined up behind the foul line,
remind me of balls I hit at the batting cage,
all of them landing in the same area.

The sound of the ball slapping my finger tips,
going up and down, is the sound of a snow leopard,
running in a blizzard.

Dribbling balls sound like stampeding antelope.

Balls coming at me sound like charging rhinos.

When I shoot a basket and my hands release the ball,

I feel like a bald eagle flapping its wings.
Running up and down the court,
makes my heart jump around like a hyper orangutan.
I breathe faster and faster like a train at full speed.

The Game

by Emily Lomax

Sounds like a beat of music echoing on the old wood floor
A drum in your neck starts beating really fast,
Looks like a fence with the basketballs in a line,
Following the ball it feels like a baby hippopotamus.

Running a race like a rhyme in your head
Jumping up and down following the ball.
Maybe you're under deep pressure,
When you're running at a high speed,
Trying to beat the ball.

Resources on the Web

For the latest reviews for ***Strong to the Hoop*** go to:
<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/hoop.html>

View this **Active Reader Classroom Guides** at:
<http://www.leeandlow.com/teachers/coywksp.html>

View other **Active Reader Classroom Guides** at: <http://www.leeandlow.com/teachers>

Book Information

AGES 6 and up, 10 1/2 x 8 3/4, 32 PAGES

\$16.95, HARDCOVER, ISBN 1-880000-80-6

READ-ALOUD LEVEL: GRADE 1 and UP

READ-ALONE LEVEL: GRADE 2 and UP

Themes: Basketball, Competition, Self-Confidence, Courage, Brothers, African American

Accelerated Reader® Level/Points: 2.5/.5

Lexile Measure: 420RA

Scholastic Reading Counts!™: 3.2

Order Information

On the Web:

<http://www.leeandlow.com/order> (general order information)

<http://www.leeandlow.com/books/hoop0.html> (individual secure on-line ordering options)

By Phone:

212-779-4400 ext. 28

212-683-3591 fax

By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, NY NY 10016

Copyright © 1997-2007, Basketball and Poetry Writing Workshop

Printed with permission from John Coy

Lee & Low Books, all rights reserved.

For questions, comments and/or more information
please contact us at info@leeandlow.com