



Essential Words: LTAB Online 2020

Lesson plans and writing prompts for teens



Bored in the House

by Jassmine Parks

DURATION: 1.5 hours

GRADE LEVEL: Middle & High School

WRITING LEVEL: All levels

FOCUS: boredom

EXAMPLE TEXT

[Bored](#) by Margaret Atwood

Check in | 15 minutes

What day of quarantine did you start running out of interesting things to do?

LISTEN | [Bored In The House by Tyga & Curtis Roach](#) (YouTube, clean lyrics)

EXERCISE | Make a descriptive list or draw detailed images of the following:

- What does boredom feel like physically, mentally and emotionally?
- What have you been spending your time doing while bored?
- How have the things you've done to pass time make you feel?

Resource Building | 15 minutes

READ | [Boredom Is Not A Problem To Be Solved by Gayatri Devi](#) (The Guardian)

DISCUSSION | Agree vs. Disagree: Why or why not?

- "[Boredom] is to admit that we're not engaging with the world around us. Or that your cellphone has died."
- "...boredom is not tragic. Properly understood, boredom helps us understand time, and ourselves."
- "Thinking is the best antidote to boredom...Thinking is not how they were brought up to handle boredom."
- "When you're bored, time moves slowly... And slow-moving time can feel torturous for people who can't feel peaceful alone with their minds."
- "...reflection – can fill empty hours while teaching you, slowly, how to sit and just be in the present."

Close Reading | 20 minutes

"Bored" by Margaret Atwood

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What lines stress the feeling of extreme boredom? Why do you think that?
- How does Margaret's attitude about boredom start and end in the poem? What makes you say that?
- **Myopia** is near-sightedness (unable to see things unless they are close). Atwood repeatedly lists the small details of everything she observes during the boredom. Have you shared the same experience while bored? What do you notice more?



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- **Imagery** is descriptive language that engages the five senses (smell, taste, hearing, sight and touch). Imagery is used in poetry to vividly express the author's experiences. What images did the author provide that were most effective?
- What do you think Margaret means by the last two lines?

Writing Prompt | 20 minutes

Write your own lyrics to “Bored in the House” based on your experiences during the COVID-19 quarantine.

OR **Write a survival guide to get through boredom.**

OR **Write about an alternate universe you travel to during your boredom.**



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Bored

by Margaret Atwood

All those times I was bored
out of my mind. Holding the log
while he sawed it. Holding
the string while he measured, boards,
distances between things, or pounded
stakes into the ground for rows and rows
of lettuces and beets, which I then (bored)
weeded. Or sat in the back
of the car, or sat still in boats,
sat, sat, while at the prow, stern, wheel
he drove, steered, paddled. It
wasn't even boredom, it was looking,
looking hard and up close at the small
details. Myopia. The worn gunwales,
the intricate twill of the seat
cover. The acid crumbs of loam, the granular
pink rock, its igneous veins, the sea-fans
of dry moss, the blackish and then the graying
bristles on the back of his neck.

Sometimes he would whistle, sometimes
I would. The boring rhythm of doing
things over and over, carrying
the wood, drying
the dishes. Such minutiae. It's what
the animals spend most of their time at,
ferrying the sand, grain by grain, from their tunnels,
shuffling the leaves in their burrows. He pointed
such things out, and I would look
at the whorled texture of his square finger, earth under
the nail. Why do I remember it as sunnier
all the time then, although it more often
rained, and more birdsong?
I could hardly wait to get
the hell out of there to
anywhere else. Perhaps though
boredom is happier. It is for dogs or
groundhogs. Now I wouldn't be bored.
Now I would know too much.
Now I would know

[Bored by Margaret Atwood, The Atlantic](#)