

Small Groups: Trimble Chapters 9 & 10

Group One

Although H. L. Mencken's essay, "Literature and the Schoolma'm," (89-92) is dated in many ways, it nevertheless illustrates a lively writer's voice in action. Trimble calls it "an object lesson in word power." Almost every sentence pushes his cynical argument forward. Review the essay swiftly with your group, choosing examples to share of his reader awareness, his careful diction, and the way he signposts his argument.

Group Two

Take a close look at the student paper by Jolene Shirley, "Can Writing Be Taught?" (99-100). In her piece, she demonstrates that she has listened carefully to Mencken. Her response involves a clear representation of his thesis, then shifts to her own counter-thesis, which she goes on to develop using a hypothetical lesson, probably based on her experience in Trimble's class. How many traits of good writing do you see in her paper? Prove that she is Trimble's student.

Group Three

Quickly review Trimble's teachings on the techniques he calls "artful presentation" (103-112). In your own words, explain what he means by *attractive formatting*, *interesting phrasing*, and *dramatic plotting*. Provide the class with a list of specific strategies to help them implement each one of these qualities in their own writing.

Group Four

Examine Amy Jetel's essay, "The Price of Service" (112-114). What elements of *artful presentation* do you see at work? What can we learn from Jetel about the techniques Trimble teaches in his book? To what extent does her essay exemplify his teachings? Prove that she is Trimble's student.