

Guided Imagery

Set-up:

Have students sit quietly at their desks. Inform them that you will be reading them a passage and that you want them to think as if they are Steve Harmon, 16 and Black, who has been called a monster by others and now has to look forward to life in jail. In the back ground softly play a mixed cd. The first song will be Bon Jovi's "It's my life" followed by Enya songs. Inform the students that you want them to listen and think until you tell then to write. Make sure that the students already have a piece of paper and pen before you begin the guided imagery prompt so that the transition between each activity can be as smooth and natural as possible.

Prompts:

Class, I want you to all sit in your desks and relax. Close your eyes and imagine that you are Steve Harmon. Steve is Black and almost your same age, 16. He has grown up in the hood. He is now on trial for murder. The prosecution called him a monster. I want you to all listen to me read the following passage. Think as if you are Steve Harmon. What do you feel? Just listen as I read, then you will be writing as you were Steve.

Passage:

The best time to cry is at night, when the lights are out and someone is being beaten up and screaming for help. That way even if you sniffle a little they won't hear you. If anybody knows that you are crying, they'll start talking about it and soon it'll be your turn to get beat up when the lights go out.

There is a mirror over the steel sink in your cell. It's six inches high, and scratched with the names of some guys who were here before you.

When you look into the small rectangle, you see a face looking back at you but you don't recognize it. It doesn't look like you.

They say that you get used to being in jail but you don't see how. Every morning you wake up and are surprised to be there. If your life outside was real, then everything in there is just the opposite. We sleep with strangers, wake up with strangers, and go to the bathroom in front of strangers. They're strangers but they still find reasons to hurt each other.

Sometimes you feel like you have walked into the middle of a movie. It is a strange movie with no plot and no beginning. The movie is black and white, and grainy. You have seen movies of prisons but never one like this. This is not a movie about bars and locked doors. It is about being alone when you are not really alone and about being scared all the time.

Passage from Walter Dean Myer's *Monster*.
Passage from pages 1-4

Following reading:

As you finish the passage, quietly give them prompts as if they are Steve as they continue to sit relaxed and thinking. Give them prompts such as:

What is you/Steve feeling?

Does you miss anyone?

What are you thinking about?

Do you wonder what will happen?

What do you miss the most?

What is going to happen to you?

Directions:

Now give the students 10-15 minutes to write their feelings and thoughts as if they are Steve. Walk around the classroom as the music continues to play in the background.

After you have given them the allotted time, have willing students share their passages. Talk about some of the issues that were brought up in their writing experiences.

