

## **Sloppy Copy Slipup**

By

**DyAnne DiSalvo**

DiSalvo, DyAnne. **The Sloppy Copy Slipup**. Holiday House: New York, 2006.

Reading Level 5.9

Interest Level 3-6

### **Genre**

Realistic fiction

### **Annotation**

Every child can relate to showing up at school without their homework. But Brian Higman has a doozy of an excuse that he hopes will keep his teacher from giving him another big red zero! We follow Brian through the day as he wrestles with telling his teacher that his assignment is not done. First there is a fire drill. Next he gets called to the office. Later his principal drops in with a new student teacher. He has no sloppy copy to turn in and he tells his teacher over the course of the day about the events that led to his failure to complete his assignment. The class is hooked by his exciting telling of events that led to his little brother running away. His teacher keeps him after school and gives him a second chance to produce his sloppy copy.

This story could take place in any classroom in any school. Students and teachers alike will relate to Brian's predicament. Sprinkled throughout the novel are strategies to be used by all writers. 'Big Hig's Facts for Writing' at the end of the book should be taped to every student's desk for use during the school year.

This kid is talking our language. Every student knows that your sloppy copy is your first draft. This is a great topic for an elementary school. It illustrates what happens in classrooms across the country. This book uses the language we use when conferencing with students about their writing. It's a perfect title for a book.

### **Booktalk**

Imagine going into your fourth grade classroom without your homework! Again! In the book, The Sloppy Copy Slipup, by DyAnne DiSalvo, Big Hig has seconds to figure out how to tell his teacher that he does not have his Monday assignment. Again! What will his teacher do? The last time it happened, she gave him a big red zero. What will his parents say? How can he tell her that it wasn't his fault? Will he survive or be banished to Siberia?

### **About the Author**

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

DyAnne DiSalvo grew up Brooklyn, New York. She attended the School of Visual Arts before working for Hallmark cards. This author/illustrator wrote this book for reluctant readers and writers. While teaching writing workshops for students, the kernel of this book began and grew into her first novel. Her other works include Spaghetti Park, A Dog

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Like Jack, A House on Viola Street, Grandpa's Corner Store, Going to Grandma's, City Green and Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen. Some of her awards include:

Grandpa's Corner Store Congressional Commendation from the state of New Jersey

A Dog Like Jack Gold Medal Irma and James Black Award

A Castle on Viola Street Notable Children's Book 2001

City Green Notable Children's Book 1994 and

Uncle Willie and the Soup Kitchen Notable Children's Book 1991

When she is not working with children or writing or illustrating books, you can find her playing rhythm guitar in the rock band Smash Palace.

### Author's Websites

DyAnne DySalvo

<http://www.dyannedisalvo.com/>

Children's Illustrators

<http://www2.childrensillustrators.com/illustrator.cgi/ddisalvo>

Smash Palace

<http://www.smashpalacemusic.com/>

### **Summary**

This **realistic fiction** is a humorous story set in a school. The tale is told from the **viewpoint** of fifth grader Brian Higman. It's a normal Monday at Franklin Elementary School. Brian is in a pickle because he does not have his homework assignment. He feverishly thinks of a way to keep from getting another big red zero. A fire drill, a call to the office and a visit from the principal prolong but do not eliminate a showdown with Miss Fromme over his missing sloppy copy. Several attempts to explain why he doesn't have his homework, captures the rapt attention of the class. They are on pins and needles listening as Brian explains the events that kept him from completing his assignment. A compromise after school gives Brian another chance.

### **Point of View**

This story is told from the first person by the main character Brian Higman.

### **Theme**

Everybody has a story.

Look around you and write about what you know because life is universal.

### **Conflict**

Brian Higman does not have his homework again. But this time it is not his fault. His teacher is not hearing it and Brian takes the entire school day to try and convince his teacher, Miss Fromme to spare him another big red zero.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Brian's dilemma consumes the entire class throughout the day as he tries to tell the story of why his homework is not done. The entire class can hardly wait to hear the details, but they have to wait until he writes the ending after school during detention when his teacher gives him a second chance.

### **Characters**

Brian Higman aka Big Hig

Mom, Florence

Dad, George, publishes The Franklin News

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Older Brother, Denny, guitar player

Younger Brother, Stevie (weird)

Dog, Patches

Teacher, Miss Fromme aka The General

Classmates- Ana, Robby, Brian, Josh, Nadine, Fareed, Martin, Kayla,

Mr. Meyers, music store owner

Band Members- Harry, Ace

School Staff- Mr. Zifferman (Principal), Mrs. Dunn, Mrs. Confrontini, Mrs. Wagner, Mr.

Minty (student teacher)

Harry's two beautiful sisters

### **Setting**

This story takes place in a modern setting in a school and neighborhood that could be any small town USA. The town of Franklin has shop owners who are friendly and every one knows everyone else.

### **Discussion Questions Before Reading**

Have you ever come to school without your homework?

What was the reason for not having your homework?

What were the consequences of not doing your homework?

Discuss classroom rules for homework.

### **Chapters 1-4 (After reading the chapters)**

**Do you have a younger brother or sister?**

**Have you ever had to baby-sit them? Did they pull any stunts like Stevie?**

**Were they cooperative? Perhaps you are the youngest, if so have you ever acted like Stevie?**

**Denny told Brian how to tell if Miss Fromme is not in a good mood. Can you tell when your teacher or mom or dad is not in a good mood? What are their non-verbal signs?**

**Brian did not want to accept the consequences for not having his homework. Shouldn't he just have accepted his grade of zero?**

### **Chapters 5-8 (After reading the chapters)**

**Do you play an instrument?**

**Was there ever a time that you saved up to get something you really wanted? What was it and how long did it take you to achieve your goal?**

**Do you keep a journal? Are there suggestions you could get from Brian to help you with your writing? What would they be?**

### **Chapters 9-12 (After reading the chapters)**

**Do you think Brian deserves a second chance?**

**Have you ever been given a second chance like Brian?**

**The Higman's dog Patches was the thief. Has your pet ever created a disturbance at your house? Describe the event.**

**What ordinary things happened to you today that might make a good subject to write about?**

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## Anticipation Statements

Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		<b>Teachers give too much homework.</b>		
		<b>Writing is easy.</b>		
		<b>Teachers have to treat everyone the same.</b>		
		<b>If you break the rules, you deserve the punishment.</b>		
		<b>Everybody has a story.</b>		

## Vocabulary Page

Outstanding	1	exceptional or terrific (How many times did the word appear in our story?)
Description	2	written or verbal explanation of something
Horoscopes- the planets	3	astrologer's description of an individual based on the positions of
Emergency	14	crisis, unexpected event
Desperate (endpapers)		frantic, wanting or needing something very much
Reputation	24	opinion about someone
Investigate	27	look into
Distraction	30	interruption
Acoustic	33	a sound from a guitar that is not amplified
Calluses	34	
Gumption	40	courage
Unfortunate	48	not having good luck
Alias	55	also known as, assumed name
Scavenged	60	to search
Verbal	63	spoken
Bonafide	64	real, true, authentic
Illuminate	71	light up, clarify
Universal	77	worldwide
Frantically	83	worried, anxious, frenzied
Exuberant	94	enthusiastic, lively
Monumental	96	huge
Inspiration	98	idea
Visualize	102	imagine

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### Read Alikes

Humorous School Fiction

*Clementine* by Sara Pennypacker

*Lunch Money* by Andrew Clements

*Oggie Cooder* by Sarah Weeks

Sibling Fiction

*Judy Moody & Stink: the Holly Joliday* by Megan MacDonald

*Soupy Saturdays With the Pain and the Great One* by Judy Blume

### Read-Aloud Pages

Pages 22-27 begin with, "Excuse me Mr. Higman," Miss Fromme said.

This passage begins Brian's attempt to explain why he handed in a blank piece of paper instead of his sloppy copy.

Pages 77-82 End with "I waited for the final blow.

This segment describes Brian's detention after school with Miss Fromme.

### Book Activities

Book Activity 1

*Telling to Write*

Grades 4-6

Materials:

Story Map Worksheets

Pencils

Time: 3 class sessions

Session 1 Model the assignment

Tell your students a story from your childhood. I suggest a school story. (I tell my students about the time I got into a fight and broke another girl's glasses and the big trouble I was in when the principal called me down to the office.)

Students need to bring a family story to share with the class. A suggested list of topics will help them interview their family and stay focused on collecting their story.

Interview Questions

<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html#questions>

A story map will help them collect their story and practice it before they share it.

Story Map

[http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/story\\_map.pdf](http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/story_map.pdf)

Session 2

Provide students with a rubric for their storytelling presentation.

Storytelling Skills Rubric

<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/usestories/storyrubric.html>

Discuss techniques for storytelling. Using their story maps, students will share their story with a partner. Ask for volunteers to share some of the stories with the entire class.

Provide positive feed back to the tellers so that they can improve their telling. Half of the class will present during this session.

Session 3

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The rest of the class will share their stories to the entire class. Invite these students to share their stories with a first, second or third grade class.

### **Indiana Academic Standards**

#### Speaking Applications

4.7.11 Make narrative presentations that:

- relate ideas, observations, or memories about an event or experience.
- provide a context that allows the listener to imagine the circumstances of the event or experience.

•provide insight into why the selected event or experience should be of interest to the audience.

4.7.17 Make descriptive presentations that use concrete sensory details to set forth and support unified impressions of people, places, things, or experiences.

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5.7.9 Deliver narrative (story) presentations that:

- establish a situation, plot, point of view, and setting with descriptive words and phrases.
- show, rather than tell, the listener what happens.

6.7.7 Use effective timing, volume, tone, and alignment of hand and body gestures to sustain audience interest and attention.

6.7.10 Deliver narrative presentations that:

- establish a context, plot, and point of view.
- include sensory details and specific language to develop the plot and character.
- use a range of narrative (story) devices, including dialogue, tension, or suspense.

### Book Activity 2

Grades 4-6

#### *Storytelling as a Prompt for Writing*

Materials:

Completed Story Map Worksheets

Paper

Pencils

Using the collected story, write a story. Just like Brian Higman, you can write about what you know. This circumvents the complaint that they have nothing to write about. This project may begin in the media center and continue in the classroom. You can collect the sloppy copy or progress to the final published story. You determine what the final product will be. We encourage student writers to publish their final stories in the school or class newsletter.

### **Indiana Academic Standards**

#### Writing

4.4.1 Discuss ideas for writing. Find ideas for writing in conversations with others and in books, magazines, newspapers, school textbooks, or on the Internet. Keep a list or notebook of ideas.

4.5.1 Write narratives that:

- include ideas, observations, or memories of an event or experience.
- provide a context to allow the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.
- use concrete sensory details.

4.5.5 Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.

4.5.6 Write for different purposes (information, persuasion, description) and to a specific audience or person.

5.4.1 Discuss ideas for writing, keep a list or notebook of ideas, and use graphic organizers to plan writing.

5.4.2 Write stories with multiple paragraphs that develop a situation or plot, describe the setting, and include an ending.

5.4.8 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

5.4.9 Proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or set of rules, with

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specific examples of corrections of specific errors.

5.4.10 Edit and revise writing to improve meaning and focus through adding, deleting, combining, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.

5.5.5 Use varied word choices to make writing interesting.

5.5.6 Write for different purposes (information, persuasion, description) and to a specific audience or person, adjusting tone and style as appropriate

6.4.1 Discuss ideas for writing, keep a list or notebook of ideas, and use graphic organizers to plan writing.

6.4.8 Review, evaluate, and revise writing for meaning and clarity.

6.4.9 Edit and proofread one's own writing, as well as that of others, using an editing checklist or set of rules, with specific examples of corrections of frequent errors.

6.4.10 Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.

6.5.1 Write narratives that:

- establish and develop a plot and setting and present a point of view that is appropriate

### **Curriculum Connections**

**Art** Have students illustrate their stories art boxes, paper, book making supplies

**Language Arts** Have students create podcasts of their stories computer & software

**Social Studies** Have students collect and write their family history pencil, paper, word processing

### **Writing Resources**

PBS.ORG

Arthur Series Worksheets

Story Plan

[http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/story\\_plan.pdf](http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/story_plan.pdf)

Story Writing Checklist

[http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/story-writing\\_checklist.pdf](http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/story-writing_checklist.pdf)

Group Story

[http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/group\\_stories.pdf](http://www-tc.pbskids.org/arthur/parentsteachers/lesson/storywriting/pdf/group_stories.pdf)

Video

Random House (1997). *ARTHUR WRITES A STORY*. New York: Distributed by Sony Media.

Use this resource to introduce this writing activity. While it is geared for younger students, the worksheets on PBS Kids work well with all ages.

National Association for the Preservation and Perpetuation of Storytelling (1984). *By Word of Mouth: Storytelling In America*. Evanston, Illinois: Wombat Film and Video, United Learning.

Teachers need to familiarize themselves with this art form and if you can't attend a festival or event, look at this video.

### **Storytelling Resources**

Hamilton, Martha (2005). *Children Tell Stories: Teaching and Using Stories in the Classroom*. Jonesborough, Tennessee:Richard Owens Publishers.

This is a handbook for incorporating storytelling into all areas of the curriculum.

Story Cove

Stories and storytelling activities with lesson plans.

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<http://www.storycove.com/>

Scholastic Folktale Writer's Workshop with Alma Flor Ada and Rafe Martin

This site provides an online workshop for teachers and students to complete. The focus is on folktales.

[http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktalewshop\\_index.htm](http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/mff/folktalewshop_index.htm)

Scholastic Storytelling Workshop with Gerald Fierst

This site provides a step-by-step workshop with activities to work through to create student storytellers.

<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/storyteller/index.htm>

Storytelling Arts of Indiana

(Look for storytellers and attend the Hoosier Storytelling Festival, October 8-11,2008)

<http://www.storytellingarts.org/>

Storytelling Skills Rubric

<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/usestories/storyrubric.html>

### **Bibliography**

Bookwink

<http://www.bookwink.com/index.html>

Discovery School Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators

<http://school.discoveryeducation.com/schrockguide/arts/artlit.html>

Follett Library Resources

<http://www.flr.follett.com/>

Indiana Academic Standards

<http://www.doe.state.in.us/standards/grade04.html>

National Storytelling Association. Tales As Tools. National Storytelling Press:

Jonesborough, Tennessee, 1994.

Scholastic Teacher Resources

<http://www2.scholastic.com/browse/teach.jsp>

Story Arts

<http://www.storyarts.org/>

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