

# Writing For Today's Teen

## Voice Exercises

### ***To All the Boys I've Loved Before*, by Jenny Han**

After dinner (chicken, per Kitty's request), I'm in the kitchen doing dishes when I hear the doorbell ring. Daddy opens the door, and I hear Josh's voice. "Hey, Dr. Covey. Is Lara Jean around?"

Oh, no. No no no no. I can't see Josh. I know I have to at some point, but not today. Not right this second. I can't. I just can't.

I drop the plate back into the sink and make a run for it, out the back door, down the porch steps, across the backyard to the Pearces' yard.

### ***Wintergirls*, by Laurie Halse Anderson**

I measure myself. I can't act or play soccer, and most of them have better grades than me. But I am the thinnest girl in the room, hands down.

I don't know how they do it. I don't know how anybody does it, waking up every morning and eating and moving from the bus to the assembly line, where the teacher-bots inject us with Subject A and Subject B, and passing every test they give us. Our parents provide the list of ingredients and remind us to make healthy choices: one sport, two clubs, one artistic goal, community service, no grades below a B, because really, nobody's average, not around here. It's a dance with complicated footwork and a changing tempo.

I'm the girl who trips on the dance floor and can't find her way to the exit. All eyes on me.

### ***Strange the Dreamer*, by Laini Taylor**

He saw a soft, stooped creature of a man whose dandelion-fluff hair, beard, and brows encroached upon his face to such a degree that only his sharp little nose and round spectacles showed. He looked, Lazlo thought, like an owlet fallen out of its nest.

"Do you want to end your days a half-blind troglodyte hobbling through the bowels of the library?" the old man demanded. "Get out of doors, Strange. Breathe air, see things."

Lazlo smiled and went back to the receipts. Well, that word made them sound dull, even in his head. They were old cargo manifests, which sounded marginally more thrilling. He wasn't archiving them. He was skimming them for the telltale flourishes of a particular rare alphabet.

He was looking, as he always was on some level, for hints of the Unseen City—which was how he chose to think of it, since Weep still brought the taste of tears.

“I’ll go in a moment,” he assured Master Hyrrokkin. It might not have seemed like it, but he took the old man’s words to heart. He had, in fact, no wish to end his days at the library—half-blind or otherwise.

### ***Scythe* by Neal Shusterman**

Rowan put away his toxicology book and pulled out his volume on weapons identification. They were required to identify 30 different weapons, how to wield them, and their detailed history. Rowan was more worried about that than the poisons. He spared a glance at Citra, who noticed the glance, so he tried not to look at her again.

Then out of nowhere she said, “I would miss you.”

He looked up, and she looked away. “How do you mean?”

“I mean that if disqualification was part of the rules, I’d miss having you around.”

He considered reaching out to take her hand, which rested gently on the table. But the table was big, and her hand was too far away for it to be anything other than insanely awkward. Then again, even if they sat closer, it would be an insane thing to do.

### **Exercise: Voice Journal**

Try writing a journal entry in your character’s voice.

Which parts of their day do they focus on or ignore? How do they feel about these events? How would they articulate their thoughts?

Also consider the character’s setting, society, occupation, etc. How would these color how they speak?