

Inspired by [Pictures of Hollis Woods](#) and the [Episodic Writing Lesson](#) at the WritingFix website, this eighth grader wrote the following series of episodes to tell a story. Grace worked especially hard on his idea development and organization skills as she wrote and revised the published writing you see here.

Read this essay, and be prepared to discuss where this writer excels with idea development and organization.

American Lemonade

by Grace, eighth grade writer

1. The night before you serve your homemade lemonade, place lemon juice into ice cube trays and stash in the freezer.

I stood five long feet away and stared at the intricate rug. Dare I? It seemed that there was nothing to do at 11:00 on the first day of summer. I had already cleaned my room, ridden my bike, and watched TV. Fourth grade had filled my days, and without it, my life was an empty pitcher.

“Momm...” I whined, “I’m bored.”

“First day of summer, and you’re already bored, huh?” I nodded sullenly. “Well, Gracie, how about you and I make pink lemonade? You know what they say, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” I smiled.

2. Peel and juice 6 lemons to make 1 cup of juice.

The party of eight sat in the dim restaurant, the only nice one in town. Claire asked me to go to the bathroom (run around the hotel) with her. Again. I declined, sighing, as I leaned back in the sticky faux-leather chair and sipped my sugary lemonade. GranGeorge ordered “Death by Chocolate.” He missed restaurant food.

3. Make simple syrup by heating the sugar and water in a small saucepan until the sugar is dissolved completely.

The sweltering pavement burned my elbows. It was after one of the infamous “Kick the Squirt Lemonade Can” games, and just a few stragglers of the crew remained. My sister had gently persuaded the little kids we didn’t like to leave. Bored to tears, I victimized Nick for a little fun.

“Hey Nick, did you know we got a dog?” I deadpanned, careful to not sound excited.

“What? No, you didn’t!”

Five minutes and a little convincing later, Meredith and I returned with the electronic dog I had gotten on vacation. He believed at first, but then realized. I giggled, but still wanted a dog.

4. Remove from heat immediately once you achieve a syrupy consistency. Let it cool.

I plopped down on the rubbery trampoline’s surface, staring at the cerulean sky.

“And everyone was Kung Fu FIGHTING!” Jonathan tried. Meredith, Maddy, and I groaned. I had only recently joined them, after realizing Meredith and Maddy had lied to me, yet were already tired of the song. We lay there braiding pieces of their olive-colored overgrown grass. We decided on a quiet game after the annoying new neighbors crashed, but Meredith cheated by texting. Our mom called us in, and we reluctantly trudged back home. We wiped our dirty feet on the ground, and Meredith shot my Mom a dirty look.

My smile was sugary sweet, though. “Momm...can I have lemonade instead of milk?”

5. Mix 1 cup of lemon juice, 1 cup of syrup, and 2 cups of cold water.

The warm summer wind rippled across the sail, and I winced and squealed. “We’re going to tip over!” I screeched as we reached an uncomfortable angle that allowed me to dip my feet in the salty lake. My Dad’s best friend,



Ron, just laughed. As scared as he was making me, I liked Ron. He would tell us stories about our parents from when we were little that always made me laugh. My sister adjusted the ropes, following his instructions.

“You’re letting HER do it? She doesn’t know a thing about sailing!” I cried, gripping my stomach so I wouldn’t get sick. “I shouldn’t have had all those glasses of lemonade.” I frowned and my sister scooted over nervously. We begged our parents to go back next summer, but it didn’t happen.

6. Stir well and adjust according to taste or preference.

It seemed that Jonathan was practicing his violin, so Meredith and Maddy ran back to our house. I was keeping up with them pretty well, but felt a stab of pain. I wiped my right foot on the rubbery grass, and it sang achingly, but I continued. I hoped I hadn’t hurt myself, because it was golf Sunday for my parents. I opened the door and took a peek at my foot. It was a mess of blood and possible infection from my wiping it on the grass. The cut was pretty deep, but I told myself that that wasn’t the bone I saw. Meredith and Maddy had beaten me in and were sitting at the kitchen table gulping raspberry lemonade and flicking through the latest issue of Seventeen.

“Um...I think I hurt myself”

Meredith and Maddy followed my eyes. Maddy’s widened. “No kidding.”

7. Pour lemonade over glasses of ice.

I heard the howl of a wolf in our darkened campsite, or rather the wolf track I had downloaded off iTunes to set the mood in our basement. Meredith, Maddy, and I trotted upstairs and walked outside to the grill which was set on high. Roasting marshmallows on the grill was desperate, yet these were desperate times. We giggled timidly as the marshmallows roasted, which took about five minutes per marshmallow, but we still got the goo all over our chins like we would if we were really camping. We washed down the doubly chocolate s’mores with lemonade and I snuck a tree branch downstairs to tape against the pillar like a tree. Eventually, our sheet-tent collapsed and we migrated to the couch. Reluctantly.

8. Squeeze slice of lemon on top of each

“Nowhere...yeah, we’re going nowhere fast.” Meredith and I sang along to the old Lady Gaga song. But in this particular situation, the lyrics were ironic. Originally, we were just going to drive to the nearby Tropical Sno so I could get the Sunset Sno Cone I was craving. But it was closed.

“How about the one over by Val Lanes?” I asked. After all, wasn’t it worth it?

“Grace...that’s on the other side of town!”

“No, it’s not. Well, kinda. But I really want a Sunset!”

That Tropical Sno was closed too. So was Mrs. A’s Hawaiian Ice (the knock-off place).

“At this point, I’d settle for lemonade.”

9. Garnish with a sprig of mint.

It was a humid August night and I sat on the patio with my parents while they discussed stuff I really didn’t care about. I stroked Mackenzie as she slept in my lap. Yet, before I knew it May, Jonathan’s unbelievably large black New Foundland had stormed into our yard and Mackenzie was at the door. Jonathan tried to shoo May back into their yard, with no success. We took Mackenzie in, but she still shook with fear, even minutes later.

My dad put his hand on her head. “She knows who’d win.”

10. Enjoy!

I pushed the cart slowly through Target, feeling grungy and sleep-deprived.

“Grace, you need five folders. You go pick them out and I’ll get your sister’s calculator.” My mother instructed me with a smile, like this was something I was supposed to enjoy, but I just grunted.

I was past the “Oooh, I-want-to-pick-out-folders-with-kittens-on-them” stage in my life and in the “I-don’t-want-to-do-thisssss...” phase. I downed my store-bought lemonade which was disgustingly syrupy. Real American Lemonade was bittersweet. A lot like summer.