

## My rough draft (inspired by [my writer's notebook page](#)):

Sometimes I wonder why I became a teacher because every once in a while, you just have one of those really bad days. Let me tell you about the worst first day of school I ever had.

It all started when my alarm clock didn't go off. I accidentally had set it for 5:30 p.m. instead of 5:30 a.m. I opened my eyes and noticed the clock read 6:47 a.m. I only had forty-three minutes to make it to school on time. I surprised myself by getting dressed and combing my hair fast enough to be on the road by 7:02 a.m., but of course traffic was a nightmare. I'm talking total gridlock. I inched along the 6 miles to the school where I teach, and pulled into the parking lot one minute after the tardy bell rang. I saw the principal glaring at me from his office window, and I asked myself, "Why on earth did I become a teacher?"

I dashed down the hallway towards my classroom. I saw my new batch of students crowded around my locked door. They looked irritated, and I didn't blame them. I get mad when they are late, so I think they should be mad when I am late, especially if it's the first day of school. I reached into my pocket and—oh no!—I didn't have my school keys. Over the summer, they sat in the top drawer of my bureau at home because I don't need them over the summer, and they were still sitting there this morning. In my rush, I had forgotten them. Ten minutes later, I had found the custodian who unlocked the door for me. The look on his face and on my students' faces showed disgust and disappointment. I asked myself, "Why on earth did I ever become a teacher?"

The students all took a seat, and I picked up the handout that explained my class rules, which I had made copies of the Friday before school began. As I began passing them out, I noticed something terribly embarrassing: they were covered with spelling errors and punctuation errors! I couldn't send these home and ask their parents to sign them like this. Shocked at my own mistake, I dropped the entire pile of handouts. The students began laughing at me. Their laughter increased when I bent down to pick them up, and my pants ripped up the seam. I often gain 5-10 pounds over the summer, but never had I gained enough to make my pants rip. I tried to act like it didn't bother me that much, but it did bother me. I mumbled, "Why on earth did I ever want to become a teacher?"

I attempted to begin teaching the first day's lesson to my students when the principal stuck his head in the door. He must have wanted a little revenge on me for being late the very first day of school. Every time I'd open my mouth to say

something to my students, he would ask a weird question, keeping me from doing any teaching. “How was your summer? Did you eat a lot of barbeque? How is your dog?” When you’re late to school on the first day, you don’t want to be rude to your principal, even if he is keeping you from teaching something important. I just had to endure it, and I watched my students’ faces. It was clear they were losing respect for me, so I thought, “Why on earth and in Heaven did I ever want to become a teacher?”

The damage had been done. I had been late, I was keyless, I had a handout full of errors, and a principal who was continuing to ask me silly questions from the doorway. You have to start your school year strong, and you have to show your students you are in control of the classroom. Otherwise, they don’t want to learn from you. As I struggled to make it through my first lesson, I noticed they were all talking to each other about their summers instead of listening to a single thing I was saying. I didn’t know their names yet, so all I could say was, “Hey you, I need you to listen to me,” but they kept on talking. I had lost them on the very first day. I fell to my knees and cried out, “Why on earth and in Heaven did I ever want to become a teacher when students won’t even listen to me?”

I really dislike stories that end with “And then I woke up and it was all a dream,” so I won’t do that here. What I’ve just described to you, however, is the nightmare I usually start having every year during the week before school starts. I became a teacher because I’m good at helping my students pay attention in class and learn important things they need to know, so my nightmares about school try to convince me I’ve lost my ability to do that. I’m better than my nightmares, though, and I’m glad this year has started out with me being on time, prepared, and in charge of my classroom.

For my final draft, I want to add an interesting simile or two, some more memorable details in each section of the story, and some better verbs. Where might I do these things in this rough draft?