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THE STORK DOESN'T DELIVER LESSON PLANS:

A Teacher's Guide to
Maternity Leave & Beyond

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PLANS:

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About the Author

INTRODUCTION

First of all, CONGRATULATIONS!! Chances are, if you are reading this eBook, you are pregnant and/or planning to bring home a baby soon! I know what an exciting, exhausting, and overwhelming time this is, so I'm honored that you'd let me play a tiny role in it. Thank you!

My guess is that - like me - you're the kind of teacher who truly cares about your students, works really hard, and is a *little* on the "Type A" side. Sound about right?! If so, you're in the right spot. You're going to love this. And, really, even if you are totally "Type B," I think you'll benefit from my obsessive planning and list-making here. In the following pages, I'm going to share everything I know about maternity leave with you just like I would with my best teacher friend down the hall; but, before that, let's back up a little...

In 2007, at 23 years old and a brand new bride, I started teaching 9th and 10th grade English at the same school I'd graduated from five years earlier in southwest Virginia. I'll be honest, I'm a perfectionist (have I mentioned that?), and my first year was *hard*! Of course, I survived, and each year got gradually better; but, it took a long time to really establish solid routines, settle into an effective classroom management method, and find a decent work-life balance. Then, just when I thought I might finally have things figured out, I decided to throw a baby in the mix!

My son, Sam, was born in July of 2011, and I literally took a year sabbatical from the classroom to avoid having to plan for maternity leave and let someone else start the school year for me. That spring, at seven months pregnant, when I heard that the testing coordinator position would be open in the fall, I didn't think one bit about whether or not I'd actually *enjoy* being in charge of standardized testing for a school of 500+, I just heard "no long-term sub," and I was sold. (Besides, I figured my penchant for list-making would come in handy there too!) For months I had been totally overwhelmed and downright *paralyzed* by all that I felt I needed to do before the baby came. I'm not proud of it, but - in the end - I took the easy way out.

Fast forward twelve weeks or so and, though the new role did make my transition back to work easier (just keeping it real), I quickly realized how much I loved being in the classroom and missed working directly with students. The next year I returned determined to make it work as a teacher *and* a mom. Since then, I have been teaching English 9, 10, and AP Language and Composition (English 11) at a speciality high school in our district. I also blog at [Teaching Sam and Scout](#) all about pursuing my passion for teaching and family at the same time and attempting to juggle all the balls that come with those two things. (Spoiler Alert: I drop A LOT of balls, but I'm really happy and love what I'm doing!)

So what does all this have to do with this book? Well, in 2015, I decided to give this whole maternity-leave thing a second shot and began preparing for the birth of our daughter, Nora, in March. In the weeks and months leading up to my due date, I scoured the internet and was shocked by how few resources are available for the pregnant teacher. Instead, I turned to friends and blog readers for advice and, eventually, got myself organized and prepared. Thankfully, by the time Nora arrived, I felt good about the work I had done to set my substitute up for success. I was able to leave feeling confident that my class was in good hands and was free to focus on my baby at home. Even better: when I returned eight weeks later, my students and I were able to pick up right where we'd left off. We all survived and had a new appreciation for each other!

Of course I didn't do everything perfectly, but I learned a lot about the process of preparing for maternity leave (I joke with my husband that we need to have a third baby just so I can practice everything I've finally figured out) and kept good notes as I went. This book is a culmination of all those lessons and lists. (And a good alternative to another baby... For now.)

Since my own leave in 2015, I have shared my long-term substitute binder and maternity leave notes with countless friends and colleagues, and they have all reported back saying how helpful it was to them. Getting ready for a baby can be stressful and intimidating enough as it is, so it is my hope that this book takes just one thing off your plate - or at least simplifies it a lot. Though it is written based on my own experience and, therefore, from the perspective of a high school English teacher, I sincerely believe that it will be a resource for all teachers regardless of your grade level or subject. I have tried to make it both easy to read and very actionable, while still

writing as if to a friend. You will notice that it is organized into four parts that will walk you through first announcing your pregnancy at school, all the way up to your return to work after baby. Along the way, I've included every tip and bit of advice that was helpful for me, so that you can have the best maternity leave experience possible. Finally, the appendix of the book includes my "Big Maternity Leave Checklist for Teachers" organized by trimester, printable tabs to create your own Long-Term Sub Binder, and a complete list of all the products and tools I found useful during this season. (With the purchase of your book, you will also receive a Word document with my complete 20-page sub binder and lesson planning file ready to be edited and adapted for your needs AND an invitation to join a private Facebook page where I'm looking forward to being able to connect with you, answer questions, and help you meet other teacher-moms in the same shoes!)

At only slightly over 60 pages, I recommend reading through the whole book early in your pregnancy to get a good overview of the process and start thinking about particular aspects, then going back to certain sections as a reference while you move through the checklist and begin prepping for your leave. I have included everything that was helpful to me in my own maternity leave, but I certainly understand too that it won't all be applicable (or necessary) for everyone. Please use my experience as a jumping off point - take what is useful and manageable FOR YOU and your situation, and feel free to leave the rest! Whatever you do, don't let me add stress to your life. My lists and advice are simply meant to take the pressure off of you to "think of everything" so that you can narrow down your "to dos" and focus on what really matters.

I am not an expert in the field. I am not a professional education consultant, or even a "big blogger." I'm a teacher-mom, just like you, and this is the book I wish someone had written for me.

Good luck, you've got this!! Now, let's go! That baby will be here before you know it!!!