

Narrative Writing Unit

Lesson 1

- Structure of narrative—orientation (opening), rising action, climax, falling action, resolution. Show plot “mountain” diagram.
- Openings.
 - Read one/two opening chapters of novels.
 - Discuss.
 - Distribute copies of opening chapters to pairs of students.
 - Students discuss/answer questions.

Lesson 2

- What makes a good story?
- Discuss favorite books, novels, short stories, movies, plays, etc.
- Conflict.
 - Types of conflict
 - Character vs. character
 - Character vs. self
 - Character vs. society
 - What makes a good conflict?
- Read previous class’s stories and discuss.

Lesson 3

- Character development.
 - What makes a good protagonist?
 - What makes a good antagonist?
- Discuss emotions and expression of emotions.
 - Behavior traits
 - Facial expressions
 - SHOW don’t TELL

Lesson 4

- Settings—five senses

Lesson 5

- Plot “mountain” diagram revisit.
- Set up for *Little Red Riding Hood* or other well-known story.
- Teacher plans story on white board using plot diagram.
- Students begin planning their stories.

Lesson 6

- Opening/orientation revisit.
- Modeled writing of teacher’s story.
- Students begin writing their openings.

Lesson 7

- Rising action.
- Modeled writing of teacher's story (in brief sentences, rather than in full as in opening).
- Students begin writing their rising action.

Lesson 8—Work day

- Students should finish their openings.
- Students should continue writing rising action.

Lesson 9

- Climax/conflict/dilemma.
 - Read one or two climaxes from well-known/written novels.
- Modeled writing of teacher's story (in full or in brief sentences).
- Students begin writing their climaxes.

Lesson 10—Work day

- Students should finish their rising action and lead into their climaxes.

Lesson 11

- Resolution and ending.
 - Read one or two endings from well-known books.
 - Was there a twist?
- Modeled writing of teacher's story (in full).
- Students begin writing their resolutions.

Lesson 12—Work day

- Students should finish their resolutions.
- They may begin compiling the story, working on transitions, etc.

Students will type and illustrate their stories.

Writing Lesson: An Introduction to Narrative Writing—Orientation (Exposition)

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to identify the characteristics of an opening to a narrative including character/setting development, attention grabbing, and inciting incident, for example.

Assessment: Students will correctly answer discussion questions both orally and on paper.

Opening: Read students one or two well-written story openings. Explain to them that they are now moving on to the narrative unit of writing and over the next few weeks they will be working on writing their own narrative story.

Procedure:

1. Ask what they can remember about the elements of the plot of a narrative (opening/orientation/exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution). Draw diagram on board and tell students that they will be exploring these elements as readers and writers.
2. First look at orientations of stories. Read two examples aloud to the students and discuss:
 - *What does opening hint at (predict)
 - *How the opening draws the reader in (attention getter, hook)
 - *Are there character introductions?
 - *How the author set up the opening (quick hook, build up main character, draw right into story, flashback, dream, etc.)
 - *Are you introduced to a setting?
 - *Was there a puzzle to solve?
3. Add to the checklist as students come up with more analysis points.
4. Give students copies of orientations to read in pairs. Have them discuss the following questions afterwards:
 - *Did the author “hook” you in some way? How?
 - *Predict what this story will be about.
 - *What characters were introduced in the orientation? Do you think they will be important in the rest of the story?
 - *What is the setting in the orientation? Do you think it will be important in the rest of the story?
 - *Choose THREE characters and write three characteristics of each of them from the orientation.
4. Ask students what type of orientation they would like to try for their adventure stories (see list above).

Closing: Students should hand in their copies of story openings and begin thinking about their own narratives.

Materials: Copies of two books with good openings to read aloud, copies of good openings of books for each student pair, white board.

Resources: Books with good openings:

- * *Jaws* by Peter Benchley
- * *The Boy in the Striped Pajamas* by John Boyne
- * *Hatchet* by Gary Paulsen
- *

Accommodations:

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension:

Writing Lesson: Conflict Makes a Good Story

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to define the three types of conflict present in most narrative stories and identify which type of conflict is used in various popular stories (movies, books, etc.).

Assessment: Students will present teacher with a “ticket into class” to review previous lesson. The ticket will have three to five facts about the orientation of a narrative. Students will then present teach with a “ticket out of class” to review today’s lesson. The ticket will list the four types of conflict and their definitions.

Opening: Gather students on the carpet and review the various elements of a successful orientation (i.e., grabs reader’s attention, introduces setting and/or main characters, previews rest of book, etc.). Next explain to students that even with the best orientation, a narrative would be nothing without a good storyline. But what makes a good storyline? It is the problem, or conflict, that is the most important part of a narrative, and it is what keeps viewers and readers interested.

Procedure:

1. Distribute copies of four easy read picture books for students to read in four small groups (one for each type of conflict).
2. Students should then read the book as a group, taking turns reading or listening to a cassette tape.
3. After reading the book, have students fill out discussion questions as a group on a poster (attached).
4. Next, ask students what the problem was in the story. Their answers will likely be quite basic, but that is the point of this lesson—they will learn to identify the more broad definition of the conflict type in today’s lesson.
5. Display the following posters somewhere in the classroom: “Character vs. Character,” “Character vs. Nature,” “Character vs. Society,” “Character vs. Self.”
6. When students finish their discussion questions, they should try to identify, based on the titles of the posters in the room, what type of conflict their story had. They should then hang their posters underneath the appropriate poster heading (from step 5).
7. Next, students should present their posters to the rest of the class, identifying the type of conflict that was present in the story.
8. Once each group has presented, correct any mistakes in the conflicts found by students and, using direct instruction, teach the definitions of the different types of conflict.
9. Have students work as a whole group to come up with at least five different movies, books, or stories to fit under each of the conflict types and write them up on new posters.

Closing: As a ticket out of class, students should write definitions of the four types of conflict.

Materials: Eight pieces of poster paper, markers, four books (one with each type of conflict—examples listed in resources)

Resources: Character vs. self: *First Day Jitters* by Julie Danneberg

Character vs. society: *The Best Loved Bear* by Diana Noonan

Character vs. character: *Free to a Good Home* by Colin Thompson

Character vs. nature: *Loony Little* by Dianna Hutts Aston

Character vs. self: *Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge* by Mem Fox

Accommodations: Students who struggle with reading should be given audio books to listen to.

Modifications: Have students perform their books and let the rest of the class determine which type of conflict is present.

Enrichment/Extension: If there is a lot of time leftover, students should read last year's class's picture books and determine the type of conflict in the book. Was the book intriguing?

Writing Lesson: Developing Character

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to use descriptive language to portray characters in their own writing.

Assessment: Students complete a journal entry about Margot from *All Summer in a Day*.

Opening: Gather students around a Smart Board or PowerPoint projector and project images of famous celebrities. Have the students shout out describing words for each of the celebrities. Probe to get answers beyond the physical characteristics (e.g., "What might he/she think if...?").

Procedure:

1. Return class to desks. Explain to them that they will be learning about characterization in class today. Since they are in the midst of a unit on narrative writing, it will be important for them to be able to develop well-rounded characters for their own writing.

2. Explain to students that it is vital to SHOW what a character is doing through writing and not TELL what a character is doing. Describe using detailed adjectives, bold action words, and other words to describe the mood. Ask them to think about the character Margot when reading *All Summer in a Day*.

2. Distribute a copy of *All Summer in a Day* by Ray Bradbury to each student. Instruct students to read the short story, making note of the character Margot and how she is described in the story.

3. When students are finished, they should answer the following discussion questions in their writing journals:

What do you imagine Margot to look like?

How does the author describe Margot's looks?

Describe Margot when she is excited or happy.

Pick one child from the story (not Margot or William). What did he/she look like when he/she got to go outside? What did he/she do there and how?

Describe how Margot reacted (what she did) when the students opened the closet.

What did she look like when she was let out?

How would Margot react if she were given the opportunity to return to Earth?

What emotions would she have, and how would she show them?

Closing: Have students trace their handprints and write one physical characteristic, one skill, one like, one dislike, and one nickname for a person they know very well—a family member, guardian, or friend.

Materials: Student copies of *All Summer in a Day* by Ray Bradbury, copies of journal questions

Resources:

Accommodations: Students who struggle with writing should understand that they do not need to finish all of the discussion questions; they simply need to do their best in the amount of time they are given.

Modifications: Students could answer the journal questions about someone else as well as themselves.

Enrichment/Extension: When all students have finished, instruct them to think about someone they know very well. Have them answer the journal questions below about their subject.

Writing Lesson: Setting and Being Descriptive

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to write about setting using descriptive vocabulary.

Assessment: Students will revise other students' writing changing the vocabulary to make it more interesting to read.

Opening: Gather students' attention. Allow them the first ten minutes of class to finish their writing from the previous lesson (about Margot and character development). Once this is finished, tell them that today's lesson will continue descriptive language by developing a well thought out setting.

Procedure:

1. Explain to students that being descriptive is so important when writing a narrative. It is vital to SHOW and not TELL what is going on in the story.
2. Instead of writing, "The boy was happy," ask students what they could write.
3. Instead of writing, "It was a dark night," ask students what they could write.
4. Continue... "The weather was cold," "We ran quickly up the steep hill."
5. Now distribute copies of previous student work to the current students. Explain to them that they are to find at least 15 words and 5 phrases to make more descriptive in the work they are revising.
6. Students should make their revisions on Post-It Notes stuck in the book/paper OR in pencil if the work is not an original copy.

Closing: Students should share one change from the book they revised.

Materials: Individual copies of previous students' work for revision, individual copies of Margot questions, journal questions

Resources:

Accommodations: Students who struggle with writing could make fewer revisions and may require the use of a thesaurus or other vocabulary assistance.

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension: Students who finish early should think of conflict stories (movies, TV, books, etc.) to fit under the posters created two lessons previously.

Writing Lesson: Plotting a Story

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to organize an original story using a plot diagram.

Assessment: Students will write an outline to an original story using a plot diagram.

Opening: Read students a quick story (i.e., *Little Red Riding Hood*). Ask students what the orientation was in the story, who the main characters were, what the setting was, and what type of conflict was utilized in the story. This should all be review since they have learned these concepts the past few days.

Procedure:

1. Draw or display the “Plot Mountain” diagram with the five parts of a narrative.
2. Help students complete the diagram for the story read during the opening by talking through each part of the story and reviewing the definitions of the various terms on the diagram.
(For *Little Red Riding Hood*):
 - a. Orientation: introduced to characters, introduced to setting.
 - b. Rising action: Little Red hears of wolf, goes to visit grandma through woods
 - c. Climax/Dilemma: Little Red sees wolf, has eaten grandma, man cuts open
 - d. Falling action: Grandma is okay, wolf is dead
 - e. Resolution: Little Red is good again
3. Now set up a similar plot diagram for an original story (or one that teacher knows well but students would not know, i.e., one from a curriculum guide).
4. Brainstorm out loud as if making up the story “on the spot,” so students can see how the writing process should work.
 - a. Come up with characters and a setting.
 - b. Continue with orientation type, rising action, etc.
5. Once the teacher story is plotted large on the board, allow students to return to their seats to begin working on a narrative structure outline of their own.
6. Remind students that this is only an outline, so they do not need to use complete sentences, etc.

Closing: Students should hand in their plot diagrams if finished.

Materials: Copy of well-known story (i.e., *Little Red Riding Hood*), white board, “Plot Mountain” diagram, copy of not well known (or original) story for teacher to work from

Resources:

Accommodations: Students will need help with their plots! Be available to assist and make sure stories are at grade-level—not too simple.

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension: Students who finish this project early should begin writing detailed character and setting descriptions.

Writing Lesson: Writing the Orientation

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to write a captivating orientation to an original narrative.

Assessment: Students will begin to write an orientation to an original story.

Opening: Ask students to recall the various types of orientations from stories. They learned these a few lessons ago, so it should be review. Bring them to the carpet and explain that they will be starting their orientations in today's class.

Procedure:

1. Bring out the copy of the story mountain made for the class in the previous lesson (about "Mac's Big Adventure" or other "original" story).
2. Explain to the students about the orientation selected—get right into the story.
3. From your notes, begin writing the orientation in mostly full sentences on the board...
Make it look as if brainstorming and coming up with fairly fresh ideas the entire time.
4. Ask students for input along the way.
5. Encourage students to be creative in their writing, and return them to their seats with plenty of time left over to begin writing.
6. Circulate the room and assist students as needed. They should use their plot diagrams from the previous lesson as starting points for their orientations.

Closing: Gather students on the carpet and allow one or two students to read their orientations to the class.

Materials: Copy of "original" story ("Mac's Big Adventure), Smart Board, copy of plot mountain from previous lesson, paper for all students

Resources:

Accommodations: Students will need help with their orientations! Be available to assist and make sure stories are at grade-level—not too simple.

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension: Students should not finish in one class period. If they do, then they should revise their orientation because the first draft will not be perfect.

Writing Lesson: Writing the Rising Action

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to continue from the orientations of their stories to the descriptive and engaging rising action.

Assessment: Students will continue their stories, beginning their rising action.

Opening: Gather students around a Smart Board. Remind them what happens during the rising action of the teacher story (“Mac’s Big Adventure”) by displaying the plot diagram. Next, reread the orientation that was written in the previous lesson.

Procedure:

1. Start a new page and begin writing the rising action to “Mac’s Big Adventure.”
2. Instead of writing in full sentences like for the orientation, simply write a detailed summary.
3. Students should grasp the concept of keeping the story descriptive and exciting, but they don’t need to be bored with an entire series of events leading up to a climax.
4. Always remind students to SHOW and not TELL when writing. Be sure that they understand what this means. Instead of simply using descriptive adjectives, they need to use feelings and actions to portray what characters are doing.
5. Explain to students that they should not get to the climax of their stories in one day. The rising action should consist of many events—not just one or two. These events should be described as descriptively as the captivating orientation.
5. Once the rising action has been written, allow the students time to work on their own stories.
6. Walk throughout the room and assist students as needed. Be sure their orientations are captivating before they move on any further or their whole story will not be quality.

Closing: Have students pack up their materials and transition to the next subject.

Materials: Copy of “original” story (“Mac’s Big Adventure”), Smart Board, copy of plot mountain from previous lesson, copy of orientation from previous lesson, paper for all students

Resources:

Accommodations: Students will need help with their stories! Be available to assist and make sure stories are at grade-level—not too simple.

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension: Students should not finish in one class period. If they do, then they should revise their story because the first draft will not be perfect.

Writing Lesson: Writing the Falling Action and Resolution

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to continue from the climaxes of their stories to the falling actions and resolutions, possibly presenting the reader with a twist.

Assessment: Students will write intriguing endings to their narratives.

Opening: Play an episode of *The Twilight Zone* or other show that often has a twist at the end. A great example of such a show is the episode “To Serve Man” from *The Twilight Zone*.

Procedure:

1. Ask the students what the twist was at the end of the story. Ask how they might be able to incorporate a twist in their story to leave the reader puzzled or anxious.
2. Explain to students that sometimes an ending should be eerie, sad, or unsettling.
3. Other twists in stories include having the narrator be a character from the story, a secret being exposed, a seemingly silly object or part of the story playing a huge role in the ending, etc. Tell students to be creative with their endings!
4. Allow students time to continue writing their narratives.

Closing: Have students pack up their materials and transition to the next subject.

Materials: Video clip (i.e., “To Serve Man” from *The Twilight Zone*), projector and DVD player, paper and pencil

Resources:

Accommodations: Students will need help with their stories! Be available to assist and make sure stories are at grade-level—not too simple.

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension: If students begin to finish, instruct them to start revising. They should change three words from each section of the story (a total of 15 words) to be more exciting.

Writing Lesson: Illustrating and Publishing a Narrative

Academic Standard:

Objective: Students will be able to create a professional-looking narrative.

Assessment: Students word-process their narratives utilizing correct punctuation, paragraph styles, and spelling.

Opening: Invite students to the computer lab to do their typing.

Procedure:

1. With students not yet at computers, ensure that all students understand quotation marks, when to start new paragraphs, and when to ask for help with spelling.
2. Next, tell students that these narratives should be typed all the way through, not worrying about pages as if to be in a book. Once they are finished typing the narrative once, they should then revise and try to divide the narrative up into pages of a book to illustrate.
2. Allow students to go to computers and begin working.
3. Be available to help with writing.

Closing: Have students pack up their materials and transition to the next subject.

Materials: Computers per each student, copies of their narrative drafts

Resources:

Accommodations: Students will need help with their stories! Be available to assist and make sure stories are at grade-level—not too simple.

Modifications:

Enrichment/Extension: If students begin to finish, instruct them to start illustrating their stories. They should break up the paragraphs into pages that would suit their story best and then illustrate.