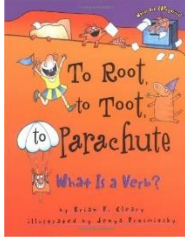


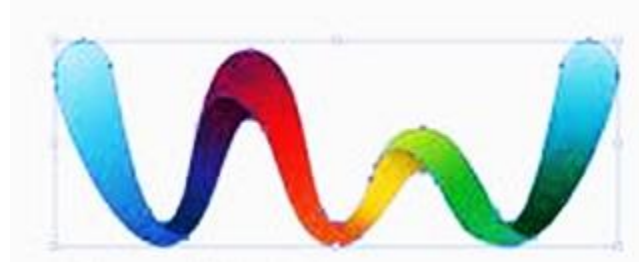
## VIVID VERBIAGE!



Literature Links: "Educational" doesn't have to mean dumpy and dull. Books such as *To Root, to Toot, to Parachute: What Is a Verb?* (Words are Categorical) by Brian P. Cleary as well as *A Mink, a Fink, a Skating Rink: What Is a Noun?* and *Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What Is an Adjective?* may be helpful in illustrating the following concepts and providing students inspiration.

Descriptive writing has a unique power and appeal, as it evokes sights, smells, sounds, textures, and tastes. Using description in your writing brings the world within your text to your reader.

Read a (very vague) sentence about a character and have everyone draw it. Ex. *The person went by.*



Does anyone's drawing look the same? Why or why not? What do we know about the person? Do we know how they moved? Do we know what they looked like?

What mental image of them did students have? What else do we need?

Now, let's add descriptors and words to the sentence and have students draw a picture from this description. Ex. *The old man was stooped and bent, his back making the shape of a C and his head bent so far forward that his beard would nearly have touched his knobby knees had he been just a bit taller.*



Does everyone's picture look similar? Why or why not? What mental image did you have?

The sensory details you select in your writing and in your character descriptions should create for your reader the same picture you have in your mind. Instead of using vague, general words, your sensory language should be concrete and sensory-packed. This makes the difference between vivid and vague language. Take a look at the comparison between vague and vivid sentences.

Vague	Vivid
The food was unappetizing.	The pale turkey slices floated limply in a pool of murky fat.
The sprinkler was refreshing.	The cool water from the sprinkler sprayed our hot faces.
The traffic was heavy.	Our old car puffed as Main Street became clogged with a line of clamoring motorists.

# GET A CLUE!

You know that a large vocabulary is very useful. It helps you talk more interestingly and makes a good impression on other people. It helps you read faster and with more understanding. And it has also been found that your power to think clearly grows as your knowledge of words grows.

Because descriptive text and interesting vocabulary is so powerful, many examples of it can be found in famous literature and poetry. **But how do you know what it means if you aren't sure what those words are or what they mean?** In this excerpt from *Jamaica Inn* by Daphne du Maurier, notice the writer's choice of adjectives, adverbs, and verbs.

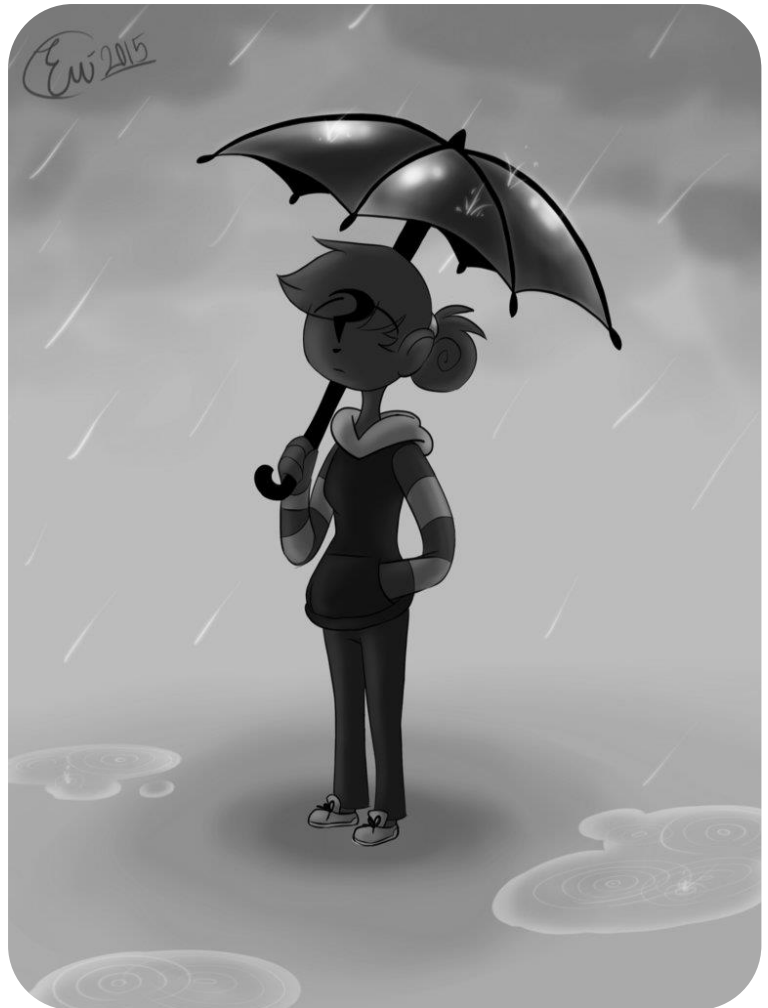
*"It was a cold grey day in late November. The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a mizzling rain with it, and although it was now only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist."*

You can see that the writer had to carefully choose her words so that the reader could almost see and feel the weather that was occurring

Does that mean that you should keep a dictionary chained to your wrist to look up new words you hear or read? It's one way.

But there is another way to learn new words. You have used it all your life. Here it is. Listen for words you don't know. Suppose someone calls you diabolical, for example. You want to know whether that's good or bad. What do you do? You could say What's that? And let the other person feel superior. You could say How do you spell it? And whisk out your pocket dictionary. You could ask How diabolical am I? so that you can get another clue to the meaning.

If you choose the last method, you are trying to learn from context clues. Each time you hear or read a word in a different sentence, you get more information about what it means. Finally, you have an idea in your mind about what the word means. You have learned from the context of the word.



A context clue is a source of information about a word that helps readers understand the word. This word or phrase offers insight, either directly or indirectly, into the word's meaning. There are four main kinds: Examples, Definitions, Descriptive words, Opposites.

In other words, the context is simply the words or ideas around your unknown word. Using context clues as you read is important! If you skip over the meaning of unfamiliar words, you may come to the end of the passage you are reading with a very fuzzy idea of what you

have read. On the other hand, if you stop and look up every word you don't know, you may become irritated at the slow rate of your reading and stop altogether.

So, if you can be alert to context clues and figure out meanings as you read, you will help your speed as well as your comprehension.

Even if you use a dictionary it is often necessary to read several definitions of a word before you can find the one that fits the meaning of the sentence. So you will have to be alert to context clues even when you use the dictionary.

So, back to our paragraph.

*"It was a cold grey day in late November. The weather had changed overnight, when a backing wind brought a granite sky and a mizzling rain with it, and although it was now only a little after two o'clock in the afternoon the pallor of a winter evening seemed to have closed upon the hills, cloaking them in mist."*

She's very descriptive...but **we can't feel it if we aren't sure what she's saying. Were there any words that you didn't know or weren't sure about?**

Let's decode them! You can sometimes piece together the meaning of a word by a little straight detective work. Look at the word granite. Now which words in the paragraph help you understand the meaning of the word granite? ex. The word 'grey' might give us a clue or two...what else?



Do we have any other context clues in the paragraph? **Model decoding skills by thinking out loud for students.** *Hmmm, mizzling kind of sounds like miserable... pallor...that's similar to pale...what color is mist? Does that give me a clue?* Do we see anything that might be a synonym or antonym? It's afternoon, but what time of day does it describe it looking like? What other descriptive words do we see?

Now, let's see what we 'see' in the vivid description of smoke in this excerpt from Rebecca Harding Davis's "Life in the Iron Mills":

*"The idiosyncrasy of this town is smoke. It rolls sullenly in slow folds from the great chimneys of the iron-foundries, and settles down in black, slimy pools on the muddy streets. Smoke on the wharves, smoke on the dingy boats, on the yellow river--clinging in a coating of greasy soot to the house-front, the two faded poplars, the faces of the passers-by."*

**And now, let's get a clue! Practice decoding any unfamiliar words in the last paragraph to help you get a better picture in your minds of what the smoke was like in Iron Mills.**

## **ORDINARY? NO, EXTRAORDINARY!**

Now that we've explored some examples, on the included "Ordinary, No Extraordinary!" sheet, individually and/or as a group have students write down a list in each column of nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs they might ordinarily use to describe their characters (tall, short, fast, hair, ran, jumped...). Then, in the next columns, have students look in a thesaurus for vivid synonyms to those words that could be used instead, to spice up their stories and their descriptions.

Let students know that they will use as a resource in the following fun and competitive game(s). They will also use the word banks they create through this process to help write their stories and character descriptions later.





# VIVID VOCABULARY GAME!



1. Divide students into two teams. Each team should choose a team leader. The team leader will record answers on a white board.
2. Call out a word.
3. Each team should write as many synonyms as possible for the given word. Note: the synonym must be a **more vivid word**. Teams should work quietly so they don't reveal words for the opposing team. Note: Depending on your students' skill level and ability decide whether or not reference sources may be used.
4. Allow three minutes for brainstorming, then say "Stop."
5. Each group leader calls out the words from their group one at a time. If the other team does not think the word is a good synonym, or if they don't think the word is a more vivid word, they may call out, "Challenge!"
6. If a challenge is called, a group vote determines the outcome. Vote by counting one...two...three...thumbs up or down. The group in question does not vote. The teacher has the final decision.
7. Keep a tally on the front board of total words accepted.
8. Try several rounds.

Determine which team has the most points.

A few ideas for words students use all the time in writing:

a lot	fun	little	cold
good	said	black	sick
nice	mad	walk	red
fast	slow	old	young
big	happy	mean	pretty
small	bad	hot	ugly

## TIPS: What to Avoid When Using Sensory Detail

- Too many adjectives—retain only the most powerful words in your writing, deleting any unnecessary words.
- Too many adverbs—verbs are stronger than adverbs

She strolled into the room is more powerful than She walked casually into the room.

Clichéd figures of speech—overused language, such as green with envy, signals a lack of imagination.

Use fresh, descriptive words that go against rote thinking.



# HUNTING THE THESAURUS!

Students are divided into four groups. Each group will have a group of similar words and will generate a list of as many vivid verbs as they can. They are allowed to use a thesaurus and/or dictionary. The groups of words are as follows:

Team 1 – say/said/tell

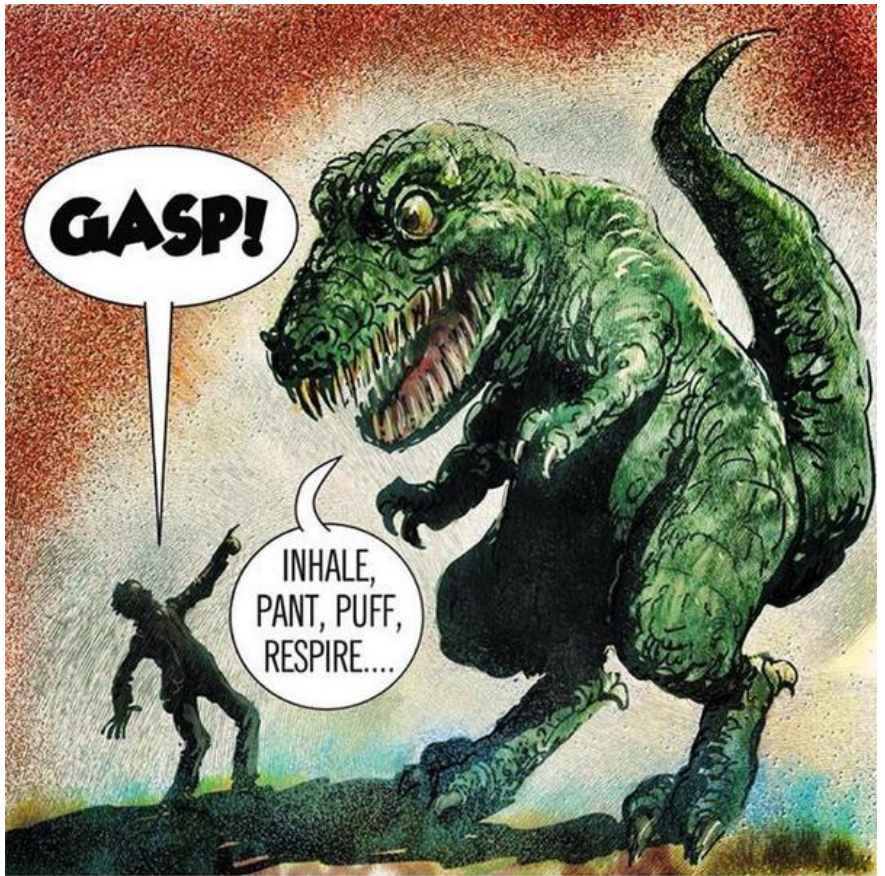
Team 2 – like/love/want

Team 3 – movement (walk, run, play, jump, etc.)

Team 4 – feelings (laugh, cry, mad, etc.)

You can add more teams using another grouping of your choice, e.g. eat/drink. Or add in adjectives and/or adverbs.

After the teams have their lists ready, the challenge commences. One team will start the activity by



## Thesaurus.

### TEACHER TIP



### Whiteboards

Use plastic plates as economical white boards! Just make sure they are large and smooth.

giving a vivid verb.

For example, if Team 1 gives a word, it may be informed, articulated, expressed, divulged, remarked.

The other teams have a minute (more or less depending upon the difficulty of the word) to come up with a sentence using that vivid verb. The groups then orally give their sentences (or they could write one on a dry erase board). The team that gave the word will vote on the best sentences. The teacher also gets a vote, so for every challenge, there are two votes.

Option: To add to the game play some music (similar to a game show music) while the students are creating their sentences.

For the final round, the students are allowed to use their more difficult words to stump the other teams.

If no one gets a correct sentence, then the point(s) for that round are awarded to the team that gives the word.

## DAY THIRTEEN K-8 STANDARD ALIGNMENT

### K

- L.K.5. With guidance and support from adults, explore word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- L.K.5 d) Distinguish shades of meaning among words, e.g., verbs describing the same general action (e.g., walk, march, strut, prance), by acting out the meanings.

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

### 1

- L.1.5. With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- L.1.5. d) Distinguish shades of meaning among verbs, e.g. those differing in manner (e.g., look, peek, glance, stare, glare, scowl) and among adjective, e.g. those differing in intensity (e.g., large, gigantic) by defining or choosing them or by acting out the meanings.

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

### 2

- L.2.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
- L.2.5. b) Distinguish shades of meaning among closely related verbs (e.g., toss, throw, hurl) and closely related adjectives (e.g., thin, slender, skinny, scrawny).

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words (emphasizing verbs & adjectives) throughout the games and activities.*

### 3

- L.3.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.



- L.3.5. c) Distinguish shades of meaning among related words (e.g., knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered).

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

#### 4

- L.4.4. c) Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses) to find, determine the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
- L.4.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.4.5. c) Demonstrate understanding of words by relating them to their opposites (antonyms) and/or to words with similar but not identical meanings (synonyms).

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. We'll use thesauruses to find and explore synonyms (and antonyms) and discuss whether not they all mean the exact same thing, or what the variations between them are—how they are similar and different from each other and their opposites. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

#### 5

- L.5.4. c) Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses) to find, determine the pronunciation of and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.
- L.5.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.5.5. c) Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonyms) to better understand each of the words.

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. We'll use thesauruses to find and explore synonyms and discuss whether not they all mean the exact same thing, or what the variations between them are—how they are similar and different from each other. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

#### 6

- L.6.4. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses) to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- L.6.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.6.5. c) Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., stingy, scrimping, economical, unwasteful, thrifty) to better understand each of the words.

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. We'll use thesauruses to find and explore synonyms and discuss whether not they all mean the exact same thing, or what the variations between them are—how they are similar and different from each other. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

## 7

- L.7.4 c) Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- L.7.5. Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.
- L.7.5 c) Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending) to better understand each of the words.

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. We'll use thesauruses to find and explore synonyms and discuss whether not they all mean the exact same thing, or what the variations between them are—how they are similar and different from each other. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

## 8

- L.8.4 c) Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- L.8.5 b) Use the relationship between particular words to better understand each of the words.
- L.8.5 c) Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., bullheaded, willful, firm, persistent, resolute) to better understand each of the words.

*These standards will be met and reinforced as students participate in the discussion about context clues and decoding words as well as vague vs vivid words and their effects on stories and audiences. We'll use thesauruses to find and explore synonyms and discuss whether not they all mean the exact same thing, or what the variations between them are—how they are similar and different from each other. Then we'll continue to reinforce what we discussed and explore shades of meaning between different words throughout the games and activities.*

# DAY FOURTEEN

## LIKE A GOOD STEW...THE PLOT THICKENS



So now we've got our characters, we've got our setting, and we've got our vivid words, aah, such great ingredients! But wait...what about our plot? What happens to our characters? Where do they go? What do they do? What happens next? And who is our main character/narrator? We've gotten some practice with the dice, we've got some vivid words to choose from, and now it's time to put the action into action! (And remember, if you're at crisis point in the creative process of a story, you can always use the story cubes to stimulate your imagination.)

Tip: For students who struggle having a place to begin, have them look at and read the background story that comes with the monsters from Papertoy Monsters (each comes with background story and plenty of other information) to use as a starting point.)

There are so many monsters and creatures galore, let your imagination be your guide. The possibilities are endless. *Hmm, does your teacher or your dad turn into a dragon when you fail a test?* And remember if you don't have a clue, maybe the dice will give one to you as we go through the following process.

### STAGE 1: IDEATION CONCEPT

- This is the starting point of plot development. To create a great story you need to first start with a great idea. We know you've got those! Take a look at your characters and your setting and see what you come up with!

### STAGE 2: PLOT DEVELOPMENT

- Think of this as the planning stage for how the story unfolds.
- The basic concept for the story is expanded [by the writer-you] into a workable story outline and then the plot.



Via YonyYonYon @ DeviantArt

- You can more than imagine the story playing out in your mind, take your characters and use them in your setting...what ideas begin to form? All of the story elements are arranged with consideration for pacing and character development.

## **STAGE 3: STORY TIME!**

- The writer [you!], using the plot outline as a guide, writes the full action packed character driven story that will be your base for your 3D tale.
- Aside from tweaks and edits, this is the writer's/your primary window for determining the story. The story is the basis for everything that follows.

**Let's start with  
a story...**



## **HOW TO TELL A TALE WORTH TELLING**

First, you probably already have a least a mental sketch of the "basics" of your story

These are the basics of almost all stories:

1. Sympathetic character
2. Who faces a problem
3. Character solves problem

**NOW, FILL IN THE DETAILS!**

## **CHARACTER AND CONFLICT**

### **CHARACTER**

First, build your main character. Here are important traits of a main character:

- Has a problem or need.
- Has the ability to solve the problem, whether or not he knows it (there's usually more suspense if he doesn't).



- Often has a flaw to overcome to solve the problem or win the reward.

Then, think about your secondary characters: the main character's friends and enemies. To get you started, here are some types of secondary characters, along with famous examples of each.

- Villains: Block the main character from reaching goals. (The Green Goblin in Spider-Man)
- Allies: Assist the main character in reaching goals. (Robin in Batman)
- Mentors: Wise characters that help the main character. (Obi-Wan Kenobi in Star Wars)
- Jokers: Lighten things up! Often the main character's best friend is a joker. (Donkey in Shrek)

Tips on creating characters:

- If you already have a plot in mind, think of who needs this plot -- who has a need the plot's reward would fulfill? Who could grow by overcoming the obstacles? That is your main character.
- Combine different types of characters. Examples: a funny villain (Dr. Evil in Austin Powers); a mentor who is also a joker (Hagrid in Harry Potter); a villain that becomes an ally and helps the main character solve the real problem (Floop in Spy Kids).

## **CONFLICT -- A STORYTELLER'S BEST FRIEND**

- The stronger the story problem, the stronger the story.
- **Don't be nice to your character!** Create obstacles to the goal. The story is more exciting that way, the character learns more, and the reward is more valuable since the character worked so hard for it.

The classic conflicts: These are ideas to get you started.

- Person versus person: The most popular, since conflicts between people are the most interesting to readers. (Example: Cinderella and her wicked stepmother)
- Person versus himself: Conflict between good and evil or strengths and weaknesses in a character. This is deep stuff and not usually the main conflict. (Example: The Grinch is evil and hates Christmas, but he is not evil at heart -- he is like that because someone hurt him. The Grinch feels inner conflict over the good and evil inside of him.)
- Person versus nature: Usually involves natural disasters or survival skills. This conflict is exciting, but often difficult to write about at length. (Example: The character in Jurassic Park must survive in and escape from a dangerous land of dinosaurs.)

Tips on creating conflict

- Combine different types of conflict. Maybe your characters struggle to survive and fight among themselves.
- Add more conflicts and obstacles if your story seems slow or not "big" enough.
- Before you write, know how the problem will be solved. Don't write yourself into a hole!

- The main character must solve the problem. Don't have someone (or something) enter at the last minute and save the day.

## PLANNING THE PLOT

Character and conflict are the heart of your story. The plot is just the sequence of events that happen as the character faces problems. Here are a few things to remember about plotting:

- A plot is based on cause and effect.
- The plot follows the effects of the character's actions and decisions.
- Avoid a series of events. You want a chain of events, each affecting the next. Each link in the chain should be necessary to your story!

## ELEMENTS OF MOST PLOTS

Plan these scenes and you should be ready to write. Here are some examples from the movie *Shrek*.

- **"Get the story going" event:** Show character's problem & event that starts adventure. (Shrek's swamp is ruined when Lord Farquaad puts fairy tale creatures there. Lord Farquaad promises to remove the fairy tale creatures after Shrek rescues Princess Fiona.)
- **Adventure scene(s):** Meet friends & enemies, face obstacles, learn lessons, prepare for...(Shrek meets Donkey, they rescue Princess Fiona and set off for Duloc. Along the way, they become friends and have adventures, like fighting Robin Hood and his Merry Men.)
- **THE BIG EVENT:** Everything is on the line. Most exciting part of story. (The wedding scene.)
- **Wrap-up:** Tie up the loose ends and hand out rewards & punishments. (Shrek marries Fiona, Donkey falls in love with the dragon, and Farquaad is eaten by the dragon.)

## PLAN YOUR SCENES

Scenes: how you show your plot

- Decide how to show action, plot, character interactions, lessons characters learn, etc. Example: Don't just say, "Alex was shy." Have Alex demonstrate shyness by the way he interacts with others. Later, show Alex has gotten over his shyness by having him face someone he was previously afraid of.
- Each scene needs a beginning, middle, and end. See if you can use the end of one scene to transition to the beginning of another, and so on.
- Don't write a short scene for a major event, and don't make a scene out of something that doesn't need to be. Example: If several uneventful days go by as a character waits for important test results, don't write several day's worth of boring events. Skip to the test results and show the character has waited for days.

## DIALOGUE

Dialogue does many things for your story.

- Reveals character (especially through reactions)
- Advances plot
- Brings scenes to life
- Adjusts the story's pace
- TAKES UP SPACE!!! (Start a new paragraph every time a new character speaks. This takes up space, which is useful if you need a story of a certain length.)

Tips on writing dialogue

- Avoid long greetings and goodbyes. These slow the story and add little.
- Convey character by showing a character's reaction or way of speaking.
- Don't use dialogue as a substitute for action. Example: If you have an earthquake in your story, write a great earthquake scene with lots of action. Don't have a character say "Oh! An earthquake!" and leave it at that.

## SETTING

- Plan your setting (Hey you've done that!)-- know details about it. This makes your story more vivid.
- Setting helps you avoid "floating" scenes -- conversation or action that could be happening anywhere.
- Setting adds atmosphere to scenes. Example: In a beach story, a character might compare Aunt Mary's screeching to a seagull. In a city story, Aunt Mary might remind the character of a burglar alarm.
- In some books, the setting is like a character. Example: Survival stories like Gary Paulsen's *Hatchet*.

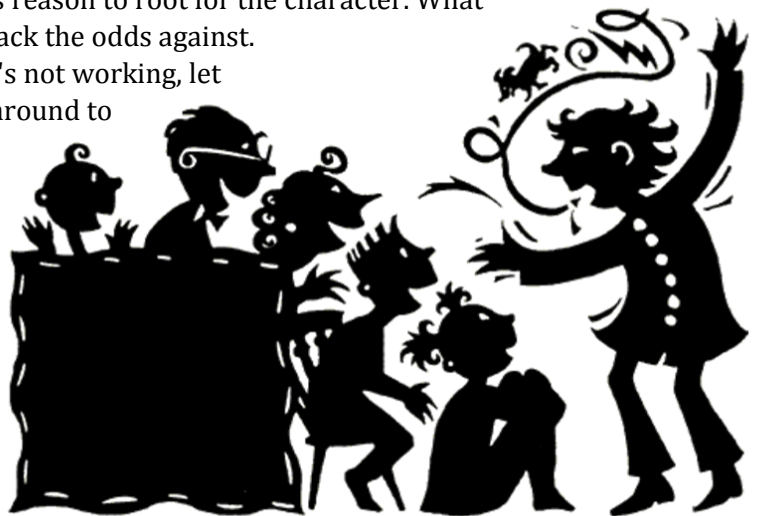
## START WITH A BANG! Your story's opening scene

- Start with the day that is different -- the day the hero is called to adventure
- Start your story as close to the "big event" as you can
- Show the main character and the problem, or hint at the problem.
- Use action to get your story rolling and make your reader want to see what happens next.

**IN YOUR ROUGH DRAFT, JUST CONCENTRATE ON GETTING IT ALL ON PAPER! YOU CAN GO BACK AND FIX THINGS LATER.**

## 22 GOOD RULES OF STORYTELLING

- #1: You/Audiences admire a character for trying more than for their successes.
- #2: You gotta keep in mind what's interesting to you as an audience, not what's fun to do as a writer. They can be very different.
- #3: Trying for theme is important, but you won't see what the story is actually about 'til you're at the end of it. Now rewrite.
- #4: Once upon a time there was \_\_\_. Every day, \_\_\_. One day \_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_. Until finally \_\_\_.
- #5: Simplify. Focus. Combine characters. Hop over detours. You'll feel like you're losing valuable stuff but it sets you free.
- #6: What is your character good at, comfortable with? Throw the polar opposite at them. Challenge them. How do they deal?
- #7: Come up with your ending before you figure out your middle. Seriously. Endings are hard, get yours working up front.
- #8: Finish your story, let go even if it's not perfect. In an ideal world you have both, but move on. Do better next time.
- #9: When you're stuck, make a list of what WOULDN'T happen next. Lots of times the material to get you unstuck will show up.
- #10: Pull apart the stories you like. What you like in them is a part of you; you've got to recognize it before you can use it.
- #11: Putting it on paper lets you start fixing it. If it stays in your head, a perfect idea, you'll never share it with anyone.
- #12: Discount the 1st thing that comes to mind. And the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th – get the obvious out of the way. Surprise yourself.
- #13: Give your characters opinions. Passive/malleable might seem likable to you as you write, but it's poison to the audience.
- #14: Why must you tell THIS story? What's the belief burning within you that your story feeds off of? That's the heart of it.
- #15: If you were your character, in this situation, how would you feel? Honesty lends credibility to unbelievable situations.
- #16: What are the stakes? Give us reason to root for the character. What happens if they don't succeed? Stack the odds against.
- #17: No work is ever wasted. If it's not working, let go and move on - it'll come back around to be useful later.
- #18: You have to know yourself: the difference between doing your best & fussing. Story is testing, not refining.
- #19: Coincidences to get characters into trouble are great; coincidences to get them out of it are cheating.



- #20: Exercise: take the building blocks of a movie you dislike. How d'you rearrange them into what you DO like?
- #21: You gotta identify with your situation/characters, can't just write 'cool'. What would make YOU act that way?
- #22: What's the essence of your story? Most economical telling of it? If you know that, you can build out from there.

## **DAY FOURTEEN K-8 STANDARD ALIGNMENT**

### **K**

- W.K.3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events,
- W.K.3. a. Tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

### **1**

- W.1.3. Craft narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events,
- W.1.3. a) include some details regarding what happened,
- W.1.3. b) use temporal words to signal event order,
- W.1.3. c) provide some sense of closure.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

### **2**

- W.2.3. Craft narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events,
- W.2.3. a) include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings,
- W.2.3. b) use temporal words to signal event order
- W.2.3. c) provide a sense of closure.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*



*The different story elements we can/should include in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

### 3

- W.3.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.3.3.a) Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.3.3.b) Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- W.3.3.c) Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- W.3.3.d) Provide a sense of closure.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (where are we/they, how did they feel, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

### 4

- W.4.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.4.3. a) Orient the audience by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.4.3. b) Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- W.4.3. c) Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- W.4.3. d) Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- W.4.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, where are we/they, how did they feel, what happened, in what order, how did it all end?*

*Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **5**

- W.5.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.5.3. a) Orient the audience by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.5.3. b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- W.5.3. c) Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- W.5.3. d) Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- W.5.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **6**

- W.6.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.6.3. a) Engage and orient the audience by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.6.3. b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.6.3. c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- W.6.3. d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- W.6.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **7**

- W.7.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.7.3. a) Engage and orient the audience by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.7.3. b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.7.3. c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- W.7.3. d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- W.7.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **8**

- W.8.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

- W.8.3. a. Engage and orient the audience by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.8.3. b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.8.3. c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
- W.8.3. d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- W.8.3. e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

# DAY FIFTEEN

## PULLING THE RUG OUT!

Plot twists. Mistaken identities, sneaky plans, sleight of hand—it's all grand. Nothing keeps readers glued to the page like plot twists and cliffhangers. Few things make readers happier than a story that pulls the rug out from under them and shows them that their perception of the story up to that point is nowhere near as cool as the reality. But, by the same token, few things annoy a reader more than a story that fools them and then laughs at them—or, worse, thinks it's fooled them when, really, it's only bored them.



Plot twists can bring a whole new dimension to your story. But done with less finesse than not, they can also submarine the whole thing. Today, let's take a look at what is required to pull off a delightful plot twist.

### **PLOT TWISTS:** Practical Steps to Pulling the Rug Out

#### **1. Eliminate the obvious**

When coming up with the climax to your story, discard every possible solution you can think of for your protagonist to succeed. Discard them.

Then think of some more.

And discard those, too.

You're trying to create an ending that's so unforeseen that if a million people read your story, not one of them would guess how it ends (or how it will get to the end), but when they finally come to it, every one of those people would think, *Yes! That makes perfect sense! Why didn't I see that coming?*



The more impossible the climax is for your protagonist to overcome, the more believable and inevitable the escape or solution needs to be. No reader should anticipate it, and smile when it happens. No one guesses, everyone nods. That's but everyone should nod what you're shooting for.

## 2. Redirect suspicion

When you work on your narrative, constantly ask yourself what readers are expecting and hoping for at this moment in the story. Then keep twisting the story into new directions that both shock and delight them.

To keep readers from noticing clues, bury them in the emotion or action of another section. For example, in an adventure novel, offhandedly mention something during a chase scene, while readers' attention is on the action, not the revelation. Use red herrings, dead ends, and foils. Bury clues in discussions of something else.

### ***While writing, ask yourself:***

*How can I do a better job of burying the clues readers need to have in order to accept the ending? Where do I need to bring those clues to the surface?*

*How can I play expectations based on genre conventions against readers to get them to suspect the wrong person as the villain or antagonist?*

## 3. Avoid gimmicks

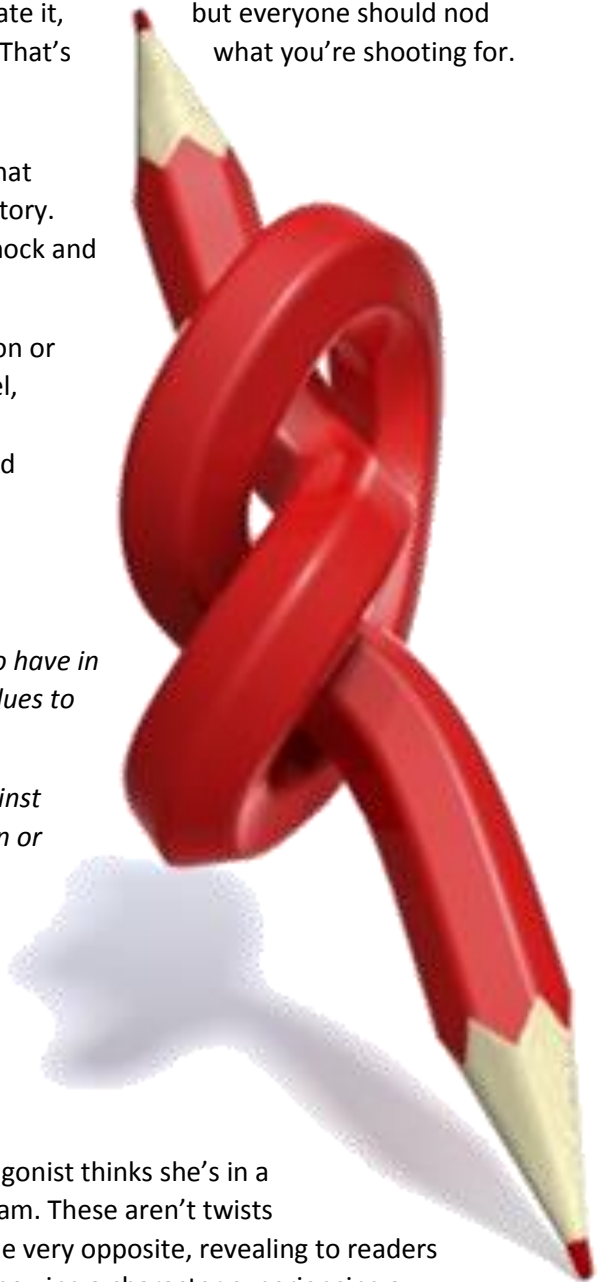
Readers want their emotional investment to pay off. The twist should never occur in a way that makes them feel tricked, deceived, or insulted. Great twists always deepen, never cheapen, readers' investment in the story.

This is why dream sequences typically don't work—the protagonist thinks she's in a terrible mess, then wakes up and realizes it was all just a dream. These aren't twists because they almost never escalate the story but often do the very opposite, revealing to readers that things weren't really that bad after all (de-escalation). Showing a character experiencing a harrowing or frightening experience and then having him wake up from a dream is not a twist; it's a tired cliché.

How do you solve this? Simply tell the reader it's a dream beforehand. It can be just as frightening without de-escalating the story's tension, and it can also end in a way that's not predictable.

### ***While writing, ask yourself:***

*Will readers feel tricked, deceived, or insulted by this twist? If so, how can I better respect their ability to guess the ending of my story?*



*Have I inadvertently relied on clichés or on any plot turning points that have appeared in other books or movies? How can I recast the story so it's fresh and original?*

#### **4. Write toward your readers' reaction.**

The way you want your readers to respond will determine the way you set up your twist. Three different types of twists all result in different reactions by readers: (1) “No way!” (2) “Huh. Nice!” and (3) “Oh, yeah!”

When aiming for the “No way!” response, you’ll want to lead readers into *certainty*. You want them to think that there’s only one possible solution to the story.

The more you can convince them that the story world you’ve portrayed is exactly as it appears to be—that only one outcome to the novel is possible—the more you’ll make their jaws drop when you show them that things were not as they appeared to be at all. If the twist is satisfying, credible, and inevitable based on what has preceded it, readers will gasp and exclaim, “No way! That’s awesome! I can’t believe he got that one past me.”

With the “Huh. Nice!” ending, you want to lead readers into *uncertainty*. Basically, they’ll be thinking, “Man, I have no idea where this is going.” When writing for this response, you’ll create an unbalanced, uncertain world. You don’t want readers to suspect only one person as the villain but many people. Only when the true villain is revealed will readers see that everything was pointing in that direction all along.

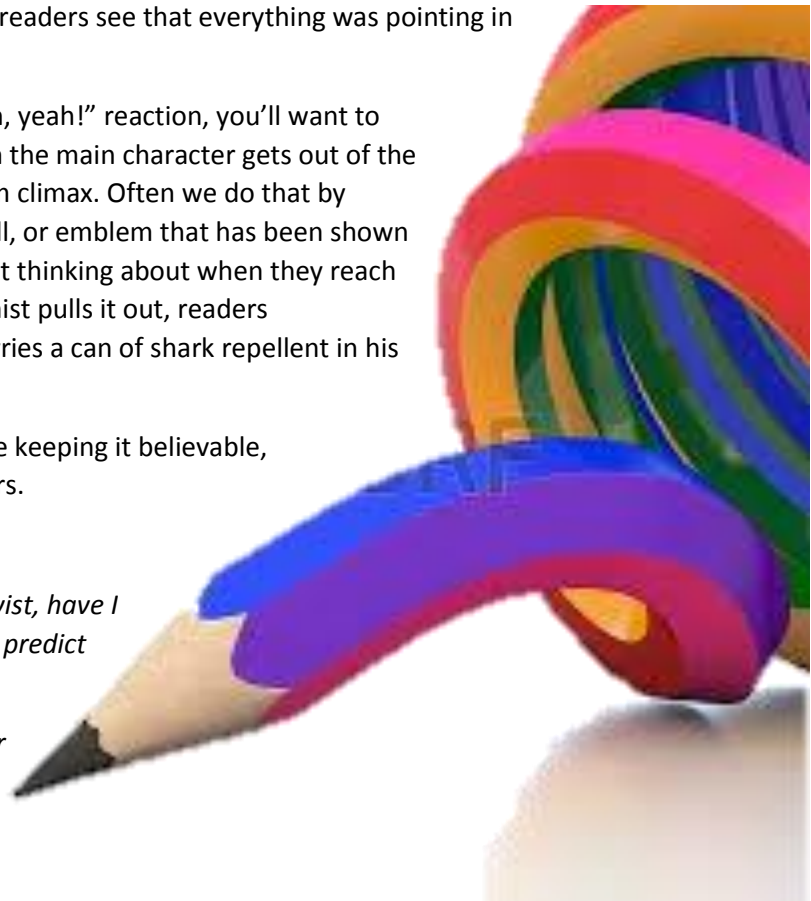
Finally, if you’re shooting for the “Oh, yeah!” reaction, you’ll want to emphasize the *cleverness* with which the main character gets out of the seemingly impossible-to-escape-from climax. Often we do that by allowing him to use a special gift, skill, or emblem that has been shown to readers earlier but that they aren’t thinking about when they reach the climax. Then, when the protagonist pulls it out, readers remember: “Yes! That’s right! He carries a can of shark repellent in his wetsuit! I forgot all about that!”

Relentlessly escalate your story while keeping it believable, surprising, and deeper than it appears.

#### ***While writing, ask yourself:***

*If I want to shock readers with the twist, have I led them into certainty as they try to predict the ending?*

*If I want readers to suspect a number of different endings, have I satisfactorily built up all the potential outcomes?*



*If I want readers to cheer at the ending, have I (1) created a seemingly impossible situation for the protagonist to escape from or conquer or (2) allowed the protagonist to persevere through wit or grit rather than with the help of someone else (that is, deus ex machina)?*

## YOUR WRITE!

Now that we've discussed a bit more about plot...it's time to twist and turn and churn out a plot with lots of thought! Keep working on writing the full action packed character driven story that will be your base for your 3D tale! Keep in mind, in your rough draft, you're just concentrating on getting it all on paper. You can go back and fix things later.

**QUICK TIP!** Remember, you can use story cubes to help you craft plot twists for your tale! Just pick a couple of dice at random, roll 'em, and interpret the symbols as you see fit. Rinse and repeat until story reaches a fitting conclusion.

Story dice won't change the way you write, except to sometimes make it faster and easier to come up with interesting descriptions & plot events/twists on the fly. They won't overload you with information or draw attention away from the story. They're designed to give you just enough information to nudge

your creativity and keep things varied and lively as you build your plot.

# cliffhanger



## EXTENSION: CLIFFHANGER!

This game combines elements of collaboration, persuasive speech and creativity to create a complete story by the end of the game.

Objective: Players contribute to the creation of a narrative story with a beginning, middle and end. Players: 3-4 players

Game Play 1) Players draw 5 STORY BUILDER cards each. As they use a card during play, they draw a new one from the deck. They should have 5 cards in their hand at all times.

2) The youngest player draws a STORY STARTER card to begin. Place it in the first space on the STORY MAP. The game has begun!

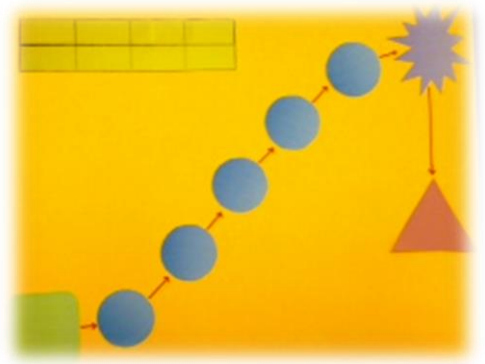
- 3) Players examine the cards in their hands and choose one to suggest as the next stage in the story. They place their choices on the table all together at the same time.
- 4) Each person has 15 seconds to elaborate on his or her choice. The choice may be silly but it should fit logically into the story.
- 5) After the last person to explain, the group votes on which suggestion should be the next stage in the story. Every player who receives a vote receives a point. The player who receives the most votes places their suggested STORY BUILDER card on the next space on the STORY MAP. If there is a tie vote, then the last player to place a STORY BUILDER card breaks the tie. Blank cards are wild and can be invented by the person who plays them.
- 6) Play continues until the STORY MAP is complete. Scoring 1 vote = 1 point The player with the most points at the end of the story is deemed the AUTHOR and winner of the game.

#### Adaptations

- The STORY BUILDER cards could be replaced with sticky notes. Each player would have to write the next sentence that they are suggesting for the story.
- A STORY MAP with fewer event spots could be used for struggling students.
- A STORY MAP with an increased number event spots could be used for students who need more challenge.
- A random element generator like Rory's Story Cubes or WritingExcercises.co.uk could be substituted to support students who have difficulty comprehending the STORY BUILDER cards.

The game board sheet includes the pieces to assemble into the game board shown here at whatever size you choose. Or, make up your own.

Game & Resources via [Amy Sullivan](#). All Rights Reserved.



## Story Starter Cards









<p>"Once upon a time, in a deep dark wood, in a teeny tiny cottage with a straw roof, lived a big rat. His name was Claude."          --from Tomie dePaola, children's book author</p>	<p>"Deep, deep down in the ocean as I was minding my own business..."          -- from Lily Wong, professor, Southeast Asia Union College</p>
<p>"Way back in the hills where even the ants didn't go, I remember..."          --from Jerry Tello, author and education consultant</p>	<p>"In my old grandmother's trunk there was a..."          -- from Rebeca Barrera, president, National Latino Children's Institute</p>
<p>"There once was a rabbit who loved to dance."          --Laura Sims, storyteller, author, and educator</p>	<p>"My grandmother used to tell me home is where the heart is. I did not understand what she meant by that until one stormy night when..."          --from Deborah Eaton, president, National Association for Family Child Care</p>
<p>"Long ago, in a faraway place, there was a land filled with wonder. In this fantastic place there was a little girl. She was very special, for she had a magic..."          --from Robert Kikuchi-Yngojo and Nancy Wang, members of Eth•Noh•Tec, an Asian storytelling troupe</p>	<p>"It started out just like any other school day. I finished the last soggy pieces of cereal from my bowl full of milk. (I always pour too much!) But as I grabbed my coat and ran out the door, I couldn't believe my eyes!"          --from Marian Wright Edelman, president Children's Defense Fund</p>
<p>When _____ ignored the "Enter At Your Own Risk" sign on Mr. Sedgewick's property line, she had no idea what the consequences would be.          -- <a href="http://elaseminars.com/">elaseminars.com/</a>... <a href="https://twitter.com/writingprompts">#writingprompts</a></p>	<p>Since I was the last one to see _____ before he disappeared, I knew the police would have to question me.          -- <a href="http://elaseminars.com/">elaseminars.com/</a>... <a href="https://twitter.com/writingprompts">#writingprompts</a></p>
<p>Although _____ always suspected that something was living under her bed, she never had proof until the night of her eighth birthday.          -- <a href="http://elaseminars.com/">elaseminars.com/</a>... <a href="https://twitter.com/writingprompts">#writingprompts</a></p>	<p>Since the instructions in the briefcase were clear, _____ slid the sealed envelope under the red door.          -- <a href="http://elaseminars.com/">elaseminars.com/</a>... <a href="https://twitter.com/writingprompts">#writingprompts</a></p>













<p>When he opened the tiny letter postmarked December 18, 2025, _____ finally understood the meaning of his recurring dream.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>Although _____ couldn't explain it, she knew there was something disturbing about Mr. Finney's apple orchard.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>
<p>Although the two men appeared to be public entertainers, the fact that they avoided having their picture taken aroused my suspicious nature.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>Since _____ was known for his crazy antics, his mother was not surprised when she found him pinned to the clothesline in the back yard.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>
<p>When _____ found the bottle near the shoreline, he felt compelled to read the note which had been tucked inside it.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>When I spotted _____ wandering through my backyard, I realized he was no ordinary turtle.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>
<p>When the tree house appeared in his back yard, _____ decided to find out if there was anyone inside.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>When _____ saw the smoke rising from the tiny reptile's head, he placed the creature in a box and headed for the lab.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>
<p>Although the genie lamp had brought her nothing but trouble, _____ knew she had to make one more wish.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>Although _____ had only fifteen minutes of oxygen left in his tank, he refused to return to the ship.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>
<p>Although everything about Lily Devereaux seemed normal, she was actually the farthest thing from it.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>When _____ placed his hand on the doorknob, a tingling sensation spread throughout his body.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>
<p>When _____ found the opening in the garden wall that was not there yesterday, she knew exactly what she had to do.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>	<p>Although _____ did not believe in ghosts, it was hard to dismiss the occasional appearance and disappearance of the girl in the white chiffon dress.</p> <p>--<a href="https://elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts">elaseminars.com/.../writingprompts</a></p>

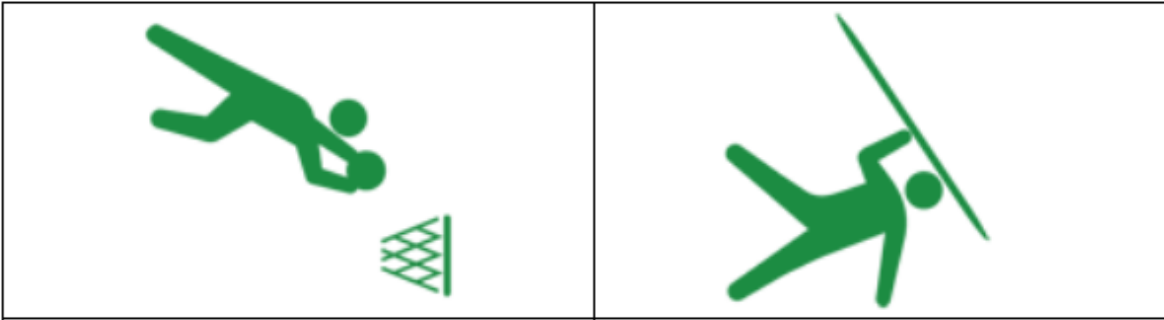
# Story Builder Cards











(pictograms created by [Da-Yama from TopeconHeroes](#))



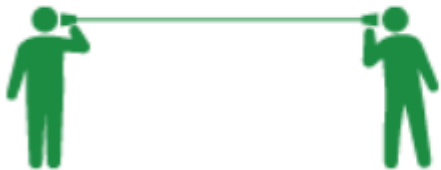







	
	
	
	






















	
	
	
	
	























	
	
	
	
	











				
				











	
	
	
	
	











	
	
	
	
	























	
	
	
	
	











	
	
	
	
	











	
	
	
	
	











	
	
	
	
	






	
	
	
	
	



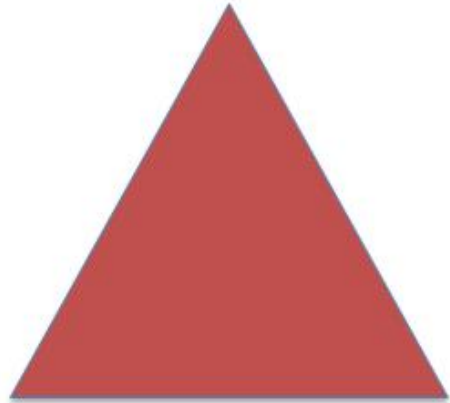
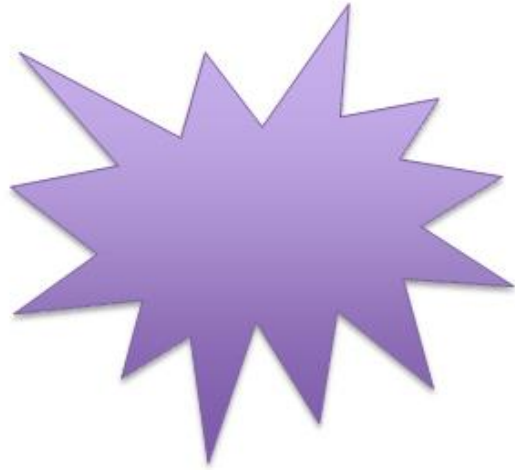
	
	
	
	
	



|



***ENDING***

## DAY FIFTEEN K-8 STANDARD ALIGNMENT

### K

- W.K.3. Use a combination of drawing, dictating, and writing to narrate a single event or several loosely linked events,
- W.K.3. a. Tell about the events in the order in which they occurred, and provide a reaction to what happened.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories, adding in interesting plot twists, and finalizing their rough drafts.*

*The different story elements we can/should include in order to make a good story (ex. Exciting plot twists) will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

### 1

- W.1.3. Craft narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events,
- W.1.3. a) include some details regarding what happened,
- W.1.3. b) use temporal words to signal event order,
- W.1.3. c) provide some sense of closure.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories, adding in interesting plot twists, and finalizing their rough drafts.*

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### 2

- W.2.3. Craft narratives in which they recount a well-elaborated event or short sequence of events,
- W.2.3. a) include details to describe actions, thoughts, and feelings,
- W.2.3. b) use temporal words to signal event order
- W.2.3. c) provide a sense of closure.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters*

*and settings and developing the plots of their stories, adding in interesting plot twists, and finalizing their rough drafts.*

*The different story elements we can/should include in order to make a good story (ex. Exciting plot twists) will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

### 3

- W.3.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.3.3.a) Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.3.3.b) Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
- W.3.3.c) Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
- W.3.3.d) Provide a sense of closure.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots (and adding in plot twists) to their stories and finalizing their rough drafts.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

### 4

- W.4.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.4.3. a) Orient the audience by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.4.3. b) Use dialogue and description to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- W.4.3. c) Use a variety of transitional words and phrases to manage the sequence of events.
- W.4.3. d) Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- W.4.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots (and adding in plot twists) to their stories and finalizing their rough drafts..*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **5**

- W.5.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
- W.5.3. a) Orient the audience by establishing a situation and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
- W.5.3. b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, description, and pacing, to develop experiences and events or show the responses of characters to situations.
- W.5.3. c) Use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to manage the sequence of events.
- W.5.3. d) Use concrete words and phrases and sensory details to convey experiences and events precisely.
- W.5.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots of their stories.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **6**

- W.6.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.6.3. a) Engage and orient the audience by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.



- W.6.3. b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.6.3. c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- W.6.3. d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.
- W.6.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots (and adding in plot twists) to their stories and finalizing their rough drafts.*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## 7

- W.7.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.7.3. a) Engage and orient the audience by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.7.3. b) Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.7.3. c) Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another.
- W.7.3. d) Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- W.7.3. e) Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots (and adding in plot twists) to their stories and finalizing their rough drafts..*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what*

*order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

## **2**

- W.8.3. Craft narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.
- W.8.3. a. Engage and orient the audience by establishing a context and point of view and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.
- W.8.3. b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, and reflection, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- W.8.3. c. Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence, signal shifts from one time frame or setting to another, and show the relationships among experiences and events.
- W.8.3. d Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to capture the action and convey experiences and events.
- W.8.3. e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

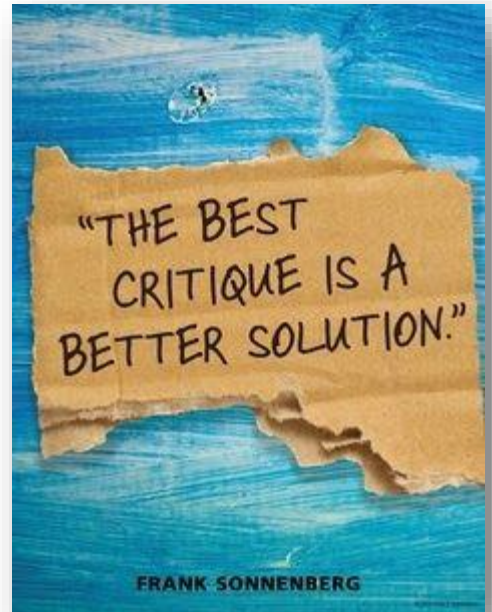
*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for student work and expected elements and outcomes) as students continue to work on taking their characters and settings and developing the plots (and adding in plot twists) to their stories and finalizing their rough drafts..*

*The different story elements we can/should include (vivid adj. & verbs, transitional words, dialogue, where are we/they, how did they feel, what did they say?, what happened, in what order, how did it all end? Etc.) in order to make a good story will be discussed and then reinforced with notes/reminders on the board and shown by example through modeling by the instructor.*

# DAY SIXTEEN

## PEERING DEEPER

Sometimes we have ideas that make good sense to us, but seem to lose or confuse readers as we voice them in conversation or on the page. Once students have a complete draft of a story, they need ways to share their ideas to learn points where their ideas need further development. With feedback from an audience, students are better able to see the final decisions they still need to make in order for their ideas to reach someone. These decisions may be ones of word choice, organization, logic, evidence, and tone. Keep in mind that this juncture can be unsettling for some students. Having made lots of major decisions in getting their ideas down on the page, they may be reluctant to tackle another round of decision-making required for revising or clarifying ideas or sentences. Remind students that ideas don't exist apart from words, but in the words themselves. They will need to be able to sell their ideas and tell their story through the words and arrangement of words on the page for a specific audience.



### TIME FOR STAGE 4: STORY EDITING

- The writer/you works with a partner or multiple partners to refine the story and get feedback and suggestions.

The editor and editing process is the last line of defense for finding errors and ensuring that it is a quality story.

*Tip: Show students how to revise specific aspects of their writing to make it more coherent and clear by modeling. You can model reading your own writing and do a think aloud about how you could add more details and make it clearer. Teach students to reread their own work more than once as they think about whether it really conveys what they want to their reader. Reading their work aloud to classmates and other adults helps them to understand what revisions are needed.*

### 'PLUSSING' A.K.A. CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Peer review refers to the many ways in which students can share their creative work with peers for constructive feedback and then use this feedback to revise and improve their work.

When editing stories (or coming up with new story ideas) the general rule is that you may only criticize an idea if you *also add a constructive suggestion*. Hence the name *plussing*. The practice has been built on the core principles from improvisation, which are: accept all offers (accept the idea, don't reject it), use "yes, **and** ..." instead of "yes, but ...", and make your partner look good.



"You know what they say: when you have lemmings, make lemming aid..."

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Teach students to use these three steps to give peer feedback: **Compliments, Suggestions, and Corrections**, or think of it as the TAG method if that's easier. Tell something you like, **Ask a Question**, **Give a Compliment**.

If you follow these principles, dialogue before and during the editing process becomes more like a structured debate that's both serious and yet constructive. It's not an attempt to gloss over the hard stuff. Discussions still involve challenging problems, like possibly rejecting initial ideas, but this is done always with a view to replacing them with a better solution.

A key element achieved is respectful listening, and ongoing respect for the talents and abilities of the storyteller.

The true task is to eliminate the language that destroys creativity – language like “yes, but ...” or “that’ll never work ...” and replace these with language that shifts the focus to adding value – language like “yes, and ...” or “what if ...” or “how might we do this? ...”. This is how the practice of plussing begins.

One of the core principles is to separate the people from the problem, and thus take the focus off personal issues to avoid negativity. People often can feel that a rejection of their idea is a rejection of *them*. Once that new behavior is recognized as a *required* behavior, it can then evolve into a standard practice for students. But it must be required and practiced, first and foremost, by the leaders, in other words, modeled by the teacher.

And, the editor has no final authority. This is crucial: the writer does not have to follow any of the specific suggestions given, but also they have to keep the question of what's best for the story in mind. It is up to him or her to figure out how to address the feedback, taking the time and space necessary to think through challenging problems and solutions at length.

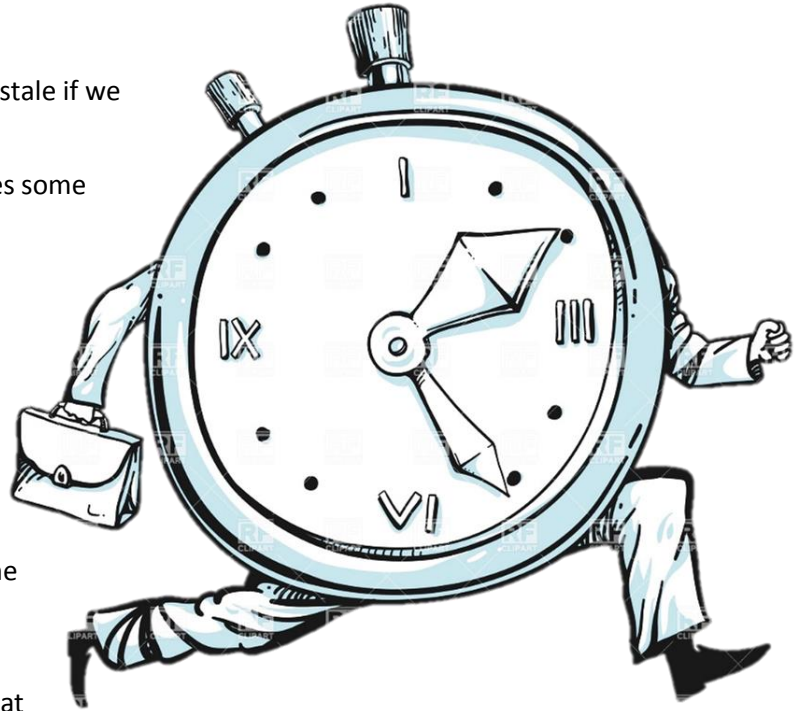
## VARIATION: 'SPEED DATING' OR QUICKTIME PEER-REVIEW

Like any classroom activity, editing can grow stale if we always follow the same format.

The format is pretty simple, though it requires some preparation and classroom reorganization.

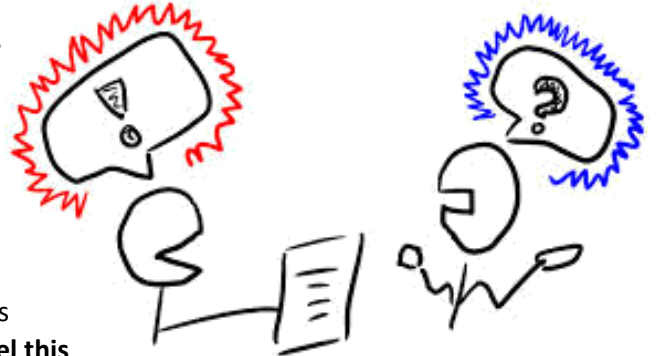
### SET UP:

1. Each student needs a copy of their story.
2. Move the chairs (and, if the room has them, tables) so that there are two concentric rings of chairs. The chairs in the inner ring should face the chairs in the outer ring. Make sure students sit in the rings.
3. Bring some music to class—a song that plays for approximately 4 minutes. It can be instrumental, it can be the Jeopardy count down song, just choose something appropriate that won't distract students. You can even simply use a kitchen timer.
4. Students need to get out their printed introductions, one piece of paper, and a pen or pencil.



After this preparation, the process is pretty simple. When the music starts, facing pairs of students exchange stories. *You may choose to have students focus on just one part of the story (ex. The introduction paragraph), two sections (the introduction and conclusion), or have them review the whole story.*

They read each other's stories and then give their partners one specific piece of advice (using the strategies of 'plussing' and Compliments, Suggestions, & Corrections) about how to improve their (ex. introductions, introductions & conclusions, or the whole story). Have them give the best tip that they could or ask specific questions about the piece and try to get a good answer within the time limits. This advice is delivered orally, and students write down their partner's advice on their papers. **The teacher can and should model this process. The teacher can even participate in the exercise itself, especially if numbers are uneven.**



Hopefully they can do this before the song ends (which doesn't always happen in the first round but almost always happens within a few rounds).

When the music stops, the students in the inner ring stand up and rotate to the next partner. Restart the music and they begin the process again.

Ex. In one classroom, the teacher asked students to review the whole story in 5 minutes and they each did 4 "dates" and then flipped roles.

This format is helpful for several reasons:

1. It's focused. Students hone in on a single aspect of their papers, which makes the workshop less overwhelming, especially for less confident writers.



2. It's cumulative. At the end of the workshop, tell students to look through the list of suggestions their classmates made and identify trends. "If you see three or four comments pertaining to one element of your introduction," tell them, "you know to work on that." This addresses one of the most common problems with peer review workshops—uneven partnerships. In this format, students' stories aren't sunk by one unhelpful partner.

3. It changes the pace of the class. Students have fun with the music and the

frequent movement and there are usually moments of laughter during the "shifts."

**NOTE:** You can also use this as a brainstorming activity or strategy. Bring in a kitchen timer and set it for five minutes. Have students discuss ideas with one another and the listener needs to build on the speaker's topic or give alternative suggestions - suggestions can be as outlandish as they want. Have them take turns and share ideas for five minutes then rotate around the room.

## DAY SIXTEEN K-8 STANDARD ALIGNMENT

### K

- SL.K.2. Confirm understanding of a text by asking and answering questions about key details and requesting clarification if something is not understood.
- SL.K.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other and authors respond to questions and comments about their stories.*

### 1

- SL.1.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- SL.1.2. Ask and answer questions about key details in a text, e.g., one read aloud.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other and authors respond to questions and comments about their stories.*

### 2

- SL.2.1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
- SL.2.1. c) Ask for clarification and further explanation as needed about the texts under discussion.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other and authors respond to questions and comments about their stories.*

### 3

- SL.3.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.3.1. c) Ask questions to check understanding of information presented, stay on topic, and link their comments to the remarks of others.
- SL.3.1. d) Explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide*



*constructive feedback to each other and authors respond to questions and comments about their stories.*

**4**

- SL.4.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.4.1. c) Pose and respond to specific questions to clarify or follow up on information, and make comments that contribute to the discussion and link to the remarks of others.
- SL.4.1. d) Review the key ideas expressed and explain their own ideas and understanding in light of the discussion.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other. Then, authors will take the constructive feedback and notes they've received and determine what changes, if any, or expansions they're going to make to their stories, plots, characters, dialogue, details, order of events, etc., when creating their final drafts.*

**5**

- SL.5.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.5.1. c) Pose and respond to specific questions by making comments that contribute to the discussion and elaborate on the remarks of others.
- SL.5.1. d) Review the key ideas expressed and draw conclusions in light of information and knowledge gained from the discussions.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other. Then, authors will take the constructive feedback and notes they've received and determine what changes, if any, or expansions they're going to make to their stories, plots, characters, dialogue, details, order of events, etc., when creating their final drafts.*

**6**

- SL.6.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.6.1. c) Pose and respond to specific questions with elaboration and detail by making comments that contribute to the topic, text, or issue under discussion.



- SL.6.1. d) Review the key ideas expressed and demonstrate understanding of multiple perspectives through reflection and paraphrasing.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other. Then, authors will take the constructive feedback and notes they've received reflect on them and determine what changes, if any, or expansions they're going to make to their stories, plots, characters, dialogue, details, order of events, etc., when creating their final drafts.*

### **7**

- SL.7.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.7.1. c) Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
- SL.7.1. d) Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other. Then, authors will take the constructive feedback and notes they've received and determine what changes, if any, or expansions they're going to make to their stories, plots, characters, dialogue, details, order of events, etc., when creating their final drafts.*

### **8**

- SL.8.1. Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on texts, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.
- SL.8.1. c) Pose questions that connect the ideas of several speakers and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant evidence, observations, and ideas.
- SL.8.1. d) Acknowledge new information expressed by others, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views in light of the evidence presented.

*These standards will be met and reinforced (and used as guidelines for expectations of students during the peer editing process) as students work together to edit stories and provide constructive feedback to each other. Then, authors will take the constructive feedback and notes they've received and determine what changes, if any, or expansions they're going to make to their stories, plots, characters, dialogue, details, order of events, etc., when creating their final drafts.*

# SAMPLES OF ACADEMIC VOCABULARY TO REINFORCE DAYS 13-16

K

- |               |            |          |
|---------------|------------|----------|
| • Author      | • Ending   | • Speech |
| • Illustrator | • Story    | • Title  |
| • Beginning   | • Sentence | • Read   |

1

- |                  |              |               |
|------------------|--------------|---------------|
| • Capitalization | • Illustrate | • Punctuation |
| • Character      | • Sequence   | • Question    |
| • Setting        | • Predict    |               |

2

- |             |              |        |
|-------------|--------------|--------|
| • Adjective | • Discussion | • Edit |
| • Adverb    | • Main idea  | • Plot |
| • Pronoun   | • Draft      |        |

3

- |             |                      |            |
|-------------|----------------------|------------|
| • Adverb    | • Setting            | • Synonyms |
| • Antonyms  | • Summarize          | • Verb     |
| • Character | • Supporting details | • Opinion  |

4

- |                    |                     |                                 |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Audience         | • Making inferences | • Time order/transitional words |
| • Author's purpose | • Outline           |                                 |
| • Compare          | • Prediction        |                                 |
| • Contrast         | • Proofread         |                                 |

5

- |                       |                          |                   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| • Figurative language | • Introductory paragraph | • Personification |
| • Hyperbole           | • Main ideas             | • Point of view   |
| • Interjections       | • Narrative              | • Onomatopoeia    |

6

- |             |                   |                    |
|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| • Hyperbole | • Personification | • Relevancy        |
| • Imagery   | • Point of view   | • Sequential order |
| • Inference | • Relevant        | • Symbolism        |

7

- |                          |                |              |
|--------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| • Interaction with texts | • Juncture     | • Accent     |
| • Stress                 | • Onomatopoeia | • Repetition |

- Irony
- Mood
- Foreshadowing
- Flashback
- Tone
- Inferences
- Viewpoint
- Nuance
- Climax

8

- Bias
- Clincher sentence
- Composition
- Debate
- Shades of meaning
- Coherent order
- Composition
- Reliability
- Sensory detail
- Tension
- Mood/tone

## SAMPLE SUPPLY LIST WEEK 4

### DAY 13

Materials:

- Optional: Selected Books such as *To Root, to Toot, to Parachute: What Is a Verb?* (Words are Categorical) by Brian P. Cleary as well as *A Mink, a Fink, a Skating Rink: What Is a Noun?* and *Hairy, Scary, Ordinary: What Is an Adjective?*
- Printouts
- Pencils
- Thesauruses

### DAY 14

Materials:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Completed Characters (for inspiration)
- Completed Settings (for inspiration)

### DAY 15

Materials:

- Pencils
- Paper
- Completed Characters (for inspiration)
- Completed Settings (for inspiration)
- Extension Materials (If time allows & stories are complete)
  - Printouts

- Posterboard
- Scissors
- Glue

## **DAY 16**

### Materials:

- Completed stories
- Music/stop watch
- Pencils/Pens