

Writing A Mystery Lesson Plan

Concept to Teach

This lesson provides a visual experience in which students develop a better understanding of sequencing, while further developing their mystery writing skills.

Grade: 2-7

Time: up to four class periods

Objectives

- Students will listen to or read a variety of genres to use as models for writing in different modes.
- Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

This lesson is best when used in conjunction with the “Reading a Mystery Lesson Plan” and the “Mystery Vocabulary Lesson Plan”

Materials

- 1) Copies of the *Mystery Writing Prompt*—one copy per student
- 2) Copies of the *Student checklist*—two copies per student
- 3) Posters or drawings of monsters the students can look at for inspiration.

Procedure

Preparation

- 1) Gather mysteries to have available for independent reading and read aloud

Setup

Session 1:

- 1) Ask students if they have ever read any mystery stories, and if so, what their favorites are. Ask them to think about what the different parts of a mystery are, recording their responses on chart paper.
- 2) Review the elements of a mystery with your students: characters, setting, plot, clues, sequence, distractions, and solution. Tell them that we are going to work on the parts of a mystery today.
- 3) Allow the students to go to lunch, or take a break of some sort. While the students are out of the classroom, mess up the room as though a monster came in while they were out of the classroom. Turn book, chairs and even desks upside down, scribble on the board, bite off a piece of the teacher’s lunch, etc. You might even put some large footprints down on the floor to indicate it was a bigger monster. Just generally mess up the room.

Direct Instruction

Session 2:

- 1) As the students return to the classroom, act surprised about the mess. Discuss what has happened. Who do they think did this? Think about what the being looked like. What were they doing? What was the sequence of events? Write the suggestions on the board as they brainstorm. Make sure to take them through a sequence of where the monster started and ended. (Remind them of “sequence words”: first, then, again, second, finally, etc.)
- 2) Instruct them to use the *Mystery Writing Prompt* handout to tell what they think happened.
- 3) Look over the prompt handout by the end of the day and tell them that this is going to be the start of their first mystery story.

Sessions 3 and 4:

- 1) Give the students time to write the first draft of their story. Tell them to make sure they include a beginning, a middle, and an end. Give each student a copy of the *Student Checklist* and review your expectations and the features that you will use to grade their stories.
- 2) Ask them to have a buddy check their paper (using the *Student Checklist*), and then make corrections to their mystery for a final draft.

Assessment

- 1) Use the *Student Checklist* as a buddy check and as a final grading piece.
- 2) When the story is final, allow each student to share their story with a buddy, a group of fellow students, or the entire class, depending on the amount of time you have.

Extended Learning Activities

- Post students' stories on a class website or create a classroom mystery magazine for family and friends.
- Students design a board game using the mystery monster stories they created in class.

Date _____

Mystery Writing Prompt

Describe the monster. Remember to include what the monster looks like (color of skin/fur, color of eyes, etc.), what he/she sounds like, and something about the personality (favorite things, things the monster hates, etc.). Does your character have a name? Where does your monster like to hang out?

[illegible]

Does the monster like to scare people, or just like to eat your pizza?

Describe the scene: What were the clues? In what order did the clues appear?

Make a Hunch: Can you make any hunches based on the clues?

Name _____

Date _____

Student Checklist

_____ This is a buddy check

_____ This is for my final draft

1. Does your story have a properly written title? ____/5

Comments:

2. Are paragraphs indented? ____/10

Comments:

3. Do all sentences begin with capital letters? ____/15

Comments:

4. Do all sentences end with proper punctuation? ____/15

Comments:

5. Do sentences make sense? ____/15
(ex: subject verb agreement, proper word usage etc.)

Comments:

6. Does your story follow the proper sequence? ____/20

Comments:

7. Did you use at least 5 order words? ____/20

Comments:

Total: ____/100