

Grade 3 Sampler



# UNITS OF STUDY

*in* Opinion, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

A COMMON CORE WORKSHOP CURRICULUM



LUCY CALKINS

*with Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project*



# Grade 3 Components

## Professional and Classroom Support

*A Guide to the Common Core Writing Workshop* crystallizes the essential principles, methods, and structures of effective writing workshop instruction.

The *Resources for Teaching Writing* CD-ROM provides unit-specific print resources to support your teaching throughout the year.

## Four Units of Study

- ◆ Are organized around the three types of writing mandated by the Common Core—*opinion, information, and narrative writing*
- ◆ Lay out six weeks of instruction (18–22 sessions) in each unit
- ◆ Include all of the teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work needed to teach a comprehensive workshop curriculum
- ◆ Model Lucy and her colleagues' carefully crafted teaching moves and language

## Writing Pathways:

### *Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions*

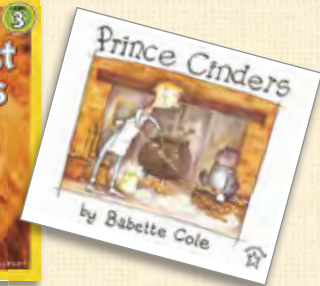
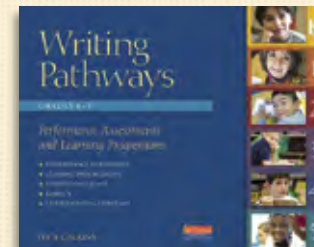
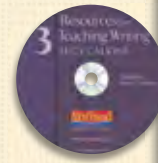
- ◆ Is organized around a K–5 continuum of learning progressions across opinion, information, and narrative writing
- ◆ Includes performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars

## If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction

- ◆ Offers five concise units of study
- ◆ Presents alternative assessment-based units that support targeted instruction and differentiation

## Units of Study Trade Book Pack

- ◆ Includes three age-appropriate trade books referenced in the units of study (*recommended*)
- ◆ Models effective writing techniques, encourages students to read as writers, and provides background knowledge



Welcome to this sampler of the Grade 3 components in the Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing series. The first pages of this sampler provide an overview of the units of study. They describe the instructional pathways each unit follows and how this journey is subdivided into bends, or parts. This overview describes how each bend builds on the learning in the previous bend and sets the stage for the learning in the next bend. Likewise, it describes how each larger unit of study builds on the learning in past units and sets the stage for learning in future units and grades. The tables of contents that follow focus in on the steps of the journey and map in detail the learning students will see and experience.

The bulk of this sampler is the first bend from Unit 4, *Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales*. This bend, “Learning about Adaptations by Writing in the Footsteps of the Classics,” extends your students’ journey into narrative writing. This in-depth look allows you to see how learning is progressively built in each unit and how students become immersed in the writing process. In addition to mapping your teaching points, minilessons, conferences, and small-group work, each session also includes Lucy’s coaching commentary. In these side-column notes, Lucy is at your side explaining proven strategies, offering professional insight, and coaching you through the nitty-gritty details of teaching.

Also included are samples of the instructional resources that support these core units. *Writing Pathways* shows you the types of learning progressions, checklists, and benchmark writing samples that will help you evaluate your students’ work and establish where students are in their writing development. *If... Then... Curriculum* describes the alternate units you can use to enhance or differentiate your instruction. The samples from the resources CD-ROM show you the wealth of teaching tools that support each unit. And finally, the trade book pack lists the mentor texts that support instruction.

As you review this Grade 3 sampler, it is important to remember that the goal of this series is to model thoughtful, reflective teaching in ways that enable you to extrapolate guidelines and methods, so that you will feel ready to invent your own clear, sequenced, vibrant instruction in writing.

“For third-graders the writing process is vastly more elongated. Students are able to be more deliberate and plan more at junctures throughout the writing process. Third-graders are taught ways to start a text, plan a text, structure a text, reread a text, revise a text, and so on.”

—Lucy Calkins



- ◆ Units of Study Overview and Contents *pages 2–12*
- ◆ UNIT 4: *Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales* (Narrative Writing)  
BEND 1: “Writing in the Footsteps of the Classics” *pages 13–72*
- ◆ *Writing Pathways: Performance Assessments and Learning Progressions* *pages 74–77*
- ◆ *If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction* *pages 78–83*
- ◆ *Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM* *pages 84–87*
- ◆ Units of Study Trade Book Pack *page 88*
- ◆ About the Grade 3 Authors *back cover*



# OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 1

## *Crafting True Stories*

Lucy Calkins and Marjorie Martinelli

In the first section—bend—of this unit, in addition to helping children get accustomed to the routines and expectations of the writing workshop, you will show them examples of third-grade writing notebooks. Then, as children generate personal narrative writing, you'll coach them in setting goals for themselves. For some children this will mean increasing their volume and stamina; for others it will mean writing with more attention to conventions or craft. This first bend provides a vision for the kind of writing third-graders can do and sets clear expectations in a celebratory, can-do way.

Bend II introduces children to keeping a writing notebook. Children will learn to reread their notebooks, to select a seed idea, and then to develop that seed idea by storytelling different ways the story might go (sound, start and end, etc.). Then you will teach them that writers draft by writing fast and furiously, reliving each moment as they go. Next, children will spend time on revision, studying the work of mentor author Karen Hesse; they'll try her techniques in their own drafts. You'll conclude this bend by introducing paragraphing and discussing how to develop paragraphs by adding step-by-step actions, dialogue,

thoughts, and feelings.

The third bend emphasizes independence and initiative. You'll remind children that writers finish one piece and begin the next right away, applying all they've learned and moving to higher levels of expertise and independence. Much of what you teach during this time will depend on what you observe when you compare your students' writing with the narrative writing checklists. In addition to this revision work, you'll teach students the conventions of punctuating dialogue.

During the final bend, after students have selected the draft they will publish, you will rally them to tackle a whole new fast draft on that topic. They'll need to rehearse just as they did for the first draft, envisioning the story bit by bit. Then you'll teach children, once again, to look to professional authors to learn ways writers deliberately craft the endings of their stories. Finally, you'll show students how to use an editing checklist. As a final celebration, you will create a bulletin board that has a space for each child's writing and then invite classroom visitors to read and admire the work put forth by these blossoming third-grade writers.

## Welcome to Unit 1

### BEND I ♦ Writing Personal Narratives with Independence

1. Starting the Writing Workshop: Visualizing Possibilities
2. Finding Ideas and Writing Up a Storm
3. Drawing on a Repertoire of Strategies: Writing with Independence
4. Writers Use a Storyteller’s Voice. They Tell Stories, Not Summaries
5. Taking Stock: Pausing to Ask, “How Am I Doing?”
6. Editing as We Go: Making Sure Others Can Read Our Writing

### BEND II ♦ Becoming a Storyteller on the Page

7. Rehearsing: Storytelling and Leads
8. Writing Discovery Drafts
9. Revising by Studying What Other Authors Have Done
10. Storytellers Develop the Heart of a Story
11. Paragraphing to Support Sequencing, Dialogue, and Elaboration

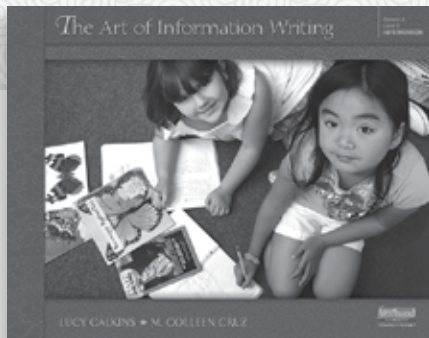
### BEND III ♦ Writing with New Independence on a Second Piece

12. Becoming One’s Own Captain: Starting a Second Piece, Working with New Independence
13. Revision Happens throughout the Writing Process
14. Drafting: Writing from Inside a Memory
15. Revision: Balancing Kinds of Details
16. Commas and Quotation Marks: Punctuating Dialogue

### BEND IV ♦ Fixing Up and Fancying Up Our Best Work: Revision and Editing

17. Writers Revise in Big, Important Ways
18. Revising Endings: Learning from Published Writing
19. Using Editing Checklists
20. Publishing: A Writing Community Celebrates





## OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 2

### *The Art of Information Writing*

Lucy Calkins and M. Colleen Cruz

**B**efore the first day of this unit students need to have chosen the general topic they'll be teaching others about through their writing—a topic on which they already have expertise. As they get started writing in this first bend, you will teach them ways to write with authority by inviting them to teach their topic to others and take what they learn from teaching it back to their writing. You will then spend a few lessons teaching students to try out various writing structures before drafting.

Bend II emphasizes both drafting and revising, braiding them together as many professional writers of information books do. Students will learn increasingly complex revision strategies, now involving choosing grammatical structures and using research to feed elaboration. They will continue to use ways to improve their writing learned in the primary grades.

In Bend III you will help your students prepare for publication, emphasizing the importance of being aware of one's audience. You will

also ask students to keep in mind the sorts of things a nonfiction author attends to while preparing for readers: using text features, checking facts, and attending to conventions. These, not incidentally, are skills that third-graders need to practice again and again throughout their year and across the disciplines.

During the final bend you will push toward independence. Students will learn ways to write informatively, in a variety of genres, about a topic they've been studying in social studies, thus discovering how transferable writing skills can and should be once they are learned. At the end of the unit, students have an opportunity to teach their writing skills to younger students as a celebration of what they've learned and as a way to bring full circle the theme of teaching with which this unit opened. Throughout the entire unit, you will see a renewed commitment to grammar, vocabulary, and conventions, all carefully aligned with the Common Core State Standards.

## Welcome to Unit 2

### **BEND I** ♦ **Organizing Information**

1. Teaching Others as a Way to Prime the Pump
2. The Power of Organizing and Reorganizing
3. New Structures Lead to New Thinking
4. Laying the Bricks of Information
5. Organization Matters in Texts Large and Small

### **Bend II** ♦ **Reaching to Write Well**

6. Studying Mentor Texts in a Search for Elaboration Strategies
7. Making Connections within and across Chapters
8. Balancing Facts and Ideas from the Start
9. Researching Facts and Ensuring Text Accuracy
10. Reusing and Recycling in the Revision Process
11. Creating Introductions through Researching Mentor Authors

### **BEND III** ♦ **Moving Toward Publication, Moving Toward Readers**

12. Taking Stock and Setting Goals
13. Putting Oneself in Readers' Shoes to Clear Up Confusion
14. Using Text Features Makes It Easier for Readers to Learn
15. Fact-Checking through Rapid Research
16. Punctuating with Paragraphs

### **BEND IV** ♦ **Transferring Learning from Long Projects to Short Ones**

17. Plan Content-Area Writing, Drawing on Knowledge from Across the Unit
18. Revising from Self-Assessments
19. Crafting Speeches, Articles, or Brochures Using Information Writing Skills
20. Bringing All You Know to Every Project
21. A Final Celebration: Using Knowledge about Nonfiction Writing to Teach Younger Students





## OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 3

### *Changing the World* *Persuasive Speeches, Petitions, and Editorials*

Lucy Calkins and Kelly Boland Hohne

During the first bend in this unit you will rally your third-graders to support bold, brave opinions as they write persuasive speeches. Children first work together on a shared topic; this allows them to receive lots of help writing structured texts that contain a claim, reasons, and examples. They immerse themselves in the genre by writing this speech, revising it, and delivering it to the school principal. Then students write many more persuasive speeches in their notebook—at least one or two a day. As they do, you coach them to apply and extend the opinion writing skills they learned in previous grades. At the end of this bend students use a checklist to assess their work, set goals, and create action plans for meeting those goals.

The second bend gives writers the opportunity to work for an extended time on one persuasive speech, taking it through the writing process. They gather facts and details and organize them. They “write long” about their topic, categorize the evidence they collect, and decide which evidence belongs in their speech. They then deliver their speech to at least a small group. These speeches may be filmed.

In Bend III, “From Persuasive Speeches to Petitions, Editorials, and Persuasive Letters,” students transfer and apply everything they have learned about writing persuasive speeches to writing other types of

opinion pieces. While working on their new project, students generate ideas, plan, draft, revise, and edit, going through the writing process more quickly and with greater independence, at the same time learning strategies for raising the level of their work. Students then assess their work, revise their draft, and consider how well they are meeting the expectations for third-grade (perhaps fourth-grade) opinion writing. They publish a second piece at the end of this bend.

In the final bend of the unit, “Cause Groups,” students work collaboratively to support causes through writing in various genres. You may have a group of students dedicated to recycling, for example, or another group dedicated to animal rights. Because they will by now be well versed in taking themselves through the writing process, your teaching can focus instead on helping students incorporate research into their writing. To publish their third and final piece, students will consider where in the world the text should go to reach the particular audience the writer had in mind. The culminating celebration of this unit showcases all the pieces students have written as well as the process they have gone through to ensure that others will see and be moved by their work.



## Welcome to Unit 3

### BEND I ♦ Launching Work on Persuasive Speeches

1. Practicing Persuasion
2. Gathering Brave, Bold Opinions for Persuasive Writing
3. Drawing on a Repertoire of Strategies for Generating Opinion Writing: Writing with Independence
4. Considering Audience to Say More
5. Editing as You Go: Making Sure Your Audience Can Always Read Your Drafts
6. Taking Stock and Setting Goals

### BEND II ♦ Raising the Level of Persuasive Writing

7. Gathering All You Know about Your Opinion
8. Organizing and Categorizing
9. For Example: Proving by Showing
10. By Considering Audience, Writers Select and Discard Material
11. Paragraphing to Organize Our Drafts
12. Choosing Words that Sound Right and Evoke Emotion
13. Looking Back and Looking Forward:  
Assessing and Preparing for Mini-Publication

### BEND III ♦ From Persuasive Speeches to Petitions, Editorials, and Persuasive Letters

14. Inquiry into Petitions
15. Becoming Your Own Job Captain
16. Gathering a Variety of Evidence: Interviews and Surveys
17. Revising Your Introductions and Conclusions to Get Your Audience to Care
18. Taking Stock Again: Goal Setting with More Independence

### BEND IV ♦ Cause Groups

19. Tackling a Cause
20. Becoming Informed about a Cause
21. Yesterday's Revisions Become Today's Drafting Strategies
22. Getting Our Writing Ready for Readers
23. Celebrating Activism



## OVERVIEW AND CONTENTS FOR UNIT 4



### *Once Upon a Time* *Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales*

Lucy Calkins, Shana Frazin, and Maggie Beattie Roberts

During the first bend in this very special unit you'll rally each child to adapt a fairy tale—we suggest children choose either *Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. Once writers have chosen a tale, they will first need to reread the classic version, then study and annotate it, noticing the plot as well as the qualities of a fairy tale. Children then plan their adaptations, thinking about significant changes they could make to alter the course of the tale. At first your children are apt to write their stories in a just-the-facts way. Their attention will be on getting the adaptations right. This will probably change midway when you teach storytelling as a way to rehearse and plan their adaptations. Suddenly, in partnerships, children will use gestures, small actions, expressions, and dialogue to act out their adaptations and bring their imagined stories to life. In this first bend you will also teach children that a narrator can function a bit like Jiminy Cricket once did in old-fashioned movies—coming onstage to tell viewers background information. They, too, can use a narrator to stitch their small-moment scenes together.

The theme of the second bend is independence and transference.

During this bend your children will write their second adaptation of a fairy tale—of any tale they choose! You'll teach a series of lessons that support students in applying what they learned in the previous bend. You will address common pitfalls of third-grade narrative writing—drafts that are swamped with dialogue, sentences that lack variety, and scenes that are summarized rather than stretched out with detail. An important part of this bend is to help children imagine far more extensive revisions than anything they've previously undertaken. This will set the stage for the message that pervades this bend: "Push yourself. You can do more than you think."

In the final bend, to celebrate your students' growth and ensure that it continues, you will teach them to apply all they've learned in writing an original fairy tale. You will teach children that writers of fairy tales use what they know about narrative writing, creating characters with wants who encounter trouble and then—ta-da!—there's a resolution. Once your writers have generated possible story ideas, they draft and, more importantly, revise until they exceed even their own expectations. Then you will coach them in editing and finally publishing their favorite tale.

## Welcome to Unit 4

### **BEND I** ♦ **Writing in the Footsteps of the Classics**

1. Adapting Classic Tales
2. Writing Story Adaptations that Hold Together
3. Storytelling, Planning, and Drafting Adaptations of Fairy Tales
4. Writers Can Story-Tell and Act Out as They Draft
5. Weaving Narration through Stories
6. Mirror, Mirror on the Wall: Assessment Using Self-Reflection

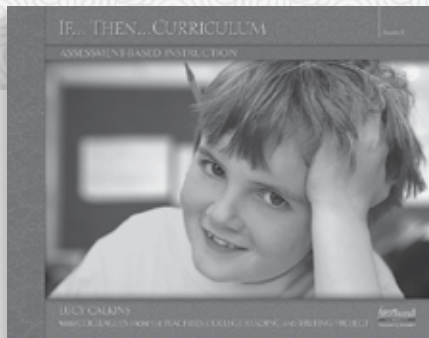
### **BEND II** ♦ **Follow the Path: Adapting Fairy Tales with Independence**

7. Goals and Plans Are a Big Deal
8. Telling Stories that Make Readers Shiver
9. Revising Early and Often
10. When Dialogue Swamps Your Draft, Add Actions
11. Painting a Picture with Words: Revising for Language
12. The Long and Short of It: Editing for Sentence Variety

### **BEND III** ♦ **Blazing Trails: Writing Original Fairy Tales**

13. Collecting Ideas for Original Fairy Tales
14. From “This Is a Fairy Tale About” to “Once upon a Time”
15. Tethering Objects to Characters
16. Using Descriptive Language While Drafting
17. Revising the Magic
18. Revising for Readers
19. Editing with an Eye Out for Broken Patterns
20. Happily Ever After: A Fairy Tale Celebration





# CONTENTS

## *If... Then... Curriculum* *Assessment-Based Instruction*

Lucy Calkins with Julia Mooney  
and Colleagues from the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project

### **Introduction: Third-Grade Writers and Planning Your Year**

### **Part One: Alternate and Additional Units**

---

#### **1. Writing Gripping Fictional Stories with Meaning and Significance**

*If your students are new to the writing workshop, performed at a low level on their narrative on-demand assessment, or have not had experience writing narratives in previous grades, THEN you may want to teach this unit prior to Crafting True Stories.*

—or—

*If your students would benefit from an additional narrative unit on fiction, THEN you may want to teach this unit after Crafting True Stories and before Once Upon a Time.*

#### **2. Information Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas**

*If you want to extend your students' knowledge of information writing as well as teach them to write across the curriculum, THEN you might want to teach this unit after The Art of Information Writing.*

#### **3. Poetry: Writing, Thinking, and Seeing More**

*If you want to teach your students to become more conscious of the crafting and language decisions that writers make, THEN you might want to teach this unit.*

#### **4. The Literary Essay: Equipping Ourselves with the Tools to Write Expository Texts that Advance an Idea about Literature**

*If your writers are strong and are ready for more challenging units, THEN you may want to teach this unit after Changing the World to prepare students for the writing they will do in fourth grade and beyond.*

#### **5. Revision**

*If you want to present your students with an opportunity to reflect on their growth as writers and return to previous work with a new vigor, THEN you might want to end the school year with this unit.*

## Part Two: Differentiating Instruction for Individuals and Small Groups: If... Then... Conferring Scenarios

### **NARRATIVE WRITING**

#### **Structure and Cohesion**

- If the story lacks focus . . .*
- If the story is confusing or seems to be missing important information . . .*
- If the story has no tension . . .*
- If the story has no real or significant ending . . .*
- If the writer is new to the writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .*
- If the writer does not use paragraphs . . .*

#### **Elaboration**

- If the writer has created a story that is sparse, with little elaboration . . .*
- If the story is riddled with details . . .*
- If the story is swamped with dialogue . . .*
- If the writer has written the external story but not the internal story . . .*
- If the writer struggles to identify and convey a deeper meaning . . .*
- If the writer is ready to use literary devices . . .*

#### **Language**

- If the writer summarizes rather than story-tells . . .*
- If the writer struggles with spelling . . .*
- If the writer struggles with ending punctuation . . .*

#### **The Process of Generating Ideas**

- If the writer has “nothing to write about . . .”*
- If the writer’s notebook work does not represent all he can do . . .*

#### **The Process of Drafting**

- If the writer has trouble maintaining stamina and volume . . .*

#### **The Process of Revision**

- If the writer struggles to work independently (during revision or other parts of the writing process) . . .*
- If the writer does not have personal goals for his writing progress . . .*

#### **The Process of Editing**

- If the writer does not use what he knows about editing while writing . . .*

### **INFORMATION WRITING**

#### **Structure and Cohesion**

- If the writer has not established a clear organization for his book . . .*
- If information overlaps in various sections . . .*
- If the writer is ready to experiment with alternative structures of organization . . .*
- If the writer has chosen a topic that is too broad . . .*
- If the piece is lacking an introduction and/or conclusion . . .*

#### **Elaboration**

- If each section is short and needs to be elaborated upon . . .*
- If the writer elaborates by adding fact upon fact . . .*
- If the writer goes off on tangents when elaborating . . .*
- If the writer does not elaborate on information from outside sources . . .*

#### **Language**

- If the writer incorporates quotes, facts, and statistics but does so awkwardly . . .*
- If transitions from section to section sound awkward . . .*
- If the writer does not incorporate domain-specific vocabulary . . .*

#### **The Process of Generating Ideas**

- If the writer chooses ideas about which he has little expertise and/or that are difficult to research . . .*
- If the writer simply copies facts into his notebook . . .*

#### **The Process of Drafting**

- If the first draft is not organized . . .*

#### **The Process of Revision**

- If the writer is “done” while revising . . .*
- If the writer does not have a large repertoire of strategies to draw from . . .*

### The Process of Editing

*If the student has edited but has missed several mistakes or would otherwise benefit from learning to partner-edit . . .*

## **OPINION WRITING**

### Structure and Cohesion

*If the introduction does not forecast the structure of the essay . . .*

*If supports are overlapping . . .*

*If supports are not parallel or equal in weight . . .*

*If the writer is new to the writing workshop or this particular genre of writing . . .*

*If the writer has multiple, well-developed reasons, but they all blur together without paragraphs or transitions . . .*

*If the writer is ready to consider counterarguments . . .*

### Elaboration

*If the writer is struggling to elaborate (1) . . .*

*If the writer is struggling to elaborate (2) . . .*

*If the writer's evidence feels free-floating or disconnected from the argument at hand . . .*

*If the piece is swamped with details . . .*

*If the writer has provided evidence, but it does not all support the claim . . .*

### Language

*If the writer uses a casual, informal tone when writing . . .*

*If the writer struggles with spelling . . .*

*If the writer struggles with comma usage . . .*

### The Process of Generating Ideas

*If the writer struggles to generate meaningful topics worth exploring . . .*

*If the writer is exploring opinions that are overly simple or without dimension . . .*

### The Process of Drafting

*If the writer has a clear plan for her writing but loses focus and organization when drafting . . .*

### The Process of Revision

*If the writer has a limited repertoire of revision strategies . . .*

### The Process of Editing

*If the writer "edits on the run," investing little time or effort in the process . . .*

# Writing in the Footsteps of the Classics

## BEND I



SAMPLE BEND



## Session 1

# Adapting Classic Tales

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that writers create their own fairy tales by adapting classic ones. To gain inspiration and begin to write, writers study several versions of a classic fairy tale and then ask themselves, "Why might the author have made these versions?"

### GETTING READY

- ✓ *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole (see Minilesson and Active Engagement) 📖
- ✓ Classic versions of *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, which you will want to read aloud before today
- ✓ White paper folded into quarters to make a story-planning booklet, one piece for each student (see Connection)
- ✓ Your version of the story-planning booklet (see Connection)
- ✓ "Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales" chart (see Teaching and Active Engagement)
- ✓ Notebooks and pencils
- ✓ Your demonstration writer's notebook (see Teaching)
- ✓ Chart with phrases such as *Maybe . . .*, *Could it be . . .*, *My theory is . . .* (see Teaching and Active Engagement) 📖
- ✓ Printed copies of *Cinderella*, enough for each student 📖
- ✓ Printed copies of *Cinderella* adaptations, enough for students to be in groups of four with one copy per group 📖
- ✓ Optional: A selected bibliography of some of our favorite classic fairy tales and adaptations

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.3.5, W.3.7, W.3.8, RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, RL.3.7, RL.3.10, RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.9, SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.6

2

**S**TARTING A NEW UNIT is like walking across an unbroken field of snow or writing on a blank page of notebook paper. It is beautiful thing—but it may also be daunting. Today will be especially highly charged because your children will be totally thrilled at the idea that they may now, at long last, write fiction. For many of them, the fact that this is not just a unit in fiction but in fairy tales will be even more exciting; they may bring giants and trolls, evil stepmothers, and talking mirrors into their stories!

It would be great if you could assume that all your children know what you mean when you tell them they will be writing fairy tales and that they understand your allusions to fairy tales. It would be great if your third-graders all understand, for example, that if you ask, "If I don't get it done by our deadline, will I turn into a pumpkin?" you are referring to Cinderella's rush to leave the ball before the clock strikes twelve and her carriage returns to its original shape. This unit would be easier if your children are all right there with you when you say, "It's real, honestly! Do I need to sleep on a pea to prove it?"

But the truth is, unless you have taught fairy tales yourself, some of your children may have only a hazy idea of what you mean by writing fairy tales. That's okay, too. One goal for the unit will be to immerse students into an intensive study in the essentials of fairy tales while they adapt and write their own. That is, your children will be learning on the job—which, after all, is what school should be about!

Although you needn't launch the unit with an intensive three-week unit on reading fairy tales, you will need to be sure that your children at least know the three fairy tales that will be especially central to this unit. If you follow the course set by this book, that will mean that before or on Day One of the unit, outside of the writing workshop, you'll read aloud at least the classic version of *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella*, and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. It would be ideal if you could read these more than once, and perhaps you also can assign children to listen to audio versions of these stories. If you don't have the books on tape or CD, you can digitally record yourself reading your favorite versions. Or even ask parents, the principal, beloved art teachers, and so on to record themselves reading the books.

GRADE 3: ONCE UPON A TIME



We also include the old Norwegian version of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, the Grimm’s version of *Little Red Riding Hood* (called *Little Red Cap*), and Charles Perrault’s version of *Cinderella* on the accompanying CD-ROM. You may of course use a classic fairy tale version of your choice. “Wait,” some of you may be thinking, “this is a book on fairy tale adaptations— isn’t *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* a folktale?” Although *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* straddles both categories, the heart of our book is fiction writing, specifically writing well-structured stories. Both *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, with their clear, accessible structures, support our goal.

---

*“We do well to pay conscious attention to filling our students’ ears and minds with the rich sounds of this genre.”*

You will want your children to have the cadence and language of those three fairy tales in their bones. When Cynthia Rylant was asked, for example, “How do you teach children to write?” she answered:

Read to them. . . . Take their breath away. Read with the same feeling in your throat as when you first see the ocean after driving hours and hours to get there. Close the final page of the book with the same reverence you feel when

you kiss your sleeping child at night. Be quiet. Don’t talk the experience to death. . . . Teach your children to be moved and they will move others.

As you read and reread fairy tales to your students, as you remind yourself to be quiet and let kids feel and think, you are quietly building within them the capacity to emulate the language they are hearing—and of course, to innovate. Reading and writing are not simply visual processes. We do well to pay conscious attention to filling our students’ ears and minds with the rich sounds of this genre.

If you can channel students to read fairy tales as well, perhaps collecting observations about how fairy tales usually go, that would be icing on the cake. If children have even just a bit of time to study fairy tales prior to this unit, this means they will be ready to ooh and ah over the prospect of writing tales in which trolls tackle the biggest goat and children outwit the evil witch. But the unit is designed so that it works beautifully if the only thing you’ve been able to do before it begins is to read aloud.

Today’s session is a bit unusual because you channel children to read published fairy tale adaptations and do not suggest they spend today writing at all. They won’t be able to adapt a tale until they understand what it means to do so, and to do this they need to compare and contrast several versions of a story and think about what the author was doing when he or she wrote a different version. Help children notice that adaptations are not arbitrary—the author is attempting to improve on the original tale: to make a character less stereotyped, to set more fairy stories in urban settings, to present girls in a less sexist fashion, to alter the moral of the story.



## MINILESSON

# Adapting Classic Tales

### CONNECTION

**Support your students as storytellers of fairy tales, ensuring that classic tales are “in their bones” before they begin writing fairy tale adaptations.**

“Writers, you know that today is the first official day of our fairy tale unit. You’ve probably noticed that I’ve been reading lots of different fairy tales to you lately. I’ve been doing that on purpose so that the stories—their language, their sounds—will be in your bones.

“Whenever I read a fairy tale, I think about the fact that before fairy tales were ever written down, they were told and retold, time and again, in different ways. They’ve been told and retold, passed from one person to another, because they work as stories. Fairy tales are our most beloved stories of all time.”

**Demonstrate storytelling a familiar fairy tale across four pages in a story-planning booklet.**

“In a minute, you’re going to practice getting either *Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, whichever story you choose to work with first, into your bones. I gave you a piece of white paper as you came to the meeting area. Will you fold it into a little booklet? We’ll call it a story-planning booklet, because that’s what it will help us with.” I folded my page in half once, then in half again, to show them. “Here’s my booklet, and I am going to choose *Little Red Riding Hood*. Each of you decide on the story you’ll tell—that will be the first story you adapt. Thumbs-up if you have that decided.

“My booklet has four pages, and I know yours does as well. I’m imagining that the first page will be the set-up speech, the second page will be the story of the first small moment—of what happens first—and the third page will tell the trouble. Then, on the last page, things are wrapped up.

“Think about your story, and think about how you will fit the whole story into just the pages of your story-planning booklet.” I gave them a minute to think. “Touch each page, thinking what you’ll tell on each page.” They started thinking, and I added, as I flipped through my pages, “The background, the first scene, the trouble, the ending.

### ◆ COACHING

*Just as texts have themes, and the start of a text hints at those themes, so too do units of study. This unit hints early on at the oral nature of fairy tales, emphasizing the way fairy tales have been told and retold over the ages, which sets students up for the work that will be especially important. Before long, students will be telling and retelling these beloved tales.*

*When children tell and write their stories, they often blend from one page to the next in a sort of cascading storyline. It helps them to have distinct boundaries between one page and the next, and to be clear about the job they’ll do on each page. Describing the structure of fairy tales to children is tricky because all don’t unfold in the exact same way. But using this booklet as a vessel for children’s storytelling generally works to help clarify students’ stories.*

"I'll go first, then you try this." Touching the first page, I said in a dramatic storyteller's voice, "Once upon a time, there was a little girl who always wore a bright red hood, so everyone called her 'Little Red Riding Hood.' She was told never to talk to strangers—but she never remembered, because she was such a friendly little girl." I added, in an aside, "That's the backstory."

Then I turned the page, saying, "Now I'll tell the first small moment." I touched page 2 and said, "One day" [I interrupted myself to say as an aside, "Page 2 usually starts like that"]. Then I continued, "Little Red Riding Hood's mother said, 'Would you take a basket of lunch to your sick grandma? It will cheer her up.'"

**Channel students to practice storytelling the tales they will adapt, touching each of the story-planning booklet's four pages as they go.**

"Get together with your partner and will one of you do the same thing that I have done, only use all your own words? Remember to start with the backstory for the first page, then shift to your first small moment for the second page. That small moment should include dialogue and details—all of that you already know how to use in your writing."

As the meeting area erupted with storytelling, I moved among the students. The students didn't have time to finish telling one story, let alone to switch places, before I reconvened the class. "You know those classic fairy tales so well! I noticed that each story sounded a little bit different depending on who was telling it—you each gave it a little bit of your personality as you told it. That is so interesting because today, we are going to start thinking about—and studying—fairy tale adaptations."

**Explain that writers often write adaptations of a classic story; suggest the class participate in an inquiry on how writers do this.**

"Writers write adaptations all the time. They take a classic story and they write a different version of it. Writers call this kind of writing an 'adaptation.' And although writers adapt all sorts of stories, there is one kind of story that writers especially adapt—fairy tales.

"Today, instead of a regular workshop, you'll spend the time studying books, doing an inquiry. Tomorrow you'll each start working on an adaptation of one of the fairy tales you just told—and later in this unit, you will write your own original fairy tale. To do this work, we need to investigate a question that *all* of us have—myself included. We need to know how to go about writing fairy tale adaptations."

**❁ Name the question that will guide the inquiry.**

"The question we will be researching is: What does the author seem to be trying to do when he or she changes some things and not others?"

"And most of all: How will a study of someone else's adaptations help me when I write my own?"

*Notice that I start to tell my story as a small moment. I include the exact words that are said to the character, and I proceed along in a bit-by-bit fashion.*

*The predictable structure of a minilesson is meant to provide students with a lot of support. They can listen, knowing that within a minute from starting the unit, the teacher will crystallize the point of the minilesson in a teaching point that will later go onto anchor charts, or otherwise be remembered and referenced. Because that structure is meant to support students, it is helpful to let them know when we will deviate from the structure, thereby altering their expectations. You will notice that most of our units have at least one and often two inquiry sessions.*

## TEACHING AND ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Remind students that to inquire into the characteristics of any kind of writing, it is important to study an example of that kind of writing, asking, “What did the writer do to make this?”**

“I do not know how authors go about adapting fairy tales, but I do know how to answer that question. When we want to figure out how to write a great poem, we find a few great poems and figure out what the writer probably did to produce them. We ask ourselves, ‘What did the poet do to make this so beautiful?’

“So—are you thinking what I’m thinking? To get ready to write an adaptation of a fairy tale, we should probably . . .”

The children chimed in, “Study some!” and I agreed. “And we should try to figure out *how* the author made them.”

**Recruit kids to study a mentor text, noting what the author changes and why, keeping the guiding inquiry questions in mind.**

“I know you have read or heard me read some of the many great adaptations there are of *Cinderella*. You’ve all heard the adaptation *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole. By studying that adaptation and others, maybe we can figure out what authors do when they made adaptations. You’ll all start by adapting either *Three Billy Goats Gruff* or *Little Red Riding Hood*, stories we’ve already gotten to know really well, and then later in this unit you’ll be able to choose any fairy tale to adapt that you like.

“But let’s study adaptations of *Cinderella* and let’s think, when we look at each adaptation, ‘When *this* author adapted the original story, what did she change? What did she keep the same?’ Let’s ask the harder questions, too: ‘What does the author seem to be trying to do when he or she changed some things and not others?’

“I was thinking we could start by studying Babette Cole’s adaptation,” I said, and examined the cover of *Prince Cinders*, knowing the class was doing so as well. “What are you thinking?”

Charlie’s hand shot up. “It’s a boy!”

I nodded, “You are right. Babette Cole changed Cinderella from a girl to a boy. That’s so cool. You already found one change—she changed the character. Let’s keep reading to find as many changes as we can. No, wait—our job isn’t just to *find* the changes, it’s also to think about *why* the author might have made those changes and what her reasons might have been for doing so.

*In minilessons, we often take some time to demonstrate in front of kids the work that we want them to do, trying to avoid the easiest possible path and leaving it instead for children to discover. In this instance, there was no way for us to talk about adaptations of this story without mentioning that Cinderella had become Prince Cinders, so we decided not to demonstrate coming to that realization but instead to invite kids to come to it themselves. Therefore, our demonstration is peppered with examples of students taking the lead, rather than us.*

"Let's pause right here and think about why Babette Cole might've changed Cinderella from a girl to a boy. Hmm, . . . why *would* she do that? I am not really sure." (I then shrugged as if to say, "Oh well, I do not know the answer, so I might as well move on.") I added, "Too bad I can't call Babette on the phone and say, 'Hey, Babette, I have a question. Why is your Cinderella turned into Prince Cinders?'"

**Coach writers to go out on the thin ice of conjecturing why authors may have chosen to make adaptations. Highlight that the authors' adaptations are consequential and purposeful.**

"So class, we do not *know* what exactly was in Babette's mind when she turned Cinderella into a boy, so what do we do? Give up? Say, 'Oh well?'" I looked over the group and they clearly signaled that there was no way we should just give up. I agreed. "You are so right. When we aren't sure, when the answer is not right there on a platter for us to just reach out and grab, all that means is that we need to turn our thinking caps on high and we need to use phrases such as *Maybe it is because . . .*, *Could it be that she was thinking . . .*, *My theory is that . . .*" I flipped over the chart paper to reveal those phrases.

*Maybe it is because . . .*

*Could it be that she was thinking . . .*

*My theory is that . . .*

"Let's think together—Why *might* she have changed the main character to a boy? Turn and talk."

**Chart the big picture of the class's thinking about how authors adapt fairy tales in consequential ways.**

After a minute, I reconvened the class. "I overheard some of you saying something really interesting. You think maybe she made this change to the character because often people think that *Cinderella* is a girls' book, and Babette may have wanted to show kids that *Cinderella* is a for-everybody book. Fascinating idea—and that would be an important reason to make this adaptation, wouldn't it? I am going to start a list—'Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales.' I'll write *Changing the character* here, because that's one big thing that authors can change. I'll put *a girl to a boy* right below, because that's one example of how an author makes an important change to a character. Meanwhile, will you be thinking of other important ways—and reasons why—an author might make an adaptation?"

#### Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales

*Changing the character:*

- from a girl to a boy

*Of course you will be playacting this a bit, and the kids will know it. You come to a hard question, ponder it for a moment, and then just give up. The kids are accustomed to you often demonstrating what not to do to make the point about what to do, so they probably will grasp that this is what you are doing; but if they don't, you tell them in a jiffy.*



FIG. 1-1 It can be helpful to provide students with a few prompts to think about why authors make decisions.

*To you, it may not seem all that interesting that Babette Cole made this gender switch, but we suggest you make a big deal of it. One of the big things you want to communicate today is that adaptations should be purposeful. When we have taught this unit, we've often found that children are apt to make changes that are utterly trivial—altering Goldilocks to Silverlocks, for example. Those changes have no consequences in the story, and they do not really alter the story in any important way. So we highlight the significance of authors' adaptations, even going a bit overboard.*

**Continue reading the adaptation you have chosen to share, channeling students to continue noticing adaptations and thinking about what could have prompted the author to make them.**

“Let me read on, and this time will you make your own additions to our list in your notebook? After a bit we’ll talk about the next adaptations you notice and the theories you develop.”

I continued, reading the first few pages of the book. In the story, Prince Cinders is introduced as a “small, spotty, and scruffy” prince with three *hairy brothers* who are always zooming off to the disco and leaving him behind to clean. Instead of a fairy godmother appearing, a dirty fairy falls out of the chimney. Whenever I reached an adaptation, my voice signaled that I was seeing something really intriguing and I wondered if they were seeing it too, but I did not pause. At one point I looked up to say, “I have to do some jotting in my notebook before we read on—give me just a second?” Then I ducked my head and jotted like crazy, resisting the temptation to eye the class as if to say, “Are you doing this too?” I knew my absolute absorption in the task would be a more powerful nudge.

After a bit, I said, “Turn and tell the person beside you what you are thinking, and I’m going to be a researcher, recording what I hear you say. Oliver, you want to be a researcher too, and jot down what you hear people saying?”

Then Oliver and I listened in on conversations, and after two minutes or so I conferred with him to glean what he had heard.

**List another adaptation you overheard children discussing and ask them to signal if they’d noticed that kind of adaptation as well.**

Speaking to the whole group, I said, “I heard lots of you talking about the way Babette’s fairy godmother is a dirty fairy. Will you put a thumb up if you and your partner noticed that very same thing?”

#### Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales

*Changing the character:*

- from a girl to a boy
- from a fancy godmother to a less fancy one (a dirty one)

*This is, of course, a little spin on the traditional turn and talk. The reason we decided to do this is that after children generate some ideas by talking, we aren’t planning to call on them to harvest what they generate. Instead, we plan to essentially report back what we heard them saying. We are doing this to be efficient so that kids will have more time to be deeply engaged in the work we are describing. We don’t want to make the list of possible adaptations too all-encompassing because we want to leave space for children to see and name new adaptations later as they work on their own.*

*There are some much more obvious reasons why writers make adaptations, but later today students will have opportunities to do this on their own and generally we try not to name all the easier options. We often make a point of leaving the obvious choices for kids.*

## LINK

**Channel students to spend today working with each other in small groups, going from table to table, reading other adaptations and adding to the chart.**

"Writers, I am going to let you in on a secret. When you make a theory or two or three about why an author did this or that, even if you are not totally right, this helps your own writing. Because the theories you invent about how and why authors adapt fairy tales will fuel your own writing work. Be sure you are jotting those theories in your notebooks. You have your work cut out for you today! You know that to compare adaptations and get a sense for how they tend to go, you need to study more than one text. So . . . drumroll, please.

"At each of the tables in the room you will find a different adaptation of *Cinderella*—*Prince Cinders* and a couple of others. You will each have your own printout of the original story in your writing folders. I'm going to send two partnerships to each table, and after ten minutes at one table, I'm going to signal you that you need to switch to another table, whether or not you are done with the first story. When you arrive at a table, will you first set up your notebooks so you are ready to take notes and decide how four of you will study one text? I suggest one person reads it aloud, stopping after a chunk for you all to take notes and talk about the text, and then that person reads another chunk. But you may invent another system so long as it takes you no more than two minutes to get yourselves started.

"One more thing: It will be helpful, as you study these tales, to pay attention to the fact that a lot of things stay the same in the adaptation. The trouble is usually the same. For example, Prince Cinders *still* wants to go to the event where his brothers are and he *still* cannot go because he's home doing chores."



*Teachers, we've designed this so that it puts the least burden possible on you. You'll see that we have grouped four children around a single copy of an adaptation of Cinderella and suggested they each also have a copy of the classic text, which you can print from the CD-ROM.*

*We do this not because it's perfect, but because we realize you have other subjects to teach and to provision and we do not want to be too greedy of your time or your budget. If you have the resources and wish to build your classroom collection of fairy tale adaptations, we recommend, in addition to Prince Cinders, Susan Lowell and Jane Manning's Cindy Ellen and Frances Minters's Cinder-Elly. The best scenario would be to have duplicates of these books, which would allow each partnership to have a book; alternatively, you could have a small table with one lovely copy of the picture book and then give each writer a typed text of the words printed onto a sheet of paper that they may mark. Or, you could do both!*

*Obviously, we are packing a lot into this lesson. First lessons are often like that—we provide lots of information and a variety of entry points, knowing that we'll follow up on them throughout the course of the unit. Don't expect your students to absorb everything you're telling them right away. You'll be able to better get a sense of what work you'll want to pull out and focus on as the unit progresses.*



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Using Notes as a Tool for Thinking

STUDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO KEEP THEMSELVES PRODUCTIVE and busy with very little assistance. You will still want to make sure that each group of students is organized so that everyone can see the text (either the original or a photocopy), has decided on a way to read the text together, and that each student has set herself up to record what she’s noticing in her writer’s notebook. If you feel like your students need more scaffolding, you might stop them after each step so they’ve followed the steps correctly the first time around.

Once you see that students are mostly engaged, you will want to get a sense of how this work is going to start determining what you’ll need to teach. At right we’ve listed a few things that students often need help with as this unit begins; you’ll notice other things as well.

It will be the last of these that you’ll especially want to address, because chances are good that your children will need an extra nudge to dig deep enough to speculate about an author’s reasons behind her adaptations. Jasmine, for example, was intent on listing every possible difference between *Prince Cinders* and the classic version of *Cinderella*. When I asked, “What are you working on as a writer?” she merely shoved her list toward me so that I could admire it (see Figure 1–2 on next page).

I said, “You are such a researcher, aren’t you? It is impressive that you aren’t just making these observations in your mind—you’re recording them. I wonder, though, when you take notes like this, what do you *do* with them?” Jasmine looked a bit confused. “Show them to you?” she asked. “Yes, and you did that,” I confirmed. “But how do the notes you’re taking help you? The reason I ask is that many writers take notes because once they have things on the page, they may *think* about them. And if I were you, after listing a bunch of ways in which the story changed, I’d want to *think* about those ways. Usually the author makes one big change and all the other changes sort of domino from that—they’re connected. So I’d want to reread my list and star what I thought was the biggest change, or the first one. And I’d want to see if some of the other changes come from the first main change. Like, you wrote here that the author

If you see . . .	You could teach . . .
Students reading silently	“Fairy tales are a bit like poems in that they are meant to be read out loud. Piper, would you read this part like it’s gold? And the rest of you, think about our questions: When <i>this</i> author adapted the original story, what changed and what stayed the same? What does the author seem to be trying to do when he or she changes one thing and not others?—so that as soon as Piper finishes you can begin talking about what changes and your theories about why.”
Students recording adaptations they note without discussing them	“Whoa, writers, may I pause you before you move on? I see you discovered that Frances Minters changed the setting and you think she did this because it wasn’t fair to city kids. Wow! But now you are already looking for more changes. I want to remind you to consider several possible reasons for the change by . . . [I let my voice fade and the kids fill in, saying ‘Maybe . . . Or could it be . . . And, what about. . .’].”
Students pointing to what they see on the page, but not surmising why	“Why might the author have made this adaptation? You don’t know for sure, none of us do, but we need to sort of wonder about possible reasons.”

made the fairy godmother into a dirty fairy. But why? What else happens because she did that? How does it affect the rest of the story?”

Jasmine looked perplexed, so I nudged a bit more. “A perfect-looking, clean fairy godmother has perfect magic, right? How about this dirty fairy?” “She’s always messing



## MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

### Notes Capture Thinking, Not Just Facts

"Writers, look up for a minute. I want to tell you about the work Jasmine has just done as she records her thinking about the changes Babette Cole made in *Prince Cinders*. Jasmine showed me a *giant* list she had going in her notebook, and when I asked her to tell me what she noticed about the items on her list, she didn't have a lot to say."

Jasmine piped in, "I spent so much time making my list of changes that I never got to thinking about *why* she made those changes."

I nodded and added, "So Jasmine went back to her list and started thinking about *why* the author made each of the changes. Jasmine, can you tell us what you discovered?"

Jasmine continued, "I was just thinking that, you know how the fairy godmother is a *dirty* fairy in this book? Well, I was noticing that she's this dirty fairy *and* she can't really do magic! So Prince Cinders has to figure his problems out on his own. Maybe that's why the fairy is a dirty fairy."

"Readers, do you see how Jasmine is really pushing herself to do more than just list adaptations she sees in the story? She even added another column to her notes so that she could record the *why* next to the changes she noticed. You might want to take a look at your notes and see if they are holding all of your deep thinking work, too. You don't need to organize your notes in the same way that Jasmine is doing, but you do need your notes to capture deep thinking about not only what you see, but also about *why* the author may have done that."

stuff up!" Jasmine said, her eyes starting to light up. "Aha! So the author is not just changing one detail about the fairy that doesn't affect anything—it affects everything! She can't even do magic! How does *that* affect what happens in the story?" "Well, it's like, the fairy messed everything up, so Prince Cinders doesn't go to the disco in a fancy car. It's like the opposite of *Cinderella*."

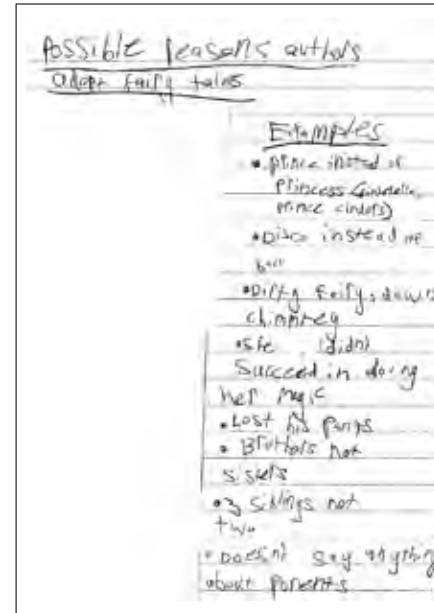


FIG. 1-2 Jasmine's notebook entry

### Possible Reasons Authors Adapt Fairy Tales

#### Examples

- Prince instead of princess (*Cinderella*, *Prince Cinders*)
- Disco instead of ball
- Dirty fairy down chimney
- She didn't succeed in doing her magic.
- Lost his pants
- Brothers not sisters
- 3 siblings not two
- Doesn't say anything about parents

"What do you mean? Can you compare the two?" "In *Cinderella* the magic works and Cinderella just gets what she wants from the fairy godmother. She gets the coach and the fancy dress and stuff. But Prince Cinders doesn't get fancy stuff—he gets a toy car, and turns into a hairy gorilla! So . . . he kind of has to make the best of it and figure it out on his own. And he still ends up with the princess. Maybe Babette wanted him to have to figure it out on his own?"

"Ah. So a lot of big things are affected because Babette Cole changed the fairy godmother into a dirty fairy who can't do magic! That is the kind of deep thinking writers do when studying adaptations like this—kind of like following the breadcrumbs of an idea, right? You follow the changes the author makes and discover some big ideas about why she chose to make those changes. I think you might need another column over here in your notes so you can write some of this stuff down!"



## SHARE

# Pooling Knowledge Gleaned from Mentor Texts

Set students up to share what they've noticed about the *what* and *why* of adaptations, collecting the class's knowledge on the anchor chart.

*I'd asked the students to bring their notebooks to the rug so that we could discuss what they'd noticed about the adaptations they'd been studying.*

"Writers. You've now spent some time with several fairy tale adaptations, including *Prince Cinders*, which you're getting to know really well. This is a time for groups to share what you've noticed—not just about *which* adaptations authors have made, but *why* you think they've made them. We can pool our knowledge and collect it here on our chart. Take a moment to look through your notes, and let's hear from one writer in each group about one thing you noticed in one of the fairy tale adaptations you studied together. Don't forget to add the *why* when you tell us about it. Mariko, would you be our scribe and add on to the chart?"

"Harry, you look ready—what's something you and your group noticed?" Harry scanned his notebook entry, which looked like this (see Figure 1–3):

changes to setting

olden → new

It might be easier to picture if new rather than old. For example, I can't picture Cinderella's village, but I can picture New York City.

changes to events

ball → basketball game

I think it changed to make it easier to understand.

"Well, when we were studying *Cinder-Elly*, we noticed that she isn't going to a ball, she's going to a basketball game!"

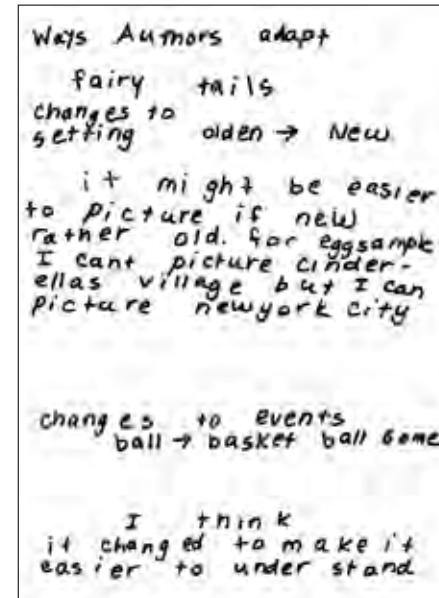


FIG. 1–3 Harry's notebook entry

“Ah, okay, interesting. That’s not really a change to a character, is it, it’s a change to the story’s events. I think we need another section—Mariko, leave some space, and then write a heading, *Changing the events*. Harry, what did your group think might be the read on *why* Frances Minters decided to make that change?”

“Well we were thinking that it kind of makes the story more modern, like it could happen now. I mean, like we go to basketball games too, now. It’s like Cinder-Elly could be anyone.”

“Whoa, that’s a big one! Changing from something old-fashioned to something modern. Mariko, would you add that to our list? Did any other groups notice adaptations that made the story more modern? Turn and tell someone who wasn’t in your group what you noticed. That way you’re working to spread what you learned all around the room.”

### Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales

*Changing the character:*

- from a girl to a boy
- from a fancy godmother to a less fancy one (a dirty one)

*Changing the events:*

- from something old-fashioned to something modern

#### **Channel your students to consider which fairy tale they might choose to adapt.**

“This list is growing into a really helpful collection of your knowledge! It’s going to be a great tool for you to use as you work on your very own adaptations. Tomorrow is a really exciting day—you’re going to actually start working on your very first fairy tale adaptations! And everything you’ve noticed about these published adaptations will be so helpful as you start planning and writing. I mentioned that for this unit’s first story, you are going to get to choose between two tales, *Little Red Riding Hood* and *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. We’ve been reading these tales together, so I know that you all know the classic versions really well. You may even have been doing some thinking already about which tale you’ll choose. I want to give you a couple of minutes right now to think and start coming to a decision about which tale that will be. I can’t wait to get started with this tomorrow, and to hear all of the interesting and meaningful ways you start adapting these stories! It’s going to be so cool—we’ll start with just two classic tales, and after tomorrow, there will be the beginnings of twenty-six totally different adaptations of them in the room!”

*This teaching share is about collecting more ideas about how writers make consequential adaptations of fairy tales, but it is also an opportunity to highlight the importance of students sharing what they have learned with each other—promoting independence, ownership of the material, and a sense of writing community.*

*Teachers, your class’s list will look different from this one; this lesson is a student-driven inquiry, so while you will be guiding students and pushing them to think deeply—especially about the why part of the changes they notice—the content of the list will depend on not only the selection of fairy tale adaptations your students are using, but also on the things your students notice. More important than the actual changes they notice is the idea that writers who adapt fairy tales do so in meaningful ways, for reasons that are larger than “just because it’s cool,” for reasons that are connected to big-picture ideas.*



## Session 2

# Writing Story Adaptations that Hold Together

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that writers adapt fairy tales in meaningful ways. When changes are made, they must be consequential changes that affect other elements of the story, rippling throughout.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Students' writers notebooks (see Link)
- ✓ "How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation" chart (see Connection)
- ✓ "Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales" list (see Connection)
- ✓ Chart paper and markers (see Small-Group Work and Conferring)

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.3.3.a, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a, RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, RL.3.10, RL.4.2, SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, SL.4.4, L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.6

14

**T**HE CHALLENGE WHEN TEACHING is not finding topics one could teach, but selecting from the many possibilities to make the biggest difference for children. As you embark on this unit, your mind will brim with observations about the genre that you could share with your children. Do children know things generally come in threes in a fairy tale? Do they understand these stories were written to teach life lessons—that *Little Red Riding Hood* is a cautionary tale, warning children against talking to strangers? Do they know that in fairy tales, there is often a villain in the shape of a troll, a giant, an ogre, a mean stepmother? One could easily imagine an inquiry lesson that channels students to talk about what they notice in this genre.

That lesson will come in this unit, but we postpone it until the start of the third bend. At that point, children have lived inside fairy tales for a few weeks, so they'll be able to draw on a close knowledge of fairy tales to make those observations. They'll also need at that point to be conscious of the characteristics of the genre because they'll be embarking on the project of writing their own original fairy tale.

For now, we immerse students in the genre and provide them with opportunities to work inside the supportive scaffolds of a familiar fairy tale; we don't overwhelm them with too many specifics about the particular genre. This is a deliberate decision, made because our priority is that students use fairy tales as a vehicle for understanding story and writing fiction. We want them to see the structure of a short story that undergirds all fairy tales, and for now it is less important that they learn the unique features of fairy tales.

Of course, it is not a small challenge for children to learn traditional story structure. Within that general topic, this unit spotlights helping children learn the plotting work that a short-story writer does. It is essential that children learn that in a story the main character usually wants something and encounters a bit of trouble along the way. That's the focus of this session.

As the children work with fairy tale adaptations today, help them to grasp that the parts of a story are interconnected. As you read aloud an adaptation or two of one story, show

GRADE 3: ONCE UPON A TIME

children how any adaptation, any change in plot, may lead to a cascade of subsequent changes. This domino effect is an important pillar of this session.

---

*“We want students to use fairy tales as a vehicle for understanding story and for writing fiction.”*

You’ll especially encourage children to take note of the types of changes authors make to traditional tales as they adapt them. Authors of adaptations may aim to make a tale more modern, more inclusive, or more socially just. You’ll lead children to resist making cosmetic or surface changes, such as simply changing the name of a character. Instead, you’ll rally your class of writers to make purposeful changes, ones that improve the original tale or make it more modern.

As children think about the adaptations that other authors have made, they will also think about their own. In this session, children will write plans for their stories, not only planning how they will adapt a traditional fairy tale, but how they will tell a good story. This session is filled to the brim with reminders of the work of strong fiction writing—rehearsing plotlines, creating character traits, imagining story setting. At the end of workshop today, children will move from writing story plans to planning and storytelling scenes. Scenes may feel new to your children but you’ll show them how one scene is like one small moment, a familiar structure children learned in the beginning of the year. This unit allows children to come full circle, ending the year with a unit that recycles and elevates the narrative writing with which they began their third-grade year.

SESSION 2: WRITING STORY ADAPTATIONS THAT HOLD TOGETHER





## MINILESSON

# Writing Story Adaptations that Hold Together

### CONNECTION

**Channel students to think about the underlying ideas about adaptations that they'd discussed in the previous session, especially highlighting the way one adaptation creates a cascade of others.**

"Let's start today by thinking about yesterday's realizations. When writers adapt fairy tales, what do they change? And more importantly, Why do they make those changes? We noticed two big changes authors tend to make—they change the characters and they change the events. Hmm, . . . will you look over your notes, and think to yourself about why the author made the adaptations he or she made?" I turned to my notes and began rereading them with rapt attention, knowing that my doing so would channel students to do likewise.

After a moment, I said, "Turn and tell your partner some of the reasons why you think an author might alter an original fairy tale, making an adaptation of it. Go."

As children talked, I listened to one, then another. Realizing that children weren't drawing on the chart from the preceding day, I called out, "Writers, the charts in our room are meant to be references. When you need something to jog your memory, check a chart."

After a minute, I reconvened the class. "Writers, many of you are talking about the fact that when a writer makes one change—say, changing Cinderella from a girl to a boy—that one change changes other things, right? What were some examples, I'm trying to remember?"

Jasmine said, "Yes, 'cause changing the Cinderella losing her glass slipper to Prince Cinders losing his pants made a whole lot of other changes!" Soon the class recalled that this one change, changing a glass slipper to pants, meant that the princess would write a proclamation to find the man with the lost trousers, which would lead every prince trying to fit the trousers, which would lead to Prince Cinders finally trying on and fitting into the pair of pants.

"So, am I right that you are saying the first big change the author makes—say, turning Cinderella into a boy—is like a domino that falls over and pushes other things to change?" I asked, adding, "So, what if we decided that too often the main characters in fairy tales are farm animals, and for children everywhere to enjoy fairy tales it would be better

### ◆ COACHING

*Your goal today will be to channel students to make their own adaptations of a fairy tale; your hope is that these will be consequential and purposeful. Across the length of the unit, you will want children to realize that authors alter fairy tales for reasons—perhaps an author thinks too many tales are set in pastoral setting, are sexist or old-fashioned, or aren't centered on positive values. That is, you are hoping to make the project of writing an adaptation as consequential as possible.*

*If you know that some of your students still haven't internalized the two original tales they are choosing between, you might orchestrate having these children in writing partnerships where both children are adapting the same tale, to provide an additional layer of support.*

*I'm not sure that all of the children have a grasp of what it means for things to fall like a row of dominoes, so I used my hands to illustrate this important concept.*

if the characters were household pets that city kids as well as farm kids might know about? How might that affect a story like *The Three Little Pigs*?"

Charlie announced, "It could be the three little . . . um . . . hamsters?"

I nodded. "So if the pigs were hamsters, would they still build houses, would it still be a big, bad wolf that terrorized them? With your partner, think about the changes that might result if you changed the pigs to hamsters."

As the children talked, I listened in and after a minute I called the class back. "My goodness, I am so impressed with the 'domino thinking' that I heard. Some of you were saying that it would be a big, bad cat that was after the hamsters! And the cat wouldn't say, 'I'll huff and I'll puff,' he would say, 'I'll hiss and I'll scratch.' The hamsters wouldn't reply, 'Not by the hair on my chinny, chin, chin,' but . . . but . . . well, no one figured out that part yet."

"So, writers, this leads me to the idea for what I want to teach you today."

#### ✿ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that when writers plan how an adaptation of a story will go, they do two things. First, they decide on a change that they think will improve the story, and second, they make sure that the change leads to other changes so the whole story fits together. Often the one big adaptation cascades like a row of dominoes through the writer's adaptation of the fairy tale."

#### How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation

- Know the classic story and tell it often.
- Decide on a change to improve the story.
- Make the change lead to other changes so the whole story fits together.

## TEACHING

**Recruit children to join you in thinking about a purposeful adaptation of a fairy tale and how that one change could lead to a domino effect, creating the need for other changes.**

"I know yesterday you did some thinking and talking about which fairy tale—*Little Red Riding Hood* or *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*—you'll choose to adapt. If you haven't chosen your tale yet, take a minute now to decide." I paused.

"Thumbs up if you have decided." I scanned the room, making sure most thumbs were up. "I'm going to be writing an adaptation of *Cinderella*—and hoping you help with that."

SESSION 2: WRITING STORY ADAPTATIONS THAT HOLD TOGETHER

*You will want to emphasize imagining the implications of any one of those decisions. You could, of course, go an entirely different way than thinking about hamsters. If one child suggests they all explore the possibility of The Three Little Pigs being renamed The Three Little Dogs, then you will want to help students wonder whether the villain should still be a hungry wolf. Might it be an eager dog catcher? Would the story still be set in the country, or might it be in a city? If the children decided that their adaptation of The Three Billy Goats Gruff involved turning the goats into raccoons, will the raccoons trip-trap over a bridge to get to the meadow? Will they skitter across the bridge? Or will the author invent a different route to their destination? If their destination is a brimful garbage can in the alley, are the raccoons crossing a porch instead of a bridge?*

*The reason that we ask children to get their story in mind is that this means they may listen to the work with *Cinderella* while beginning to do similar work adapting their own story. You'll notice fairly often throughout the series that we shoehorn topic choice into the connection of a minilesson for just this reason.*

“Before a person can think about a possible adaptation, it helps to have the original well in mind. So I’m going to list in my mind the main things that happen in *Cinderella*; will you meanwhile do the same for your story?” I was quiet in front of the class, touching one finger, then another, as I silently recalled the main events in *Cinderella*.

Then I resumed talking to the class. “Now comes the hard part. We need to think—what is an important way in which we could change the elements of this story to make it better? I usually start by thinking, ‘Is there a part or an aspect of the story that I don’t really agree with, the way it is now? Is there a reason to change the story?’ Will you join me in doing this work first with *Cinderella*, because it is hard work and I’d love your help, and then with your fairy tale? Okay, let’s recall the main events in *Cinderella* and as we do, think, ‘Is there a reason that we don’t love the message in this story, or the way it goes?’ Let’s review the plot of the story.” Then, referring to my fingers as I proceeded through the plot outline, I said:

- ◆ Cinderella is mistreated by her stepmother and her stepsisters. She has to do all the work.
- ◆ An invitation comes to a ball at the palace; they tell Cinderella she has to get them ready for the ball and then to stay home, cleaning the ashes out of the fireplace.
- ◆ A fairy godmother gives Cinderella a fancy dress and a fancy pumpkin carriage so she looks like a fancy princess. The magic will go away at midnight.
- ◆ Cinderella goes to the ball and dances with the prince.
- ◆ At the stroke of midnight, she runs out, leaving a glass slipper, which the prince finds.
- ◆ The prince searches for the owner, finds Cinderella. They get married and live happily ever after.

“So let’s think about a big reason to change this story. Hmm, . . . what do you think?” I left a long stretch of silence while I thought. Musing to myself I said, quietly, “It’s about this girl, who wants the fancy dress and fancy car so she can get the fancy prince. . . .”

“Tell the person beside you what might not be so great about this story, what you might change.”

After listening as the children talked, I reconvened the class. “You have really got me thinking. I agree that it isn’t that great to have a story where the one and only thing the girl wants is to go to the ball and marry the right man. She isn’t really the sort of powerful girl that many of us want in our stories—all she does is goes to a dance and look fancy.”

Sam was on his knees with excitement. “And who cares if she has the fanciest dress or goes in the fanciest car, I mean, the fanciest pumpkin? The story is like teaching bad values, it is practically saying ‘go spend money,’ ‘go get stuff,’ and that’s not right.”

*Take some time to do this. Giving children spaces within a minilesson and asking them to think about something in those intervals is very important. As long as you are talking, your voice fills the minds of the listeners. When you stop talking, you leave space for them to do their own thinking.*

*You needn’t muse, “It is about a girl who wants the fancy dress . . .” if you do not think your children need this scaffold. Your job is to modulate the amount of scaffolding you provide so that students are left to do some important and challenging work. This last bit of thinking aloud may provide too much scaffolding for your students. Be conscious when you provide support that lowers the cognitive demands you place on kids, but also realize that it takes a lot of depth-of-knowledge level 1 work for students to be able to handle depth-of-knowledge level 4 work.*

*In this instance, chances are good that you were the first one to object to the materialistic bent to the story. But you needn’t tell that to the kids. Resist the instinct to say, “I thought of that first,” and instead, if a child says this, support this idea!*



"So, . . . are we all saying that we want to change what Cinderella wants, what she wishes for? Maybe instead of wishing to go to the ball and marry the handsome prince, maybe she wants . . . hmm, . . . what? We'll have to think what better or a bigger goal we'd want to give her. Maybe she wants something that will make the world a better place, not just to marry the right guy. Like she wants to save the dolphins. . . ."

"Or to open a library!"

"Or give homes to the homeless!"

I nodded. "And if we decided, for example, that the invitation would be to go to a meeting to plan a new library, not a ball, then we'd need to decide if Cinderella's job was to get the mean stepsisters ready for that meeting about the library, or maybe they wouldn't even want to go. And we'd need to decide if she needed a fancy car and dress—what do you think?" Children called out that maybe she'd just need a bike.

**Debrief in ways that highlight the fact that the class is making a significant change in the fairy tale and a change that will cascade like dominoes throughout the story, affecting a lot of other things.**

"So, do you see that first you think about a way to improve the original story? Someone could decide to change a fairy tale because they thought that the fairy tales too often are set in the country, so they might decide to write a city version. Or . . . what else?"

Children suggested that a person might decide that authors might change something in a story from being really rich and fancy to something more regular, that everyone could relate to—like our Cinderella's bike! Sierra mentioned that for our class adaptation of *Cinderella*, we wanted to change it so Cinderella didn't just want fancy things and riches (for example, money and power), she wanted to do something good in the world. I highlighted the idea that another *big* thing that authors change is motivations, doing so in such a way that Sierra thought she'd had the idea herself. I asked Harry to add that as another category before the bullet. Our list, "Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales," now looked like this:

#### Ways Authors Adapt Fairy Tales

*Changing the character:*

- from a girl to a boy
- from a fancy godmother to a less fancy one (a dirty one)

*Changing the events:*

- from something old-fashioned to something modern
- from something rich and fancy to something more people can relate to

*Changing the motivations:*

- from wanting more money and power to wanting to do good in the world

*Let children chime in. You want their thinking. If they don't seem to be activating their brains in moments like this, you may need to signal to kids that they need to be thinking with you and to have something to share.*

*Don't worry about resolving the whole story with all its details. Writers don't proceed in that way. This is planning. If you do resolve the story, however, be sure you look ahead to what we do with the story in the upcoming sessions, deciding whether you want that to influence you. There is no reason that your adaptation needs to mirror ours.*



Then I said, “The other thing you realized is that one change makes other changes, right? The fact that Cinderella is going to a meeting, not a ball, changes what the fairy godmother will give her, right? The one change—turning her from a girl who wants to marry the right guy and needs a fancy dress to a girl who wants to help work on a new library for the town—ends up meaning that the story has other changes too.”

## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Channel students to go through the same process, this time thinking about their intended adaptations.**

“So think about your story with your partner and ask those important and hard questions. What don’t you love about your fairy tale, if anything? How might you change it? You probably will come to different ideas. Turn and talk.”

As children worked, I crouched alongside one group after another. I tried to steer children toward more consequential adaptations, noticing that many were making inconsequential changes at first. For example, Sam was saying he hated trolls and goats, so he planned to make his version of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* about a parrot and a dirty pony. “Why a dirty pony?” I questioned, nudging for meaning or purpose. Sam shrugged, “I dunno. Well, a rhino then,” he said.

“Hmm, . . .” I said, realizing that Sam and his partners might be making random changes instead of ones for bigger reasons. “Remember, Sam, and all of you—it’s really important to make sure the changes you make are meaningful ones that lead to other important changes. One way is to keep story elements in mind as you’re thinking about what changes to make. For instance, what does the parrot *want*? What’s in its way? Answering these questions might help.” After some thinking out loud, Sam decided that his parrot lives in a zoo and wants his freedom—so the troll became the security guard that stood in his way—a more consequential change that would lead to other consequential changes in the story.

## LINK

**Channel students to get started writing plans for their own adaptation of a story. Remind them that the change should be significant, making it a better story.**

“Writers, may I stop you? Oh my gosh, I am floored. You are not coming up with silly little adaptations like changing the wolf to a tiger, but with big ones. Shelly wants to make the story more current and changes the goats into people, and the bridge will be a busy, city bridge with cars and trains going over it. The poor troll has a lot to deal with! And Simone changed the goats to moles—which means the setting is totally different and the problems are totally different, because they live underground—can you guess what she changed the troll into? A hedgehog!

*The active engagement is a time to assess how the strategy is working in action, a time to get your fingers on the pulse of your entire classroom. It’s okay if you stumble across a partnership that is struggling, not yet grasping the essence of the strategy. Embrace this struggle as a teachable moment, giving students a tad more coaching so that they will feel supported in trying the strategy successfully. This is an important collaborative moment before they move into the independent part of the workshop.*

*When you send kids off to work, it is best if you have a clear idea of the range of options that you have in mind for what they’ll be doing. Usually your minilessons cumulate options and you end the minilesson by reminding kids of all the choices before them. But right now, you are trying to move all to start drafting and revising adaptations of a fairy tale. So for this session, you are expecting them all to write a page or so in their notebooks, and to be detailing how their proposed story could go. You’ll expect them to try more than one option, to especially think about the opening scene (you’ll teach into that later).*

"So, here is my suggestion for today. Get your plans down in your writer's notebook. Don't write plans as a story—don't start it, 'Once upon a time . . .' and try to tell everything in a bit-by-bit story way, but do write a lot of the details for how things will go, and write in paragraphs. It might sound like this, 'In my story, there will still be a character named . . . and like in the classic story, she will still . . . When the story starts I am thinking she will be . . .'

"My other suggestion is to be hard on yourself. After you write a bit, pull back and think over your plan, draw a line, and try a different plan until you get one that feels great."

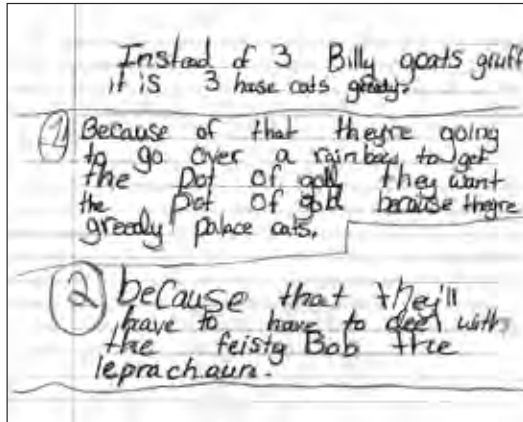


FIG. 2-1 Ella's notebook entry

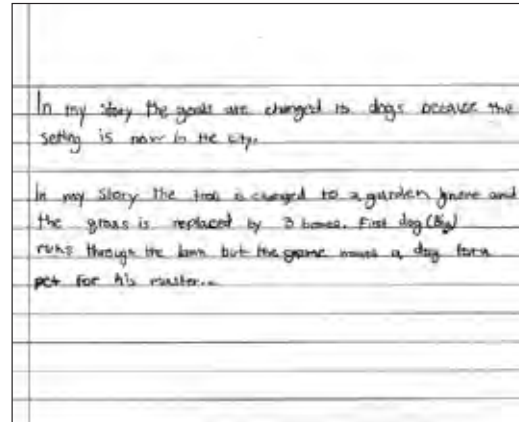


FIG. 2-2 Jackson's notebook entry

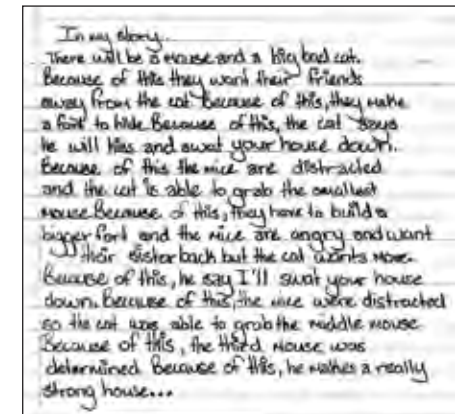


FIG. 2-3 Cora's notebook entry



## Wrestling with Cohesion and Story Structure

**D**URING THE FIRST FEW DAYS OF THE UNIT, you'll want to touch base with a majority of your writers, making sure that they are really thinking through their adaptations and not just changing the story at the surface level. You may find that some writers become overwhelmed by all of the possibilities for change and have a hard time focusing in on making changes that are consequential. If you find that a group of students is in this boat, you might reel them in with some guided practice using a mentor text (in this case, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*) and a simple flowchart that might look something like this:

*Character* → *Setting* → *Motivation/Trouble* → *Resolution*

You might explain the logic behind the flowchart by saying something like, "If I change something about the character, then other changes will follow—just like one domino knocking into the next. For example, if we change the billy goats to house cats, then the setting will change as well; they'll probably live in a house." Pointing to the chart as you go, you might continue, "and they'll probably want big, juicy mice instead of sweet, tender grass. And probably the humans will get in their way! The resolution would need to change, too. Let's try another version: If the billy goats become wolves, then they might live in a deep, dark forest in Alaska, and they might want rabbits to eat, and a hunter might stand in their way."

You might ask students to use the chart, with your support, to come up with other potential adaptations for *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*, making sure to guide them toward changes that will cascade across the whole story. You'll find, as I did, that understanding this crucial element of writing fairy tale adaptations will increase students' motivation exponentially. In fact, after this small-group work, Sam asked, "Can we take our notebooks home tonight to write?"

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Checking Adaptation Plans**

"Writers, may I stop all of you? Tomorrow you will begin actually writing the story, so I want to remind you to check that the adaptation you're planning is a consequential one that will improve on the story in big ways. Let's say that someone was adapting *Cinderella* and they decided to give her a magic leprechaun instead of a fairy godmother, and he *hopped* in instead of *flew* in. Would that change be consequential? To answer that, think if it would affect a bunch of other things in the story and think whether it seems to be a significant, important change or a sort of silly—trivial—one. What do you think?"

The students, in unison, chimed in that it would be trivial.

"Let's say someone was changing *Cinderella* and they decided that too many fairy tales are about brothers and sisters who are jealous of each other, and that in real life it is more usual for classmates to be jealous of each other. If the writer decided to change this to a story of competing classmates who wanted not a royal prince but something that they might get at school, would that be a change that changed other things—like changed the setting, changed the people, changed the actions?"

The students agreed that yes, that would be a significant, consequential change.

"So will you tell your partner the adaptations you are thinking of making, and help each other think whether those adaptations are significant, and if they are not, help each other come up with a different plan?"

After children did this, I said to them, "Writers, I have one more tip that I want to tell you. When you write your story tomorrow, you need to make sure that your adaptation doesn't miss some of the super important parts of a good story. So right now, will you get in your mind how your adaptation is probably going to go? List, across your fingers, your plan for how your adapted fairy tale

will go, and then I'm going to ask you something." I gave them a minute to do this.

"Now, here comes the thing you need to consider. Remember, good stories include a character who wants something—do you have that in your story? Thumbs up if you do, thumbs down if that is not yet clear.

"Good stories have a character who runs into trouble, who has a problem. Does your story have that?" I motioned with a thumbs up and thumbs down to signal I was expecting a response.

After children talked for a bit, I said, "You have a few more minutes to think through and write about your plan for your story in your writers' notebooks. If you've got the plot all figured out, you might take some time to jot down character traits for your characters. Perhaps you'll do some writing about the type of person or animal your main character is, how he responds to other characters, or the troubles he faces. I've put this on our "How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation" chart so you can remember the work you can be doing today."

- Make a character with traits and wants who runs into trouble.

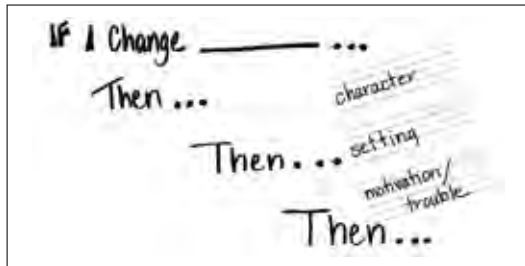


FIG. 2-4 A chart like this with moveable Post-Its supports students in understanding the concept of changes that cascade across the story.

You may encounter other students who need support reconstructing a coherent story line after their adaptations essentially deconstruct the original plot. We've found that sometimes it helps a child to try to summarize his story by using this thinking template:

*Once upon a time there was \_\_\_\_\_. Every day, \_\_\_\_\_. One day \_\_\_\_\_.  
Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Because of that, \_\_\_\_\_. Until finally \_\_\_\_\_.*

For example, Jackson's consequential changes to his story led him to follow so many tangents that he lost his story line. He used the template to come up with this plan: "*Once upon a time there were three dogs who lived in the city. Every day, they loved eating bones. One day there was a mean garden gnome blocking their way. He wanted to take them as pets to his master. Because of that, they couldn't get to the bones. Because of that, the two biggest ones made excuses to get by and the little one tricked him. Until finally all three dogs got the bones.*"

As you work with children, keep in mind that the goal of this unit is not so much that they learn all about the genre of fairy tales, but that their work with fairy tales helps them grasp the extremely powerful concept that stories often follow a predictable structure. This means that in your conferences and small-group work, you'll want to be assessing which of your children seem to be aware of the fundamentals of story and which still need help with that. You will probably need to explicitly point out to some students that in all fairy tales, and indeed in any story, there is a character who has wants, who has motivations, and who runs into trouble meeting those wants. This is not a new concept for your children, but actually applying this idea to a new adaptation of a fairy tale may be challenging. Again, there is a thought template that may help remind children that they may use the key words to help them construct a story line.

*Somebody wants something because . . . but . . . so . . .*



## SHARE

# Organize Notes to Plan Scenes

**Teach children to organize their story-planning notes into a few scenes, or Small Moment stories.**

"Writers, may I stop you? It's going to be time to get started on your first scene soon. So I want to help you a bit with that right now.

"Before you can write anything, you need to realize that a short story—and a fairy tale is a short story—is actually made up of two or three Small Moment stories. So we can look back at our plans for our *Cinderella* adaptation and we can think about the two or three Small Moment stories, or scenes, we'll use to carry the whole of the plot. During today's minilesson, you helped me think about the plot for the class *Cinderella* adaptation. Here are some notes that detail one plan for this story." I showed a sheet of paper with my jotted notes.

- *Cinderella is still the stepsister who is treated like a servant. She loves reading.*
- *A letter comes inviting them all to a fund-raiser to save the town library.*
- *The stepmother and stepsisters throw the letter away because they hate the library.*
- *Cinderella cries and her fairy godmother arrives.*
- *The fairy godmother grants Cinderella's wishes so Cinderella may go to the fund-raiser.*
- *Cinderella saves the library.*

"Will you and your partner look at that plan and see if you can box off two or three scenes we can write that would allow us to capture the whole story? You'll see some of these points on the timeline can all be smushed into one flowing scene, and that is often the case."

**Rally children to plan with you the first scene of the class text.**

Soon I asked, "What will our first scene, our first Small Moment story be?" The children agreed that *Cinderella* would be doing some kind of work and then an invitation would come in the mail about the event to save the library. I said, "So you are saying we can write that whole part of the story like it is one scene? Then we will jump ahead to a scene that comes later in the story—and we haven't figured that one out yet. We'll work on that more later."

**Ask students to plan the first scenes of their own fairy tale adaptations and to practice storytelling that scene by writing in the air, making sure to get into the action.**

“Right now, will you think of what the first scene, or Small Moment story, in *your* fairy tale will be? Doing this remembering you only get to write about two or three scenes, so the first scene usually needs to be right where a lot of action is happening.” I left a pool of silence. “Give me a thumbs up if you have thought of what the first Small Moment story, the first scene, might be.

“In a fairy tale, that scene usually starts, ‘One . . .,’ and then there is a time, like ‘one day, one morning, one evening.’ Then the main character usually does or says something important. These stories are short so they don’t waste a lot of time about things that don’t relate to the story. Partner 2, turn and try to write in the air how your story will start. Begin with, ‘One’ . . . Go!”

His finger swirling elaborately in the air, Sam said, “One day, the parrot was resting in the zoo and the security guard was pacing up and down. The parrot began to peck at the door with his red beak. . . .”

Jackson shared, “One afternoon, Little Green Cleats was heading to soccer practice. He took a shortcut through the woods so that he would be first on the field.”

“Remember that the beginning of a story sets the stage for what’s to come. It should get right into the action because fairy tales are short—no words are wasted! Tonight, as you plan possible opening scenes, ask yourself, ‘Is there enough action? Does my main character do or say something important right away—something that sets the story rolling?’ I’ll add this to our chart.”

#### How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation

- Know the classic story and tell it often.
- Decide on a change to improve the story.
- Make the change lead to other changes so the whole story fits together.
- Make a character with traits and wants who runs into trouble.
- Tell the story in two or three scenes (Small Moment stories).



### Session 3

# Storytelling, Planning, and Drafting Adaptations of Fairy Tales

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that writers story-tell or act out their stories to help as they plan their drafts and as they write their drafts.

#### GETTING READY

- ✓ Writers' notebooks and writing folders stocked with several sheets of lined paper
- ✓ "How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation" chart (see Connection)
- ✓ Your demonstration writer's notebook (see Teaching)
- ✓ Blank paper to make scene-planning booklets for homework, several sheets per student (see Share)

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.3.3.b, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.b,d; RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.6

**T**ODAY YOUR CHILDREN will start writing their stories. What we have found is that they are apt to pick up their pens, start writing, and write on and on and on, not making deliberate choices or crafting anything, but still writing up a storm with great pleasure. When they come up for air, they are totally committed to their story. "I already have four pages!" they'll tell you. "I love my story," they'll say. Their intensity and absorption will be a beautiful thing, but their writing will probably be less beautiful. There is truth to the saying that fiction is the genre that kids want worst to write—and write the worst!

The answer here is that you mustn't be afraid to teach. Your children will need you to teach with decisive clarity. And frankly, front-end revision is going to be much more efficient and satisfying than back-end revision.

Remember that the goal of the unit is not so much for kids to learn to write fairy tales but for them to learn to write fiction, and to learn through their work with fiction, to write more effectively in every genre. Eudora Welty once said, in *One Writer's Beginnings*, "Poetry is the school I went to in order to learn to write prose" (1984). In this unit, fairy tales will be the school that children go to in order to learn to write fiction—and to learn to write well, in general. Your clarity about the purpose of the unit should help you spotlight the qualities and processes of good writing that are applicable across all stories.

This means that whereas the first two sessions focused on the unique challenges of adapting fairy tales, this session probably should focus on processes that would be equally important had this been a unit on writing realistic fiction or short fantasy or historical fiction or mysteries. We've taught all those genres many times, and found that until children have had a huge amount of experience writing narratives—and specifically, fiction—the biggest challenge for them, hands down, will be that they tend to summarize instead of storytell. Children stride in big steps across the plot of the tale, overlooking the events and reactions to the events instead of writing in such a way that readers can climb into the shoes of the character and *live* the events. In *The Stuff of Fiction* (1972), Gerald Brice writes, "It's not enough for a writer to tell a reader about a person or a place, he must



help readers be the person . . . the basic failure of most writing is a failure of the writer's imagination . . . he is not trying hard enough to live moment to moment in the shoes of his character."

John Gardner, in *On Becoming a Novelist* (1999, 71), adds to that advice: "Write as if you were a movie camera. Get exactly what is there—the trick is to bring it out . . . getting down what you the writer really noticed."

---

*"There is little that matters more to a fledgling fiction writer than learning to step into the shoes of the characters, to live the story, to reenact while writing."*

These are big guns to bring out in preparation for a little lesson that aims to teach third-graders how to tell a story, but we hope these quotes fill you with resolve to teach this session as if it were one of the most important lessons you will ever teach, because we think that for narrative writers, it is. There is little that matters more to a fledgling fiction writer than learning to step into the shoes of the characters, to live the story, to reenact while writing.

Specifically, this session teaches children the importance of rehearsal. Children will first recall what they have learned about rehearsal and then, through guided practice, you will set them up to story-tell as a way to try out different ways their stories might go. The focus today will be on bringing stories to life through acting, so you will want to encourage children to first embellish their story scenes with enough detail so that they may then bring heightened drama and emotion to their acting. This use of storytelling and acting is not only an essential tool for planning stories, it honors the rich tradition of oral storytelling that accompanies fairy tales and spans many cultures. You may choose to weave in examples from famous children's storytellers from different cultures and backgrounds.

You'll encourage children to craft their enactments, pausing to consider whether they have gotten a character's tone of voice, gesture, or posture just right. Of course, by teaching students to pause and to reconsider, you are also teaching them to revise their writing, even before a word is written. Writers revise as they plan; they are revising when they reconsider where, in the sequence of events, they'll start the story—wanting to start it close to the main action—and when they think, "What exactly will the main character be doing or saying when the story starts?" Writers are revising when they pause after they've written a portion of the story and ask, "How could I do this even better?"



## MINILESSON

# Storytelling, Planning, and Drafting Adaptations of Fairy Tales

### CONNECTION

**Celebrate the volume of work children have produced and ask them to share their progress with a partner.**

"Writers, can you believe all that we've done in just two days? Quickly tour your partner through your writer's notebook, showing your partner how much writing work you have done in just two days."

After a moment, I interceded, "Okay. It is great you have already gotten into the swing of doing a lot of work because today you are going to do even more in one day than you did in that last two days!"

**Point out that writers need to rehearse; recruit children to list ways they know to rehearse for writing.**

"By now, writers, you are experienced enough that you should be able to tell *me*, not the other way around, what you need to do first to get started writing your actual stories. I'm pretty sure you already know that you need to rehearse. But will you think about the ways that you know writers of stories, of narratives, use to rehearse? Go ahead and call out ways writers rehearse!" From throughout the group, voices called out, "Story-tell to each other!" "Sketch or act out what happens." "Think what is first, next, next!" "Timeline." "Try different leads."

### ❁ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to remind you that the real goal when you rehearse for writing a story is not to come up with something to say, but to make the story you will write much stronger. If you story-tell and act out your story, your rehearsal brings your story to life." I referenced our chart where I had added this new bullet.

### ◆ COACHING

*If your writers haven't gotten a lot of writing done, you won't start this way. The point is to create a little buzz at the start of the minilesson. The other goal is to make this part of the minilesson extremely brief, as the middle section is very long and includes several cycles of guided practice.*

#### How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation

- Know the classic story and tell it often.
- Decide on a change to improve the story.
- Make the change lead to other changes so the whole story fits together.
- Make a character with traits and wants who runs into trouble.
- Tell the story in two or three scenes (Small Moment stories).
- Story-tell or act out the first scene, filling in lifelike details.

## TEACHING

### Help students recall and then embellish the steps of the Small Moment story that they'll be telling.

"Let's use storytelling and acting as a way to rehearse the first scene in our *Cinderella* adaptation, and while doing that I think I can give you some tips that will help you do the same work with your own fairy tale adaptation. Before we can story-tell or act out the adaptation, we probably want to story-tell at least the start of the classic story. Then we need to get clear about the facts of our adaptation, right? We're going to use the same blank booklets we've used to story-tell and plan an entire story, but we're going to use them differently. This time, when I use the booklet, I'm going to use it to tell just one scene.

"So—next we need to think about our first scene. We have figured out Cinderella will be doing some kind of work for her mean stepsisters and then a letter arrives about a meeting to plan a way to save the town library.

"Okay, right now, across your fingers, list what is going to happen in this first scene—in detail. You know Cinderella is working, but what is she doing, exactly? Is she sitting? Standing? Who is near her? Who says what? Plan what happens first, then next, then next . . . across your fingers. Go."

I pulled in to listen for a minute and heard Caleb suggesting a reasonable plan, so I called out to the class, "May I have your attention? Listen to Caleb's plan and then let's all work off that one plan for now. Caleb—lay out the plan."

Caleb began talking, touching his fingers as he proceeded through the plot outline: "Cinderella is doing a job, like laundry, and then someone comes with the invitation to the library thing, and third, the sisters throw it away, and fourth, Cinderella says she wants to go, and fifth, they laugh at her."

### Channel one partner to story-tell to the other partner the scene the class just planned, reminding them to include specific actions and dialogue. Then harvest a class lead for the story.

"Okay, let's work off Caleb's plan. Partner 1, you are going to start storytelling Caleb's version of this. Story-tell in ways that show what Cinderella is doing, and then who says or does what. Go!"

After a minute, I intervened. "Many of you are storytelling with so many details that I can picture it exactly! Marco's story starts like this":

*One sunny afternoon Cinderella was folding her stepsisters' gowns. She had a whole mountain of more laundry to fold. Then all of a sudden the doorbell rang.*

"Notice how Marco filled in details. It's no longer just a line drawing—he's colored in the story with details. Who has figured out what people say after the doorbell rings? And what have you added to show that the stepsisters are mean

*In this session, you'll be using the method of guided practice because this lesson has several parts. You'll take children through multiple cycles of rehearsal, beginning with the rehearsal of the class story. Then, you'll coach them to rehearse their adaptations one way, then another way. You'll coach into their talk, lifting their level of work. You wouldn't want to demonstrate this all in one sitting, having children stare for long periods of time without opportunities to practice. Therefore, you'll break it down into small steps, demonstrating for a bit and then coaching them to give it a try in bite-sized steps.*

*Calling on the child will only work if you have a student who is ready and able to lay out a clear plan. Otherwise say the plan yourself. This plan needs to be clear and stable.*

*Watch the pace of this minilesson. You need to plan on being very quick. You need to channel writers to do whatever it is you have in mind with forcefulness and urgency, and to interrupt their work in short order so as to progress to the next step. Otherwise this minilesson will lag on. You may quickly jot the story as you go, using the method you're most comfortable with. You might choose to jot notes to yourself that you'll write up on chart paper later or you might choose to write on an overhead projector, Smart Board, or document camera if you have the access and inclination.*

to Cinderella? Let's take Marco's story as our class version and embellish it," I said, and repeated Marco's story. Soon the class had added:

*One sunny afternoon Cinderella was folding her stepsisters' gowns. She had a whole mountain of more laundry to fold. Then all of a sudden the doorbell rang.*

*"You lazy girl," the mean stepsister said to Cinderella. "Go get the mail. Hurry. Don't waste time."*

*Cinderella went to the door.*

**Channel the children to retell and extend the story, building off of the lead you helped the class produce, this time encouraging them to highlight certain character traits and to enhance the storytelling.**

"I'll retell what we have so far, then Partner 2, repeat what I say, only try to make it even better and then add on. Partner 2, remember Cinderella is slaving away, and the stepsisters treat her horribly. Make sure that those big things shine through in your version. After you retell, keep going in the story, remembering to include specific actions and specific things people say. You ready? I'll start us off. You repeat what I say and keep going, but jazz things up. What sorts of looks are the mean stepsisters giving Cinderella? What does Cinderella look like, do, think about? Like Marco, fill in more details." Again the children storytold to partners for just a minute or so.

I reconvened the writers. "I heard one of you say that the stepsister growled at Cinderella and shot angry looks at her! No wonder Robert Munsch says that before he writes a story, he story-tells it a hundred times."

**Repeat the cycle, this time supporting children to reenact the same scene, adding small actions, gestures, and interactions.**

"So, now we're going to make our storytelling even more powerful. Remember the main parts of our *Cinderella* scene—starting with her folding the mountain of laundry. This time, Partner 1, you are going to *be* Cinderella—acting her out. This is pretty similar to the amazing storytelling you just did, but you're going to add in a little bit of movement—some gestures, some of the small actions that happen as the first scene begins. Do you see the pile of laundry in front of you?

"Partner 2, you are one of the mean stepsisters. While you are sitting right there in your seats, assume your roles. Cinderella, get started. I'll be the doorbell. Go!"

A minute later I called out over the bustle, "Writers, storytellers, freeze. You have got to see what Sam and Simone were doing as actors in that scene, watch." For a moment the class watched their classmates' reenactment, complete with gestures. "Take lessons from Sam and Simone and add little actions when the character speaks, like twirling a strand of hair, or chewing a piece of gum. Or think about *how* the character talks. Change your character's voice. Partner 1, you are Cinderella again, and Partner 2, you are the stepsister, hounding her while she does the laundry. Action!"

A minute into the drama, I called out "Ding dong," and the plot moved forward. A minute later, I called, "Bring the scene to an ending, we're stopping in a sec."

*The process of collaboratively writing a text—whereby one child's suggested text becomes foundational for a text that each child continues to author—is one that your students will have already experienced in the previous units. There is something intense and fast-paced about this way of channeling students into producing a flash-draft. We think it is a very effective way to give them a sense for a genre.*

*You'll be tempted to open the floor for a whole-class conversation, but the minilesson is already very long. Keep the pace quick.*

When I got the class's attention, I said, "I hope you can see how storytelling and drama can help you bring a story to life. Now our job would be to take all that good storytelling and acting and put it onto the page, onto drafting paper. I'd probably start writing something like this. . . ."

I reread the notes I'd jotted, and then I told the next part of the story, incorporating the students' ideas. I'd made sure to jot notes to myself in my own notebook, knowing I'd go back later and rewrite the story for students to see.

*One afternoon Cinderella was folding her stepsisters' laundry. She had a whole mountain of more laundry to fold. Then all of a sudden the doorbell rang.*

*"You lazy girl," one stepsister said to Cinderella. "Go get the door. Hurry. Don't waste time."*

*Cinderella went to the door. When she opened it, no one was there. She looked left, right, and then down. There on the doorstep was a letter.*

*"Well," said her stepsister. "Who's there and what do they want?"*

*Cinderella picked up the letter and handed it to her stepsister. "It's an invitation. From the town's mayor! It says 'Save the library' on the envelope."*

*Her stepsister looked at Cinderella and smirked, "I don't know what you're getting excited about. You're not going anywhere dressed in rags and dirt. And besides, who cares about a library?" She ripped the invitation in two and threw it in the trash. "A library? How ridiculous."*

*Cinderella returned to folding her mountain of laundry. "It's not ridiculous," Cinderella thought. Taking a deep breath, Cinderella said, "May I go?"*

## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Set members of the class up to use the class's work with storytelling and drama as a model for their own storytelling.**

"Try this with your own story. Start by retelling the beginning of the classic tale, using a booklet to help you do so." I gave them a minute to do this. "Next, make sure you get the facts straight about what will happen in your opening scene, your first Small Moment story. Who is doing what, exactly? Remember, we had Cinderella *doing* something, and then something is said, or something happens—for us it was the stepsister getting mad at Cinderella, and then the doorbell.

"Right now, think in your mind about who is doing what and saying what in your opening scene, in your first small moment. Be specific—we had to decide exactly what kind of work Cinderella was doing, and you will need to make decisions like that too. Think about that for a second." I left enough silence that I could see kids turning their minds to the job of making those decisions.

SESSION 3: STORYTELLING, PLANNING, AND DRAFTING ADAPTATIONS OF FAIRY TALES

*When you do this, draw your adaptation from your own class. But you'll probably want to follow a storyline something like this, or that echoes this. Be sure that your character has wants and trouble getting those wants fulfilled. That's the crux of any traditional story, and fairy tales fall into that category. We recommend, too, that the part of the story you tell all occur within one small moment, one scene. This will become more important as you move deeper into the unit.*



**Channel one partner to story-tell or act his or her opening scene to their partner, reminding them to include specific actions and dialogue.**

“Your tale will probably begin ‘One day . . .’ or ‘One early morning. . . .’ Think of your way to begin and think of the words you say when you story-tell, storytelling in your mind right now.” I left another pool of silence.

“Partner 1, you are going to start at the beginning and story-tell or reenact to your partner. Show and tell what your character is doing and who says what, exactly, in his or her words. Partner 1, on your mark, get set, turn and story-tell or act with your partner.”

**Coach with lean prompts that raise the level of what individuals do during the partner talk. Then convene the class and share.**

As I listened, I coached using brief verbal and also many nonverbal cues. When one partner in a partnership storytold her opening scene, I pointed to my eyes to show that she needed to tell about what she saw. I mimed people talking and made quote marks with my hands to channel another child to add more dialogue. When one writer was speeding through her scene, I made an impromptu stop sign with my right hand, holding it up like a traffic guard.

As I silently prompted beside him, Jackson storytold to his partner Shane, “‘I don’t care if it’s dangerous,’ said the big German shepherd. So the big dog ran across the field. But the gnome caught him and in a wicked voice said, ‘You will make a great gift for my master.’ ‘Wait for the middle-sized dog,’ said the German shepherd. ‘He will prove to be a much better pet.’”

**LINK**

**Channel the students’ acting energy toward writing.**

“Class, I am impressed with how you slowed the scene down, acting out what the characters were actually saying through dialogue and storytelling exactly what the characters saw. I can’t wait to see that appear in your writing! Writers, we are on the brink of writing time! Pull a sheet a clean paper from your writing folder.” I paused as the students readied their materials. “Partner 1s, you have your opening scene fresh in your mind from storytelling and acting. Will you return to your seats right away and get started drafting that scene? Remember to add in all the details, actions, and dialogue you just discovered while rehearsing. Partner 2s, stay behind here at the rug for a moment. We are going to rehearse our opening scenes too.”

“Okay, Partner 2s, it’s your turn to story-tell! Remember all that we’ve worked on today—slowing down, adding dialogue, including actions—and think of your opening scene. Get with a new partner and when I say ‘Go!,’ story-tell or act out your opening scene. On your mark. Get set. Go!” As children rehearsed, I coached using the same brief verbal and nonverbal cues as I did with the Partner 1s. After a minute or two, I stopped them and sent them off to join the others and draft. A few remained to tell the start of their story to me.

*This type of nonverbal cue is helpful when giving children quick, direct feedback, while not derailing their opportunity to practice. You might, another time, coach partners to use visual clues to give each other similar sorts of feedback.*

*Send half of the class off to write and keep others for a little more coaching. Half of the partnerships have not had a moment to rehearse their story ideas, so it’s important to provide them a small amount of time to story-tell in their minds before they draft.*



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Coaching Children to Use Drama for Writing

**B**ECAUSE IT IS EARLY IN THE UNIT and many children will need help, you are going to need to balance your time between one-to-one work and small-group work. When going to individuals, your first instinct might be to support your strugglers, and surely you need to do all you can to get them up and going in this work. But you also need to work with some children who can provide examples that other children can follow.

Piper was one of the first children to get started writing and she wrote with ease, quickly filling her page. I glanced at what she'd written, and noticed a disparity between the dramatic work she'd just done and her draft. It was as if Piper was plowing through the storyline, trying to cover the basics of the plot. I knew that she wasn't alone with this, and knew that I'd need to spend a lot of time supporting children to move from summarizing to storytelling.

I took a seat next to her and interrupted her writing for moment. "Piper," I said. She looked up, clearly slightly annoyed to be interrupted as she plowed headlong through her storyline. Knowing that she was, in fact, probably feeling pretty successful—she was zooming through her first sheet of draft paper, after all—I wanted to make sure to honor her efforts—not simply because she actually was writing with great stamina, but because I knew she'd get onboard with the conference more quickly if I called out this observed strength of hers first.

I complimented, "You know, I saw you from all the way across the room—I could tell from the quiet and serious look on your face that you were *really* focused, and I could tell from the way your hand was zooming down the page that you were writing fast and furiously, getting your ideas down, with a whole lot of stamina. That's great!" She beamed. "But . . . I actually want to switch gears for a minute and talk with you about that talent you have for storytelling—and acting! Are you aware that you have a real knack for bringing people to life when you story-tell? When I watched you during the minilesson, it seemed like you'd become your characters—your hands weren't

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING **Storytelling Not Summarizing**

"Writers, I want to stop you and first say how impressed I am with the amount of writing you are doing. I love that you have been writing fast and furiously.

"I want to caution you that *some* of you are slip-sliding into the next scene of your story. I bet you don't even know that you had stopped writing about one small moment, one scene, and slid into another. Chances are you'll find that you were writing bit by bit for a while, letting the story happen slowly, and then all of a sudden you speeded up and *vroom*. You were out of that small moment.

"Think of it like this—you are in a car, driving down the street. Think of each small moment, each scene, as a stretch of road in between two red lights. If you step on the gas too fast, you run past the red lights! That's against the law—not just the police law, but the law of writing.

"Will you reread your story, and see if you are still writing within the first small moment—or did you step on the gas and go *vrooming* to other parts of the story? If you went past the opening small moment of your story, will you draw a line on your draft paper at the place where the first small moment ends, and see if for now you can go back to that small moment and revise it, improve what you've written?"

### **As Students Continue Working . . .**

"If you really want to move on to a second Small Moment story, I want to first meet with you and give you another lesson, another tip. But your first scene should be something like a page in length, not a few sentences. If it is four or five sentences, start it all over on a new sheet of paper."

yours any more, they were your characters'. Your voice, your posture—it was as if you became someone else."

Piper blushed and also lit up, becoming the characters all over again as we talked. Moving on to teach, I said, "I'm telling you this because when you started writing this story, it felt like you forgot that you have a special talent for making a story come to life when you story-tell it and act it out, and you forgot that the world needs you to bring that talent to your work. And in this instance, to your writing. Right now, it looks like your draft is zooming along through the story without including *any* of that lively action and dialogue that I saw coming out of you earlier. Do you mind me saying to you that I think you can do much, *much* better at this, and that you really should start over again?"

A huge sigh from Piper, and a rueful glance down at her full page of writing. We may be tempted, in situations like this one, to not push. She had, after all, been producing lots of writing. What a bummer to have to start all over again! But in actuality, it's not a bummer at all—it's an opportunity to not only help Piper get started on the right foot, incorporating the richness of her dramatization into her draft, but also to teach her that revision sometimes means beginning again—and again, and again—and that this is not at all a bummer, but a wonderful and necessary way to enrich writing.

Getting specific now, I said, "I think you should just fold this draft up, and get a new sheet of paper and write *Draft 2* on the top of your page. And this time, before you start writing, relive the scene, exactly. Think, 'Who am I in this scene?' Only, you need to switch from being one character to being another . . . to be all the players. And as you start your new draft, make sure that you're putting all of that great stuff in—what the characters do, feel, say. . . . Right now, may I give you a moment to think about this and get started, and then I'll come back in a bit?"

On the flip side, there was Simone, who was always one to get swept into the drama of an event. I'd seen her out of the corner of my eye, dramatically marching around her desk, waving her arms, and then sitting down to write. At first glance, what could be better? She was certainly feeling the story in her bones! But when I sat down next to

her to read her draft, it seemed that the acting may have carried her away. In her draft of the first scene in her story about the three moles, it became clear that there were so many changes being made that it was becoming less like an adaptation of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by the minute.

"What are you working on, Simone?"

"Well, I added this change where the humans are digging the soil up so the moles are having a hard time. Every time they try to get somewhere, a shovel comes down and stops them!"

She was clearly thrilled with this, and full of energy for writing. But the work at hand was writing adaptations—and to write an adaptation, the bones of the original story need to be strong.

"Simone," I said, after skimming the rest of her draft and confirming that she could use some reining in, "you're really diving in here and making some creative changes to your story. But, you know, when writers are adapting a story, they have to make sure not only that the changes they are making are meaningful, but that they don't change the original story so much it's unrecognizable. Think about the adaptations we've been reading. Big changes are made in *Prince Cinders*, right? But we never doubt that we're reading a version of *Cinderella*. I think that your readers are not going to know, at this point, that you're adapting *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*."

Simone added, "The humans and the shovels are cool though."

"Totally. But you know what, you just put your finger on the part that doesn't need to be in this adaptation. It doesn't mean it's not great—it just doesn't fit with this adaptation. Tell you what—why don't you save it for another story? Maybe you can write the moles' continuing adventures sometime! But right now, dig back into this first scene, and reread it. Think about what changes belong in this story, and which ones are too much. You might want to start a second draft if you find that there are so many changes that you can't see the original story at all."





## SHARE

# Using Story-Planning Booklets as Scene-Planning Booklets

### Recruit writers to listen to one student's work, noticing what he has done well.

"Writers, you've each written the first scene or small moment in your fairy tale adaptation. Let's study Sam's opening scene and see if we can notice specific things Sam does to story-tell this scene in ways that allow us to picture the unfolding story. Ready to listen to the start of Sam's story? List across your fingers three things you hear him doing to bring this to life." I read aloud Sam's piece, making sure my voice came to a slow stop as I neared the last few lines (see Figure 3–1):

*One sunny Wednesday, Gruff the parrot was resting when the zoo guard walked by. He was a bad person because he was smoking. He twirled his keys. Gruff did not like the zoo but he really hated the zookeeper. Gruff was pacing up and down in his cage. Also he was making a bunch of weird noises and said to himself, "I've got to get out of here! I wish I could fly free in the air."*

*He was about to cry but then he came up with a plan.*

"Turn and tell your partner what Sam has done that you admire." After a second, I reconvened the group and heard a few of the things they especially admired.

### Set up children to plan upcoming scenes by using scene-planning booklets.

Then I switched the subject a bit. "Tomorrow you'll move on to later scenes, or Small Moment stories. Instead of trying to write your way to that next Small Moment story, for now I'm going to suggest you make yourself another scene-planning booklet. Sketch really quickly the timeline of the next scene in your story—and it is probably the second of three scenes—and then story-tell out loud, as you learned to do earlier this year, making sure that on each page of the booklet you tell what happened first, next, and last in the scene. You can do that by yourself, in your mind, as you sit with each page of the scene-planning booklet in front of you.

"And the cool thing is, writers often try out lots of possible ways that they could tell a scene, so make more than one scene-planning booklet and try telling the next scene in a bunch of different ways." I passed out multiple sheets of blank paper to each child. "So tonight for homework you'll make a few booklets, quickly sketching out different possibilities for the next scene in your story. Remember, you'll want to story-tell each page just like we worked on today because tomorrow we are drafting these next scenes!"

SESSION 3: STORYTELLING, PLANNING, AND DRAFTING ADAPTATIONS OF FAIRY TALES

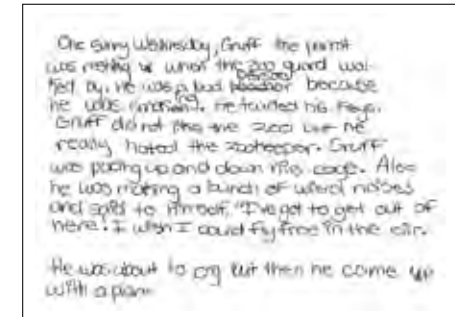


FIG. 3–1 Sam's first draft of scene 1



## Session 4

# Writers Can Story-Tell and Act Out as They Draft

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that writers can rehearse for writing by storytelling or acting out each scene.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Students' scene-planning booklet homework (see Connection)
- ✓ Class adaptation of *Cinderella* from Session 3 (see Connection)
- ✓ "How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation" chart from previous sessions
- ✓ Students' writing folders containing their drafts (see Link)
- ✓ *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole (see Small-Group Work and Confering)

**T**ODAY YOUR STUDENTS will be drafting their fairy tales in earnest. The goal is for their drafts to be as informed and as full of the qualities of good fiction writing as possible from the beginning—knowing full well that a draft is a draft, and that the story will evolve through revision.

Part of what you need to teach early on in this unit is that there is no way that a six-page booklet can contain a whole novel or a whole TV series-like saga. What your children will be writing are *short* stories or picture books, not epic sagas. You may find that some of your students get carried away by the fun of fiction writing and, despite what you have said to them, the text they produce resembles the kind of epic saga that spans a character's lifetime. You will want to channel those students toward writing a more focused story from the beginning. To do so, we recommend telling students that their stories will be apt to involve two, maybe three characters, and two or at the most three "scenes," as writers say, or "small moments" as your children say.

Once children realize that their fairy tales will be written as a series of scenes—Small Moment stories—they are free to tap into their skills and experience as writers of small moment narratives. You may need to explicitly remind children to draw on all that they already know. Because prior instruction in small moment, personal narrative storywriting will need to be front and center to the new challenges they are now undertaking, you'll definitely want the anchor charts from the *Crafting True Stories* unit to be prominently displayed. Be prepared to remind students that there is great value in rehearsing along the way as they flesh out their plans into scenes, and remind them that their Small Moment stories need to include action and dialogue. Students used the folded blank booklets to plan scenes as opposed to an entire story for the previous session's homework. They will be chomping at the bit to get started. Those who eked out words during earlier units will write with new volume, new stamina, new engagement, their scrawl filling one page, another, another as the unit taps into a great energy source. You'll set them up to have a great start and then get out of their way.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.3.3.b,d; W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.b,e; RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, L.3.6



## MINILESSON

# Writers Can Story-Tell and Act Out as They Draft

### CONNECTION

**Channel partners to share their writing with each other and to talk about what might happen next in their fairy tales.**

"Writers, meet me at the rug and bring both your writer's notebooks and your scene-planning booklets that you worked on last night for homework!" As children began settling on the rug, I encouraged them to take a moment to reread their writing to their partners and to talk about what will happen in their next Small Moment story.

"Writers," I interrupted, "like you, I am thinking about what will happen next. Our class story needs to jump ahead now, probably to the part when the fairy godmother comes. For homework, you worked on figuring out what you might jump to next in your story. You thought, 'What's the next scene, the next small moment, that I need to storytell?'"

**Work together to plan the start of the next scene of the shared class fairy tale adaptation.**

"Let's do this work with our class story. We know it will be that the fairy godmother comes, but where does she come, and how? And when she comes, is Cinderella still folding laundry in the same place, or has the scene changed?" Then I added, "I know in the original story, Cinderella is by the hearth, cleaning up the ashes . . . hmm. . ."

Charlie said, "Maybe the fairy godmother comes down the chimney, like Santa, and stands beside the washing machine."

I thanked Charlie and started jotting notes about the class story on a white board. Pausing, I said to the class, "Do you see how you're helping me to think through the plan for the next scene? Will you do the same planning with your own story, making sure you ask, 'What will happen next? How might the scene go?' You may use your scene-planning booklets from last night's homework to help you." I added, "While you jot your plans, I'm going to do the same for our class story."

**Record plans for the class story on a chart while children jot plans for their own stories and share them with a partner.**

On the easel I jotted:

### ◆ COACHING

*Notice that we are reining the kids in a bit, trying to be sure they write in scenes rather than just blasting through the whole story. Their progress will be less scaffolded and less controlled during the next portion of the unit.*

*Teachers, later we will teach the students how to glue their scenes together, but for now we are focusing students on planning their scenes and getting those scenes drafted.*

*I'm hoping you notice that "my" story is also the class's story. There are times when I demonstrate with this text, and other times when I recruit children to join me in doing some work, with lots of support, on that text.*

- *Cinderella, in her bedroom/in the basement laundry room? Crying.*
- *Her fairy godmother comes down the chimney?*
- *Cinderella wants a bike and clean clothes to get to the fundraiser—gets them.*

❁ **Name the teaching point.**

“Today I want to teach you that when you are writing, you can rehearse in the middle of writing as well as at the start of it. And specifically, when writing a fiction story that contains several small moments or scenes, it helps to story-tell or to act out each small moment before writing it—or at least to do this *while* writing it. I’m going to add that to our chart.”

How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation

- *Know the classic story and tell it often.*
- *Decide on a change to improve the story.*
- *Make the change lead to other changes so the whole story fits together.*
- *Make a character with traits and wants who runs into trouble.*
- *Tell the story in two or three scenes (Small Moment stories).*
- *Story-tell or act out a scene, filling in lifelike details. Then write the scenes.*

**TEACHING**

**Give children tips that will bring their characters and stories to life.**

“Because you all are storytelling, or acting your story to get ready for writing it, I’m going to give you a few acting tips. The first tip is that when you act, you need to not only show what the character *says*, but also what the character *does*. Even little tiny actions may make a big difference.

“The second tip is this. When you are acting or writing a story, you not only bring some *characters* to life—say, a girl and a wolf—you also bring a *place* to life. Always make sure you know where, exactly, your character is, what the things are that are nearby, and what the place feels like.”

**Perform the new, second scene of the class story in a flat, motionless way. Ask children to coach you to improve your performance to better help your writing.**

“So let’s try doing some acting with our *Cinderella* story, first, and then you may try with your own stories. Remember—you are working on the second scene of your stories! I’ll play the part of several characters, and you may watch, and then after I act out the scene, coach me. Okay, here goes.”

*As you will recall, there are a few common methods used in the teaching component of minilessons. This minilesson uses a rather unusual method—the teacher is telling the students and showing an example. In a moment, this will switch.*

*When trying to make a point in a minilesson, I tend to exaggerate. There is no advantage to being subtle. You want to drive home your point as forcefully as possible.*

Standing stock still, I said, “Stop crying, Cinderella. I am your fairy godmother and I am here to grant your wish.”

Switching places so that I became the second character in the story—Cinderella—I said, “Wh . . . at? Who are you?” I meanwhile stood motionless.

Hopping back to the place where the first character—the godmother—had spoken, I stood still and said to Cinderella, “You want to go the fund-raiser for the library, and I have the magic to make that happen. Let’s see, you’ll need. . . .”

I stopped. “Any suggestions for how my acting could be improved?” I asked. “Remember, acting helps me bring the characters and place to life.” The kids jumped to point out that I had forgotten all about adding actions, and added that I also forgot all about adding in the place. “I need to think what objects we might be holding. And also I need to feel what the place might feel like . . . hmm, . . . let me try it again. I want to think about what action could show that I just came down the chimney.”

**Perform the scene again, incorporating their ideas.**

I spun around as if I were a top, stopped as if I’d just landed, and then looked at an imaginary Cinderella. I raised my wand, twirling it in the air a bit, as if releasing a cloud of fairy dust. “Stop crying, Cinderella,” I said, pointing my wand toward the girl. “I am your fairy godmother and I am here to grant your wish.”

As Cinderella, I then gaped up at the magical woman, taking a few steps back in awe.

**Set up half the class to play one part in the scene, while you play the other. Ask the other half of the class to watch, noting any suggestions.**

“Okay, Partner 1s, you’ll take over the scene! Partner 1s, you will be Cinderella and talk back to me,” I said. “Act like her and bring her to life—remembering she has a whole pile of laundry in front of her.” Then I repeated my fairy godmother lines.

The kids tended to fall backward in amazement, open mouthed, saying something like, “Wh . . . at? Who are you?”

Approaching the whole class full of Cinderellas, I continued my lines, “You want to go the fund-raiser for the library, and,” touching my chest, “I have the magic to make that happen. Let’s see, you’ll need. . . .” I let them respond to me, to their partners.

**Demonstrate how acting out the scene improves the quality of writing.**

“Writers, or should I say actors, the acting we just did together helped us discover different ways to bring the characters and place to life. We stumbled across little, tiny actions that make a big difference once we add them to our writing, like the twirling of a magic wand or Cinderella falling back in amazement. Let’s add these tiny details we discovered through acting to our class story.”

*When contrasting two versions of the same thing, it is important to make sure the two versions are the same in every way except the one dimension that is meant to be different.*



## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Channel children to act out their own scenes with a partner. As they do, listen and coach in as needed.**

“Okay, time to try this in your own scenes. Partner 2, will you tell your partner what’s going to happen in *your* next scene, and then will the two of you try acting that out? You can use your scene-planning booklet and the notes you jotted earlier to remind you. Get started.”

I listened to Sam sharing his scene with his partner Shelly. He said, “Gruff, the parrot, was resting. He was thinking about how bored he was. He didn’t want to be there anymore.”

Caught up in the excitement of acting, Shelly and Sam immediately began to act out the scene, each imitating a parrot resting.

I coached, “Remember, you want to use acting to bring your characters and place to life! This will improve your writing. Hmmmm, where could Gruff be resting?”

Shelly exclaimed, “On a tree!”

“Yeah, but he’s in the zoo. He lives in a cage. That’s why he’s bored!” Sam clarified.

“Oh, let’s act that!” I nudged. “Who can be the bars of a cage? Who can be the bird? Remember, bring the characters and place to life with your acting.”

Sam threw up his arms to represent bars of a cage, while Shelly leaned back and forth as if she were on a swing with eyes heavy and a fallen face.

“So, Sam, how could your writing improve now that you and Shelly have acted out this little part?”

Sam began again, “One sunny afternoon Gruff, the parrot, was resting on a branch in his cage at the zoo.” Sam looked up at Shelly as if to ask, “Is that better?” and got a thumbs up.

## LINK

**Ask children to revisit the start of the scene they just acted, clarifying a character’s words and actions, and then to start writing the scene.**

“I know you’ve only had a chance to act out one partner’s scene, but that is okay because usually when a person writes, she *acts in her mind the story she is going to write*. That is, when *you* write, it helps to be acting the story out with your body or in your mind as you rush to get it onto the page. So right now, go back to the start of this scene in your writing. Picture what you just acted out. Or picture what you could act out. Who is saying what? What is that person doing? Picture what that person is holding, where he or she is. You got it in your mind?” I gave the children a little bit of silence. “Start writing, right here, right now. Go!”

40

*Don't let yourself become convinced that there always needs to be a time for sharing after the partner work in an active engagement. That is an option, but if minilessons are taking too much time or kids aren't getting enough writing done, you need to be economical. Reporting back or even just debriefing after partner work may become a luxury you can't afford.*

*Sometimes, it may be particularly powerful to get started writing as a whole community while still in the meeting area. This is what we are suggesting for today. As soon as you see that a writer has a good, strong start, say, four or five lines of writing, you might whisper, "Off you go."*

GRADE 3: ONCE UPON A TIME



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Teaching the Balance of Narration, Description, and Dialogue

AFTER THE PREVIOUS SESSION, I'd read through the work of children who sat at one table and I'd made notes about some of the conferring and small-group work I would need to do in this session. I'd noticed, for example, that Sam had zipped through the first scene hardly adding anything to the initial story he'd told a day or so earlier. It read, *The parrot was resting, and the guard was pacing up and down. Then the parrot began to peck at the door with his red beak.* Sam had already moved on to other scenes, and those other scenes felt equally underdeveloped.

In contrast, Leroy's draft brimmed with dialogue and description. His story was stretching longer and longer and nothing had happened in it yet. He seemed to have overdone the emphasis on telling the story bit by bit.

I decided to gather both Sam and Leroy for a small group. Although they were coming at the challenge of writing a story from different angles, I thought the fact that they had opposite issues and opposite strengths might allow them to help each other.

Once we were settled together on the rug, I said, "I want to help you work a bit on the first scene in each of your stories. Would you reread each other's first scenes so that we can all talk about all the texts?"

After they read, I asked, "So, what did you notice?"

Leroy said, "Sam's is really short. Like, it's a *really* small moment. The parrot is just sitting there and the guard guy is just pacing."

"Yes," I agreed. "Sam has really zoomed in. There's some good things about that, and sometimes some hard things about it too, right? Sam, what did you notice about Leroy's draft?"

*(continues)*

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

#### Being a Spelling Fairy Godmother

"Writers, may I interrupt you? As I move about the room, going from writer to writer, I see you carrying all that you've learned across these past few days into your drafts. I am going to read our chart, and if you have done or are doing one of the items on the chart, give a thumbs up.

"It feels good to hold yourselves accountable to the things you know how to do, doesn't it? What I am wondering, and you are probably wondering as well, is are you holding yourself to all that you've learned across this year, to the things that writers remember to do always? I specifically want to remind you of the important work you have learned to do as spellers, because I see some of you acting like a fairy godmother is going to come along and with a magic wand make your spelling look like the work of an almost-fourth-grader. Guess what—you need to be your own spelling fairy godmother. And the magic dust is actually elbow grease.

"So here are three things you need to remember to do as spellers."

- ◆ Try a word a few different ways.
- ◆ Check the word wall.
- ◆ Circle the word and come back later.

"Writers, take a moment right now to become your own spelling fairy godmother. Reread a part of your draft looking for words that don't look quite right and remember you can try the word a few different ways in the margin, check the word wall, or circle it, reminding yourself to figure it out later."

“He’s got a lot of dialogue. They are talking the whole time!”

“Yep. Again, dialogue—like zooming in—is an important thing that Small Moment writers do. But Leroy, I get the sense that you’re suggesting Sam’s draft may be too focused, and Sam, that Leroy’s might have too much talk, and I think you both are on to something. I think that sometimes writers tend to do one thing in a really big way—something the writer is good at—and sometimes that one thing gets almost overdone, with other things being ignored. You two are good at different things, but both of your pieces are somewhat out of balance because you each do one thing really well, and forget some other work.

“For example, may I tell you one thing that I think both of you could work on? Neither of you have got much action yet in your drafts. Will you look over your draft and see if you agree?”

The children looked, and agreed that yes, that was sort of true. “Let’s see if I can help you work on that one aspect of your writing, okay?” I said. “Will you think about your Small Moment story as a scene in a play? Will you think about what the action is that happens up on stage?”

“I could add the thinking, like what the parrot was thinking about,” Sam said.

“Sam, I think you need some action as well. Are you sure you have figured out what actually happens in the story, because making those decisions may help you put more action in. May I leave you two to help each other think about the actions that characters are making, and about how you put those into your draft? I’m pretty sure you are

going to need to start a new draft, this time telling not only what people are thinking and saying, but also what they are doing.” As I left the boys to their revising, I thought to myself that later I might suggest that children study the way that *Prince Cinders* provides a balance of action, description, dialogue, and narration.

Sam, meanwhile, began a new draft, this time writing (see Figure 4–1).

Assured that both kids were poised to not only make meaningful revisions of their first scenes but to carry their Small Moment story knowledge into drafting the rest of their scenes, I moved on.

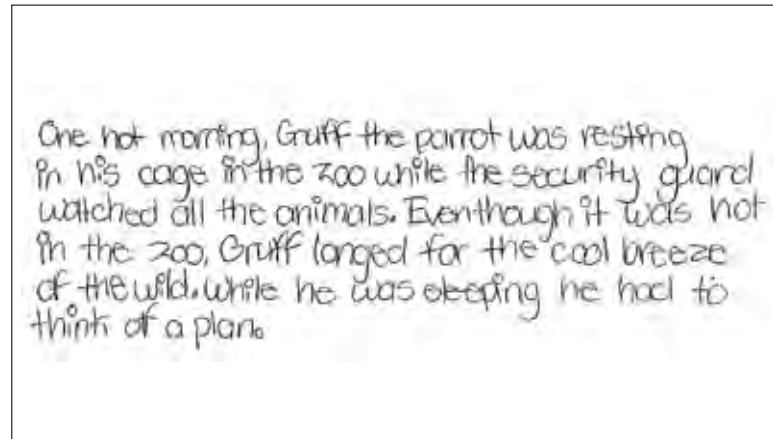


FIG. 4–1 Sam’s revised draft of scene





SHARE

## Ending Stories

**Ask students to discuss what they know about writing strong endings, and then highlight a few for the class.**

"Writers, gather the scene-planning booklets you've been using and meet me on the rug." I gave them a moment and then said, "You've put so much time and care into rehearsing and storytelling the first and second scenes of your fairy tale adaptations. Many of you will be ready to start drafting your final scenes, or endings, tomorrow." I held up a booklet and pointed to the final page. "Let's make sure you end these books with a bang! Before we close for the day, let's think about how endings to stories usually go and then try out a few ways our story could end.

"You already know a lot about writing effective endings to a story," I said. "Turn and talk to your partner about one thing that you think makes an effective ending." I stopped them after just a few moments.

"I am impressed, writers! Some of you were talking about using important actions or important dialogue, others remembered that many books end with rich images. The truth is, sometimes a writer uses all of these things to create



FIG. 4-2 Jackson's scene-planning booklet

SESSION 4: WRITERS CAN STORY-TELL AND ACT OUT AS THEY DRAFT

43

an end. I also heard a few of you say—and I think you’re right about this—that an effective ending makes you feel like the story is *over*. And that, writers, happens when all of the problems that your character faced at the beginning of the story are solved.”

**Ask students to identify what happens at the ending of a classic tale.**

“Could we try something together, writers? Could you think with me about the classic *Cinderella* story we all know and see if we can, together, figure out how the ending of the classic story solves Cinderella’s problems and helps us feel the story is over?”

“The first thing I’m going to do is list for myself what happens at the end.” I retold plot events across my fingers using the story’s ending language. “Now that the ending is fresh in our minds, turn and talk with your partner. What happens at the end that solves Cinderella’s problems?” I gave the class just a moment to do this, then summarized their talk, highlighting the process.

“I heard many of you saying that the ending fixes Cinderella’s problems by letting her marry a prince because at the beginning she is so lonely. Some of you are saying that the ending solves Cinderella’s problems because the evil step-mother and stepsisters get sent away—those wicked girls were her real problem all along! Both of these problems do get solved in the classic tale! But writers, do you know what I noticed? I noticed that when you want to figure out what is an effective ending for a story, you have to ask yourself, ‘What were the big problems at the beginning?’”

**Challenge children to find the central problems of the main character in the class adaptation.**

“So writers, now I have a challenge for you, and this is the kind of writing that I know some students are doing even in the seventh grade! Do you think you are ready for it?” The students chorused “Yes!”

“Okay, this is it—to write an effective ending for our story, we not only need to write an ending that’s different from what happens in the classic story, but also we need to write an ending that solves the big problems that we have created for *our* story, *our* Cinderella.” I added a new item to our chart.

“So writers, let’s stir up some ideas for our ending! I want you to think about this silently first, just to yourself—what were our Cinderella’s problems at the beginning? Thumbs up when you have an idea.” I waited until thumbs are up across the rug. “Okay, now take this idea and try rehearsing an ending with your partner. Partner 2, as you listen, make sure you are thinking, ‘How does this ending solve our Cinderella’s problem?’”

“Right here at the rug, think about how you might tie up the loose ends of your story, and—I know it’s a lot—keep all that you know about strong endings in mind as you do that.” I gave them a moment to think and then said, “Now, what could be *another* way that you end your story?” After another quick moment of thinking time I said, “Work with your partner and story-tell or act out a possible ending or two to your fairy tale. Use what you’ve learned about great story-telling and acting to make the final scene, the ending, come alive for your partner! You might want to jot yourself a few notes in your scene-planning booklet, too, so that you remember what you’ve planned for tomorrow’s writing time.”

**How to Write a Fairy Tale  
Adaptation**

- Know the classic story and tell it often.
- Decide on a change to improve the story.
- Make the change lead to other changes so the whole story fits together.
- Make a character with traits and wants who runs into trouble.
- Tell the story in two or three scenes (Small Moment stories).
- Story-tell or act out the first scene, filling in lifelike details. Then write the scenes.
- Figure out an ending that solves the character’s big problem.

## Session 5

# Weaving Narration through Stories



**I**N CRAFTING TRUE STORIES as well as many other narrative writing units, we have focused on the importance of showing, not telling, and that skill continues to be important in this unit. It is important for readers to be brought into a story and for the story to unfold right in front of the readers' eyes. Still, as important as showing is, *telling* also has a role in narrative craft. Gail Carson Levine, author of *Ella Enchanted* (1997), suggests that when the author *shows* readers something, the author allows the reader to live on the ground of a story, to get traction. Readers are in the shoes of characters. On the other hand, when the author *tells* instead of showing something to readers, this allows readers to see the story as if looking out from the window of an airplane. The world rushes by so quickly that only the largest landmarks—lakes, mountains, a sprawling city—stand out.

Levine argues that as writers, we need to both the show *and* tell. Writers *show* when they want to slow the story the down, inviting the reader into a scene, entering the world of a character and catching an important part of the tale. Writers *tell* when they want to cover a lot of ground quickly, laying out the most important parts of the story and then moving on.

This technique of telling in fairy tales is often embodied by an anonymous narrator who stands outside the tale. Remember how many Disney fairy tales open? An illustrated olden-days book opens under the light of a candle and a soothing voice begins, "Once upon a time. . . ." In *Pinocchio*, Jiminy Cricket, an animated cricket, played the role of this narrator. He was the first character the audience met, a formally dressed fellow who sat outside of the storybook—in fact, on top of it—just like a narrator stands outside the red curtain at the opening of a play. He spoke directly to us, the audience, narrating the beginning of the story and giving us important context: "One night a *long* time ago, my travels took me to a quaint little village. It was a beautiful night, stars shining like diamonds." Jiminy Cricket invited both young and old into the world of an old tale.

In this session, you'll explain the concept of a narrator who functions like Jiminy Cricket, providing context and stitching the story together meaningfully. You'll highlight the difference between telling and showing, teaching children that it is powerful and effective to use both techniques.

SESSION 5: WEAVING NARRATION THROUGH STORIES

**IN THIS SESSION**, you'll teach students that writers often weave narration through fairy tales as a way to establish background, tie together scenes, and teach a moral or end a story.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole or other fairy tale adaptations (see Connection)
- ✓ Fairy tale excerpts you plan to read, copied onto chart paper (optional)
- ✓ "How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation" chart from previous sessions
- ✓ "The Power of Narration" chart (see Teaching)
- ✓ Class adaptation of *Cinderella*, Scene 1 and the start of Scene 2 (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ Students' writing folders (see Active Engagement and Link)

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.3.3.a,b,c,d; W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a,b,c,d,e; RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.6, RL.3.10, SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, L.3.3.a

45



## Weaving Narration through Stories

### CONNECTION

**Introduce the concept of a narrator by telling children about the role Jiminy Cricket played in the movie *Pinocchio* long ago. Explain that fairy tales often rely on narrators and cite a few.**

"When I was little, when I watched the movie *Pinocchio*, there was a little cricket guy named Jiminy Cricket who came on screen, wearing a top hat and coat and carrying a cane, at various times in the story, and he would talk right to those of us watching the movie. He'd say things like, 'One night, a long time ago, my travels took me to . . .,' or he'd say, 'Of course, I'm just a cricket singing my way from hearth to hearth, but let me tell you what made me change my mind. . . .'"

"Now, as a grown-up, I know that the fancy word for that little cricket guy is *narrator*. You all know about narrators because when you and your partner, during reading time, decide to take parts and read aloud in the role of characters, and there are some words that none of the obvious characters say; that's usually the narrator's part.

"I'm telling you this because if you read a ton of fairy tales, you quickly realize that many of them have a Jiminy Cricket character in them—a narrator who comes out on stage and makes a little speech to readers. Listen to the start of these stories, and you'll hear the narrator, and then you'll hear when the actual story gets started. Listen to this part of *Prince Cinders* by Babette Cole":

*Prince Cinders was not much of a prince.  
He was small, spotty, scruffy and skinny.  
He had three big, hairy brothers who were  
always teasing him about his looks.*

"Then the narrator stops saying his lines, and the Small Moment story takes over":

*One Saturday night, when he was washing the socks, a dirty fairy fell down the chimney.*

### ◆ COACHING

*Of course, this is one of those places where showing a bit of a video would be a terrific addition. We have found several useful clips on YouTube. If you find others that feature Jiminy Cricket or other narrators and if that footage helps your children grasp the important concept you are teaching, send us word and we'll include the reference in future editions.*

*The italics are ours. When you read the bits from fairy tales in this session, make sure that your voice accentuates the transition between telling and showing, between the narrator talking, and the narrator standing back to let the scene resume, the characters carrying the story.*

“Or here is another, from *Cinder-Elly* by Frances Minters”:

*Once upon a time,  
Or so they tell me,  
There was a girl  
Called Cinder-Elly.  
Elly was good  
And she was pretty.  
She lived with her folks  
In New York City.*

“And again, the narrator’s part ends and the story starts”:

*But then one day  
El got a note.  
So did her sisters.  
Somebody wrote . . .*

❁ **Name the teaching point.**

“Today I want to teach you that writers of fairy tales use narration, or *telling*, in some important ways: to introduce the story, to stitch one scene to the next, and to end the story.”

## TEACHING

**Set up your teaching by telling students you’ll be giving them a lot of new information in the form of a little lecture, just like in a college class.**

“Today is going to be a course about the narrator’s job. I’ll teach you a bit, then we’ll practice together on the class fairy tale, and then I’ll give you some time to practice on your own fairy tale adaptation. You’re going to get a taste of what it’s like to be in a lecture class in college, where you hear a bunch of new information all at once, and you have to be really alert and awake to catch all of the kernels of information. So, shake your hands, stretch your necks, take a deep breath, and get ready! After I give you a little talk about the narrator’s role, I’m going to ask you to say back what you have learned to your partner.”

**Explain some of the different ways in which narration is used in stories. Start by discussing the jobs that narrators do at the start of fairy tales, providing examples, then spotlighting transitions.**

“The first place where writers of fairy tales use the power of telling is at the beginning of the story. Fairy tale writers often start by almost coming out on stage, talking to readers, filling them in on the background to the story. For example, the classic *Cinderella* tale does *not* begin in the ways you’ve learned to begin a story, with a small moment and a character who is saying or doing something. Cinderella isn’t even out on stage at the start of the classic version.

*It will help later in the minilesson if you have a chance to write these excerpts on chart paper. Later, you’ll ask students to write narration for the class adaptation of Cinderella, and having model texts in front of them will help. But it is not crucial.*

*When you need to give a little bit of content up front, it may be helpful to use the metaphor of a college class because you set your students up to learn a bunch of new content quickly. If you recall, there are four kinds of teaching that one draws upon in the teaching component of minilessons. Usually you are demonstrating, sometimes teaching through guided practice, as in the previous lesson. This minilesson uses another unusual method; you are teaching by explaining and showing an example.*

*Of course, you’ll read the first few lines of the classic Cinderella version you choose to use with your class here.*

Instead, it is as if a narrator comes out on stage and gives the readers a little speech, explaining some of the background to the story. The narrator tells the readers, ‘There once was a man whose wife died and so he took another. The new wife was proud and haughty, and had two daughters who were just like her in every way. But the man also had a daughter, and she was sweet and gentle and good as gold.’ Did you hear how the narrator pops in like Jiminy Cricket and gets the story going?

“And that’s not the only place that writers use narration. The narrator is also used to stitch the scenes, the small moments, of a story together. Usually, there is a jump-in time and place between one Small Moment story and another, and the narrator of the story—the Jiminy Cricket—comes out on stage and talks directly to readers, saying, ‘After this, a bunch of time went by. Then one day, in this other place,’ and then readers are back into a second Small Moment story.

“In fairy tales the narrator often uses fancier words to stitch scenes together, like they might say, ‘After some months had passed, the king’s son gave a ball for all the stylish people in the countryside’ and ‘For two days the sisters could hardly eat for excitement’ and ‘At last the evening of the ball came.’ But the important thing for you to know is that another powerful way to use narration is to stitch together Small Moment stories so that readers understand how they fit together.”

#### **Debrief by asking students to recap what they’ve heard, while you chart your main points.**

While partners did a quick recap of what they’d heard to a partner, I quickly jotted on chart paper two ways narration is powerful.

#### *The Power of Narration*

- Provides backstory at the beginning of a story
- Stitches together Small Moment stories

### ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

**Ask students to practice, in partnerships, the two types of narration you’ve discussed in the context of the class fairy tale.**

“Let’s try using these two kinds of narration in our class adaptation of *Cinderella*. We haven’t finished drafting all of our scenes yet, but I think we have enough of a start to practice. Partner 1, quickly jot on a clean sheet of paper from your folder what narration you might add at the start of our *Cinderella* story to provide readers with some backstory. Remember, this doesn’t need to be a long, drawn-out overview of the characters or the place; you can cover a lot of ground in just a few sentences.

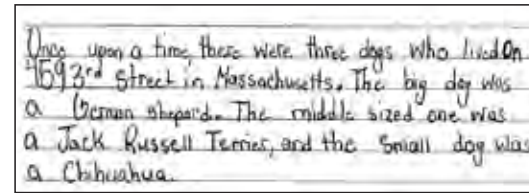


FIG. 5-1 Jackson’s narration at the start of his story

"Partner 2, you're going to think about and jot a way that you could use the narrator to stitch together Scene 1—it is written up here—and Scene 2—the start of it is written here. Keep in mind that readers might be confused about how Cinderella gets from the laundry to her attic, and might not have any idea what time it is. Write quickly—the exact words you suggest we stick into the story. We'll share ideas in a minute." As students wrote or thought, I circulated, prompting students to keep the narration succinct, to use some of the exemplar text that I'd cited earlier. I kept my ears open for some child's narration that I thought would especially add to the class tale.

**Share some strong examples of narration.**

"Okay, partners, let's wrap it up. Quickly, exchange papers, and read what each other has written." As the children did this, I continued searching for some good examples. Before the children even had time to finish reading each other's work, I asked for their attention. "May I stop you? I think our story is going to hang together with a lot more power because of the narration you just came up with. We could use the work any one of you just did. Let's take Sierra's idea for now. She said the beginning could go something like:

*Once long ago, in a land far away, there lived a girl named Cinderella. Cinderella tried to be cheerful, but it was kind of hard. She lived with her evil stepmother and two mean stepsisters. They made Cinderella work all the time. All she wanted to do was read.*

"And José thought that in between Scenes 1 and 2, the narration might go something like:

*Later that night, as she sat in her room, Cinderella . . .*



**Debrief. Name what students have just practiced and plan to add new narration to class text later.**

“Did you notice how, in just a couple of sentences, we used the power of narration to give readers backstory at the beginning and to stitch together two scenes? We’ll have to add those narrated parts to our class story later.”

## LINK

**Remind students of the ways that narration may be used in fairy tales; set them up to try it out on their own pieces.**

“Today you’ll have time to do some of this work, and all the rest of the work you need to do, in your own fairy tale adaptations! You’ve got your drafts in hand. Before you leave the rug, take a minute to look quickly through them to get your minds going, thinking about ways you might add narration at the beginning or to stitch together your Small Moment stories. This is really, really important work. When you add the voice of the narrator your story becomes a *story* rather than just a collection of wonderful scenes. Where would Pinocchio be without Jiminy Cricket to keep his story together?

“Get started, right here and now on the rug. It probably makes sense to start with trying out narration at the beginning of your story—but do what makes the most sense to you. I’ll come tap you when it looks like you’ve got yourself set up to be really productive today. When you go off, you’ll want to be pushing ahead with rehearsing and drafting remaining scenes as well. Some of you might even finish drafting today!”

### How to Write a Fairy Tale Adaptation

- Know the classic story and tell it often.
- Decide on a change to improve the story.
- Make the change lead to other changes so the whole story fits together.
- Make a character with traits and wants who runs into trouble.
- Tell the story in two or three scenes (Small Moment stories).
- Story-tell or act out the first scene, filling in lifelike details. Then write the scenes.
- Figure out an ending that solves the character’s big problem.
- With narration, give a backstory at the start and stitch scenes together.





## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Encouraging Students to Take on Challenging Work

IT MAY BE TEMPTING—REALLY TEMPTING—to spend much of our conferring and small-group time working with those students who so obviously and desperately need our help. And it may indeed be fine to tilt the balance in favor of spending more time with those students who clearly need more support. But, we think it’s incredibly important to make conscious plans for working with students who are sailing ahead. Not only do all writers have things to learn, but sometimes it is especially students who excel who benefit from the idea that continuing to develop richness in our lives as writers and as learners means not resting on our laurels. You may have writers who are able, seemingly effortlessly, to incorporate your minilesson work into their writing. It would be easy to walk by and give a supportive nod here and there and know that those students are meeting expectations for the unit and for the year. But if we do that, we miss the opportunity to teach them what it feels like to stretch, to be challenged, to push. That is a huge opportunity that may affect children’s writing lives not only for the time they spend in their classrooms, but forever. When we teach all students that taking on challenges is immensely satisfying and important work, we prepare them for those times that will occur in the lives of all learners when they genuinely are challenged by something, genuinely stumped, genuinely unprepared. We prepare them to take on issues in their own learning rather than sticking to a comfort zone, to what’s always worked in the past. A valuable lesson for writing, and for life.

In the situation below, I decided to push Simone, one of the strongest and most natural writers in the class, to build on the absolutely adequate bit of narration with which she’d begun her story. After approaching Simone, I read over her shoulder (see Figure 5–3):

*There were three moles who lived underneath the ground of a field of grass and eventually the humans took over. That caused the moles’ home to be destroyed. The moles got very upset.*

SESSION 5: WEAVING NARRATION THROUGH STORIES

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

#### Using Narration to Wrap Up a Story

“Look up for a minute, writers. I know that some of you are in the middle of drafting your very last scenes. Even if you’re not, listen carefully, because you will be soon. There is *another* way that writers use narration—it may be used at the end of a story, to wrap up the loose ends and sort of send the reader on her way. Listen to the ending of the classic *Cinderella*—you’ll see what I mean.”

*Cinderella was taken before the prince. He was overwhelmed with love for her and some time later they were married. Cinderella, who was as good as she was beautiful, gave her two sisters a home in the palace, and that very same day they were married to two lords of the court.*

“It’s kind of like Jiminy Cricket coming back onstage one last time to tell us a few things we need to know about how everything fits together in the end. When you all draft your endings today, try this out. We can add this third kind of narration power to our chart, too.”

#### The Power of Narration

- Provides backstory at the beginning of a story
- Stitches together Small Moment stories
- Wraps the story up at the end

After noticing out loud Simone’s excellent work setting up her story by adding the narration, the telling, I said, “Simone, you are so strong with this kind of work. I wonder if you might be up for taking on something a little trickier, something a little more sophisticated. I think this is a great beginning—and you did exactly what we talked about Jiminy

June 21st Simone

The three moles  
and a Hegeheg

There were three moles who lived underneath the ground of a field of grass and eventually the humans took over. That caused the moles to try home to be destroyed. The moles got very upset.

FIG. 5-3 Simone's narration at the start of her story

Cricket doing with his narration—you set the scene, and you gave us the backstory we need to understand what's happening when we get into your first scene. Sometimes, though, writers are a little more flexible about where they put in that beginning narration. Sometimes, writers actually do start with the characters saying something, or details about the setting or the weather, and *then* tuck the narration in. That may make readers even more curious about what will happen. Do you think you might want to try something like that?"

Simone was slightly put out that I was asking her to revise a perfectly good beginning, but she was willing to try another way too. She thought it might be interesting to have the moles talking to each other at the beginning and then to have the narration come in.

I decided to ask Simone to share her work with Piper, another strong writer in the class who I thought could benefit from the same tip. I set this small group up so that Simone would really take ownership of the strategy and basically teach it to Piper herself. I was there to guide and offer tips, but Simone was able to share what she'd done with

June 21st Piper

The Museum's crossing guard!

"I can't wait to go to the museum!" squealed Shelly. Shelly, her Mom, and her Grandma all lived in apartment #27A on 20th Street in New York City. They were going to the city museum, and Shelly was very, very excited because they had never gone there before. Her mom agreed that she was also excited, but her grandma was worried.

FIG. 5-4 Piper's narration at the start of her story

Piper in a way that set Piper up to replicate that strategy in her own work. Piper's story beginning soon read (see Figure 5-4):

"I can't wait to go to the museum!" squealed Shelly. Shelly, her mom, and her grandma all lived in apartment 27A on 20th Street, 7th Avenue in New York City. They were going to the city museum, and Shelly was very, very excited, because they had never gone there before. Her mom agreed that she was also excited, but her grandma was worried.

If you have other students who you think are ready for this kind of sophisticated work, you could invite them into the small group as well. And you will know your students well enough to determine if the work done within the small group will be best launched by you, or if you might choose to encourage a student who has tried the strategy successfully to run the group, with or without your support.



## SHARE

# Giving Each Other Feedback

Invite students to the meeting area to share the endings of their tales.

"Writers," I called, "take a moment to jot a plan for what you'll do next and meet me at the rug." Within a minute, most of the writers had gathered on the rug, folders in hand. "Yesterday we experimented with endings. Today many of you drafted your ending one way then another way, solving the characters' big problems and let the reader know the story was over. It helps to share endings with a friend or a partner, reading it out loud and getting a reaction. So today read your ending to your partner. And partners, your job is to let your partner know if the ending is doing its job."

I pulled up alongside Simone as she read aloud her ending to Sam (see Figure 5-5).

Sam clarified, "So the mole's big problem was the hedgehog?" Simone nodded. "And it's clear the story is over." Simone nodded again. Sam put his fist out and Simone, smiling, bumped it with her fist.

I moved on to Piper and Jackson. Piper read (see Figure 5-6). Jackson put up one thumb, then the other. "Two thumbs up," he said.

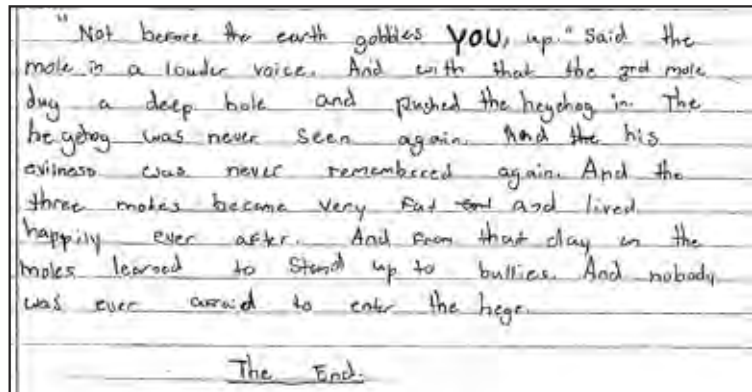


FIG. 5-5 Simone's ending

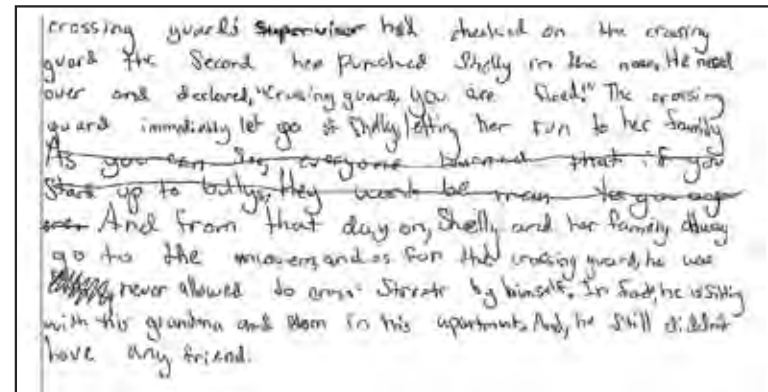


FIG. 5-6 Piper's ending



## Session 6

# Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

## Assessment Using Self-Reflection

IN THIS SESSION, you'll teach students that writers check their work and plan for future projects.

### GETTING READY

- ✓ Students' writing folders containing their drafts
- ✓ Pens or pencils
- ✓ Narrative Writing Checklists, Grades 3 and 4, one copy per student (see Active Engagement)
- ✓ Optional: Printouts of fairy tales for students to take home

THIS LAST SESSION IN BEND I is critical in several ways. Your students will have finished drafts of their very first fairy tale adaptations ever. It is worth taking a moment to pause and celebrate the fact that in just over a week, they've immersed themselves in an unfamiliar genre and have produced something brand new. The share becomes the foundation for Bend II, setting students up to write new and stronger adaptations of the fairy tale of their choice.

During the start of the minilesson, you'll support writers as they assess their work, reminding them that although they may be thinking of what they've been writing as specifically fairy tales, they are actually stories—narratives. This means that students can bring in all that they already know about narrative writing as they self-assess; you can encourage them to weigh their fairy tale adaptations in relation to the qualities of narrative writing that were front and center during the *Crafting True Stories* unit earlier in the year. The work of self-assessing provides an opportunity for goal setting, and you'll see that this session's mid-workshop teaching supports students to develop clear goals and plans that can then influence their upcoming work.

You've now taught several minilessons like this one. In every unit, you've brought out a checklist that captures qualities of strong writing in that unit's genre, and you've asked writers to self-assess. We have suggested that in this session you champion the fact that some of your students have initiated this process of self-reflection on their own. You might be skeptical, thinking, "It is not likely that my students would do that." But the truth is that you can do the engineering to pull this off. On the day before today's session, leave a narrative checklist where writers can easily see it, and if necessary suggest that writers self-assess. Later, convene students and describe the writing work that you witnessed.

This lesson, then, functions as a pivot point between the two bends—celebrating students' first, best efforts at writing fairy tale adaptations, rallying them to thoughtfully examine and assess what they've done in the context of narrative writing, and setting them up so that they jump into the next bend with greater independence.

COMMON CORE STATE STANDARDS: W.3.3,b,c,d; W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a,b,c,d,e; RL.3.1, RL.3.2, SL.3.1a, SL.3.2, L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, L.3.4, L.3.5a, L.3.6



## MINILESSON

# Mirror, Mirror on the Wall

*Assessment Using Self-Reflection*

### CONNECTION

**Celebrate students' completion of their first fairy tale adaptations, and then, using the example of a student who did so, rally students to independently use available tools to assess their writing and set goals.**

"This is an important day, writers. Last night as I was getting ready for today's writing workshop lesson, knowing that you will all be finishing your very first fairy tale adaptations today, I was thinking about how much you've grown into yourselves as writers since the beginning of the year. I remember lots of times, early this year, when some of you would creep up next to me during writing time and ask, 'Is this good?' or 'What should I do now?' This still happens sometimes, but more and more I see writers who are asking *themselves* those questions, and finding ways to answer them. Listen to this—yesterday I was watching Edwin during writing time, and I noticed that he wasn't actually writing—he was instead poring over some kind of paper. So, I sidled over to him and peeked over his shoulder at the paper. And guess what? Edwin wasn't a bit off task. In fact, he had pulled the Narrative Writing Checklist from his folder of work from the first unit in the year, *Crafting True Stories*, and was reading the checklist over, then glancing at his fairy tale adaptation. When he saw me behind him, he said, 'Just checking!'

"So, writers. We need to celebrate what Edwin was doing—totally on his own. Edwin has discovered that writers spend a fair amount of their writing time not actually writing, but *preparing* to write and *reflecting* on their writing. A really superb writer does what Edwin has done and picks up checklists, even when no one suggests it, and rereads the writing, thinking, 'Does this piece of writing match the items on this checklist, and my hopes for it?' Another wonderful thing that Edwin and I noticed as he used the checklist is that he was feeling much more ready for those more grown-up, fourth-grade goals than he was earlier in the year. I bet a lot of you will notice the same thing!"

#### ✿ Name the teaching point.

"Today I want to teach you that writers know that their writing gets better not only from what they do *on the page*, with their pen, but also from what they do *off the page*. And no work is more powerful than being a really tough critic of one's own draft, rereading one's writing and judging it against goals in such a way that the writer comes away with goals to live by, stars to steer by."

### ◆ COACHING

*Notice in this instance that we are using the Small Moment narrative structure ourselves to write a little story to use at the start of the minilesson. You'll find that most of your minilessons are actually a composite of small moments, essays, and how-to texts! You'll also notice that we've caught Edwin in the act of using the checklist independently, although it's easy to orchestrate this situation if you don't see it happening naturally. At this point in the year, students will be more ready for the fourth-grade checklist than they were earlier in the year when they first used it. You can use this as an opportunity to celebrate their growth!*

## TEACHING

### **Demonstrate using a checklist in a superficial way.**

“Let me show you what I mean. When I watched Edwin using his checklist yesterday, one thing I noticed is that he didn’t just read it without thinking. It can be easy to just skim through like this.” I got out my own narrative checklist and slumped in my chair with it with a big sigh. Pointing to the top item on the list, I muttered to myself, “Sure, I do that, kind of,” and then checked it off. Moving on to the next item, I continued, “Yep, I think I sort of do that too.” With another big sigh, I stared off into space.

Looking up at the class, I asked, “Do you think that kind of work is going to help me get better as a writer?” I looked into a sea of shaking heads.

### **Contrast superficial assessment and decision making with an explanation of thoughtful assessment and decision making.**

“All of you know what it feels like to be deeply engaged in assessment and you also know what it feels like to shrug and say, ‘It’s fine,’ like I was doing earlier. And to become stronger writers, it’s important for you to try the deeply engaged way of assessing. As you are doing this work with your own stories, you are not only thinking deeply about those particular stories, you are thinking about the stories you will be working on next, starting in the very next writer’s workshop session. You will be asking yourself, ‘What kinds of things do I want to rally my energies around as I begin new drafts? Are there things that I find particularly challenging?’ And you might decide to focus particularly on those things as you start your new stories tomorrow.”

## ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT

### **Encourage students to use their narrative checklists thoughtfully as they begin assessing their drafts and setting writing goals.**



“So, writers, pull out your drafts and your Narrative Writing Checklists, Grades 3 and 4, right here on the rug. As you read back and forth between the first few items on your checklist and your draft, don’t just read with that ‘eh’ kind of energy and focus, but read with a deeply engaged kind of focus. And make sure you’re also taking a deeper look at those goals on the fourth-grade side. Get started!”

As the class got to work, I circulated, celebrating any time when I noticed writers looking back at their writing to ask, “Did I do that? Let me check.”

“Writers,” I called out. “Thalia was just reading the goal about using paragraphs and I heard her say, ‘Well, I sort of did that but I can work on it to make it much stronger.’ She’s really thinking deeply about this, for sure!”

*Of course, you might come up with an example. You might compare choosing what kind of breakfast cereal you’ll have with choosing the perfect birthday dinner. Or deciding what to do on a regular Saturday morning and deciding what to do on the Saturday after your grandparents arrive from far away. There are many apt metaphors for this situation, but if you choose to use the one we’ve included, your students will ride along on the way it resonates for you. Your enthusiasm and engagement is the key to theirs.*

And then in a moment, I called out again, “You know, writers, you can all make a mark alongside anything on the checklist that you want to work on in particular.”

## LINK

**Remind students that as they continue assessing their drafts, they are also creating a list of writing goals for their next stories.**

“Writers, this is a long checklist, and it will be really important that you don’t just *read the checklist* but also *reread your writing* to check on whether you really, truly tried to do each of these items in a super-duper way. It would be really cool if some of you labeled places in your draft where you did the things on the checklist. But the most important thing of all is that you come from this work with a list of goals for the work you want to do when you get a chance to write *another* fairy tale adaptation. Writers get better by assessing their own writing and setting goals. Off you go to do this!”

**Narrative Writing Checklist**

	Grade 3	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!	Grade 4	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
	<b>Structure</b>				<b>Structure</b>			
<b>Overall</b>	I told the story bit by bit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote the important part of an event bit by bit and took out unimportant parts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I helped readers know who the characters were and what the setting was in my story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote a beginning in which I showed what was happening and where, getting readers into the world of the story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I told my story in order by using phrases such as <i>a little later</i> and <i>after that</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I showed how much time went by with words and phrases that mark time such as <i>just then</i> and <i>suddenly</i> (to show when things happened quickly) or <i>after a while</i> and <i>a little later</i> (to show when a little time passed).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I chose the action, talk, or feeling that would make a good ending and worked to write it well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote an ending that connected to the beginning or the middle of the story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used action, dialogue, or feeling to bring my story to a close.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I used paragraphs and skipped lines to separate what happened first from what happened later (and finally) in my story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used paragraphs to separate the different parts or times of the story or to show when a new character was speaking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Development</b>				<b>Development</b>			
<b>Elaboration</b>	I worked to show what happened to (and in) my characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I added more to the heart of my story, including not only actions and dialogue but also thought and feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## CONFERRING AND SMALL-GROUP WORK

# Helping Writers Set Personal Goals

**T**HIS SESSION PROVIDES ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY for you to encourage children to set high goals for themselves and to get genuine pleasure out of saying, “I can work harder on that!” You can also think of this time as an opportunity to show children that sometimes they’ll want to take on goals that are not on the checklist but are important in their own particular writing process. For example, you might help individual children know that any one of these goals might be added to their checklist:

- ◆ Write longer, aiming to produce a four- or five-page story.
- ◆ Work harder, making sure that the story always makes sense to someone who doesn’t know the backstory. This means putting on the hat of being a reader, reading the story over, and asking “Huh?” at the confusing parts.
- ◆ Make the story sound more like a fairy tale, using more literary language and longer, fancier sentences.
- ◆ Intersperse more action with the dialogue so the whole story doesn’t seem like a script of a play with no one acting.
- ◆ Study published stories more often, noticing more cool things that the author does to try doing as well.

Setting outside goals allows each student to bring a personalized workload into their writing experience. Writers have different needs and their goals should reflect that diversity. Use the goals included here to inspire students to create additional learning goals that complement the checklist.

Also, use this time to help children think toward the next fairy tale adaptation they plan to write, getting a head start on the orienting conferences that every child is going to urgently need at the start of the next session. Start asking children now if they have thought of what fairy tale they want to adapt next time around. Set some children up to carry home a book or a page printout of the fairy tale that child is considering adapting.

58

### MID-WORKSHOP TEACHING

#### Studying Other Writers’ Drafts to Add to Writing Goals

“Writers, I want to stop you. The room is full of such deeply engaged, wedding-dress kind of assessment right now! Here’s what we’re going to do next. You’ve each started a quick list for yourselves of things you want to work on, moving forward in your new adaptations and in your writing lives in general. In a moment, you are going to leave your drafts on your tables and you are going to move to another table in the room, settle down to read someone else’s draft, and admire that writer’s work. Hopefully there will be time for you to read a few other people’s work as well. Each of your drafts, each of you as writers, has something to teach the rest of the class—so we’re going to devote some time to learning from each other now. As you admire each other’s drafts, add on to your list of things you want to work on in your next stories—things you love about your classmates’ writing that you aspire to incorporate into your own writing next time around. I’m going to collect some of these things that you admire in each other’s work so that we can display them on a bulletin board, which can be a resource to you all as you begin work on another fairy tale tomorrow.”

It will be important for you to call on all your skills to provide some children with the scaffolding they need. For example, a child who struggles might benefit from writing an adaptation of the two texts that have already been in circulation in your class. If he wrote about *Little Red Riding Hood* the first time around, perhaps this time he wants to write about *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. We selected those two texts as a starter set because they each contain a very clean storyline, and we thought adaptations would be easier for those texts than for some others. But the adaptations will be even easier now because there are possibilities in the air of the classroom. Or you can provide support simply by making sure that a child works with a text that matches the one her partner is using.

GRADE 3: ONCE UPON A TIME





## SHARE

# Preparing to Write Adaptations that Teach a Lesson

**Celebrate students' thoughtful assessment and goal setting, and set them up to plan for new fairy tale adaptations that teach a lesson.**

Gathering the class, I said, "It was so exciting to see you studying your drafts of your very first fairy tale adaptations just now. You used your checklists—and you used the great resource of each other's writing—to set some important writing goals. I've told you that you'll be starting new fairy tale adaptations tomorrow. But here's what I haven't told you: This time, you are in charge. *You* will choose the tale, and *you* will be the ones who make changes in it. I know you're ready! And I know you are ready to keep one new thing in mind as you prepare: *Some fairy tales are written to teach people a life lesson.*

"Have you ever done something less than perfect and something bad happens to you? For instance, you pull a toy away from your brother and it smashes in your face—and a grown-up says, 'That'll teach you!' Well in fairy tales, when a character gets into trouble, and sometimes it is bad trouble, like the character falls into a deep, dark slumber, sometimes there's a little voice in the story saying, 'That'll teach you!'

"For example, some people say the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood* teaches kids not to talk to strangers because of all the trouble Little Red Riding Hood gets into when she talks to the strange wolf. As a new fairy tale writer, you might completely agree with these life lessons! You might want to write your own adaptations that teach similar life lessons. You could think, 'How else could a character learn not to talk to strangers? Or what other story could teach that beauty is on the inside, not just on the outside?'

"But what's also fun is to think about a fairy tale that teaches a life lesson that you don't agree with one hundred percent. For example, you might not totally agree with the idea that Jack gets rewarded for stealing all the giant's stuff in *Jack and the Beanstalk*. You might be thinking to yourself, 'How could I teach my readers a different life lesson through my own adaptation?' Starting right now, and continuing tonight, each of you will be thinking about how you might adapt a fairy tale that you know really well, using all that you know about planning adaptations. You might choose a fairy tale that has a life lesson you agree with, so you'll adapt the tale to teach a similar life lesson. Or the fairy tale you choose to adapt might teach a life lesson that you don't agree with one hundred percent. If that's the case, you might decide what different life lesson you could teach your readers through your own adaptation."

*To further ensure that your students come prepared to the next session, you may want to make this work be homework, and ask students to choose a tale and begin brainstorming potential adaptations.*

**Share an example of a way you might adapt a fairy tale so that it teaches a lesson.**

“I’ve been thinking that I might write an adaptation of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. I’ve always loved that story. Goldilocks makes mistakes, but she’s got spunk! The reason I’m thinking of adapting that story is because I’ve always wanted the ending to be different. Somehow it seems wrong that when the bears come and she’s broken their stuff, she just runs away. I mean, why doesn’t she stand up and say, ‘I did it! I’m sorry!’ I think I’ll change the ending, give it a twist, and have her take responsibility for everything she did. If I end the adaptation this way, I’ll teach readers that it’s important to take responsibility for one’s actions. That’s a good life lesson, right? I can give a famous fairy tale a twist, like having Goldilocks taking responsibility for her actions, to teach a new life lesson to my readers.”

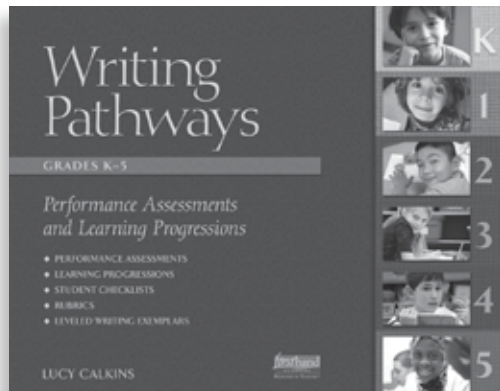
**Encourage students to keep the idea of teaching a lesson in mind as they plan their next adaptations.**

“So you can be thinking about the life lesson you want to teach in the fairy tale *you* choose to adapt. Think carefully. Is there a fairy tale that teaches a life lesson that you really agree with? And if so, how might you adapt the tale to teach a similar lesson? Or is there a fairy tale that teaches a life lesson that you don’t totally agree with? For instance, does anyone here not really like the way the Billy Goats Gruff all tell the troll to eat their brother? Or does anyone think it is wrong that a princess is so soft-skinned that she gets bruised from just sleeping on a pea?”

“Turn and talk to your partner about the ideas you have for the adaptation you might write next, keeping in mind the life lesson your tale might teach. Tonight for homework, as you think about this, you might even start envisioning some Small Moment stories that will be scenes in your fairy tale!”







*Writing Pathways* is designed to help you provide your students with continuous assessment, feedback, and goal setting. Organized around a K–5 continuum of **learning progressions** for opinion, information, and narrative writing, this practical guide includes **performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars** that will help you evaluate your students’ work and establish where students are in their writing development.

*“The assessment system that undergirds this curriculum is meant as an instructional tool. It makes progress in writing as transparent, concrete, and obtainable as possible and puts ownership for this progress into the hands of learners. This system of assessment demystifies the Common Core State Standards, allowing students and teachers to work toward a very clear image of what good work entails.”*

An exemplar piece of writing for each writing genre shows how one piece of writing could develop according to the learning progressions established by the Common Core State Standards.

## Grade 3

## Narrative Writing

The writer puts the reader right into the action, beginning with a character saying or doing something. The beginning orients the reader to the character and setting.

### *The Scary Dog*

The writer told the story bit by bit. She used phrases like *a little later, or after that* to tell the story in order.

The writer didn’t just tell a story, but instead wrote in ways that help readers picture what is happening and bring the story to life.

The story has a beginning, middle, and end.

The writer showed not only what was happening to her characters, but *inside* her characters.

“Goodbye, Mom!” Sara and I said. We started walking to school. It was Sara’s first day of school. I was happy to be walking her on her first day.

We walked past tall trees and little garden. A little later, we walked past Mr. Jordan’s store. Sara and I were singing. Then we turned a corner and heard a sound. “GRRRR!” it went. I turned around to see what was making the noise. It was a big, black, hairy dog. It growled again. The dog took stepped closer and closer and CLOSER to us. It growled even louder.

“Oh no, I can’t let the dog get us!” I whispered to myself. Sara started to cry because she is afraid of dogs. I held her hand and we started to run. We ran and ran and ran. The dog was still growling. “GRRRR!” It was getting closer.

“It’s coming close!” Sara yelled. “I’m scared.” Sara started to cry even more. The dog was huge. It looked like a monster. I saw sharp teeth sticking out of its mouth. I was scared, too.

The dog started to run after us. I saw the red doors of the school. We were almost there! Mrs. Crowley let us in.

“Good job, Sara,” I said and gave her a big hug and a high-five. Then we started laughing. I couldn’t believe we made it!

The writer worked to create a strong ending by choosing the action, bit of dialogue, or feeling that would bring the story to a close.

The writer punctuated dialogue correctly, with commas and quotation marks. She also used punctuation to fix and/or avoid run-on sentences.

The writer wrote in ways that help readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.

The units teach students the CCSS' grade-appropriate skills for both their own grade level and for the upcoming grade. That is, the third-grade narrative writing unit supports both the third- and the fourth-grade standards. This is done in part because the expectation level of the CCSS for middle school is exceedingly high. For an entire class of students to reach the sixth- and eighth-grade CCSS expectations when they reach those grade levels, teachers need to accelerate students' writing development in the early grades, when the Common Core Standards in writing do not keep the same fast pace as the reading standards.

### Narrative Writing Checklist (continued)

	Grade 3	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!	Grade 4	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
<b>Craft</b>	I not only told my story, but also wrote it in ways that got readers to picture what was happening and that brought my story to life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I showed <i>why</i> characters did what they did by including their thinking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					I made some parts of the story go quickly, some slowly.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					I included precise and sometimes sensory details and used figurative language (simile, metaphor, personification) to bring my story to life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
					I used a storytelling voice and conveyed the emotion or tone of my story through description, phrases, dialogue, and thoughts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Language Conventions</b>				<b>Language Conventions</b>			

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used what I knew about word families and spelling rules to help me spell and edit. I used the word wall and dictionaries when needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When writing long, complex sentences, I used commas to make them clear and correct.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Writing Checklist

	Grade 3	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!	Grade 4	NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
	<b>Structure</b>				<b>Structure</b>			
<b>Overall</b>	I told the story bit by bit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote the important part of an event bit by bit and took out unimportant parts.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I helped readers know who the characters were and what the setting was in my story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote a beginning in which I showed what was happening and where, getting readers into the world of the story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I told my story in order by using phrases such as <i>a little later</i> and <i>after that</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I showed how much time went by with words and phrases that mark time such as <i>just then</i> and <i>suddenly</i> (to show when things happened quickly) or <i>after a while</i> and <i>a little later</i> (to show when a little time passed).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I chose the action, talk, or feeling that would make a good ending and worked to write it well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I wrote an ending that connected to the beginning or the middle of the story. I used action, dialogue, or feeling to bring my story to a close.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I used paragraphs and skipped lines to separate what happened first from what happened later (and finally) in my story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I used paragraphs to separate the different parts or times of the story or to show when a new character was speaking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<b>Development</b>				<b>Development</b>			
<b>Elaboration</b>	I worked to show what happened to (and in) my characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I added more to the heart of my story, including not only actions and dialogue but also thought and feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Crystal-clear checklists that spell out the genre-specific benchmarks students should be working toward help students set goals and self-assess their work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rubric for Narrative Writing—Third Grade								
	Grade 1 (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Grade 2 (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 3 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 4 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
STRUCTURE								
<b>Overall</b>	The writer wrote about when she did something.	Mid-level	The writer wrote about <i>one time</i> when he did something.	Mid-level	The writer told the story bit by bit.	Mid-level	The writer wrote the important part of an event bit by bit and took out unimportant parts.	
<b>Lead</b>	The writer tried to make a beginning for his story.	Mid-level	The writer thought about how to write a good beginning and chose a way to start her story. She chose the action, talk, or setting that would make a good beginning.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a beginning in which he helped readers know who the characters were and what the setting was in his story.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a beginning in which she showed what was happening and where, getting readers into the world of the story.	
<b>Transitions</b>	The writer put her pages in order. She used words such as <i>and</i> and <i>then</i> , <i>so</i> .	Mid-level	The writer told the story in order by using words such as <i>when</i> , <i>then</i> , and <i>after</i> .	Mid-level	The writer told her story in order by using phrases such as <i>a little later</i> and <i>after that</i> .	Mid-level	The writer showed how much time went by with words and phrases that mark time such as <i>just then</i> and <i>suddenly</i> (to show when things happened quickly) or <i>after a while</i> and <i>a little later</i> (to show when a little time passed).	
<b>Ending</b>	The writer found a way to end his story.	Mid-level	The writer chose the action, talk, or feeling that would make a good ending.	Mid-level	The writer chose the action, talk, or feeling that would make a good ending and worked to write it well.	Mid-level	The writer wrote an ending that connected to the beginning or the middle of the story. The writer used action, dialogue, or feeling to bring her story to a close.	
<b>Organization</b>	The writer wrote her story across three or more pages.	Mid-level	The writer wrote a lot of lines on a page and wrote across a lot of pages.	Mid-level	The writer used paragraphs and skipped lines to separate what happened first from what happened later (and finally) in her story.	Mid-level	The writer used paragraphs to separate the different parts or times of the story or to show when a new character was speaking.	
								TOTAL

Rubrics for each kind of writing establish clear learning benchmarks and help teachers monitor student progress throughout the stages of development.

	Grade 1 (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Grade 2 (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 3 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 4 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>								
<b>Elaboration*</b>	The writer put the picture from his mind onto the page. He had details in pictures and words.	Mid-level	The writer tried to bring her characters to life with details, talk, and actions.	Mid-level	The writer worked to show what happened to (and in) his characters.	Mid-level	The writer added more to the heart of her story, including not only actions and dialogue but also thoughts and feelings.	(X2)
<b>Craft*</b>	The writer used labels and words to give details.	Mid-level	The writer chose strong words that would help readers picture his story.	Mid-level	The writer not only told her story, but also wrote it in ways that got readers to picture what was happening and that brought her story to life.	Mid-level	The writer showed <i>why</i> characters did what they did by including their thinking. The writer made some parts of the story go quickly, some slowly. The writer included precise and sometimes sensory	(X2)

	Grade 1 (1 POINT)	1.5 PTS	Grade 2 (2 POINTS)	2.5 PTS	Grade 3 (3 POINTS)	3.5 PTS	Grade 4 (4 POINTS)	SCORE
<b>LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS (cont.)</b>								
<b>Punctuation</b>	The writer ended sentences with punctuation. The writer used a capital letter for names. The writer used commas in dates and lists.	Mid-level	The writer used quotation marks to show what characters said. When the writer used words such as <i>can't</i> and <i>don't</i> , he used the apostrophe.	Mid-level	The writer punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks. While writing, the writer used punctuation at the end of every sentence. The writer wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.	Mid-level	When writing long, complex sentences, the writer used commas to make them clear and correct.	
<b>Spelling</b>	The writer used all he k about words and chunk words ( <i>at, op, it, etc.</i> ) to him spell. The writer spelled all th wall words right and us word wall to help him s other words.							TOTAL

\* Elaboration and Craft are double-weighted categories: Whatever score student meets standards in Elaboration, then that student would receive double the score for Craft.

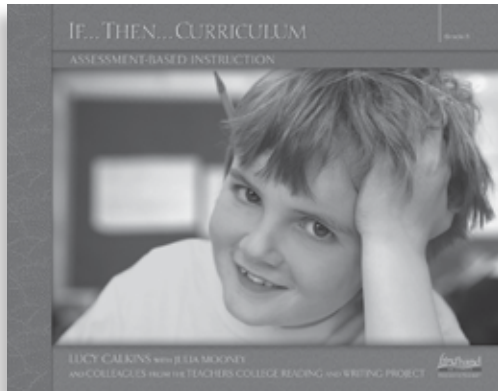
Teachers, we created these rubrics so you will have your own place to pull together scores of student work. You can use these assessments immediately after giving the on-demands and also for self-assessment and setting goals.

**Scoring Guide**

In each row, circle the descriptor in the column that matches the student work. Scores in the categories of Elaboration and Craft are worth double the point value (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 instead of 1, 1.5, 2, 2.5, 3, 3.5, or 4). Total the number of points and then track students' progress by seeing when the total points increase.  
Total score: \_\_\_\_\_

If you want to translate this score into a grade, you can use the provided table to score each student on a scale of 0-4.

Number of Points	Scaled Score
1-11	1
11.5-16.5	1.5
17-22	2
22.5-27.5	2.5
28-33	3
33.5-38.5	3.5
39-44	4



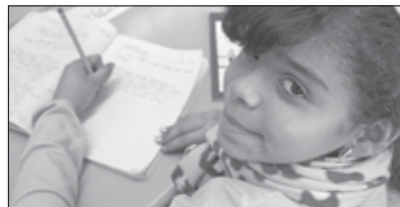
In addition to the four units of study, the Grade 3 series provides a book of if... then... curricular plans. *If... Then... Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction, Grade 3* supports targeted instruction and differentiation with five alternative units of study for you to strategically teach before, after, or in between the core curriculum based on your students' needs. This resource includes If... Then... Conferring Scenarios that help you customize your curriculum through individual and small-group instruction.

***“The quality of writing instruction will rise dramatically not only when teachers study the teaching of writing but also when teachers study their own children’s intentions and progress as writers. Strong writing is always tailored for and responsive to the writer.”***

## **ALTERNATE UNIT**

### **Writing Gripping Fictional Stories with Meaning and Significance**

IF your students are new to the writing workshop, performed at a low level on their narrative on-demand assessment, or have not had experience writing narratives in previous grades, THEN you may want to teach this unit prior to *Crafting True Stories*.



### Writing Gripping Fictional Stories with Meaning and Significance

#### RATIONALE/INTRODUCTION

This unit has been a longtime favorite. Children will approach the unit with abundant ambition and zeal, ready to write, write, write. The invitation to write fiction leads to new volume, new stamina, and new engagement. Children’s scrawl will fill one page, then another, one book and another, as the unit taps into a great source of energy.

You have choices about how you will spin the unit and about the skills you will emphasize. If the unit is being taught to students who have had units of study instruction prior to now, chances are that they’ll approach this unit already knowing the essentials about writing Small Moment stories. They will know that it helps to zoom in on a particular scene—say, an event that occurs across fifteen minutes—and to write the story of that event in a step-by-step fashion so that readers can relive the event, picturing what the main character said and did first, then what occurred in response. If children have experienced units of study on narrative writing, they’ll also approach this unit already knowing about the value of stretching out the most important parts of those stories.

On the other hand, if children have not studied writing through units of study in K–2, they may not have been taught what we regard as a crucial concept: that it is far easier to write an effective story if one zooms in on a small moment, a particular scene, and writes that small moment, that scene, as a storyteller might tell it, allowing readers to almost live in the shoes of the character. That is, a child who has not studied units of study in writing might approach the project of writing a story about a boy who learns to do a magic trick, planning to start the story, “Once upon a time a boy named Michael wanted to do a magic trick and so he did it. The audience cheered and he smiled big.” Contrast that lead with “Michael held his deck of cards. He walked up to the stage and said, “Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.” You’ll need, then, to be sure to highlight this part of your instruction. The unit contains lots of spaces for you to do that.

Either way, children come to this unit with a background not only as writers but also as readers. They’ve read narrative picture books and chapter books in which each chapter is





## Information Writing

*Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas*

### RATIONALE/INTRODUCTION

Writing is given a preeminent place as one of the “basics”—reading, ‘ritin’, and ‘rithmitic’—because it is a skill that enables learning across every discipline. It’s important, then, that writing is linked to the social studies, science, math, and reading curriculums. This unit has been designed to allow teachers to actually bring discipline-based writing into the writing workshop. Students are asked to write about a content area they’ve been studying at another time of the day (during reading and/or science or social studies time). During writing, teachers help with the specific writing challenges that this discipline-based work poses (while also helping students grasp the subject matter). This unit, then, is an extension of the information writing unit, one that makes more space for research and text citation—skills that are important in the Common Core State Standards.

Third-graders will be asked to build on their knowledge of information writing and also their knowledge of how to use mentor texts to raise the quality of their writing. They will create nonfiction books on a topic that the class has studied.

A word about nonfiction texts. If you look at many of the nonfiction books that students read, you’ll see that typically an information text is chunked into different sections, each addressing different subtopics. And often, most of those sections are organized in a fashion that mirrors the structure of the whole information text, each addressing a different subtopic. But some nonfiction texts are organized in a different fashion, such as opinion writing or how-to writing. That is, most information texts, containing subordinate sections that are organized in a different fashion than the content of that section. The writing that students do in this unit is organized in some chapters that are not organized in subsections, but in sections, letters, lists, and opinions. Their finished books will look like Primary Source books.

As you lead this unit, remember that the Common Core State Standards for third grade (and far more so for fourth grade) in in

### ALTERNATE UNIT

#### Information Writing: Reading, Research, and Writing in the Content Areas

IF you want to extend your students’ knowledge of information writing as well as teach them to write across the curriculum,  
THEN you might want to teach this unit after *The Art of Information Writing*.

### ALTERNATE UNIT

#### The Literary Essay: Equipping Ourselves with the Tools to Write Expository Texts that Advance an Idea about Literature

IF your writers are strong and are ready for more challenging units,  
THEN you may want to teach this unit after *Changing the World* to prepare students for the writing they will do in fourth grade and beyond.



## The Literary Essay

*Equipping Ourselves with the Tools to Write Expository Texts that Advance an Idea about Literature*

### RATIONALE/INTRODUCTION

This unit builds the groundwork for the fourth-grade unit *The Literary Essay: Writing about Fiction*. That fourth-grade book teaches students to write literary essays that develop strong interpretive theses about literature, are well organized, use textual evidence efficiently to support a claim, and focus on characters and their traits. In that fourth-grade unit, students read and reread a familiar short story, then a familiar novel, and eventually they work across texts. In this way, they progress from simpler, more straightforward literary essays to those built around more complex theses to compare-and-contrast essays. Writing to defend claims about literature requires close reading, attention to literary craft, and the ability to cite and defend relevant textual evidence. For this reason, many of you may decide to expose children to literary essay writing in third grade. This unit is meant as a precursor to the fourth-grade book *The Literary Essay: Writing about Fiction*. The unit aims to make reading a more intense, thoughtful experience for children by equipping them with tools they need to write simple essays that advance an idea about a piece of literature. This unit relies on children’s prior experience with opinion writing, suggesting that instead of writing about opinions such as “It is important to recycle,” they can now write about claims such as “Winn-Dixie teaches people to care for each other.”

### MANDATES, TESTS, STANDARDS

The Common Core State Standards (CCSS) emphasize the importance of teaching children to read closely to determine what a text says not only explicitly but also implicitly. That is, in third grade, students are expected to refer explicitly to the text, demonstrating an understanding of the text (RL.3.1), and by fourth grade students are expected to draw inferences, citing details and examples to support the claim (RL.4.1). Similarly, the standards ask that children learn to analyze and interpret texts, analyzing “how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text” (Anchor Standard R.3).




## Narrative Writing

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<b>Structure and Cohesion</b>		
<p><b>The story lacks focus.</b></p> <p>This writer has written a version of a “bed to bed” story, beginning with the start of a day or large event (“I woke up and had breakfast”) and progressing to the end (“I came home. It was a great day”). The event unfolds in a bit-by-bit fashion, with each part of the story receiving equal weight.</p>	<p>You are learning to write more and more, stretching your stories across tons of pages. That’s great. But here’s the new challenge. Writers need to be able to write a lot and still write a <i>focused</i> story. What I mean by this is that writers can write a whole story that only lasts twenty minutes, and it can still be tons of pages long.</p> <p>To write a really fleshed-out, well-developed Small Moment story, it is important to move more slowly through the sequence of the event, and capture the details on the page.</p>	<p>Not the whole trip, the whole day: twenty minutes!</p> <p>Write with details.</p> <p>I said, I thought, I did.</p>
<p><b>The story is confusing or seems to be missing important information.</b></p> <p>This writer has written a story that leaves you lost, unable to picture the moment or understand the full sequence of events. She may have left out information regarding where she was or why something was happening, or may have switched suddenly to a new part of the story without alerting the reader.</p>	<p>I really want to understand this story, but it gets confusing for me. Will you remember that writers need to become readers and to reread their own writing, asking, “Does this make sense? Have I left anything out that my reader might need to know?”</p> <p>Sometimes it is helpful to ask a partner to read your story, as well, and to tell you when the story is making sense (thumbs up) and when it is confusing (thumbs down).</p>	<p>I reread my writing to make it clearer.</p> <p>I ask myself, “Does this make sense? Have I left anything out that my reader might need to know?”</p> <p>If I need to, I add more information or a part that is missing into the story.</p>
<p><b>The story has no tension.</b></p> <p>This writer’s story is flat, without any sense of conflict or tension. The story is more of a chronicle than a story. If there is a problem, there is no build-up around possible solutions. Instead, the dog is simply lost and then found.</p>	<p>You told what happened in your story, in order, so I get it. But to make this into the kind of story that readers can’t put down, the kind that readers read by flashlight in bed, you have to add what writers call <i>edge-of-the-seat tension</i>. Instead of just saying <i>I did this, I did this, I did this</i>, you need to have the narrator want something really badly and then run into difficulties, or trouble . . . so readers are thinking, “Will it work? Won’t it?” You’ve got to get readers all wound up! Right now, reread and find the part of the story where you could show what the main character really wants.</p>	<p>Edge-of-the-seat tension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone who really wants something.</li> <li>• Someone encounters trouble.</li> <li>• Someone tries, tries, tries.</li> </ul>

***“Despite the uniqueness of each child, there are particular ways they struggle, and predictable ways you can help. We can use all we know about child development, learning progressions, writing craft, and grade-specific standards to anticipate and plan for the individualized instruction our students are apt to need.”***

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The story has no real or significant ending.</b> This writer has ended his story in a way that feels disappointing to the reader. Occasionally this happens because he has left loose ends unresolved, but most often it is because the ending of the story has little to do with the significance of the story itself. The ending may be something like, “Then I went home,” or “The End!” He needs help identifying what his story is really about and then crafting an ending that ties directly to that meaning.</p>	<p>Sometimes it seems like your endings just trail off, and they aren’t as powerful as they could be because of that. Writers know that the ending of a story is the last thing with which a reader will be left. Today, I want to teach you one tip for writing an ending that is particularly powerful. Writers ask, “What is this story really about?” Once they have the answer to that, they decide on a bit of dialogue or internal thinking, a descriptive detail, or a small action that will end the story in a way that ties back to that meaning.</p>	<p>Writers end a story in a way that shows what the story is <i>really</i> about. They might do this by including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue</li> <li>• Internal thinking</li> <li>• A descriptive detail</li> <li>• A small action that ties back to the true meaning behind the story</li> </ul>
<p><b>The writer is new to the writing workshop or this particular genre of writing.</b> This writer struggles because narrative is a new genre for her. She may display certain skill sets (e.g., the ability to use beautifully descriptive language or literary devices) but lacks the vision of what she is being asked to produce. Her story is probably long and unfocused and is usually dominated by summary, not storytelling.</p>	<p>Someone famously once said, “You can’t hit a target if you don’t know what that target is.” This is especially true for writers. They can’t write well if they don’t have a vision, a mental picture, of what they hope to produce. Today, I want to teach you that one way writers learn about the kinds of writing they hope to produce is by studying mentor texts. They read a mentor text once, enjoying it as a story. Then, they read it again, this time asking, “How does this kind of story seem to go?” They label what they notice and then try it in their own writing.</p>	<p>Writers use mentor texts to help them imagine what they hope to write. They:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read the text and enjoy it as a good story.</li> <li>• Reread the text and ask, “How does this kind of story seem to go?”</li> <li>• Note what they notice.</li> <li>• Try to do some of what they noticed in their own writing.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The writer does not use paragraphs.</b> This writer does not use paragraphs to separate the different parts of his story. Because of this, the story is difficult to read and hold on to. He needs support understanding the importance of paragraphs, as well as the various ways writers use them.</p>	<p>Your writing will be a thousand times easier to read when you start using paragraphs. A paragraph is like a signal to a reader. It says, “Halt! Take a tiny break. Do you understand what is happening so far? Okay, I’m going to keep going!” Paragraphs give your readers an opportunity to take in your stories, and they also alert readers to important things like scene changes and new dialogue. Today, I want to teach you a few of the ways writers use paragraphs. Writers use paragraphs when a new event is starting, when their story is switching to a new time or place, when a new character speaks, or to separate out an important part that needs space around it.</p>	<p>Make a new paragraph here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very important part that needs space around it</li> <li>• New event</li> <li>• New time</li> <li>• New place</li> <li>• New character speaks</li> </ul>

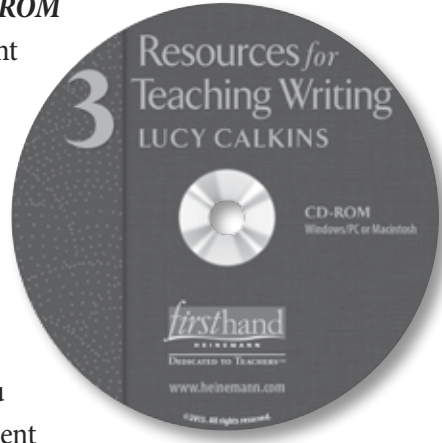
These charts will help you to anticipate, spot, and teach into the challenges your writers face during the independent work portion of your writing workshop. They lay out the specific strategy you might teach and the way you might contextualize the work for your writers.

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<b>Elaboration</b>		
<p><b>The writer has created a story that is sparse, with little elaboration.</b></p> <p>This writer has written a story that is short, with one or more parts that need elaboration. She has conveyed the main outline of an event (this happened, then this happened, then this happened), but there is no sense that she has expanded on any one particular part.</p>	<p>You have gotten skilled at telling what happens, in order, but you write with just the bare-bones sequence. Like, if you went out for supper yesterday and I asked you, “How was your dinner at the restaurant?” And you answered, “I went to the restaurant. I ate food. It was good.” That’s not the best story, right? It is just the bare bones with no flesh on them—like a skeleton. Can you try to flesh your story out?</p>	<p>Not: I ate food. I came home.</p> <p>But: Details, details, details</p> <p>or:</p> <p>Not:</p> 
<p><b>The story is riddled with details.</b></p> <p>In an attempt to elaborate or make a story compelling, the writer has listed what seem to be an endless number of tangential details. (“I got on the ride. There were a lot of people there. I was wearing a bright red shirt with a little giraffe on it. I was eating funnel cake.”) This sort of elaboration often makes the piece feel monotonous, as if there is no real purpose guiding the writer’s choice of details.</p>	<p>Although you are great at including details, you actually choose too many details. Writers are choosy about the details they include in a story. They know they can’t include every detail they remember, so they have to decide which parts of their story to stretch out with details and which parts to move through more quickly. Writers ask, “What is this story really about?” and then stretch out the part of the story that goes with that meaning. Then, they cut details from the parts that are less important.</p>	<p>Although it is great to write with details, some writers write with too many details. Writers need to decide which details to <i>keep</i> and which to <i>cut</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They ask, “What is my story really about?”</li> <li>• They stretch out the heart of the story.</li> <li>• They shorten less important parts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The story is swamped with dialogue.</b></p> <p>This writer is attempting to story-tell, not summarize, but is relying too heavily on dialogue to accomplish this mission. The story is full of endless dialogue (“Let’s play at the park,” I said. “Okay,” Jill said. “Maybe we should play on the swings,” I said. “I agree,” Jill said. “Great!” I said). This writer needs to learn that dialogue is an important part of storytelling but cannot be the only device a writer uses to move a story forward.</p>	<p>Sometimes, writers make their characters talk—and talk and talk and talk. Today, I want to teach you that writers use dialogue, but they use it sparingly. They make sure their writing has a balance of action and dialogue by alternating between the two and by cutting dialogue that does not give the reader important information about the character or the story.</p>	<p>Writers make sure that their writing has a balance of dialogue and action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They often alternate between action and dialogue as they write.</li> <li>• They cut dialogue that does not give the reader important information about the character or story.</li> </ul>

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<p><b>The writer has written the external story but not the internal story.</b></p> <p>This writer has captured the events of a story precisely, and likely has done a fine job of moving the story along at an appropriate pace. What is missing, however, is the internal story. That is, as each event occurs the main character is merely swept along with the current of events (“‘Don’t you ever do that again!’ my dad yelled. He wagged his finger at me. I went up to my room and sat down to do my homework”) and has little emotional response. The reader is left wondering what the main character is feeling and thinking throughout the story, and as a result, the story lacks a certain depth.</p>	<p>When we first learn to write stories, we learn to tell the events that happened. We tell what happened first, then next, then next. As we become strong writers, though, it’s important not just to write the external story, but also to write the internal story, as well. Today, I want to teach you that when planning for and drafting a story, the writer plans not just the actions, but also the character’s <i>reactions</i> to the events.</p>	<p>Writers tell not just what happened in a story—the <i>actions</i>—but also how the character felt about each of those events—the <i>reactions</i>.</p>
<p><b>The writer struggles to identify and convey a deeper meaning.</b></p> <p>This writer’s story likely contains most of the surface elements you are looking for but seems to lack a sense of purpose. When asked why he is writing this particular piece or what he hopes to convey to his reader, he struggles to find an answer. Because of this, each part of the story is often given equal attention, without any one part having been elaborated on. Dialogue, details, and other forms of narrative craft are used to move the story forward but do not contribute to the reader’s understanding of the meaning or theme.</p>	<p>Everybody has stories to tell. At a certain point in your life as a writer, knowing <i>why</i> you want to tell these stories becomes almost as important as writing them. What I mean by this, and what I want to teach you today, is that writers reflect on the moments of their lives and ask, “What is this story really about? What do I want my reader to know about me?” Then, they use all they know about narrative craft to bring that meaning forward.</p>	<p>Writers ask:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is this story really about?</li> <li>• What do I want my reader to know about me?</li> </ul> <p>Then they use all they know about narrative craft to bring that meaning forward.</p>
<p><b>The writer is ready to use literary devices.</b></p> <p>This writer is successfully using a variety of narrative techniques and would benefit from learning to use literary devices. She has a clear sense of the meaning behind his story, as well as the places where this meaning might be emphasized or further revealed.</p>	<p>I think you are ready for a new challenge. When writers are strong—using all sorts of craft, writing focused, well-paced stories—it often signals that they are ready for something new. I’ve noticed that you are trying to bring out what your story is really about and want to teach you one way that writers do this: using literary devices. Writers use comparisons (like metaphors and similes), repetition, and even symbols to highlight important messages in stories.</p>	<p>Literary devices writers use to reveal meaning to a reader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metaphors and similes</li> <li>• Repetition</li> <li>• Symbolism</li> </ul>

# Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM

The *Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM* for Grade 3 provides unit-specific print resources to support your teaching throughout the year. You'll find a rich assortment of instructional tools including **learning progressions, checklists and rubrics, correlations to the CCSS, paper choices, and teaching charts.** Offering daily support, these resources will help you establish a structured learning environment that fosters independence and self-direction.



Student writing samples illustrate different ways different students have exemplified the standard and highlight essential features of each writing genre.

## Zander, the Evil Step Parents and the Trip to Disney World

Once upon a time, there was a kid named Zander. Zander was a clever boy. He was so clever that he could solve a rubix cube with his eyes closed, one hand tied behind his back, hopping on one leg! He also loved to read so much that he read ten hours a day! He could also ride a five foot unicycle, staying in one spot doing the chicken dance! But the one thing he wanted to do was to go to Disney World. But his Evil Step parents wouldn't let him go.

Then one beautiful day he went up to his evil, cruel step parents and said "I want to go to Disney World." They said, "well... you don't have a ticket you ~~the~~ little rag-a-muttin. So how are you going to go to Disney world?" Then they laughed. Then Zander was clever and he came up with a brilliant idea! He thought "I will buy a ticket." The evil step parents rolled their eyes and shook their heads like it was an impossible task.

***"The writing workshop needs to be simple and predictable enough that your youngsters can learn to carry on within it independently. The materials and teaching tools you provide students will help you establish such a predictable, structured learning environment."***

**We Can Say More to convince by adding in each part...**


<b>ADD IN:</b> Examples from real life	<b>PROMPT:</b> For example... I noticed... When... — by...	<b>WRITE:</b> For example, I noticed kids always have ice packs after yard.
<b>Interview or Survey</b>	— said... I asked...	Kids in 3-317 said, 17 of the have gotten hit a basketball be
<b>Mini-Story from your experience</b>	One time... Back when...	One time, I the ball go. A student jump from the shoe covered his face his hands.

A wide range of fresh-from-the-classroom instructional charts model proven teaching artifacts that are easy to copy and customize.

**Language Paints a Beautiful Picture**

- use **describing** words
- reach for **precise, exact** words
- use **opposites** to show differences
- use **repetition** of sounds, words, lines
- Make a **comparison**, like... He walked like a Penguin.

**HOW TO WRITE A FAIRY TALE ADAPTATION**



- DECIDE on a CHANGE to IMPROVE the STORY.
- MAKE the CHANGE LEAD to other CHANGES so the WHOLE STORY FITS TOGETHER.
- MAKE A CHARACTER with TRAITS and WANTS WHO RUNS INTO TROUBLE.
- TELL the STORY in 2 or 3 SCENES (small moments).
- STORY-TELL or ACT OUT EACH SCENE, filling in lifelike details. THEN WRITE the SCENES.
- FIGURE OUT AN ENDING that SOLVES the CHARACTER'S BIG PROBLEM...
- With NARRATION, GIVE A BACKSTORY AT THE START and STITCH SCENES TOGETHER.
- MAKE YOUR READERS REMEMBER BY ADDING A REFRAIN.
- BALANCE DIALOGUE with CHARACTERS' ACTIONS.
- PAINT PICTURES WITH LANGUAGE.

# Resources for Teaching Writing CD-ROM

Checklists of genre-specific writing criteria support self-assessment and goal setting, as well as writing rehearsal, revision, and editing.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Editing Checklist

1. I have checked that this makes sense and that there are no words or parts missing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. All my sentences are complete, and I have checked for run-ons and fragments.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I have used correct capitalization (for names and the beginning of sentences).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Narrative Writing Checklist

Grade 3

		NOT YET	STARTING TO	YES!
<b>Structure</b>				
<b>Overall</b>	I told the story bit by bit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Lead</b>	I wrote a beginning in which I helped readers know who the characters were and what the setting was in my story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Transitions</b>	I told my story in order by using phrases such as <i>a little later</i> and <i>after that</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ending</b>	I chose the action, talk, or feeling that would make a good ending and worked to write it well.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Organization</b>	I used paragraphs and skipped lines to separate what happened first from what happened later (and finally) in my story.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Development</b>				
<b>Elaboration</b>	I worked to show what happened to (and in) my characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Craft</b>	I worked to show what happened to (and in) my characters.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Language Conventions</b>				
<b>Spelling</b>	I used what I knew about spelling patterns to help me spell and edit before I wrote my final draft.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I got help from others to check my spelling and punctuation before I wrote my final draft.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Punctuation</b>	I punctuated dialogue correctly with commas and quotation marks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	While writing, I used punctuation at the end of every sentence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	I wrote in ways that helped readers read with expression, reading some parts quickly, some slowly, some parts in one sort of voice and others in another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

used commas and quotation marks for dialogue.

verbs and subjects agree, and my verbs are in the right tense (past, present, or future).

words all seem to be spelled right. They look right, and I have checked the ones I was uncertain of.

I have checked for frequently confused words (to, too, two; there, their).

phed and indented.

### To Write a True Story: Monitoring My Process

- Find focused story ideas and write entries.
- For each make mental movies, tell bit by bit.
- Remember goals.
- Choose one to develop.
- Rehearse 'seed idea.'
  - Storytelling
  - Leads
- Booklet? Notebook paper?
- Flash draft with paragraphs.
- Revise
  - Emulate other authors
  - Develop heart
  - Bring out internal story
- Edit
  - Spelling
  - Punctuation



**Common Core State Standards Alignment**

Session	Writing Standards	Reading Standards	Speaking and Listening Standards	Language Standards
1	W.3.5, W.3.7, W.3.8	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, RL.3.7, RL.3.10, RL.4.1, RL.4.3, RL.4.9	SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6	L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.6
2	W.3.3a, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5, RL.3.10, RL.4.2	SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6, SL.4.4	L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.6
3	W.3.3.b, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.b,d	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5	SL.3.1, SL.3.2, SL.3.4, SL.3.6	L.3.1, L.3.3, L.3.6
4	W.3.3.b,d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.b,e	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.5	SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6	L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, L.3.6
5	W.3.3.a,b,c,d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a,b,c,d,e	RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.4, RL.3.6, RL.3.10	SL.3.1, SL.3.4, SL.3.6	L.3.3.a
6	W.3.3.b,c,d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a,b,c,d,e	RL.3.1, RL.3.2	SL.3.1a, SL.3.2	L.3.1, L.3.2, L.3.3, L.3.4, L.3.5a, L.3.6
7	W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3, W.4.4	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3, RL.3.6		
8	W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.d	RL.3.3, RL.3.5		
9	W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.d	RL.3.2		
10	W.3.3.b,d, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.b,d	RL.3.2, RL.3.4		
11	W.3.3.b, W.3.5, W.4.3.b,d	RL.3.4		
12	W.3.3.b, W.3.5, W.4.3.b	RL.3.1, RFS.3.4		
13	W.3.3, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3	RL.3.1, RL.3.3		
14	W.3.3, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.3.10	RL.3.3		
15	W.3.3.b, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.4.3.b	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RFS.3.4, R		
16	W.3.3.b, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.b,d	RL.3.1, RL.3.3		
17	W.3.3.a,d, W.3.5, W.3.10, W.4.3.a,e	RL.3.1, RL.3.2, RL.3.3		
18	W.3.3.b, W.3.4, W.3.5, W.4.3.b,d	RFS.3.4		
19	W.3.5	RL.3.2		
20	W.3.6	RFS.3.4		

\*Bold indicates major emphasis

Because writing workshop instruction involves students in writing, reading, speaking and listening, and language development, each session in each unit of study is correlated to the full Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts.

If/Then Conferring Scenarios help you assess student needs and differentiate instruction. Customizable conferring scenarios that can be printed on label paper provide students with artifacts from the day's lesson.



Narrative Writing

If . . .	After acknowledging what the child is doing well, you might say . . .	Leave the writer with . . .
<b>Structure and Cohesion</b>		
<p><b>The story lacks focus.</b> This writer has written a version of a "bed to bed" story, beginning with the start of a day or large event ("I woke up and had breakfast") and progressing to the end ("I came home. It was a great day"). The event unfolds in a bit-by-bit fashion, with each part of the story receiving equal weight.</p>	<p>You are learning to write more and more, stretching your stories across tons of pages. That's great. But here's the new challenge. Writers need to be able to write a lot and still write a <i>focused</i> story. What I mean by this is that writers can write a whole story that only lasts twenty minutes, and it can still be tons of pages long.</p> <p>To write a really fleshed-out, well-developed Small Moment story, it is important to move more slowly through the sequence of the event, and capture the details on the page.</p>	<p>Not the whole trip, the whole day: twenty minutes! Write with details. I said, I thought, I did.</p>
<p><b>The story is confusing or seems to be missing important information.</b> This writer has written a story that leaves you lost, unable to picture the moment or understand the full sequence of events. She may have left out information regarding where she was or why something was happening, or may have switched suddenly to a new part of the story without alerting the reader.</p>	<p>I really want to understand this story, but it gets confusing for me. Will you remember that writers need to become readers and to reread their own writing, asking, "Does this make sense? Have I left anything out that my reader might need to know?"</p> <p>Sometimes it is helpful to ask a partner to read your story, as well, and to tell you when the story is making sense (thumbs up) and when it is confusing (thumbs down).</p>	<p>I reread my writing to make it clearer. I ask myself, "Does this make sense? Have I left anything out that my reader might need to know?" If I need to, I add more information or a part that is missing into the story.</p>
<p><b>The story has no tension.</b> This writer's story is flat, without any sense of conflict or tension. The story is more of a chronicle than a story. If there is a problem, there is no build-up around possible solutions. Instead, the dog is simply lost and then found.</p>	<p>You told what happened in your story, in order, so I get it. But to make this into the kind of story that readers can't put down, the kind that readers read by flashlight in bed, you have to add what writers call <i>edge-of-the-seat tension</i>. Instead of just saying <i>I did this, I did this, I did this</i>, you need to have the narrator want something really badly and then run into difficulties, or trouble . . . so readers are thinking, "Will it work? Won't it?" You've got to get readers all wound up! Right now, reread and find the part of the story where you could show what the main character really wants.</p>	<p>Edge-of-the-seat tension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone who really wants something.</li> <li>• Someone encounters trouble.</li> <li>• Someone tries, tries, tries.</li> </ul>

# Units of Study Trade Book Pack

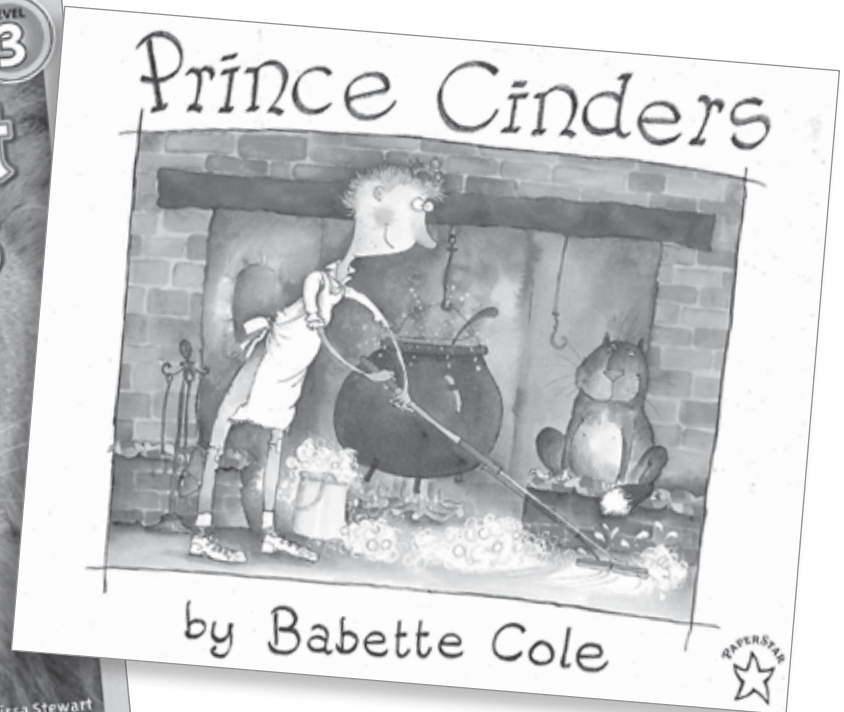
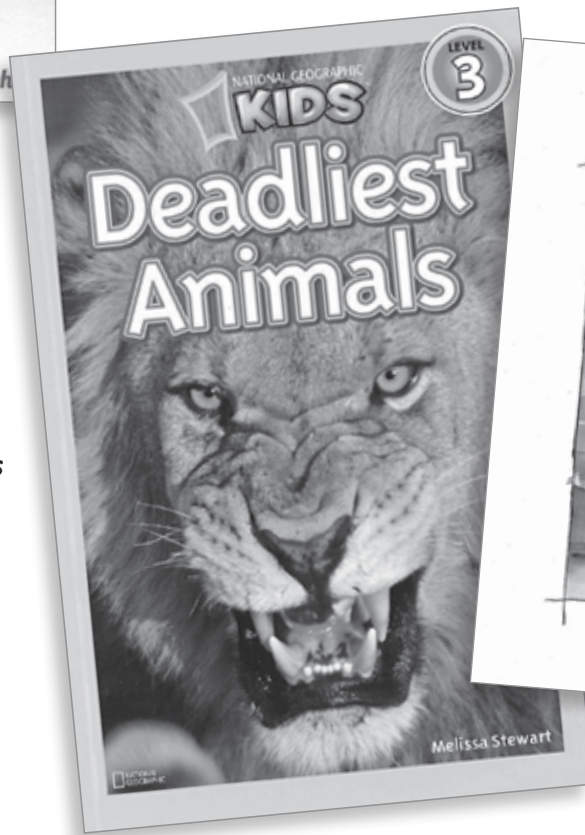


The **Grade 3 Trade Book Pack** includes three age-appropriate trade books that are used in the units to model effective writing techniques, encourage students to read as writers, and provide background knowledge.

- ▶ ***Come On, Rain!*** by Karen Hesse
- ▶ ***Deadliest Animals (National Geographic Reader)*** by Melissa Stewart
- ▶ ***Prince Cinders*** by Babette Cole

*Because some teachers may want to purchase class sets and others may already own these popular books, these are available as an optional, but recommended, purchase.*

*“Any effective writing curriculum acknowledges that it is important for writers to be immersed in powerful writing—literature and other kinds of texts. Children especially need opportunities to read as writers. By studying the work of other authors, students not only develop a felt sense of what it is they are trying to make but also learn the traditions of that particular kind of text.”*



# UNITS OF STUDY *in* Opinion, Information, *and* Narrative Writing

LUCY CALKINS WITH COLLEAGUES FROM THE TEACHERS COLLEGE READING AND WRITING PROJECT

Building on the best practices and proven frameworks in the original Units of Study for Teaching Writing series, this new series offers grade-by-grade plans for teaching writing workshops that help students meet and exceed the Common Core State Standards.

## These new units will:

- ◆ help you teach **opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing** with increasing complexity and sophistication
- ◆ unpack the **Common Core writing standards** as you guide students to attain and exceed those expectations
- ◆ foster **high-level thinking**, including regular chances to synthesize, analyze, and critique
- ◆ include **strategic performance assessments** to help monitor mastery and differentiate instruction.

## Units of Study in Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing with trade book packs



**Grade K w/trade book packs**  
978-0-325-04753-9

**Grade 2 w/trade book packs**  
978-0-325-04755-3

**Grade 4 w/trade book packs**  
978-0-325-04757-7

**Grade 1 w/trade book packs**  
978-0-325-04754-6

**Grade 3 w/trade book packs**  
978-0-325-04756-0

**Grade 5 w/trade book packs**  
978-0-325-04758-4

**Elementary Series Bundle (K–5) w/trade books** / 978-0-325-04762-1

## Units of Study in Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing



**Grade 6** / 978-0-325-04714-0  
6 books + CD-ROM



**Grade 7** / 978-0-325-04715-7  
6 books + CD-ROM



**Grade 8** / 978-0-325-04716-4  
6 books + CD-ROM

**Middle School Series Bundle, Grades 6–8** / 978-0-325-05375-2

Visit [Heinemann.com](http://Heinemann.com) for purchasing options.

## ALSO FROM LUCY CALKINS AND COLLEAGUES

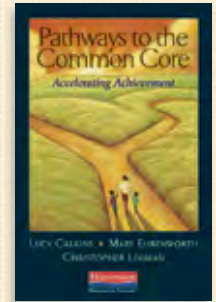
### Pathways to the Common Core *Accelerating Achievement*

Designed for teachers, school leaders, and professional learning communities looking to navigate the gap between their current literacy practices and the ideals of the Common Core, *Pathways to the Common Core*:

- analyzes what the standards say, suggest, and don't say
- provides an implementation guide for crafting standards-based instruction
- details a plan for creating systems of continuous improvement.

View free classroom videos at [vimeo.com/tcrwp/albums](http://vimeo.com/tcrwp/albums)

Grades K–12 / 978-0-325-04355-5 / 2012 / 224pp

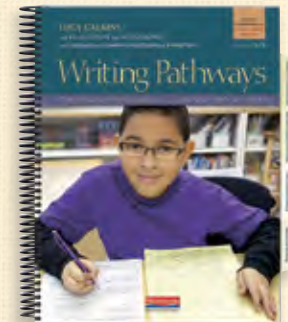


### Writing Pathways

The groundbreaking performance assessments and learning progressions from the Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing series have been reformatted to support any writing curriculum that aims for the lofty goals of the Common Core State Standards.

Designed as an instructional tool, *Writing Pathways* will help you provide your students with continuous assessment, timely feedback, and clear goals. Organized around a K–8 continuum of learning progressions for opinion/argument, information, and narrative writing, this practical guide includes performance assessments, student checklists, rubrics, and leveled writing exemplars that help you (and your students) evaluate their work and establish where they are in their writing development.

Grades K–8 / 978-0-325-05730-9 / 2014 / 340pp



**Performance  
Assessments and  
Learning Progressions,  
Grades K–8**

**Order Today!** CALL 800.225.5800 • FAX 877.231.6980 • WEB [Heinemann.com](http://Heinemann.com)

# UNITS OF STUDY<sup>in</sup> Opinion, Information, and Narrative Writing

## ABOUT THE GRADE 3 AUTHORS

**Lucy Calkins** is the Founding Director of the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, where she has developed a learning community of teacher educators whose brilliance and dedication shine through in the Units of Study books, which are quickly becoming an essential part of classroom life in tens of thousands of schools around the world. Lucy is the Robinson Professor of Children's Literature at Teachers College, Columbia University where she co-directs the Literacy Specialist Program. She is the author or coauthor of scores of books, including *Pathways to the Common Core: Accelerating Achievement* (Heinemann 2012), which was on the *New York Times* education bestseller list, *Units of Study in Opinion/Argument, Information, and Narrative Writing, Grades K–8* (Heinemann 2013–14), and *Units of Study for Teaching Reading, Grades K–5* (Heinemann 2015).



**Maggie Beattie Roberts**, a Lead Staff Developer at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, is committed to helping teachers tap into the power of their own deep engagement in reading and writing. Maggie has led research and development to help teachers use digital literacy and technology, including popular media, as an alternate way to help young people grasp fundamental concepts; she has also pioneered new work in content area literacy. Maggie is a frequent speaker at national conferences, and leads advanced institutes on information writing and school- and city-wide staff development around the country. She is coauthor of *Once Upon a Time* (Grade 3) and *Research Based Information Writing* (Grade 6) in the Writing Units of Study series.



MEREDITH ZIMMER PHOTOGRAPHY

**Kelly Boland Hohne**, EdD, is a Writer-in-Residence and Senior Research Associate at the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. Kelly is part of the leadership team for a think tank sponsored by the Council of Chief School Officers, in which researchers from both CBAL (the research arm of Educational Testing Service) and TCRWP studied learning progressions in argument writing. Kelly is the author of several books in the units of study for reading and writing series, among them, *Changing the World* (Grade 3), *Boxes and Bullets* (Grade 4), and *Argument and Advocacy* (Grade 5). In all of her work, Kelly draws on her experience as a classroom teacher at PS 6, a TCRWP mentor school.



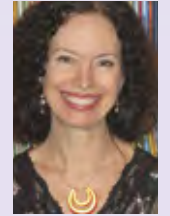
In addition to being a coauthor of one book in the Reading Units of Study series and three books in the Writing Units of Study series, **M. Colleen Cruz** is the author of several other titles for teachers, including *The Unstoppable Writing Teacher* (Heinemann 2015), *Independent Writing* (Heinemann 2004), and *A Quick Guide to Reaching Struggling Writers, K–5* (Heinemann 2008). She is also the author of the young adult novel *Border Crossing*, a Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award Finalist. Colleen was a classroom teacher in general education and inclusive settings before joining TCRWP, where she is a Senior Lead Staff Developer. She presently supports schools, teachers, and their students nationally and internationally.



As a Senior Staff Developer at Teachers College Reading and Writing Project, **Shana Frazin** works closely with administrators, coaches, teachers and kids across New York City, the country, and the world. She has led leadership groups on strong readers and higher-level comprehension as well as taught institutes on the teaching of reading, writing and the content areas. Prior to joining the Project, Shana taught third, fourth and fifth grades in Pasadena and Los Angeles Unified School districts, and was a faculty member at Pacific Oaks College. Shana is the co-author of *Once Upon a Time: Adapting and Writing Fairy Tales* in the Writing Units of Study series.



**Marjorie Martinelli** is a Senior Research Associate, Writer, and Staff Developer at TCRWP. She is the coauthor of *Smarter Charts* and *Smarter Charts for Math, Science, and Social Studies* (Heinemann 2013–14). Marjorie has illustrated charts in many books in the Units of Study series and is the coauthor of a unit in the Reading Units of Study series, as well as one in the Writing Units of Study series. Her other publications include the BrainQuest Math series for Grades 1 and 2. Before working at the Project, Marjorie taught at PS 77 and The Laboratory School for Gifted Education in New York City, and was an instructor at the Bank Street College of Education.



**Julia Mooney** is Writer-in-Residence at TCRWP, where she collaborates with Lucy Calkins and a team of writers on K–8 literacy curricula, learning progressions, performance assessments, and other major projects. Julia holds a BA in English from Stanford University. At Teachers College, Julia has helped organize and TA courses by children's book authors James Howe and Sarah Weeks, in whose classes she tapped into her first love of storytelling. Julia is coauthor of three books in the Writing Units of Study series—*Lessons from the Masters* (Grade 2), *If . . . Then . . . Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction* (Grade 2), and *If . . . Then . . . Curriculum: Assessment-Based Instruction* (Grade 3), as well as *Character Studies* (Grade 3) in the Reading Units of Study series.

