

Under Construction

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OVERVIEW

Topic: Story Structure. This lesson shows students the elements of a story: title, main characters, setting, actions, the character's purpose, and the problem to be solved. When students learn that all stories follow this structure, they will be able to look for and identify these elements when they read. Application of these elements should follow in student written stories. Students will complete a story structure in a guided setting by the teacher, and apply it to another story of their own.

LENGTH OF LESSON

2, 45 minute class periods

Subject: Language Arts

VIDEO/TECHNOLOGY HARDWARE AND SOFTWARE

TV/VCR, preferably with a remote control

Reading Rainbow #1114, Owen

Reading Rainbow #1209, Regina's Big Mistake (Extensions)

Reading Rainbow #113, Arthur's Eyes (Extensions)

Reading Rainbow #413, Best Friends (Extensions)

Reading Rainbow #1006, Nosey Mrs. Rat

World Wide Web

ClarisWorks or other word processing program

HyperStudio or PowerPoint program (optional for Post-Viewing Activity)

WEB APPLICATIONS

- Students can learn about Barbara Helen Berger, author of [Grandfather Twilight](#) and [When the Sun Rose](#) at the following Site:
<http://bhberger.com/children/features/>

She has written teachers a letter, tells about her idea box, shares secrets about writing, drawing and painting, and offers advice to aspiring writers who want to write children's stories. She also has links to write 4 kids.com which is a children's writing site that has information about how to get started, frequently asked questions(FAQs), do's and don'ts for writers, titles, what's in and what's out. Very informative site. She will also e-mail classes but cannot promise e-mail to individuals. The book club web sites are great to access. They have helpful info for kids, parents and teachers. Troll, Weekly Reader, and Scholastic are this writer's favorite three.

- Chat rooms available with different authors at various times. It has e-mail for more info and to find out schedules. www.troll.com
- Live interviews with various authors. Students can participate in online discussion groups (dates and topics vary). Books currently include: Harry Potter Books, Magic School Bus books, Clifford, The Big Red Dog books. Under the teacher section there are famous authors, beloved books, discussion guides, reading circles and more. Scholastic also has a special

section for parents on art, and parent problem solving ideas.

www.scholastic.com

- Details writing contests and other contests for kids. It also gives math, science and social studies activities (such as Martin Luther King). It also has a link to the Sylvan Learning Center where students can get a free journal with writing tips. In addition it has a section on black culture. Students can join a writing pen pals(www.epals.com) or key pals. It features a Galaxy of Links in every curriculum area.
www.weeklyreader.com

- Students can read and learn about Dr. Seuss (Theodore Geisel) at:
<http://www.metroleum.com/core/interne/t/gotolink/5.php3>

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The student will be able to:

- Identify the elements of a story
- Use knowledge of the story structure to predict events
- Create a story structure when given the elements of a story

This lesson addresses Virginia SOLs English K.11,1.12,2.11,3.9

MATERIALS AND TEACHER PREPARATIONS

For Pre-Viewing Activity (per group of 4 students):

- One puzzle in a Ziploc baggie (The puzzles can be different kinds but have approximately the same number of pieces or the same difficulty level.)

For Post-Viewing Activity (per group of 4 students):

- Blank templates of story structure (sample included)

- Selections of easy, short stories chosen in advance by the teacher.

For the teacher:

1. Blank templates of story structures (sample included)
2. Template of the story, *Owen*, (included)
3. Template of the story, *Levar's Baby Sister*, (included)
4. Transparencies of the templates, or a dry erase board and markers, or chalkboard, chalk, and eraser
5. A copy of the book, *Owen*, by Kevin Henkes, published by Greenwillow Books would be helpful, but not required.

PREPARATORY/ PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Instruct students that today they will be learning about the elements of a story. Tell them the first activity they will complete is to work a puzzle. Tell students that you want to see which group can get their puzzle completed first. Pass out the Ziploc baggies containing puzzles. Ask students to wait until you give the signal for them to take the pieces out of the bags. Allow about two minutes to work the puzzle. Notice the order in which groups finish working puzzles. When all groups have finished working their puzzles, ask the groups: What would have helped you work the puzzle more quickly? (Possible answers might include having a picture of what the finished product would look like, and the frame or tray that the puzzle fits in.) Explain that stories are a lot like puzzles. Just as a puzzle is a picture of something such as a house, church, or school, a story structure helps us get a picture in our minds of what a story is. Stories have separate parts, which fit together. Explain that stories have a structure: a title, main characters, a setting, actions, purpose, and a problem. When we understand the separate parts, it helps us to understand the story.

FOCUS FOR VIEWING/ OTHER TECHNOLOGY

To give students a specific responsibility while viewing say: Students, during this lesson you will be watching a video of a story. From this video I would like you to be able to identify the different elements or parts of a story. I will help you as we listen to the story today. We will complete an activity together as we watch the video. Pass out templates of the story, Owen, but do not pass out actions from the templates at the beginning of the lesson. Tell students that Levar Burton from The Reading Rainbow is going to tell them the name or title of the story and what the story is about. Say: I want you to listen carefully for the title of the story and also tell me who and what the story is about.

VIEWING AND/OR ONLINE ACTIVITIES

1. Set the counter to your VCR at 000 with the song. There is a lead of 0:16 from the beginning of the tape. **FOCUS:** Say: Listen now for the title of this story and for who and what the story is about. **Start Reading Rainbow #1114**, at 1:05 where Levar is sitting on the swing and says, "At some time or another, almost every kid has something soft to hold onto for company and comfort, like a friend of mine who was very attached to his blanket. Now some people thought he should grow up and out of it. He had ideas of his own." **View** that segment and **Pause** the video after seeing the picture of Owen, the mouse on the cover of the book. Ask: What is the title of this story? (Owen) Write Owen where the title is on the overhead template transparency. Ask: Who is the story about? (Owen, a mouse) Say: We call Owen the main character because he is whom the story is mostly about. Place the card "Owen" under the main character on the template. Ask: What is the story about? (It is about a mouse named Owen who wants to keep his

blanket.) Allow students to respond. Say: We call what the character wants the purpose of the story. Place the purpose card where the work purpose is on the template. Tell students to place their cards showing the title, main character, and purpose in the correct places on the template.

2. **REFOCUS:** Say: When you watch the next segment, I want you to watch and listen for when and where the story is taking place. **Resume** the video and **Pause** at 1:32, when you hear the narrator say, "...inside, outside." Ask students when and where the story takes place. (At Owen's house, present time) Ask: How did you know where the story takes place? (Students should reply because of the pictures and hearing the words, "inside, outside".) Tell students that sometimes the author of a story does not tell us directly when and where the story takes place, but that we can figure this out by looking at the pictures or by another clue the author gives us. Say: When and where a story takes place is called the setting. Place the setting card on the template and ask students to place their cards on their templates.
3. **REFOCUS:** Tell students to watch and listen to the next part of the story to find out what happens to Owen's blanket. **Resume** video and **Pause** at 1:42, when the narrator says, "...especially terrific, big boy gift in its place." Reask question. (Answer: Owen is supposed to leave his blanket under his pillow, and the Blanket Fairy is supposed to pick it up and leave a big boy gift in its place.)
4. **REFOCUS:** Say: Do you think Owen will give up his blanket? (Accept all reasonable answers.) Say: Let's watch and find out what happens to Owen's blanket. **Resume** the video and **Pause** at 1:56, after Owen says, "No blanket fairy!" Ask: Did Owen give up his blanket? (No, he stuffs his blanket in his pajama bottoms, and refuses to give up Fuzzy, his blanket.) Say: We call the part where Owen stuffed his blanket in

- his pajamas an action of the story. All stories are made up of different actions.
5. **REFOCUS:** Say: As the story continues, a change is going to take place in Owen's life. Watch and listen to the story to find out what new change is going to take place. **Resume** the video and **Stop** at 1:67 with the words, "Haven't you heard of saying no?" Ask: What new change is taking place in Owen's life? (Owen is getting ready to start kindergarten and he cannot take his blanket to school with him.) Explain to students that this is the problem in the story. The problem is what keeps the main character from getting what he wants. Place the card with the problem on it on the correct place on the template. Ask students to put their problem on their templates. Review with students what has happened thus far. Ask students: What could Owen do to solve his problem? (Some may respond that Owen could sneak and hide his blanket.)
 6. **REFOCUS:** Ask: Do you think Owen's parents will tell him no, that he may not take his blanket to school? Let's continue watching to find out. **Resume** video and **Stop** at 1:75 when you hear Owen's father say, "It'll be alright," said Owen's father. Say: What did Owen's parents tell him about taking his blanket to school? (They told him NO.) Say: How did Owen respond? (He cried.) Say: Since Owen's parents will not let him take his blanket to school, what do you think Owen can do to solve his problem? (Possible responses may be that he could throw a temper tantrum, he could beg and beg and maybe they will finally let him.)
 7. **REFOCUS:** Say: Watch and listen carefully to how Owen's problem is solved. **Resume** the video and **Stop** at 2:00 when you hear, "and Mrs. Tweezers doesn't say a thing." and you see "The End". Ask students: How was Owen's problem solved? (His mother made his blanket into handkerchiefs.) Ask: How did Owen feel at the end of

- the story? (Owen felt very happy.) Ask: How do you know he was happy? (He looked happy and he said, "Hooray!!")
8. Next, ask students to tell what happened at the beginning of the story, what happened in the middle of the story, and what happened at the end. Pass out the action cards to each group. Read aloud the actions. Ask students which card shows the first action, the last actions, and then sequence the actions in order. Demonstrate this on your overhead transparency. Tell students to show this on their templates. Monitor groups to ensure students are placing the parts of the story in the appropriate places.

Second Day Activity

Students will complete another guided activity with the teacher. Students will view a short segment of the tape that was used previously.

1. **FOCUS:** Say: Students, we are now going to view another segment of the video that we saw yesterday. This part of the video is called, "Levar's Baby Sister". After you watch this short piece of video we will create another story frame. I want you to listen to this video segment and raise your hand when you can tell me what Levar's problem is. **Start** the video at 2:56, where Levar is talking and saying, "Sometimes changes are tough for a little kid." **Stop** at 2:73 with Levar being the child and saying, "Great, a little sister. Just what I needed." After watching the video, ask: Who can tell me what Levar's problem was? (He was jealous of his baby sister.)
2. **REFOCUS:** Say: Let's watch the rest of this short story to find out what happens. **Resume** video at 2:73 and **Stop** at 3:04 when you hear him say, "Maybe this won't be so bad."
 - Give each individual or group (depending on the needs of your students and your preference) a blank template and the template of *Levar's Baby Sister* (previously cut apart).

- Pass out all the elements of the story, *Levar's Baby Sister*.
- Read aloud all parts.
- Students should place the elements on their blank templates.
- Students may need to review the tape again to get the correct placement of the actions.

2. Allow students the opportunity to visit your school library to check out a book. Have them write a short book report containing the elements of the story. (You may want to give younger students some sort of fill-in-the-blank sheet for this activity.)

POST-VIEWING AND/OR ONLINE ACTIVITIES

1. Divide students into small groups.
2. Assign each group a story to read. (The teacher will need to choose short stories in advance and have them available in class.)
3. Allow time for each group to complete a template of the story that they read with the following elements: title, main character(s), setting, actions, and problem.
4. Students should decide the sequence of the actions before they fill in for this part.
5. Each group will share orally with the class their story and template.
6. Break the class into the elements of a story. Let one group be the title (that they have to make up), and another group be the setting (that they add after hearing the title), etc. and Let them role play this.

ASSESSMENT

The teacher will assess the accuracy of oral presentations and the templates students completed for the Post-Viewing Activity. Some review of the different elements may be necessary.

ACTION PLAN

1. Invite an author into your class as a guest speaker. Have him/her talk to the class about how he/she goes about getting started writing a story, where the ideas come from, and the process they follow.

EXTENSIONS

Language Arts:

- The same format as was previously used, may be used for the following Reading Rainbow videos:
 - #1209, Regina's Big Mistake
 - #113, Arthur's Eyes
 - #1006, Nosey Mrs. Rat
 - #413, Best Friends

Any of these videos can be used to identify the title, setting, main character(s), problem and actions in a story.

- Students can write stories of their own with the elements taught included in their stories.
- The following books can be used by students to create story structures:
 - Aesop's Fables-Aesop
 - Three Little Pigs-Barbara Brener
 - Nosey Mrs. Rat-Jeffrey Allen, James Marshall
 - The Terrible Thing That Happened At Our House-Marge Blaine
 - The Teacher from the Black Lagoon-Mike Thaler
 - Bedtime For Frances-Russell Hoban
 - Best Friends-Steven Kellogg
 - The Little Mermaid and The Red Shoes-Hans Andersen
 - Beauty and the Beast-Michael Teitelbaum
 - The Frog Prince Continued-Jon Scieszka
 - Somebody and the Three Blairs-Marilyn Tolhurst
 - Grimes Fairy Tales-Jane Carruth
 - The Gingerbread Man-Eric Kimmel
 - The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs-Jon Scieszka
 - The Ugly Duckling-Hans Andersen

The Country Mouse and the City Mouse-Aesop
I Don't Think I'm going To Like This-Nancy Crystal
Cinderella-Barbara Karlin
Jack and the Beanstalk-Ruth Ainsworth
Herbert the Timid Dragon-Mercer Mayer
Cinderella Penguin-Janet Perlman
The Gingerbread Man-Patricia Zens
Sleeping Ugly-Jane Yolen
Rumpelstiltskin-Brothers Grimm
Puss in Boots-Charles Perrault
The Steadfast Tin Soldier-Hans Andersen
Rapunzel-Brothers Grimm
Little Red Riding Hood-Charles Perrault
Amelia bedelia-Peggy Parish
Miss Nelson is Back-James Marshall
The Frog Prince-Brothers Grimm

Technology:

- Students can use ClarisWorks or other word processing program to write short stories containing the elements of a story.
- If a multimedia program is available, students could design a Hyperstudio stack or PowerPoint slides that include these elements along with student illustrations to the story.

Art:

Students can create illustrated stories and story structures from stories in their basal series.

Science:

Use topics covered in science SOLs such as cycles in nature (caterpillar to butterfly, tadpole to frog) to show actions (1st,2nd,3rd). Children can create time lines or time structures to show what happens to show the sequence.

Social Studies:

- Students can create time lines of people's lives or a time structure to show

how events took place. This can be related to Jamestown, Columbus, or slavery.

Ex: Martin Luther King timeline, also compare that stories have a setting (when and where story takes place). History also has different settings (different places and time periods when events took place and when people lived).

- Children can create time lines or time structures; create a day in the life of a famous person, a Pilgrim child, etc.

Math:

In math students must determine what the problem is. Students look for key words to help them know whether to add or subtract based on information given in a word problem.

Internet:

www.bonus.com

This is a great site for kids, parents, and teachers. Activities are categorized by curriculum areas.

<http://www.write4kids.com>

This is a children's writing supersite. This site is more for teachers and parents who want to learn how to write for students. It gives ideas on how to get started as a writer. Teachers and parents can utilize this information to help students with their writing.

<http://www.kidsbookshelf.com>

It has a list of the best of kids books of the century (100 of them!) and a place for kids to submit poems, short stories, and artwork. It has lesson plans and author/illustrator spotlights, including David Adler and others. It has questions and answers about their books and about the authors themselves. It also has contests and drawings. An excellent site!