

Tell-a-Tale
Short Story Writing Lesson Plan
Mad Lib

Objective

Students will use a mad-lib style story to explore the story elements of character, setting and plot. Students will then outline, write and revise a short story for the Tell-a-Tale Short Story Contest.

Materials

Mad Lib Template
Post-It Notes or Small Pieces of Scrap Paper
3 Bowls
Character Writing Exercise Handouts
Plot Writing Exercise Handouts
Pencils

Directions

Create a Mad Lib Story

1. Ask students to write an animal on a post-it note or small piece of scrap paper.
2. Collect the answers in the character bowl. Explain that animals can be characters.
3. Ask students to write a place on a post-it note or small piece of scrap paper.
4. Collect the answers in the setting bowl. Explain that places can be settings.
5. Ask students to write an action on a post-it note or small piece of scrap paper.
6. Collect the answers in the plot bowl. Explain that actions make up the plot.
7. Select answers at random to fill in the blanks of the Mad Lib template. Read it aloud to the group.

Explore Character, Setting a Plot

1. Working together, brainstorm ideas for an original character. Ask questions about the character, such as:
 - a. What is their name?
 - b. What do they look like?
 - c. How do they act?
 - d. What are their strengths and weaknesses?
 - e. What things do they like or dislike?
2. Working independently, students fill out a character chart to create their own original character.
3. Working together, brainstorm ideas for a setting. Discuss questions about the setting, such as:
 - a. Where is the story set?
 - b. When is the story set?

- c. What are some key details of the setting?
4. Working independently, students choose a setting that fits the character from their independent character chart exercise.
5. Working together, brainstorm ideas for a story problem. Discuss ways the character could try to solve the story problem.
6. Working independently, students invent a story problem their character might encounter then brainstorm solutions their character might try to solve this problem.

Writing

1. Students will write a scene that introduces the setting, main character and story problem from their independent writing exercises.
2. Students will write a scene that shows their character trying a solution that is unsuccessful and how the character felt afterwards.
3. Students will write a scene that shows their character trying a solution that is successful and how the character felt afterwards.
4. Students will illustrate their story.

Revision

1. Working one-on-one with an adult or in small groups of peers lead by an adult, students will revise their stories to add more details and to correct grammar and spelling errors.