

STUDENT LEARNING PLAN FOR READ WRITE THINK ALOUD LESSON

Christine Ammirati

Cooperating Teacher: Tama Ferrara, Third Grade

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Virginia Standards:

3.5 The student will read and demonstrate comprehension of fiction.

- b) Make connections between previous experiences and reading selections.
- c) Make, confirm, or revise predictions.
- d) Compare and contrast settings, characters, and events.
- f) Ask and answer questions.
- g) Draw conclusions about character and plot.
- h) Organize information and events logically.
- i) Summarize major points found in fiction materials.
- j) Understand basic plots of fairy tales, myths, folktales, legends, and fables.

3.10 The student will write stories, letters, ~~simple explanations, and short reports~~ across all content areas.

- a) Use a variety of planning strategies.
- b) Organize information according to the type of writing.
- c) Identify the intended audience.
- d) Revise writing for specific vocabulary and information.

3.11 The student will edit writing for correct grammar, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.

- a) Use complete and varied sentences.
- b) Use the word / in compound subjects.
- c) Use past and present verb tense.
- d) Use singular possessives.
- e) Use commas in a simple series.
- f) Use simple abbreviations.
- g) Use apostrophes in contractions with pronouns.
- h) Use correct spelling for high-frequency sight words, including irregular plurals.

Intended Audience: The third grade class is comprised of twenty-three 3rd graders. No students are receiving ELL instruction or have an IEP or 504 plan.

Background/Overview:

Writing a friendly letter is the focus of the lesson. Students will use knowledge of character, setting, and plot of a read-aloud as well as background knowledge of another fairy tale to support the details of their letter.

Behavioral Objectives:

Given modeled writing by the teacher and an interactive teacher read-aloud of *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* by Eugene Trivizas, the student will write a friendly letter in the persona of a fairy tale character to another fairy tale character.

Resources/Materials, Time, Space:

The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig by Eugene Trivizas

document camera

notepaper

pencils

markers.

45 minutes total time:

- read and discuss the text (15 minutes)
- model and discuss teacher's sample writing response (10 minutes)
- brainstorm (5 minutes)
- student writing of friendly letter (15 minutes)

Classroom

The Lesson Proper**Introduction:**

Gather the students on the carpet in the reading corner. Show them *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig* and read the title. Ask students to make a connection to another fairy tale and to predict the content. Tell the students that the read-aloud will be followed by writing a friendly letter that will require them to take the perspective of a fairy tale character. Read the book aloud.

Instructional Strategies:

- Review the elements of a friendly letter as presented in students' recent language arts instruction. Tell the students that we will write a friendly letter as a character in a fairy tale. From the perspective of the troll from the Three Billy Goats Gruff, write a friendly letter to the Big Bad Pig from *The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig*.

- Using the document camera, model the writing process, highlighting the content of each part of a friendly letter, rereading the letter as you write, and soliciting student input on spelling corrections and descriptive synonyms. Tell students that this draft is a “sloppy copy” and that content and ideas are the primary focus. Remind students that spelling need not be perfect at this stage in the writing process. Emphasize that all letters should include the five elements of a friendly letter (heading, salutation, body, closing, signature).
- After the letter is finished, brainstorm fairy tale characters that students might wish to impersonate and determine to whom these characters would write a letter.
- Distribute paper with “friendly letter” template to students. As students work on letters, circulate and meet individually with students as necessary to prompt ideas and to encourage creativity.
- As students finish their letters, ask them to reread, edit, and make sure that all five elements of a friendly letter are included.
- For students who finish their editing early, pair students up for peer sharing and conferencing.

Differentiation: The lesson focus is broad enough to accommodate different cognitive and development levels. Teacher will check in with students who struggle with writing to offer individual prompts, feedback, and guidance.

Accommodations/Modifications: One student in this group has visual difficulties. Ensure that she is seated in her assigned seat for optimal viewing of the document camera projection. Given the lack of printed handouts, no enlarged copies are required for this assignment. No other students in the class are identified with special learning needs.

Closure: When the majority of students has finished the letter, refocus attention for whole group discussion. Solicit volunteers to share their letters on the document camera. After students read their letters, point out the parts of the friendly letter (heading, salutation, body, closing, signature). Students who have not finished their letters may continue during enrichment time.

Assessment/Evaluation: *Formative:* During the read-aloud and modeled writing, evaluate attentiveness to text and then the participation in the editing and brainstorming sessions. For

writing assignment, note spelling and grammar errors as well as letter content's relevance to fairy tales and success in taking the perspective of a fairy tale character.

Summative: Evaluate students' written responses and analyze them to check that they include all elements of a friendly letter (heading, salutation, body, closing, signature).

Reflection

The students were very excited when they saw the read-aloud book. A few were familiar with and positive about the text and most of the other students were intrigued by its title. These students drew on their obviously clear background knowledge of the original folktale and offered logical and accurate predictions of the content of this fractured tale.

The read-aloud was very smooth and became interactive as the students picked up on the two different refrains from the book and spontaneously choral read "but the big bad pig wasn't called big and bad for nothing" and "not for all the tea leaves in our china teapot." During pauses in the text, students reflected on the safety of each new wolf house, the next actions of the big bad pig, and the possible results when the wolves decide to build their house out of flowers. At the end of the text, the students reflected on how the pig's personality had changed and supported their arguments with specific examples from the book such as the pig danced, played games with the wolves, and sat on the couch and had tea and cookies with the wolves.

Next, the students raised their hands to name all the different elements of a friendly letter. At first, when the students were first settling themselves back at their desks from the reading corner, they did not all focus and participate in the friendly letter review. I initially waited to see how many hands would be raised but then decided to express my confidence that since they had all just spent two weeks of language arts class studying friendly letters, that they all surely knew the answer. One eager student blurted out, "we even know a song," and soon all hands were in the air.

The write aloud segment of the lesson produced an unexpected (for me) level of engagement. I mused about what storybook character I would choose to write the letter and the students offered many eager suggestions. My selection of the troll from *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* was received with giggles and the students responded positively to my prepared puns ("Underbridge, CA", "Great Wolf Flower Lodge", "The Big Buddy Pig", and "Trusty Troll"). They also reacted quickly when they saw my spelling errors ("Decembre", "four", "too", and "wear") and actively brainstormed synonyms with me ("pesky" and "irritating"). Having observed three of the

relatively inert language arts lessons on friendly letters, I was pleasantly surprised by the engagement and buy in from the students.

The class was eager to offer possible characters who might write a letter. At this point, the students began to get a bit off track and offered some non-fairy tale suggestions. When an avid Star Wars fan suggested a letter from Darth Vader to Obiwan Kenobi, I was receptive but when the conversation began to devolve into characters who were less well known to the general class, I pulled it back to fairy tales. For students who wanted to go beyond fairy tales, I asked them to first speak to me to make sure that the character would be recognized by most of the class.

The students were initially very chatty, sharing ideas when they received their friendly letter template feedback. As they settled into the assignment, they asked many questions about addresses (state abbreviations, where characters lived, and which address was placed in what location) that seemed to bog the students down in tangential details. I refocused attention on the document camera and reviewed the differences between the two address areas. I then praised the students for the variety and creativity of their character ideas and encouraged them to work on the body of their letters and come back to the addresses if these were a sticking point. My brief pep talk seemed to undo any logjams and the writing picked up. These next moments were almost silent in the classroom. My cooperating teacher gave me the thumbs up from her desk and later said that this level of engagement was notable. I touched base with a few students who wanted to discuss character options or needed additional guidance.

Three students had great difficulty with the lack of explicit direction for this activity. They asked me repeatedly to tell them a character to be. When I asked one student to choose a character from our brainstorming list, she said, “but who do I have to be.” These particular students have general difficulty with unstructured activities across content areas. Eventually they were able to write some sentences but it was a labored effort and I believe that they felt uncomfortable and unmoored by the activity.

Finally, the idea of a “sloppy copy” does not resonate for many students. One of the students noted in the preceding paragraphs was extremely worried about erasures and spellings and asked for a clean sheet of paper. When I explained that I did not have another copy and encouraged her to carry on and focus on ideas rather than spelling, she tried to move forward but eventually turned the paper over and began anew on the backside.

Many students were eager to share their letters with partners and later with the class. Three students placed their letters under the document camera and read them aloud to an appreciative and

polite audience. After each reading, I asked the class to name the character who “wrote” the letter, letter recipient, different addresses, the date.

I was extremely pleased by this lesson focus and its implementation. The students were able to apply their language arts knowledge of friendly letters and using the fairy tale character hook created a very engaging activity. I believe that launching the lesson with an appealing read-aloud was extremely effective and that my modeling of drafting, editing, and revising helped some students feel more comfortable with making errors in the process of creating an interesting letter. I was also excited to be able to harness the imagination and motivation to write of so many students. I believe that embracing some student suggestions that were slightly off target of my main theme was appropriate because these students were able to tap into their considerable interest to create a purposeful letter that addressed each instructional focus.

I need to consult with my cooperating teacher about ideas to nurture initiative and independence in those students who are reluctant to move forward without explicit step-by-step teacher direction. I would also like to discuss how to create greater comfort with a draft process and how to allow the ideas to flow without picking up the eraser and fretting about text details at this particular stage in the writing process.