

L.E.N.S. FOCUS

L – Literacy
E – Educators'
N – Network of
S - Saskatchewan

(formerly the Saskatchewan Reading Council)



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Story Marker

Last month you received this information about the story marker. This month we have attached some possible writing lessons that can be used with the story marker.

A story marker is a visual representation of the elements of a short story. It can be used in the classroom to support retelling a story. After reading a story together, ask the students to retell the story, using the parts of the story marker as a visual reminder of the important parts of the story. You can create your own story marker from craft materials, or cut shapes out of coloured paper to make a display on the classroom wall.



The parts of the Story Marker are as follows:

Character

Setting

Kick-off (initiating event)

The characters' feelings about that event

Next,

Then, ...

After that,

Resolution

Characters' feelings at the end of the story

*these elements can be adapted to suit your classroom's needs

Lesson 1 - Characters

Purpose:

- students will learn the word and definition of “character” (character is the most important person in the story)
- describe a character (looks, personality traits and justification from story)

Activities:

- Before reading, discuss the story and tell the students the character, setting and problem without the final outcome. (This story is about a little girl named Goldilocks, who is the **main character**, or the most important person in the story. The story happens in the forest and in the 3 bears’ cottage. The problem is that Goldilocks is hungry and tired and she gets into a bit of trouble when she gets to the bears cottage.) Let’s listen and find out what our main character, Goldilocks, is going to do.
- Read a story to highlight characters (fairy tales work well – goldilocks and the 3 bears?)
- Review the story with students, talking about each part of the story using vocabulary of characters, setting, problem/kickoff event, events/actions, resolution, and feelings.
- choose a character and brainstorm descriptions for that character (Spongebob Squarepants, Elsa, Betamax, Batman, etc.)
- groups are assigned a character and write descriptions on a web. Teacher will read the descriptions and the class will try to guess what character is being described.
- Describe character (illustrations, described by narrator, by what they did or said, by what others did or said to them)
- identify the top five most important descriptions for the main character and write a summary sentence

Lesson 2 – Setting

Purpose:

- students will learn the word and definition of “setting” (setting is where and when the story takes place – time and place)
- describe a setting (time, place, weather, mood, etc. and justification from story)

Activities:

- review the three ways we can find out about a character in a book
- explain that you are going to read the whole/part of the book and ask them to think about the setting. Explain that the setting means when and where the story takes place or time and place and clues from the story (how they know).

Time	Place	Other (weather,mood)

- choose a YouTube video or photo with a rich setting and brainstorm descriptive words for that setting
- groups are given a picture with a character and a setting and write descriptions on a web. Groups can present their pictures and how they described it.
- OR give each student a basic drawing and ask them to add details to create a setting. Describe the setting to a partner.
- identify the top three most important descriptions for the setting of the book and write a summary sentence

Lesson 3 – Kickoff/Problem and Actions/Attempts

Purpose:

- Students will identify what the problem/kickoff is (for the purpose of story recall and understanding)
- Students will identify the attempts/actions of the character
- Students will identify the direct consequence of the character’s plan (how did everything tie up? – resolution)

Activities:

- Review character and setting
- Explain what the kickoff in a story is:
 1. What good or bad thing happened to the character that made him or her do something?
 2. What happened to change the day from an “everyday ho-hum” day to a “special day”?
 3. What happened that you didn’t think would happen?
- explain that you will be reread whole or part of the story and ask them to think about what event would be considered the kickoff

- optional: talk about the character’s problem, his/her feelings about the event, and/or his/her plan
- What does the character do to meet his/her plan? Think about using first, next, last; before, after; finally, then, until.
- What happened because of the character’s plan and tries? Think about using because, since, so...

Initiating Event	
Event/Attempt	
Event/Attempt	
Event/Attempt	
Direct consequence/Resolution	

- Write a sentence summary and add to character and setting summaries

Follow-up Lessons

- compare and contrast two fictional fairy tale stories
- read books and identify story elements using Story Grammar Marker
- read books and write summaries identifying story elements
- orally retell stories or events from home
- use graphic organizer to write stories