

## What's the Story?

### SOLs:

English 4.1: The student will use effective oral communication skills in a variety of settings.

English 4.2: The student will make and listen to oral presentations.

### Materials:

- Book: *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Judith Viorst)
- Alexander Cut Outs (for group sorting)
- Whiteboard/Chart Paper
- Handout: *What's the Story?*

### Goals:

- Students will explore different genres to create an original idea based on a pattern.
- Students will collaborate and actively contribute in a small group environment.
- Students will orally present their product to the class.

### Procedure:

**Background Information:** Students have been working regularly in a Writer's Workshop format and will be using their experience with story patterns and language study (particularly adjectives and adverbs) to help them create an original piece.

**Class Starter:** Read aloud *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*.

### Activity:

What's the Story? (See attached)

Student Presentations

### Closure:

Discuss the different approaches used by each of the student groups. Ask students if they can think of other ways to present a new story. Student responses may include a letter, a poem, a comic book, a painting, etc.

Tomorrow students will begin to investigate character perspective and how word choice influences writing.

### Homework:

Think about a story that you really enjoy. If you took the place of the main character, how would the story change? Write down the name of the story and three ways that the story would change if you were the main character.

### Assessment:

Informal: Observe how students work in the group environment.

Monitor language choice and understanding of various literary structures and story patterns.

\*\*\*This lesson is based on the Innovations lesson from Susan Davis Lenski and Jerry L. Johns, *Improving Writing K-8: Strategies, Assessments, and Resources* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.).\*\*\*

## **What's the Story?** (Teacher Plan)

In this activity, students will listen to a story with a strong repeating pattern and use it as a basis for creating a new story. Students will maintain the pattern, but will choose different words and a new format to present their stories. Students will then be given the opportunity to share their new creations with the class.

### **Before Lesson Preparation:**

- 1.) Make copies of *What's the Story?* (handout)
- 2.) Make copies of Alexander pictures for group sorting.

### **Beginning the Lesson:**

- 1.) Each student will receive a picture of Alexander and a copy of the *What's the Story?* handout.
- 2.) Explain to the class that we will be reading the story of Alexander who is having a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day.

### **Activity:**

- 1.) After reading the story, suggest that the class make up their own version of the story using the predictable pattern from *Alexander*, but substituting an element of the story for instance, the main character.
- 2.) Ask students to suggest a celebrity and then several words that might describe that person's day or an activity that they might be doing.

Example: Hannah Montana and the Crazy, Wonderful, Mixed-up Identity Concert Tour.

- 3.) Explain that once students are in their groups they will be coming up with their own character (real or made up) and choosing their own repeating pattern.
- 4.) Groups will decide what genre they would like to use to create their own story. They can write a story, a song, poem, skit, etc. to be shared with the class. (Note: For the purpose of this class, this will be assigned.)
- 5.) Groups will assemble based on which picture they received at the beginning of class. Students will have 5 minutes to come up with a brief presentation for the class, using the handout as a guide. The teacher should observe and offer assistance as needed.

**Closure:**

After students have presented, ask students if they can think of other ways that they could have retold the story. Discuss how the pattern helps create a rhythm for telling the story. Ask students what would happen if they became the main character in their favorite story. Assign homework.

**Differentiation:**

Higher achieving students can be paired with lower achieving students for support. Pairing can also be used to help facilitate ESL students or students with physical disabilities. This lesson is appealing for different learning styles and intelligences.

**Extension:**

Create a classroom book based on stories or poems created by the student groups.

Have children create illustrations for the book.

Videotape or record the songs created by the students to share with younger students.

## What's the Story?

Using *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* as an example, create your own version using the questions below as a guide. Remember Who, What, How, When, Where, and Why!

Changes:

Main Character: \_\_\_\_\_

Theme: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ending: \_\_\_\_\_

Other Adjectives: \_\_\_\_\_

Try using these hints if you get stuck!

Create a Repeated Phrase: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Come Up with a Rhyming Sentence: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Develop a Pattern: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Use a Familiar Rhythm \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



How will you share your story? A song? A poem? A story? A play? Work well with your group and you'll have a great day!