

Discovering Language Arts

Beginning Fiction

Teacher's Guide

Grade Level: 3–5

Curriculum Focus: Language Arts

Lesson Duration: 1–2 class periods

Program Description

Understanding Genre (5 min.) –

Understand the genre of a book by who is telling the story and how it is told.

Understanding Myths (5 min.) – A myth is a traditional story that tells about a superhuman's adventure.

Plot of a Story (5 min.) – Three parts make up a plot: main problem, conflict, and resolution.

Stories of Persecution (5 min.) – A book's setting tells its time period and location.

Character Development (5 min.) – Main characters develop as a story progresses.

Read the way a character's actions, appearances, and motives might change.

Character Traits (5 min.) – Actions and interactions among characters give information about the characters.

Themes in The Wizard of Oz (5 min.) – A story many have more than one theme, and different stories may have the same theme.

Figurative Language (5 min.) – Learn about comparing two unlike things.

Making Connections (5 min.) – Characters may remind you of people that you know.

Onscreen Questions

- What genres do you like to read? Think about your favorite stories. Which genre do they fit into?
- Read a book about a mythical story. Think about how the characteristics we have seen apply to your book.
- Pick a book to read. Find the details of the plot in your story. Share your findings with a friend.
- Think about how a book you have recently read has similar themes to other books you have read.
- Pick a book you've read. What characters in your book did you like the best and why?
- Write down the traits of a character you recently read about. Do they share any of the character traits of Henry Fleming?
- Can you find common themes? Read your favorite story. While you read, look for themes that you found in *The Wizard of Oz*.
- Practice using figurative language. Write an example of simile or hyperbole.

- Think about your favorite book. Write a list of the characters. Then write a matching list of three people in your life that the characters remind you of.
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Lesson Plan

Student Objectives

- Define the term genre and identify different fiction genres.
- Identify the three parts of a story plot (main problem, conflict, resolution).
- Write a fiction piece that fits a genre and includes a plot, character development, and at least one major theme.

Materials

- *Beginning Fiction* video
- Chart paper
- Black marker
- Writing paper
- Pencils and erasers

Procedures

1. Discuss some of the students' favorite stories. Ask them these questions: Where and when did the story take place? Who was it about? What happened? How did the main characters change? What were some themes or messages? Tell students that most stories have plots, themes, and main characters who change over time, and that stories fit into a genre, or category, such as fairy tales or autobiographies. Watch *Beginning Fiction* to introduce the concepts of genre, plot, theme, and character development to your students.
2. Then discuss the concepts of plot, theme, character development, and genre with your class, and ask these types of questions: What does genre mean? What are some different genres of fiction? What makes a fairy tale different from an autobiography? What are the clues that a story is an epic poem? What is a myth? What are the three components of story plot? What are some of the story themes discussed in *Beginning Fiction*? What are some things that help readers see the changes that take place in a character over time?
3. Next, tell students that they will write their own fiction stories. Each one must be creative, unique, and at least two pages long. They can be fairy tales, mysteries, epic poems, or any other genre of fiction, but they must clearly fit into at least one genre. In addition, the stories must include the following elements:

- A setting
 - The three elements of story plot (main problem, conflict, resolution)
 - At least one main character who changes over time
 - At least one recognizable theme
4. First practice writing a short fiction story as a whole class. Create an outline and ask volunteers for a setting, main character, and a problem for the character. Talk about a conflict the problem might cause and how to resolve it. Write the ideas down in outline form on a piece of chart paper. Include any additional details about the themes, plot, character development, or genre. Discuss ways to show how the characters change over the course of the story and talk about adjectives or phrases that could help the story fit into one genre. Discuss important messages that might fit this story.
 5. Have students help you turn the outline into a story and write it on another piece of chart paper for future reference. Then have a volunteer read the finished story aloud while you or other student volunteers point out the three parts of the plot, changes that characters have made, themes, and clues to the genre.
 6. Put students to work creating outlines for their own stories before they write them. Remind students of the criteria their stories must meet and share some typical story themes they may want to consider. Give students time to work on their outlines and stories in class and as a homework assignment. Remind students to work the stories must be unique.
 7. During the next class period, divide students into groups of three or four and have them read their stories aloud. Tell the readers to read slowly and with feeling so that the listening students can understand and enjoy the stories. Have the groups discuss what they noticed about genre, character development, the components of plot, and themes in each story. Walk around the classroom to assess student understanding of all the elements discussed in the lesson.

Assessment

Use the following three-point rubric to evaluate students' work during this lesson.

- **3 points:** Students were able to easily and clearly define the term genre and identify several fiction genres; wrote unique, creative stories that met all the stated criteria, fit into at least one genre, and showed a solid understanding of the three parts of plot; and were able to intelligently and thoughtfully discuss the components of genre, character development, plot, and story theme in their peers' stories.
- **2 points:** Students were able to generally define the term genre with little assistance and identify at least two fiction genres; wrote somewhat unique, creative stories that met most of the stated criteria, fit into at least one genre, and showed a basic understanding of the three parts of plot; and were able to adequately discuss the components of genre, character development, plot, and story theme in their peers' stories.
- **1 point:** Students were unable to define the term genre without help and identified one or fewer fiction genres; wrote incomplete or incoherent stories with little or none of the stated

criteria, did not clearly fit into at least one genre, and showed a lack of understanding of the three parts of plot; and were unable or unwilling to discuss the components of genre, character development, plot, and story theme in their peers' stories without assistance.

Vocabulary

character

Definition: A person portrayed in an artistic piece such as a novel or a play

Context: A book usually has characters that are more memorable than others.

genre

Definition: A category of artistic composition, as in music or literature, marked by a distinctive style, form, or content

Context: You can choose to read or write different types of genres.

myth

Definition: A traditional story dealing of supernatural beings that serves as a fundamental type in the worldview of a people, as by explaining aspects of the natural world or delineating the psychology, customs, or ideals of society

Context: A myth usually features the adventures of superhuman beings.

plot

Definition: The pattern of events or main story in a narrative or drama

Context: A plot is broken down into three parts: main problem, conflict, and resolution.

setting

Definition: The time, place, and circumstances in which a narrative, drama, or film takes place

Context: Read the setting of a book to find out where the story takes place.

story

Definition: A usually fictional prose or verse narrative intended to interest or amuse the hearer or reader; a tale

Context: One well-known story begins with a girl named Dorothy who visits a strange and magical land.

theme

Definition: An implicit or recurrent idea; a motif

Context: A common theme of many books is children who come of age, or grow up in some way.

Academic Standards

Mid-continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL)

McREL's Content Knowledge: A Compendium of Standards and Benchmarks for K-12 Education addresses 14 content areas. To view the standards and benchmarks, visit

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>

This lesson plan addresses the following national standards:

- Language Arts – Reading: Uses the general skills and strategies of the reading process; Uses reading skills and strategies to understand and interpret a variety of literary texts
- Language Arts – Viewing: Uses viewing skills and strategies to understand and interpret visual media

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE)

The National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association have developed national standards to provide guidelines for teaching the English language arts. To view the standards online, go to <http://www.ncte.org/about/over/standards/110846.htm>

This lesson plan addresses the following English standards:

- Students use spoken, written and visual language to accomplish their own purposes
- Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts
- Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities
- Students read a wide range of print and non-print texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works

Support Materials

Develop custom worksheets, educational puzzles, online quizzes, and more with the free teaching tools offered on the Discoveryschool.com Web site. Create and print support materials, or save them to a Custom Classroom account for future use. To learn more, visit

- <http://school.discovery.com/teachingtools/teachingtools.html>
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DVD Content

This program is available in an interactive DVD format. The following information and activities are specific to the DVD version.

How To Use the DVD

The DVD starting screen has the following options:

Play Video – This plays the video from start to finish. There are no programmed stops, except by using a remote control. With a computer, depending on the particular software player, a pause button is included with the other video controls.

Video Index—Here the video is divided into sections indicated by video thumbnail icons; brief descriptions are noted for each one. Watching all parts in sequence is similar to watching the video from start to finish. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the remote for TV playback; on a computer, click once to highlight a thumbnail and read the accompanying text description and click again to start the video.

Curriculum Units – These are specially edited video segments pulled from different sections of the video (see below). These nonlinear segments align with key ideas in the unit of instruction. They include onscreen pre- and post-viewing questions, reproduced below in this Teacher's Guide. Total running times for these segments are noted. To play a particular segment, press Enter on the TV remote or click once on the Curriculum Unit title on a computer.

Standards Link – Selecting this option displays a single screen that lists the national academic standards the video addresses.

Teacher Resources – This screen gives the technical support number and Web site address.

Video Index

I. Understanding Genre

Literary genre is the style of a book or story. Learn the characteristics of an autobiography, fairy tale, and epic poem.

II. Understanding Myths

A myth tells the story of a superhuman being and his or her adventures.

III. Plot of a Story

The plot is what happens in a story.

IV. Stories of Persecution

Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl and *The Crucible* are stories of persecution. See how setting reflects culture.



V. Character Development

Characters develop and change over the course of a story.

VI. Character Traits

Learn more about the main character in *The Red Badge of Courage* through plot clues and dialogue.

VII. Themes in *The Wizard of Oz*

Every story has at least one theme, and most have multiple themes.

VIII. Figurative Language

Simile and hyperbole are two types of figurative language.

IX. Personal Connections

A personal connection to a story is how you relate to the characters, theme, or plot.

Curriculum Units

1. Autobiographies, Fairy Tales, and Epic Poems

Pre-viewing question

Q: What autobiographical stories, fairy tales, or epic poems have you read?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What are an autobiography, a fairy tale, and an epic poem?

A: An autobiography is an account of one's life. Usually written for children, fairy tales are stories that teach a lesson. They have fantastic or magical creatures and often begin with the phrase "Once upon a time." Epic poems are long stories written in verse about a hero's journey.

2. Understanding Myths

Pre-viewing question

Q: Who are some mythical heroes?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What is a myth?

A: A myth is a traditional story that typically features the adventures of superhuman beings. Usually a hero goes on a journey and must overcome obstacles to reach a goal.

3. Parts of a Plot

Pre-viewing question

Q: What happens in your favorite book or story?

A: Answers will vary.



Post-viewing question

Q: Describe the three parts of a plot.

A: The plot of a story is presented in three parts: main problem, conflict, and resolution. The main problem is an issue the characters face. The conflict is when the characters are involved in a struggle that prevents them from resolving the problem. The characters solve their problem in the resolution.

4. Persecution Stories

Pre-viewing question

Q: What does it mean to be persecuted?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What are some differences between the setting in *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* and *The Crucible*?

A: *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl* is nonfiction set in Amsterdam during World War II. *The Crucible* is fiction set in Massachusetts in the 1600s.

5. Character Changes and Development

Pre-viewing question

Q: How do the characters in your favorite book change over the course of the story?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What were the Wicked Witch's motives in *The Wizard of Oz*?

A: A character's motives are what make him or her do things. The Wicked Witch's motives were to gain power by trying to steal Dorothy's magic slippers and keep her prisoner.

6. Character Traits

Pre-viewing question

Q: What traits does your favorite fiction character have?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: How can readers learn more about the characters in a story?

A: Clues in the plot and how other characters in the story respond highlight traits of a particular character, whose actions and decisions also give readers information.

7. Themes in a Story

Pre-viewing question

Q: What is a theme in one of your favorite stories?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What stories have a theme of friendship or teamwork?

A: Answers will vary.



8. Simile and Hyperbole

Pre-viewing question

Q: What is figurative language?

A: It is an expressive use of language that illustrates an image, creates a mood, or makes a comparison.

Post-viewing question

Q: Describe simile and hyperbole.

A: Simile uses the words "like" or "as" to compare two unlike things. Hyperbole makes comparisons in an exaggerated way.

9. Personal Connections

Pre-viewing question

Q: What events or characters have you read about that resemble your own life?

A: Answers will vary.

Post-viewing question

Q: What part of that story did you relate to the most?

A: Answers will vary.